

THE TESTAMENT OF CYPRIAN THE MAGE
JAKE STRATTON-KENT



The Testament of Cyprian the Mage

ENCYCLOPÆDIA GOETICA VOLUME III, COMPREHENDING
THE BOOK OF SAINT CYPRIAN & HIS MAGICAL ELEMENTS
AND AN ELUCIDATION OF THE TESTAMENT OF SOLOMON



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Contents

[Exhortatio](#)
[Grimoire Timeline](#)
[References and Abbreviations](#)
[Defining and Redefining Magic](#)

[PART I - ST CYPRIAN](#)

[Blue Grimoires](#)
[Saint Cyprian of the Grimoires](#)
[The Great Book of Saint Cyprian: Introduction](#)
[The Life and Legend of Saint Cyprian](#)
[Iamblichus](#)
[The Confession of Saint Cyprian](#)
[Conjunction](#)
[Theoretical Implications: A Theurgic Interlude](#)

[PART II - THE TESTAMENT OF SOLOMON](#)

[In Search of the Four Kings](#)
[The Testament of Solomon](#)
[The Spirits of the Testament of Solomon](#)
[The Spirits of the Testament of Solomon: Decans](#)
[The End of the Testament](#)
[The Sibyl and the Hygromanteia](#)
[The Sibyl of Thyatira](#)
[Asmodeus](#)
[A Word on Angelology](#)

[PART III - THE DECANS](#)

[Gods of Time](#)
[Egyptian and Hermetic Decans](#)
[Solar Theology](#)
[The Definitions of Asclepius](#)
[The Asclepius](#)
[Concerning Angels: The Vice-Regent](#)
[Oriens](#)
[Introducing the Sacred Book](#)
[The Sacred Book of Hermes to Asclepius](#)
[The Decans and Magical Characters](#)
[The Correspondences](#)

[Stones of the Decans](#)

[Plants of the Decans](#)

[Magical Animals](#)

[INDEX](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS . Oliver Liebeskind

[*Cyprian the Mage*](#)

[*The Queen of Sheba*](#)

My profound gratitude to the following, in no particular order: Humberto Maggi and Felix de Castro for help and encouragement at many points. To many on the Solomonic and GV yahoogroups for general and sustained encouragement. To Madam Misha for many, many things. To Asterion Mage. To Jonathan at Midian Books for kind words and actions, and to numerous bloggers around the world who have promoted both my writings and Underworld Apothecary. To Tasha and Brendan Hughes for behind the scenes crisis management. To the many I have likely forgotten at the last minute. To Peter and Alkistis, as ever, for their continued belief in my work.

JSK

A PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK is to explore the implicit mythology of grimoire spirits and the contexts from which it derives. It is hard to see how any modern magician can deem themselves *traditional* without approaching this head on, yet from 1875 to the present this has hardly been attempted at all. A post Mathers/Crowley stereotype has prevailed, of Goetic magic as the conjuring of obscurely named entities by a stereotyped process, where the identities and origins of the spirits are less important than rampant bibliophilia and an unexamined adoption of 19th century fallacies. The importance of understanding the spirits and their origins has been overlooked, even substituted for, by jokey adoption of fictional gobbledy gook. Simultaneously, a mock medieval methodology – shaped by unreconstructed colonialism and ‘middle class revulsion’ in the early revival period – has blighted our appreciation of the most legitimate and continuous strand in all of Western magic. Which is exactly what Goetic magic is; a primal inheritance retaining millennia of experience and tradition; which if properly understood would regenerate Western magic and underline its immense cultural significance, on a level equal to any spiritual tradition in the world.

Talking of myth, in the inception of this rather curious book there was more than one incident of a principle arising in *Geosophia*, namely elastic geography. This principle or characteristic of mythic thinking takes various forms. In particular, regarding Saint Cyprian, there is the case of the two cities of Antioch. One in Syria built by the Seleucids, at times the most important city of the Roman Empire. The other in Asia Minor, Pisidia to be precise, famed for its precinct of Hecate and Mēn. Both were important, and in mythic geography possibly not as distinct as in geographical space. After all, Saint Cyprian of Carthage was and is prone to sharing iconography and other assets with our Cyprian. If this inter-changeability is to be accepted amongst folk saints, why should two cities not coincide in the popular imagination, or indeed in mine? The reader will therefore hopefully excuse me if despite commenting on Saint Cyprian I focus rather more on Syria in this volume, after serving Asia Minor well in the previous two.

Saints and Syria have rather a history after all. Notably there was Saint Paul, who, under the name Saul was a persecutor of the early Christians. He was famously struck temporarily blind on his way to Damascus, capital of modern Syria, and transformed into the Apostle Paul. The circumstances of this transformation are noteworthy; he exchanged a Jewish name for a Roman when travelling out of Judea into Syria. There is a variety of opinion regarding Paul; some speak disparagingly of Paulianity when describing the politicised Church. On the other hand at least one grimoire bears his name, and many Gnostic sects were favourably disposed to his teachings. Certain ‘de-Hellenising’ elements of modern Protestantism – inimical to Platonising theology – might be described as wishing to transform their names in the other direction, and hurry back from Damascus forthwith.

My invitation to the reader is to travel at first in the opposite direction, to proceed as it were from Damascus to Antioch. Not in order to espouse any early, middle or neo form of Platonism; only to gaze briefly upon what may be called low Platonism.

This phrase represents the continuum between Orphics, from whom Plato borrowed many images and mythic concepts, and the later magicians of the papyri who were familiar with Platonic concepts, but more practically oriented. That he borrowed from them before they did so from him excuses the fact that magicians are not necessarily philosophers. However, in reviewing the heritage of magic it is often useful to examine the philosophical species and their notions without necessarily converting to their camp. This can be achieved, as outlined in earlier volumes; by bearing in mind that eschatology precedes philosophy and theology as the defining principle of magic and popular

religion.

It is only necessarily to gaze briefly upon it, since though its name is unfamiliar, low Platonism is easy to recognise. It has been covertly foisted upon us for some time. The ingrained habit of going through the motions with generic Qabalah (partly inherited from Renaissance Neoplatonists) has been a substitute for a reappraisal of Platonic concepts underlying our magical tradition; whilst retaining much that originates with it.

We have become oblivious to the fact that many of us are low Platonists, in a great variety of ways both practical and theoretical. The point is, as begun in *Geosophia*, to delve beneath the 'host traditions' and reclaim archaic Goetia. To not be, so to speak, low Platonic but to get sub-Platonic.

CREDERE CUM CURA

IN THIS BOOK one endeavour is to confront various issues arising from the role of Christianity in magic, redressing certain perceptions and imbalances. This will be controversial, and hopefully enlightening, for believers and non-believers alike.

Among the issues involved, indeed perhaps the most important, are omissions formerly introduced into Western spirituality. Prohibitions relating to animistic beliefs and practices, concerning trees, streams, stones &c. were introduced in the post pagan period. So too, as discussed in previous works, many former ways of relating to the dead were largely eradicated. These omissions, as perhaps most will concede, do not serve magical practice well.

Where Western magic reflects these theological amputations, it contrasts strongly with other traditions worldwide; the result is not a unique and superior form, but a greatly reduced one. What is perhaps not fully appreciated is that these omissions do not characterise all forms of Christian magic currently extant. In the 'Africanised' forms of Christianity, many of which involve rich magical traditions, such elements are not omitted but remain central. In effect this means that such omissions are not necessarily characteristic of Christian magic. Although historically European culture underwent this particular socio-political purging, the process may be reversed within a Christian magical paradigm.

In addition, we must ask ourselves what exactly this paradigm is. For example, the role of eschatological matters in the development of magic leads to the question, what is Christian eschatology? It may surprise many of my readers to learn that there is no simple answer to this. In fact two radically contrasting eschatological conceptions can be detected throughout the history of Christianity.

One of these is thoroughly Platonist, with or without incorporating additional elements from Neoplatonism. The impression that these elements only entered Christian magic during the Renaissance is a false one; many of the Church Fathers were sympathetic to Platonism, or even committed to it. Platonic eschatology melds readily with approaches as seemingly disparate as the Greek magical papyri and New World traditions influenced by Kardecian Spiritism, as well as the grimoires and Renaissance Cabalism. Any attempt to depict these as inherently non-Christian is bound to fail. While non-Christian forms may exist, the underlying elements of Platonism still make for compatibility and potential synthesis. At the same time of course this model was not originally Christian, so such an orientation is not essential to it either.

The relationship of magic with Christianity is a thorny subject in some circles and the source of some disconcerting attitudes. On the one hand I have personally witnessed Wiccans sneering at

images of saints in a Hoodoo botanica. These were oblivious to possible charges of racism, not to mention ignorance of vibrant magical traditions; which smacks also of complacency. One – with no sense of irony – charged the shop-holders with bigotry, presumably for not subscribing to his beliefs. This is by no means true of all witches however. On the other hand there are many grimoire magicians who, while reverential of Renaissance magic, are impervious to the respect the Renaissance magicians had for Classical lore. Not to mention the origins of grimoire practice in the magical papyri and ancient Neo-platonism, and magical astrology in Sabeism and the Chaldean astrological magic of the Seleucid Empire.

To return to witches however, although there are obvious similarities with some of the modern magical practices carried out by Wiccans, most of the methods and techniques used by the old-time witches bear little resemblance to those used by today's neo-pagan witches. Often the cunning folk practised dual faith observance and the charms, amulets, prayers and incantations they used invoked Jesus, the Virgin Mary, the Trinity and the company of saints. Psalms were used for magical purposes as spells and they still are in some modern traditional witchcraft circles. With the coming of the new faith of Christianity and the suppression of the ancient pagan religions, objects such as crucifixes, saints' medallions, the host and holy water were widely used by folk magicians because they were believed to possess 'virtue' or magical energy and inherent healing power.

Christian symbolism was used in folk magic rituals involving psychic protection, counter-magic and healing. Many of the old pagan charms were Christianised and some of the saints took on the earlier attributes of Pagan gods and goddesses. Sacred springs previously dedicated to goddesses for instance were re-dedicated either to the Virgin Mary or to female saints such as Winefrede or Bride. Healing charms replaced the names of pagan deities such as Woden, Loki and Thor with those of God, Jesus and the Holy Ghost. Many of the grimoires used by witches and the practitioners of folk magic also inevitably contained Judeo-Christian symbolism.

Some modern traditional witches still follow dual faith observance using the psalms for magical purposes, working with the company of saints and employing Christian imagery, symbolism and liturgy, often in a heretical and subversive way. The neo-Pagan witch speaks of ways that *harm none*, while the modern traditional witch – in common with the witches and cunning folk of the past – can both cure and curse as the need arises. Here the magic, while Christian, is undoubtedly authentic rather than a romantic revival. Similar practices can be found in Vodou, Hoodoo, Santeria, Macumba, Ju-ju and Obeah in the Americas and in Africa. A Catholic model of the universe, including heaven, purgatory and the underworld, influenced Congolese acceptance and use of Catholicism in their magical practices, such as Palo Mayombe. It is just as useful in Western necromancy.

QUI EST SUMMUS DEI?

ONE PROBLEM in envisioning Western magical tradition coherently is that the decisive formative role of an occult synthesis in the ancient world is either not properly understood, or not considered in various artificial reconstructions. So too the major role of late pagan monotheism in this period is often unsuspected; leading to unnecessary disconnections of neo-Paganism with ritual magic, where its influence is more integral via literary sources. I stress *unnecessary*, as the needs of neo-Paganism and of ritual magic, Christian or otherwise, are served equally by the historical models here employed.

Let us take neo-Paganism based on Babylonian tradition. A 'Jovist' model often applies here, centred on Marduk as King of the gods. Marduk's pre-eminence however was in an earlier period

than the synthesis, starting BCE, while the great synthesis underlying occultism is more 2nd to 4th century CE. The highest Chaldean god of this late period is Zervan. Marduk – chief god in an earlier Babylonian phase – is in this period a planetary deity, while the time god – Zervan – embodied the entire astrological system.

Interaction between Chaldeans and Persians lent some forms of Zervan the attributes of Ahura Mazda (eternity being above dualism). He is thus a ‘pagan’ supreme god, one of several; among them – from a contemporary gentile perspective – was a god known as Jehovah. The fact that we recognise this name should not confuse us; there were several competing ideas about the Supreme God, and any one of them might be intended by the use of any single given name. The varying ideas held by contemporary Jews and Gentiles about a Supreme God are embedded in magical rituals of the synthesis period, and leave strong traces in the rites descended from them. On occasion, as will be discussed further on, Sabaoth is the name of the supreme deity, a conception concerned with Eternal Time. Elsewhere, as in *PGM* VII.1012–13, Sabaoth is portrayed differently, as first of four archangels, the others being Michael, Raphael and Gabriel.

Such instances represent different conceptions at work, implying more varied ideas than contemporary readers of the grimoires might consider. Among other things this throws doubt on ‘straight Christian Neoplatonism’ as the default structural hierarchy in every grimoire. Having questioned that supposed certainty our sub-Platonic method must: assist investigation of traditions prior to the synthesis; maintain modular coherence in the process of reclamation. This, as will be seen, will involve the Chaldeans.

DE MOMENTO CHALDÆORUM

UNDERSTANDING THE WORLD of Chaldean ideas – who they were influenced by, Persia for instance; who they influenced, virtually everyone in Roman times but especially the Stoics – is important for traditional Western magicians. For one thing the most important participant in the ancient synthesis behind the Western magical tradition, recognised as the single biggest influence on the grimoires (*FR* 155), was the Neoplatonist teacher Iamblichus. He was a hereditary Syrian priest and heavily influenced by the *Chaldean Oracles*.

The trouble is that Chaldean and Babylonian keep changing their meaning. Babylon (as a very ancient city) involves a range of periods and revivals; its religion of course was highly astrological, and its priesthood long lived and influential. The ideas of this priesthood evolved over time, and they formed intellectual alliances; with first the Stoics and later the Neoplatonists. So naturally ideas about the gods and the occult basis of the universe changed over time, although earlier phases continued to feed in and be reinterpreted to suit later conceptions.

Chaldean is also a complex term; among other things for our purposes it can refer to the doctrines of said priesthood, to ancient astrologers confused with them, as well as to tribes and sects in Asia Minor thought to have similar doctrines or beliefs (for example, the Phrygian Magi or Magusseans, and at least some of the Chalybes).

Additionally, Chaldean can refer to the authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*: two historical persons, Julian the Chaldean and Julian the Theurgist. When Neoplatonist writers used the term Chaldean they meant these two, not the priesthood or the religion of Chaldea as such.

Back to Babylon, it was of course conquered by Persia, whose religion was Zoroastrianism – the prophet of which was associated with magic in the Greek mind. A Persian (more correctly Median) sect known as the Magi – which probably predated Zoroaster – formed another powerful priesthood.

Once Persian and Babylonian priest-hoods and ideas collided with each other all sorts of complexities and confusion came into play. The god of Chaldean astrological thought at its peak was Zervan, a god of time higher than the old planetary gods. In this role he was a candidate for Supreme God in the cultural ferment of the time. In addition the interplay of Persian and Chaldean thought inspired a Zoroastrian ‘heresy’ wherein Zervan rather than Ahura Mazda was supreme.

So there are at least two versions of Zervan, one of whom has attributes of Ahura Mazda. In this guise – like Ahura Mazda – Zervan is beyond the material universe. These models join the One of the Platonists and all can feed into Jehovah from late antiquity onwards.

The ‘regular’ Zervan – a god of eternity but within the created universe rather than without – is still a much higher conception of god than is Marduk. At this point in history Marduk is one of the planetary gods below these higher ideas in whatever guise. These planetary gods obviously feed into our angels and demons, but also into a solar or solunar theology feeding into the synthesis that was distinct from the more common fatalistic astrological theology. Both tendencies can be detected within Hermeticism, but the existence of the latter is often under played. The more positive theology may relate to the earlier competition between Jupiter and the Sun in regional cults, as well as ‘Egyptian positivism.’ Naturally the old top god from these more primitive planetary and solar theologies also fed into ideas about God and his Son/Demiurge/Logos. Hence then Pagans might assert, and Christians deny, that Zeus was another name of the supreme deity; while Jesus, Michael and Apollo all performed similar roles in various cosmologies.

Thus ideas of a Supreme God can draw on a variety of models as they enter Western thought. This obviously includes the grimoires which draw on the synthesis of religions and magic occurring in late antiquity. By the time of the grimoires we may call them all Jehovah, but how he is understood – and how the magic operates – might resemble Neoplatonist, Zoroastrian or Chaldean forms, or a combination.

As you may have gathered I am of the Cumont/Lewy persuasion that Zervanism is centred on Babylonian interpretation of Persian thought. It is certainly the most useful in my own field, but it also makes most sense of things overall. Also relevant is that Kronos preceding Chronos etymologically, a Chaldean Zervan is more likely to have influenced a Greek god than Greek language influencing a Persian one.

This may be a suitable point to mention Zervan’s equivalence with another figure, more familiar perhaps, the so-called gnostic deity Aion. As the high god in Mithraism, we can interpret their model as Zervanist, having no superior transcendental deity on Platonist or Zoroastrian lines.

Zervanism can be seen entering Western magic as early as Pythagoras, via his mentor Pherecydes. This was gently indicated in *Geosophia*, which is by no means occidentalist in outlook. The emphasis was simply elsewhere; especially Thracian and Phrygian ecstatic cults and shamanism as influences on Western magic too often overlooked. The Oriental aspects of Western magic are here explored in greater detail. The Syrian and Egyptian elements of Theurgy and Hermeticism form a major part of the present study; in particular their relation to the models employed in ritual magic of the grimoire type. The origins of the spirit hierarchy are a central aspect of this; especially the Chiefs, Kings and Queens of the spirits. While the main emphasis is upon demons and spirits, a substantial new appraisal of angels is involved, embracing in particular: the Angelic Vice-regent; thwarting angels; the third order angels, with links to the Powers and the thwarting angels; plus *kharakteres*, particularly as associated with the decans. A product of numerous factors, and itself possessed of several variants, this theme is explored in stages as these are clarified and discussed.

The following timeline follows the literary tradition and shows the important personalities, movements and events contemporary with the texts. For example:

- . The legend of Cyprian, the magical papyri, the Theurgic and Hermetic movements and the *Testament of Solomon* were contemporary (period of the Great Synthesis).
- . The manuscripts demonstrate a transition of Solomonic works from the Greek Orthodox East to the increasingly Protestant West. While not definitive this balances the concept of a Catholic clerical underground as a defining feature of the grimoire tradition.

1. *Including the Great Synthesis (1st–6th century)*

YEAR/ERA	MAJOR PERSONS	MAJOR TEXTS
BCE	Pherecydes	
BCE	Pythagoras	
1st century	Pseudo-Hermes	Likely origin of the first philosophical Hermetic texts. The first technical texts are earlier.
174		<i>Chaldean Oracles</i> .
186–254	Origen	Earliest texts of the <i>PGM</i> .
4th century	Iamblichus	<i>Theurgy</i> , aka <i>The Mysteries</i> (mid 4th century: <i>Lives of Saints Cyprian and Justina</i>).
4th/5th century		Date of Prudentius’ <i>Peristephanon</i> , involving Cyprian legend. Latin translation of the Hermetic <i>Asclepius</i> .
5th century	Pseudo-Dionysus	
6th century	Pseudo-Solomon	<i>Testament of Solomon</i> . Latter texts of the <i>PGM</i> .
10th century	Pseudo-Magriti	<i>Picatrix</i> .
11th century	Psellus	<i>Corpus Hermeticum</i> compiled by Byzantines (14 texts, formerly circulating separately).

REMARKS

Syrian astronomer whose works exhibit Zervanist tendencies.

Pupil of Pherecydes, thought to be of Syrian ancestry.

Astrological worldview incorporating the Egyptian decans.

Julian the Chaldean and his son Julian the Theurgist, co-authors of the *Chaldean Oracles*, the founders of Theurgy.

Among other matters, Origen held Restitutionist views relevant to demonology.

Iamblichus, the great Syrian Neoplatonist and Theurgist: held positive view of Creation.

Influential Christian author on angelology & spirit hierarchies. Strong Theurgic influences.

Earliest fragments deal only with the decans. Prototype spirit catalogue.

Exemplifies Arab Hermeticism, includes major sections on the decans & lunar mansions.

Later MSS span the 14th to 17th centuries, contemporary with grimoire MSS.

II . *From Liber Juratus*

YEAR/ERA	MAJOR PERSONS	MAJOR TEXTS
13th century		<i>Liber Juratus (Sworn Book of Honorius).</i>
1440		<i>Bononiensis</i> MS 3632.
1483–1546	Martin Luther	
1486–1535	Agrippa	
1493–1541	Paracelsus	
1572		<i>BL Sloane</i> MS 3847 #1.
1577		<i>Weyer's Pseudomonarchia Dæmonum.</i>
1670		<i>comte de Gabalis.</i>
		<i>Lansdowne</i> 1202, 17th century.
1727–774	Martinez de Pasqually	
		<i>Lansdowne</i> 1203, 17th/18th century.
1810–1875	Eliphas Lévi	
1875	Crowley born	

REMARKS

Oldest MS, *Sloane* MS 3854 is 14th century; *Sloane* MS 313 late 14th or early 15th century once belonged to John Dee.

Earliest Greek proto-Key.

1485, end of the Wars of the Roses, concludes Middle Ages in England. Henry VIII reigned 1509–1547, founds Protestant English Church.

Strong influence from Iamblichus.

Restitutionist view of elementals.

Earliest English Key (first known Western European MS thereof).

Source for the *Goetia of Solomon*; contains Anti-Restitutionist subtext.

Restitutionist view of elementals.

Founder of a deeply influential Restitutionist & Theurgic system.

Influenced by Paracelsus & Martinism. Wrote Restitutionist versification of a prayer from *Honorius* grimoire.

Theosophical Society founded; Occult Revival begins.

LIKE PREVIOUS VOLUMES of the *Encyclopædia Goetica* this book contains no footnotes. This is characteristic of encyclopædiæ and of compendia; self contained formats which this series essentially merges. Thus for example, to take an example from academia, Ogden's thesis *Greek and Roman Necromancy* has footnotes while his compendium *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts*, does not. Similarly, dictionaries and encyclopædiæ are free of footnotes; they are self-contained sources for reference by definition.

Among the works consulted – which of course I list – are such theses as Dodds' *Greeks and the Irrational*. To pick a chapter at random, his third has 127 numbered notes, amounting to 19 pages. These typically consist of references to ancient texts, in accepted critical editions and/or the original language; to academic works in German or other languages; quotations wholly or partly in Greek and so on. Such a book – rather than being self contained – requires access to a university library beyond its pages. My compendia on the other hand contain lengthy extracts, in English, from the ancient sources; summaries of the findings of academics in rare editions, regardless of their language; potted biographies of important characters &c. So too the series is adapted to the perspective of a practicing magician; which on occasion provides insights not present in the academic sources employed, nor achievable by their methods.

Klutz's *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon* is an academic work whose format would be next to useless for the non-academic reader, enmeshed as it is in the scholarly conventions of the literary exegete. His slim text is beyond dense, virtually requiring specialised training to extract the meaning from his references. Having suffered these ordeals myself I have no wish to impose them on my readers; indeed my choice of format might be seen as a conscious reaction against the density and dryness of the research process. The fact is many such works – and their sources – have been available for a long time, and cover areas of major importance to occultism. The fields concerned have nevertheless been neglected horribly by contemporary magicians throughout my life. It is therefore hard to see how matters would be improved had I reproduced the same formats and conventions.

While this compendium requires some effort, and is rather large, the necessary material is gathered in one place and one language.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANRW Haase, W. (Editor): *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt (Rise and Decline of the Roman World)*. De Gruyter, Berlin, 1980.

COT Lewy, Hans: *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy*. Orig: 1891. Extended new edition: Institut d'Études Augustiniennes, Paris, 2011.

CS Arnold, Clinton E.: *The Colossian Syncretism*. Mohr, Tübingen, 1995.

EPM Arnold, Clinton E.: *Ephesians: Power and Magic*. Cambridge University Press, 1989.

FR Kieckhefer, Richard: *Forbidden Rites: A Necromancer's Manual of the Fifteenth Century*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.

Gdud Gundel, Wilhelm: *Dekane und Dekanesternbilder*. J.J. Augustin, Glockstadt und Hamburg, 1936.

- Geo* Stratton-Kent, Jake: *Geosophia: the Argo of Magic*. Scarlet Imprint, 2010. Page numbers accord with the hardback editions.
- GG* *Grand Grimoire*.
- GoS* *Goetia of Solomon*. Generic. Mathers/Crowley default unless otherwise stated.
- GV* *Grimorium Verum* (generic; specific references will be given in full).
- HWA* Tester, Jim: *A History of Western Astrology*. Boydell Press, Suffolk, 1987.
- IA* Fanger, Claire: *Invoking Angels: Theurgic Ideas and Practices, 13th to 16th Centuries*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012.
- KoS* *Key of Solomon*. Generic, but Mathers edition default unless otherwise stated.
- LAG* Bouché-Leclercq, Auguste: *L'Astrologie Grecque*. E. Leroux, Paris, 1899.
- LBD* Greenfield, Richard P.H.: *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology*. A.M. Hakkert, 1988.
- LDA* Andresen, Carl: *Lexikon der Antike*. Leipzig, 1972.
- LRHT* Festugière, A.J.: *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste, Vol. I, L'Astrologie et les Sciences Occultes*. Orig 1957, re-released: Société d'Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1981.
- MTS* Marathakis, Ioannis (trans. & ed.): *The Magical Treatise of Solomon or Hygromanteia*. Golden Hoard, 2011.
- MWG* Ogden, Daniel: *Magic, Witchcraft and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds*. Oxford University Press, 2009.
- PGM, PDM* Betz, Hans Dieter (editor): *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, including the Demotic Spells*. University of Chicago Press, 1986, 1992.
- RTS* Klutz, Todd: *Rewriting the Testament of Solomon*. London, 2005.
- TBM* *True Black Magic*.
- TBOP* Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius: *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*.
- TEH* Fowden, Garth: *The Egyptian Hermes*. Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- TG* Stratton-Kent, Jake: *The True Grimoire*. Scarlet Imprint, 2010. Page numbers accord with the hardback editions.
- TGH* Mead, G.R.S.: *Thrice-Greatest Hermes: Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy and Gnosis*. Watkins, 1906/1964.
- ToS* *Testament of Solomon*. Generic, Conybeare's default unless otherwise stated.
- VKS* Skinner & Rankine: *The Veritable Key of Solomon*. Llewellyn, 2008.

IN OCCULTISM as in the study of magic by academia definitions of magic have come and gone. With the contraction of the pseudo-scientific and psychological schools, and a partial return to traditional methodologies the historical and practical definitions have crept closer. The manipulation of spiritual entities to force or guarantee practical results was once taken for granted in academia, and is now once more fashionable in some occult quarters. So far this return to basics has stopped short of a reassessment of certain factors underpinning the worldview of magic, at least in the Anglophone world.

Meanwhile, academia has largely ceased to automatically perceive magic as degenerate, irrational or inferior to religion. Not that modern magic is always as deserving of this re-estimation as the older magic academia generally concerns itself with.

Besides defining what magic is, for example in the eyes of historical persons employing it, there is the other problem of established usage of *magic* and cognate terms to enforce negative stereotypes, as in witch-hunts or in demonising the religious practices of others in and outside a given society. This has been a complicating factor regarding a clear definition of magic. Over emphasising the demonising usage has led to definitions where deviance is taken for granted. An influential two point definition assumes this in both categories: there is magic as real or perceived socially deviant religious practice; and magic as such a practice exploiting supernatural beings. (See D. Aune, 'Magic in Early Christianity,' *ANRW* 1515). In fact accusations of deviance often originate in traditions with their own occult practice. This alone should vitiate the necessity to automatically include deviance when considering magic as a means of obtaining results from conjuring spirits. The difficulty of distinguishing magic from religion, which in some cultural contexts increases to impossibility, also opposes such all pervading definitions.

Even so, it is well understood, that magic was performed as an undercurrent of varied religious groups, particularly as folk religion; and might involve a cleric or other holy man within the community. Deviance comes in various forms, only one of which involves perceived hostile and antisocial persons. Accepted 'non-deviant' magical practitioners are plainly part and parcel of some societies. Some definitions of deviance involve asserting hegemony, exemplified in our case first by Roman 'state religion.' While magic was often problematic, pagan state religion left room for private and voluntary religious associations distinct from the state cult. These were often closely connected to magical practices. Under the early Church, these associations also became 'deviant,' including formerly 'respectable' magic, such as Theurgy.

Another aspect to magical studies that has been subject to change is the relationship of magic and Gnosticism. It is now widely understood that the magical practices exemplified by the *PGM* influenced Gnosticism, to which they were historically prior. Not, as once commonly supposed in academia and contemporary occultism alike, the other way round. It is thus, obviously, quite wrong to speak of Gnostic gems or Gnostic words of power; these things are the creation of magicians, from whom later Gnostics borrowed.

Still another aspect of defining magic as distinct from religion (Gnostic or otherwise) is concerned with the obtaining of results. It is essentially correct for academics to define magic as concerned with guaranteed obtaining of results, as opposed to religiously beseeching a deity who may refuse. Failure to rigorously adhere to a formula was certainly blamed for failures when they occurred, whether or not every magician genuinely believed that bar this proviso they were infallible. There remains the

assumption that magic was only concerned with day to day results, while salvation – however it is defined – was a religious issue; even where said magic was performed within a religious milieu or by a religious official. This, in my opinion, continues to be mishandled both by academics and particularly occultists, with rare exceptions.

There are several complicating factors involved in this misjudgment. One problem may be over compensation for earlier confusion of the relationship between Gnosticism and magic. That is, having defined magic as concerned with results and with Solomonic magic and the *PGM* prior to Gnosticism, such things as ascent rituals are no longer seen as relevant to earlier magic. Rather the understanding has grown that Gnosticism had spiritual goals while magic was purely practical. Or, Gnosticism, in common with other religious movements, had an eschatological dimension, magic did not. There were of course ‘magical religions’ like Theurgy, where a spiritual dimension was super-added by philosophers; the earlier goetic magic providing materials was then devalued as lacking it. Such tendencies subsequently led to ‘high magic’ movements, distinguishing themselves from witchcraft, Goetia or ‘low magic,’ along sociological and other lines. However, Lewy’s work on Theurgy strongly implies that the eschatology of Theurgy was not an outright addition; it was merely redefined in terms of a supreme deity rather than more ‘primitive’ patrons of the deceased.

Individual eschatology – beliefs and practices concerning what happens, or can happen when individuals die, rather than what happens to everyone on Judgment Day – is directly implied in many aspects of magical belief. The universalistic apocalypses of Judaism and Christianity have likely obscured its formative role for occultists and academics alike.

Such misconceptions will, in course of time, be seen as wrong headed on several grounds. An insightful essay by Morton Smith is worth referencing; ‘Salvation in the Gospels, Paul and the Magical Papyri’ (*Helios* 13, 1986, 63–74). Therein Smith observes that the day to day concerns of magic are directly mirrored by those of religion, priests are consulted regarding the problems of everyday life far more often than regarding salvation, which is generally deferred unless old age, disease or some form of insecurity cause it to be emphasised. Distinguishing magic from religion on the grounds of such an emphasis in the former, while ignoring it in the latter, is obviously specious. The truth is, as Smith eloquently says, that both religion and magic *always stock salvation* [but] *don’t sell much of it*. This is not to say that salvation or the afterlife does not utterly underpin their worldview. As I have expressed elsewhere, these concepts provide motivations and scenarios for spirits to collude with humans and vice versa; an explanation of how and why they do so. Without them spirit magic loses coherence, with them it loses only its two dimensionality.

Smith cites texts from the *PGM* which allude to such beliefs and magical practices directly involving them. These salvationist examples overlap considerably with rites cited by Lewy, as summarised later in ‘A Theurgic Interlude.’ *PGM* IV.153–221 involves permanent union with a god, involving a ritualised funeral and resurrection. The god appealed to, incidentally, is Typhon, a not infrequent occurrence. *PGM* XII.783–806 involves a similar union. These resemble ‘salvation in life’ via divine union in a religious context, scarce distinguishable from oneness with Christ.

PGM I.143–196 takes us further, not only will the angel/god invoked *perform all sorts of* [practical, day to day] *services for you* but *when you die, will wrap up the body as befits a god while, carrying your spirit, he will bring it into the air with him. For you will not go into Hades, having been established by a powerful familiar as an aerial spirit ...* Here a post mortem eschatological context is plainly part and parcel of the pact with the *paredros* or magical assistant. *PGM* III.550–90 involves similar hopes, help in life and after it: *come to me ... giving me life, health,*

salvation &c. &c ... and after my physical body is well put away, I beseech, Lord, accept this my request ... that my spirit be taken up from my bier and come to you, the Lord of all ... begetter of the gods &c.

So too, understanding the *PGM* as technical Hermetica gives us pause. The philosophical Hermetica undoubtedly involves salvation (see Copenhaver, *Hermetica* xxxvii), while the technical literature generally deals with more immediate concerns. Both – let it be noted – within the context of astrological fate. Hermeticism, as the above author notes, originates in a culture – Egyptian – where religion and magic were not seen as separate in the least. The same is true, of course, of the Greek magical papyri. What we call Egyptian religion, which was in fact equally magical, was deeply concerned with the afterlife, as is well known. That the *PGM* includes eschatological conceptions and goals alongside the day to day magic is more than merely fortuitous.

We do not possess a requiem ritual among the papyri, nor should we expect to. On the other hand, where might we expect the magician to be during funeral rites of the communities concerned? The belief systems of the above rituals need not contradict the beliefs of such and such a Mystery cult among whom the operator was numbered. On the contrary, in many cases they are directly comparable and mutually supportive.

Of course Empedocles and Pythagoras, both goetes, were ‘divine men’ whose initiation also concerned post mortem expectations. As prototypes of the less illustrious magicians of late antiquity, as of the equally illustrious Apollonius of Tyana, their example is not reliant on Gnosticism either. Historically, in both folk belief and more literary traditions, the non-dependence of magic on Gnosticism does not separate magic from an eschatological context. As a specific form of literary tradition, the papyri, and subsequently the grimoires, are the linear descendents of the Orphic literature, where eschatological concepts are a given. Day to day results, as exemplified by the *PGM*, speak volumes about the clientele of a magician, who could be a ‘cleric.’ They tell us comparatively little about the motivations of the operator as an individual, or the forming of magical ideas.

It is – as mentioned – well understood that magical activity could take place as an undercurrent of a given religious community; one type of community being the Greco-Roman private religious associations. However folk religion influencing local practice of a given religion outside these is equally involved. Thus in Judaism where such associations were not a cultural norm and were probably absent, Jewish angelology and demonology nevertheless had an eschatological dimension; as witness the close relationship between Jewish ‘folk’ or ‘magical’ ideas about angels and demons and the apocalyptic literature. All such communities naturally had eschatological ideas, and the nature of supernatural beings involved in magic is largely determined by that very fact.

The increasingly widespread acceptance of Burkert’s thesis, that the goetic magician is a Greek shaman, cannot but have implications herein. The shaman’s role is exemplified by the Orphic journey into the underworld to rescue a soul. This underpins the relation of all magic on an earlier necromantic sub-stratum, as emphasised in *Geosophia* at length. Recuperation of the devalued terms *goetia* and *necromancy* both, leads inexorably to a redefinition of magic. In other words the shaman – or goes – can assist or coerce souls to and fro in the underworld; this leads to ability to question spirits (necromancy) and to employ them in magic, voluntarily or otherwise. The shaman is on good terms with powerful spirits of the underworld; able to assist his client, or community, in their relations with them.

Concern with day to day results, or so called low magic, is thus a subset of a larger belief system within which the magician operates, with or without sanction. This larger belief system is explicitly eschatological; and religion as distinguished from magic proceeds from it rather than originating it.

Primal 'religion' is shamanic, shamanism is magic, and therefore the context of magic is wider than manipulation of supernatural entities for purely mundane results.

Saint Cyprian



... it was the French Bibliothèque Bleue grimoires that first gave the Caribbean its literary magic tradition.

Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books*

TWO TYPES OF GRIMOIRES require distinguishing from one another in order for this study to proceed clearly. There are the manuscripts of the so-called aristocratic angel magic type. Then there are those which appeared first as printed manuals; exemplified by – but not limited to – the French Bibliothèque Bleue genre. Both, to be sure, contain elements from traditions proper to the other; after all the *Fourth Book* attributed to Agrippa was an early printed grimoire. Thus, the popular grimoires of France, Italy, Spain, Portugal and beyond are replete with authentic elements of Solomonic lore; likewise the supposedly upper class manuscript tradition is very far from being devoid of folk magic elements – or plain sorcery. Features thought proper to one may be found in the other, and vice versa. It should not be automatically assumed that manuscripts outrank blue grimoires in terms of the traditions they preserve. That many manuscripts postdate the invention of the printing press should encourage caution in this respect.

Nevertheless, there are good reasons for partially distinguishing these types. There is also some irony in the fact that devotees of the angelic genre are occasionally disparaging about the more folksy blue grimoires. One element of this ironic subtext is the fact that the very term *grimoire* first gained currency through the blue genre: the *True Grimoire*, the *Grand Grimoire* and the *Grimoire of Pope Honorius* all appeared first as printed titles. It is from these that *grimoires* became a collective term for magical books. Yet some historians and angel conjurers alike have subsequently sought to exclude from the canon those very books! They have been described as *pulp* grimoires, as *pseudo-grimoires*, or merely sensationalist; among other ways sought to exclude them from proper consideration. In reality, aficionados of the blue books have a better claim to the grimoire title, since the titles of their texts originated the usage. Not that I encourage them to become overly exclusive. However there are grounds for making distinctions based on something more serious than mere snobbery, inverted or otherwise.

The nature of this distinction and its significance for this entire study, concerns differences of approach. It has been said, with some justification, that a major thread of Western magic involves compulsion. In one form this is native to Egyptian tradition, among others. The Books of Moses that appear in the papyri speak of initiated formulæ of compulsion, not of demons but of time gods. These are contemporary forms of older traditions, it is not unknown in various cultures for gods, even saints, to receive rough treatment, being literally or verbally bound included. There is however another form, that of the thwarting angel, which is a more problematic form of compulsion traceable to the *ToS*. Compulsion that is, of the demonic realm by the angelic, or the infernal by the celestial. Insofar as elements of Solomonic magic are involved in the blue genre, this may appear to be the case in the latter also. This is however, largely a matter of mere appearances.

In reality the folk aspect of the grimoires in both cases, but particularly the blue books, is rather different. It involves goetic survivals, and in the case of the blue genre, a virtual Goetic revival. Its nature is essentially chthonic, and dealings with spirits are performed on a rather different basis.

Whether as survivals of an older methodology and worldview or as a revival this difference does not invalidate the genre. On the contrary, it marks it as a different tradition – in some respects more ancient – which possesses its own inherent legitimacy.

The blue genre obtains this identity through a variety of means, and no one of these is entirely responsible. These include firstly, continuity of the Hermetic strand within the Solomonic tradition; wherein elemental demons are viewed more positively. Despite exceptions this is very present in the Solomonic genre too; for example in *Liber Juratus* and *Lansdowne 1203* (the *KoS* according to Abognazar). Together with other re-emergent themes this pre-existent tendency received a major boost from the view of elementals in Paracelsian thought. Then, within the blue genre as such, the causes are classical interests, folk sympathies and outright subversive motivations. In the latter case, most markedly in early modern France, a post revolutionary anti-clerical ethos is at work. Owen Davies' *Grimoires* gives a good account of this genre, unimpeded by the Inquisition though still at odds with the public censor. Classical interests can be seen at work in a variety of late grimoires. This involves apparent contradictory elements, seemingly completely overturning what is wrongly assumed to be the one Solomonic view of spirits; yet just as often retaining or even emphasising their most diabolical features. Such antique themes as intermediary spirits and spirit messengers reassert themselves as mainsprings of the methodology. The old nature spirits, often reclassified as elementals, also assert themselves more openly.

The demographic or target audience is markedly different from the manuscript tradition of aristocratic angel magic. Folk sympathies are thus a very major factor; and consequently folkloric elements become more prominent. The socially levelling influence of Paracelsus had played a part; an influence with other ramifications beside. The genre is, as said already, not to be taken for a novelty, so much as a resurgence of older themes. Consciously or not, the old goetic strand and its chthonic centre of gravity are reasserted through these developments.

There is then the matter of the new affiliations formed by the genre. While the French grimoires of this time had an influence way beyond France, the printed grimoire genre as a whole was to wield an influence far beyond Europe. The more kabbalistic Books of Moses certainly influenced Hoodoo in the United States, but do not particularly concern Saint Cyprian or the Goetic fusions within traditions such as Kimbando. The first is better illustrated by the Iberian grimoires and the latter by the Franco-Italian texts such as the *True* and *Grand Grimoires*. As will be seen in the course of examining the *Book of Saint Cyprian*, there is considerable affinity between these categories.

This Book represents one of a wealth of related grimoire literature little known to the Western Occult Revival (1875–1975). These are only now beginning to claim the collective attention of modern occultists. While the *True* and the *Grand Grimoire* have long been better known, if underestimated until recently, the Iberian end of the blue grimoire spectrum has so far attracted little attention in the English speaking occult sphere.

Too often dismissed as merely derivative, for example of the *Grand Grimoire*, there is in fact a good deal more to them. As I shall seek to show, these Iberian texts embody the goetic revival above mentioned, in common with the Franco-Italian Bibliothèque Bleue. While they contain much that appears innovative, in reality our rich tradition has diverse – even competing and contradictory – strands, and does not stand still. So it is that these elements are a resurgence of a theme native to the tradition in other guises. So too their influence on and harmony with thriving living traditions in the New World is important to recognise. For the purposes of this study then I shall primarily focus on two such texts:


Heptameron or Magical Elements composed by the great Cyprian

This text bears incidentally no obvious relation to its earlier namesake attributed to Pietro de Abano. While small it contains a good deal of considerable interest. In particular the chapter disarmingly entitled *Chiromancia Astrologica* will lead us into very deep waters indeed.

The Book of Saint Cyprian

This was mentioned in the recently published *Clavis Inferni* as appearing in two forms, one dismissed as a rehash of the *Grand Grimoire* and another more original. This estimation may not be exhaustive as the text I have chiefly examined here appears to bear characteristics of both. In this text much *Grand Grimoire* related material, interesting in and of itself, is accompanied by a great deal more besides. Such of it as is related to the afore mentioned Bibliothèque Bleue grimoire shows signs of meaningful adaptation, perhaps geared towards New World practitioners. Other material is derived from *True Black Magic*, as well as an alternative version of the variously named *Black Pullet*. A good deal else bears the hallmarks of authentic Iberian folk magic with a ‘grimoiric’ twist.

Both these texts are contributory to and illustrative of various significant trends in modern magical traditions outside the English speaking world. On the other hand there is a deliberate universalism at work; in the remarkable demonology embodied by *Chiromancia Astrologica* not least of all.

HILE MODERN ANGLOPHONE MAGICIANS are perhaps most familiar with the recently published *Clavis Inferni* the name of Saint Cyprian is intimately involved with the entire grimoire tradition. Magical books associated with him have been extant from at least the time of Agrippa:

... from the sect of the Goetians have proceeded all those books of darkness, which Vulpianus the Lawyer calls books disallowed to be read, and forthwith appointed them to be destroyed, of which sort the first is Zabulus reported to invent, who was given to unlawful arts, then Barnabas a certain Cyprian; and now in these days there are carried about books with feigned titles, under the names of Adam, Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Solomon, also Paul, Honorius, Cyprianus, Albertus, Thomas, Hierome, and of a certain man of York, [which] Alphonsus King of Castile, Robert Bacon of England, Peter de Abano and many other men of deplored wit have unwisely followed.

De incertitudine et vanitate scientiarum

As a pseudonymous magical author in fact Saint Cyprian's fame compares with that of Solomon. The *Grand Grimoire* cites his name, and an Iberian version of the same grimoire was attributed to him. The *Enchiridion* not only gives an oration attributed to him, but also speaks of him in the rubrics of other spells and psalms. From this text in particular it becomes clear that in folk Catholicism surrounding the grimoires the magician saint was routinely honoured and petitioned as a patron and hero. This preceded the adoption – or continuation – of similar practices in New World traditions. Cyprian's name also appears in Coptic magical papyri and early Christian texts (including prayers and amulets in Greek, Latin, Ethiopic, Arabic and Armenian), making him a truly universal magician. The author of *The Confession of Saint Cyprian*, which will be examined later, was – as numerous scholars have agreed – familiar with the foundational text of Solomonic magic, namely the *Testament of Solomon*. The *Confession*, a Christian polemical document like the final redaction of the *Testament*, was addressed to a pagan audience, while the latter was primarily aimed at Jews. Both texts will be examined in the course of this study. Through these links and in several other respects, Cyprian functions equally as a pagan magician and a Christian saint; comparable with and yet superior to Solomon. There is an ancient Cyprian, a grimoire Cyprian and a New World Cyprian, each of whom appear in various guises.

The Saint Cyprian of the grimoire literature is a complex, pan-European figure. What we might term the Nordic Cyprian of Agrippa is well served by Rankine and Skinner's text. Even so, *The Black Books of Elverum* provides another view of the Northern Cyprian. Thus we should not be surprised that it is in the blue grimoires – as opposed to aristocratic angel magic – that the Iberian Cyprian stands revealed. The populist pedigree of Iberian grimoires links back to the Franco-Italian grimoires. There is indeed a connection between Saint Cyprian and a spirit of the *True Grimoire*, to be explored anon. An examination of the books of Saint Cyprian in Iberian culture is required in advance of that meeting. Two texts will be chiefly involved in this examination the *Book of Saint Cyprian* and the *Magical Elements*. My commentary will be interwoven with the text. To help retain some of the atmosphere of the first of these texts I give a translation of the title page, revealing as it is regarding its influences and contents.

AN ANCIENT HEBREW PARCHMENT
GIVEN BY THE SPIRITS TO THE GERMAN MONK

Jonas Büfürino

The Great Book of Saint Cyprian

Complete book of true magic that is the
TREASURE OF THE WIZARD

Containing:

*The Solomon Clavicle;
Invocations, Pacts, Exorcisms;
the Black Hen, or School of Sorceries;
the Red Dragon and the Goat Infernal;
the Grand Grimoire and the Pact of Blood;
Magical Candle to Discover Enchantments;
Compilation of Chaldean and Egyptian Magic;
Philtres, Enchantments, Witchcraft and Sorceries.*



WHILE THE GRIMOIRE is attributed to Saint Cyprian it is delivered by a third party, the monkish librarian Jonas Sufurino. This name may be derived from Johannes Sell – aka John Fell – an Oxford cleric (1625–1686). A distinguished scholar, publisher and bishop, he wrote a work entitled *Saint Cyprian*. Subsequently his name became associated with the black books of Norway, which commonly bore the name Cyprianus.

Sufurino's post as librarian of the monastery on the Brocken is significant, for this mountain has a long standing association with paganism, magic and witchcraft. The mountain in question is situated in the Harz range and is the highest in Northern Germany. It is reputed to have been the site of Odin worship until the time of Charlemagne, and a large image of the god is said to have been found there. In Goethe's *Faust* it is the scene of a Witches' Sabbat on Walpurgisnacht which the magician attends with Mephistopheles. In this way the grimoire establishes Faustian as well as Solomonic credentials for itself, and sets the scene for events to be described in the course of the introduction. The sabbatic associations are appropriate for other reasons, as will become clear in the course of examining the grimoire itself.

To the faithful reader

THERE PRESENT a book to you of inestimable value, *Complete Treatise of True Magic*, written by the German monk, Jonas Sufurino. My liking for this sort of work has always led me to search carefully through piles of old books; labouring to find something beyond the small number familiar in this regard. After many years of fatiguing investigations my efforts have been rewarded. The finding of *Complete Treatise of True Magic* filled me with immense satisfaction.

I found it among others of different species, in the small bookstore of a village priest. It was written in German, a language completely unintelligible to me. However, through some figures in the text and by some names sprinkled here and there, I deduced that the strange opusculum dealt with Magic. A learned scholar translated it lucidly, undertaking his work with extreme scrupulousness. On reading the translation, I saw that this small book is really most notable. Composed by the German monk Jonas Sufurino; the librarian of the monastery on the Brocken – that mountain where, according to old legend, the devils and sorceresses celebrated his Sabbats and the dance macabre – turned out to be a treasure of true magic.

In this small book is contained, indeed, more essentials than is usual in such works: *The Book of Saint Cyprian; the Clavicle of Solomon; invocations, pacts and exorcisms; the Black Hen or School of Sorceries; the Grand Grimoire or the pact of blood; magical Candle to discover enchantments; Compilation of Chaldean and Egyptian magic; philtres, enchantments, witchcraft and sorceries*.

Revealing this much, one may comprehend that this is a treatise of exceptional importance; if one studies with true diligence many useful and beneficial things can be learned. It only remains for me to recommend taking great care in the form and time the experiments are made, so that these give the result that it is desired. Remember that omitting a small detail will often render useless the magical operation.

The Editor.

To the whole world

JONAS SUFURINO, monk of the monastery at Mount Brocken, solemnly swear, on my knees before the starry firmament, that I have had dealings with all the superior spirits of the infernal court. They have shown this book to me, written on immaculate parchment in Hebrew characters. I declare to the whole world that what is contained in this book is true. I was an unbeliever, but the evidence removed me from my error. Devoted from boyhood to the study of sciences, when I grew to be a man there was no knowledge that I had not plumbed. But at the heart of all of this I found emptiness. My soul was shaken, thirsting to discover the supreme secret truth. I thus became monk in the monastery of Mount Brocken, following my inclinations I asked for the librarian position and there, in its vast and ancient library, I isolated myself completely, spending years in the deepest and most mysterious studies. There were innumerable volumes there that dealt with the magical arts. The simple reading of some of them convinced me that there was yet more to seek. I formed the following reflections: there is no doubt that there exist good and bad spirits, as there are men. There is no doubt either that these spirits can appear, since the Devil appeared to the Son of God moments before his death: there is no doubt that these spirits are equipped with a sovereign intelligence, since the same religion affirms their power to touch us, to induce us to or from evil; thus, if by means of magic a man can be put in communion with these spirits, that man will attain to reach the supreme wisdom. I formed all these reflections in my solitary cell among the dusty books of my library; but had not become so bold as to put them into practice. I decided, then, to perform them to complete my project.

The time came one freezing winter's night. The sky was covered with enormous dark clouds, which every moment were torn asunder by the crimson flare of lightning. The wind shrieked horribly between the mountain pines. Rain whipped at the gothic glass of the windows of the monastery. Yet was I fearless, as my sole thought that night was the promise of my hopes. When all the monks were gathered in their cells, and perhaps asleep, I quietly left the monastery and undertook the march unto the highest peak of the mountain. When I was at the summit, I paused, lightning flashing incessantly around my head. My persistent intention was to invoke the Lord of Avernus. The hurricane crashed against my body, and twisted my monk's habit furiously. Yet I remained steady as the rocks beneath my feet, nor was I intimidated, nor turned from my intent. I judged the moment had come for calling the devil.

If you truly exist, I shouted with a thundering voice, oh, powerful genius of Avernus, show yourself visibly.

At that instant, in the midst of a crescendo of the lightning, appeared the infernal spirit that I invoked.

What do you want of me?

I want – I responded to him without hesitation – to enter into relations with you.

Granted – it replied, return to your cell. There you will hear from me whenever you wish. I know what you seek, and I will divulge to you all the secrets of this world and the other. I will give a book to you, the catechism of the secret arts, from which all but initiates are excluded.

With which words it disappeared, and I returned to the monastery. There I saw my great and mysterious friend whenever it was necessary to me. My purpose was to compose the book that I leave to posterity; the key of purest gold that opens and deciphers the sovereign arcana of life and of nature, unknown to all incredulous and vulgar persons. Vale!

Monastery of Mount Brocken
Year of Grace, 1001

Introduction

Where the origin and foundation of this book will be seen

ASKED OF LUCIFER the fulfilment of his promise made to me when invoked between the storm and the mountain's peak. He gave a book to me written in Hebrew characters on virgin parchment, saying:

This book, written in Hebrew, is the same one owned by great Cyprian, granted him by me, when compelled by virtue of a powerful talisman he owned. It served to acquire him the knowledge of True Magic and dominion over both spirits and people. By it he became all-powerful, as you will also, if you meditate upon and perform whatever this book contains. I must warn that it will not be parted from you; even though you attempt to burn it or cast it into a river, always you will return to find it in your monkish cell.

I was filled with wonder at these words, and I requested satisfaction of my curiosity from him, that he might explain to me the cause of such a prodigy.

It is very simple, he said to me. This book was bathed in the Great Lake of Red Dragons that exists in my dominions, thus it is impossible that any elements of the universe can destroy it. The leaves cannot be cut nor drilled. Fire is extinguished by its touch and the water cannot harm it.

This power resembles the Norwegian Black Books – called Cyprians – which could not be destroyed by fire. The Great Lake of Red Dragons in which a magical book was bathed is strongly reminiscent of themes explored in *Geosophia*. There it is associated with the Sibyl of a magical mountain, where there is a blood red lake. Necromancers undertook pilgrimages to consecrate a magical book by bathing it in the waters. Sufurino's text has other surprises in store for us.

And how do you explain, I responded, that if cast away it returns to its place?

You are very inquisitive, but today I will indulge you in everything. This book has between its leaves the cabalistic signs of the Red Dragon and the Infernal Goat, or Goat of the Art, and by the magical virtues these possess, will always return to your chamber and accompany you everywhere, remaining invisible to all save you and those who have made pact with me. You may try whatever tests you will and thus observe great wonders.

Having said this he disappeared. I was disturbed by hearing these revelations so much so, that I spent some time paying no account to these events, until finally, it being close to hand, I began reading it. There was great conflict in me between the fear and the curiosity he had awoken. Then I remembered that Lucifer said to me it was written in Hebrew, a language scarcely known by me, so already calmer, I turned the first leaf, hoping to find signs that I could not read. Nevertheless it was not to be so, since to my great wonder I could read the writing perfectly, with equal facility as if it were a book in my own language. I turned several leaves, upon one I found perfectly drawn a dragon and a goat calmly laying together. The goat had drawn upon its knees hieroglyphics that read *Arte*. As I looked upon this it seemed both strange and yet familiar: but a still greater surprise was awaiting me. The dragon and the goat became enlivened, moving their

eyes and increasing in size. Finally, leaving the book, they were prostrated before me; each speaking these words in a human voice:

I am your servant, command and you will be obeyed.

The voice of the goat had a timbre similar to the bleat of a sheep and that of the dragon the gruff tones of a bull. I was surprised at their presence, but contemplating the humble attitude of those beasts I overcame my weakness and replied to them:

I desire nothing immediately; however I wish you to tell me how to call you when needed, and what type of service you can render unto me.

The goat, replying for them both, said to me:

I am called Barbato and this one is Pruslas; we are under the jurisdiction of Satanachia, our head, who assists the great one, emperor Lucifer, and is a great general of his armies. He has sent us to your side to be obedient in everything, whatsoever you command, in accord with the pact made with our sovereign lord. You will constantly have us at your side and it will be enough to name us, to have us both attend to your orders.

It is well, I said to them, you may now withdraw.

I had not long pronounced these words, when without my knowing how, they disappeared from my sight ...

These two spirits have an interesting pedigree. Barbatos is known from Weyer and the *Goetia of Solomon*. Pruslas is listed by Weyer but omitted in both Scot and the *Goetia*. Since the *Grand Grimoire* omits Weyer's descriptions a translation of the source text may be useful here:

Pruslas, also called Busas is a great Prince and Duke, he willingly helpeth the evoker in whatever is asked of him. He reigns in the region of the Tower of Babylon, appearing outside it as a flame. His head however is like that of a great screech owl. He willingly promotes strife, war, quarrels and lies, but may not have access to all places. He responds abundantly to your requests. He commands 26 Legions, partly of the Order of Thrones and partly the Order of Angels.

The *Goetia* translation regarding Barbatos being defective, and his role here equally important, the following may also be instructive:

Barbatos, a great Count or Earl, and also a Duke commanding 30 legions of devils by his authority. His form [image = signo] is that of a hunter in the forest with a bow [sagittarii sylvestris], accompanied by four kings and their companies with great trumpets. He understandeth the singing of birds, the barking of dogs, the lowing of bullocks, and the voice of all living creatures, which he teacheth. He detecteth treasures hidden by magicians and enchanters and is partly of the Order of Virtues and partly of Dominations. Thirty legions obey him; he knoweth all things past, and to come, reconcileth friends and powers.

Quite why Barbatos appears with Four Kings may be a little clearer by the end of this volume.

The background of these spirits is complimented by reference to their superior, Satanachia. He is a deputy of Lucifer known from the *True Grimoire* and *Grand Grimoire* alike. The way the text mythologises and personalises his two subordinates is interesting enough. In the case of Pruslas we might see this as the beginning of a process; climaxing in his syncretic equivalence with the fully personalised Exu de Lodo in Kimbanda. Note regarding Barbatos that a feminine form for goat is used in Cyprian's text.

There are other details which should be underlined before moving on. The bestial forms in which these spirits appear are totally distinct from the forms in Weyer's text. A variant of the *Grand Grimoire* bears the title *Red Dragon*, while a lake of this name has already been introduced in the text under examination. Sufurino is undoubtedly connecting these traditions with Pruslas.

... Trying to be released from so many emotions, I left to stroll, and as I reflected, it seemed only natural that these wonderful events had happened to me. Later, when it was necessary to resort to my servants and their superior commanders, we could speak amicably, without surprises or fears of any kind. Preparing carefully for future contingencies, I set out to make a copy of the contents of the book whose cover bears the legend: *Complete treatise of true magic or treasure of the magician*. Within is a dedication in the following form:

We dedicate this book to the new follower of secret arts, and below these words the signature of Lucifer. Underneath this dedication was added the following note:

I declare that this book has shown the true wisdom to me, obtaining with its study an absolute superiority over all things, this bore the signature of Cyprian the Magician.

The introduction of our grimoire essentially ends here. The last words introduce another section:

Now in order to make a methodical system, it is well to indicate something of the life of Cyprian the Magician (soon Saint Cyprian), which while distinct from this magical book, is still interesting and peculiar.

The account of the life and legend next provided by our Iberian text is a faithful account of traditions surrounding Saint Cyprian. One or two necessary remarks are interpolated; otherwise the text is given as it stands. Since the text is not well known and introducing better known documents would take us far from our theme, it is retained in its entirety.

The life of Saint Cyprian

THE SAINT WHO IS VENERATED IN THIS NAME, before his conversion to Christianity, was one of the greatest magicians ever known. Born in Antioch, between Syria and Arabia, of very rich and powerful parents, he mastered all the magical arts until at the age of 30 he became joined to the religion of Christ ...

This account of his origins reflects a traditional conflation of our Saint Cyprian and the historical Bishop of Carthage, who was indeed born in Antioch in Syria rather than Pisidia. This has been a useful confusion on a cult level; for example icons of the latter are frequently employed to represent the former. Another useful aspect of the identification of these two figures is to link Cyprian with Syrian traditions as well as those of Asia Minor. A tale of two Cyprians thus becomes a tale of two cities. Both are integral to magical themes concerning the magical Cyprian. Our saintly magus originated in a polemical tale of early Christian writings: *The Confession of Saint Cyprian*. Whereas – as will be seen – the *Testament of Solomon* was adapted to polemical purposes in disputes with the Jews, the target of the Cyprian polemic involved the Neoplatonists and their theurgic magic. For various reasons Syrian Antioch is a convenient geographical symbol of theurgy. From this evolves a useful conceit; rather than accidental confusion with Saint Cyprian of Carthage, purposeful identification with Iamblichus, leader of the theurgic school of Neoplatonism.

... He left countless writings and magical books, the product of his great knowledge and of the many wonders he himself performed in his time as a magician, and that gained him the admiration of all the people. He had a formidable power over the infernal spirits, and they obeyed him in all his decrees. He was able to bring to fruition the most extraordinary enchantments. He had absolute power over the people and the elements. His conversion to Christianity resulted from the following exceptional event: There was in Antioch a Christian maid called Justina, as rich as she was beautiful, daughter of Edeso and Cledonia. She was educated in their religion, which was of the gentiles [pagan]. One day Justina heard the preaching of Frailo, at that time the deacon of Antioch. Whilst listening, the beautiful ideas of the Christian religion claimed her. Shortly after this she secured the conversion of her parents. A youth named Aglaide fell in love with Justina and asked to take her as his wife, which he could not do, because she had already offered herself to Jesus Christ. In desperation Aglaide resorted to the Magician Cyprian so that he could bend this woman, who was so resistant, to his desires. Cyprian applied all his spells and enchantments, invoking the whole company of spirits to his aid. Everything, nevertheless, was useless. Justina resisted all classes of sorceries, because she was under the protection of the Virgin and helped by

the divine grace of Jesus. Having in addition made with her right hand the sign of the Cross of Saint Bartholomew; this alone is efficacious against every class of curse and enchantment. †

The Sign of the Cross

The footnote that follows this advice is as follows:

† Those that form this cross with the right hand will be free of all class of curses and spells.

The Book of Saint Cyprian makes several mentions of the sign of the cross; due partly to the fact it is a compendium these are often contradictory, recommending it as a protective device on one occasion, insisting on its complete absence in another. The legend of the Saint – where his magic is defeated by the cross – is the obvious source of the references. The legend of course dates from the period when Christianity and Neoplatonist theurgists were engaged in dispute. This being the case certain comments of Lewy regarding the cross are particularly interesting. Firstly he alludes to passages from Proclus regarding magical signs, the sign (*kharakter*) of the human soul consisted of a combination of semicircles and the figure X. Other characters are mentioned, synonymous with what modern magic refers to as sigils. These include the sigils of heroes (including Hercules and Pentheus) and of the soul of Plato, among others. These characters offer an interesting insight into sigils in the grimoires, since the entities conjured could appear in the form of their sigil. In Lewy's words they: *became visible as a geometrical luminous figure*. It is from Plato's *Timæus* that the Chaldean Theurgists derived the idea that the World Soul (and by extension human souls) consisted of two semicircles forming an X. Such exegesis of the philosophical canon was of course consistent with their metaphysics; comparable to magical use of qabalistic hermeneutics to interpret scripture. Porphyry saw a resemblance between an Egyptian symbol, probably the ankh, and the character of the world soul (personified in the *Chaldean Oracles* by Hecate). Christian commentators such as Justin saw a resemblance between the Platonic symbol and the Serpent of Brass hung upon a tau cross mentioned in the Books of Moses. Lewy's insights make him invaluable to magicians of the present day. He refers us to a hostile report by Gregory Nazianzen, of the famous theurgist Maximus of Ephesus presiding over the initiation of the Emperor Julian. These initiations involved apparitions of hostile demons at each level of descent into the crypt of Hecate, which Maximus fended off by making cross symbols, apparently as manual gestures. The hostile commentator leaps to the polemical conclusion that the pagan mage was hypocritically invoking Jesus. Lewy suggests the far more likely interpretation that the sign: *was in reality the sign of Hecate-Psyche, the mistress of the demons ... this theurgical action would be in complete conformity with the common practice of the magicians who terrorised the minor spirits by appealing to their superiors*. This is worth keeping in mind when considering the talismans that appear later. To continue:

Cyprian, full of rage when seeing himself overcome by so delicate a creature, rose against Lucifer, and said to him: *Oh spirit of Avernus! In what does it reside, that my entire art is humiliated thus by a weak woman. With as much dominion as you possess, you cannot put her under my power! Tell me then, what talisman or amulet protects her that prevents my victory and makes all sorceries useless?*

Then Lucifer, compelled by divine order, said to him: *The God of the Christians is Lord of all Creation, and I, in spite of all my dominion, am subject to His will, no being is able to prevail*

against one who makes use of the sign of the Cross. By this Justina avoided my temptations.

Then being thus – Cyprian said, I immediately apostatise from you and become a disciple of Christ.

Which he did, and in time achieved still more; receiving martyrdom and being counted in the number of the saints.

As this account shows, the Cyprian of legend was a professional magician. In the main strand of tradition he dwelt in Antioch of Pisidia. His love magic – a major feature of the legend – appears in the Coptic Christian magical texts. The 4th–5th century Christian poet Prudentius – who confuses the two Cyprians and their respective Antiochs – tells of his skill in necromantic spells to break relationships as a prelude to seduction. These rites, he tells us, were often practiced amongst the tombs. Other accounts, such as the *Confession*, describe him calling upon demons, underlining how closely ideas concerning demons and the lower ranks of the dead were in this critical formative period. So too he is the pseudonymous author of numerous grimoires, as well as prayers and incantations, in which the legendary magician was proficient. His strict diet of plain food, including acorns, resembles the ascetic and shamanic magicians encountered in my *Geosophia*.

While there is no hard evidence he ever lived, the traditional Christian legend of Saint Cyprian is as follows. There lived in Pisidia a Christian maiden, Justina, whose father was a pagan priest. She converted both him and her mother to Christianity. A rich libertine named Aglaides saw the beautiful maiden as she frequently came to and from the Church. He desired her but was unable to prevail against her Christian chastity.

He therefore sought the aid of a famed magus of the city, Cyprian, for assistance. Cyprian was most proficient in both astrology and necromancy; the one being the art of the neighbouring Chaldeans, and the other the core of all magic.

According to one important form of the legend Cyprian fell in love with the maiden himself and sent demons to torment her in accord with the aggressive love magic of the period. Another version has him undertake the work on behalf of his client (the mid 4th century *Lives of Saints Cyprian and Justina*). In the latter a demon advised him to sprinkle the exterior of her house with a drug (*pharmakon*), while the demon assailed her mind. This magic proved unavailing, and he conjured a more powerful prince of spirits, with an equal lack of success. The demons tell him they were unable to prevail against the sign of the cross which she made in their presence.

Cyprian therefore resolved to abandon magic and serve the same God as Justina. She, in thanks at the conversion of the magician, cut off her hair as a sacrifice to the Virgin Mary (there are echoes in this of rite of passage rituals in Pagan cults). Cyprian was baptised and became a great pillar of the Church.

When persecution flared up for the last time the governor of the city had them both thrown into boiling pitch, which by a miracle had no effect. The Emperor Diocletian received them as prisoners at Nicomedia, and had them beheaded. This martyrdom took place on 26th September 304 CE, from which date originates the Saint-day of this famous magician.

Ogden (*MWG*) makes some interesting comparisons of the version in the *Lives*. The first comparison is with the legend of Saint Hilarion, in which a curse tablet is buried under the threshold of a Christian virgin. More thoroughgoing and far reaching is the comparison with Lucian's *Philopseudes*. While different in terms of attitude and conclusion, there are several affinities. The use of aggressive love magic is certainly one of these. Cyprian thrice sends demons to assail his victim, Lucian's mage summons first a ghost, next Hecate, Cerberus and the Moon together, then finally

makes and despatches an image of the Love god. Other similarities suggest that the story form was traditional, to both Pagans and Christians. Another parallel story, even more important for our purposes, is also cited by Ogden and others. Ogden points to an influential medieval collection called *The Golden Legend*. While this source tells the tale of Cyprian and Justina, it also contains another story. In this a defrocked priest named Theophilus sells his soul to the devil in order to be reinstated. Taken together these tales contributed mightily to the development of the legend of Faust. Thus we are brought full circle to the finding of the *Great Book of Saint Cyprian* on Mount Brocken. Accordingly it is time to leave the fictional Cyprian and introduce the historical figure of Iamblichus.

Certain diviners, among whom Iamblichus can be named, desiring to know who would succeed Emperor Valens, employed alectromancy ...

Grimorium Verum: Magical Secrets, Italian edition

Iamblichus ... was the first systematizer of the occult sciences: it was he, too, who adopted the doctrines of the Chaldean Oracles and incorporated them into his mysteriosophy to which he gave the name Theurgy.

Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy*

IAMBlichus IS A GIGANTIC FIGURE whose presence extends through all aspects of this study, eschatological, magical and philosophical. He founded in Syria a Neoplatonist school responsible for crucial developments in Neoplatonist philosophy. Fundamentally, his adoption of Theurgy – employing material substances in spiritual works – delivered Neoplatonism from the negative attitude to material creation bequeathed it by Plato. In this respect he is tremendously important, and for a variety of allied reasons.

There are many blanks in our knowledge of Iamblichus, the majority of whose works are unfortunately lost, though much concerning them can be recovered. We do not know very much about his life, and it has been assumed that his religious outlook is also unknown. It is my opinion that this last is also recoverable, or at least that certain assumptions regarding it are both straightforward and permissible. Further, that evidence for these assumptions may have been inconvenient, and may also explain the loss of so many of his works.

It is known that he was born into an affluent family of high repute, who it appears were hereditary priestly rulers of the Kingdom of Emesa. Indeed his name is shared by many persons connected to this line, and such a position would explain a good deal about him. For such reasons I wish to spend rather more time discussing his familial and geographical identity than abstruse points of philosophy.

Emesa and Antioch

THE CITY OF EMESA was located on the Orontes River in western Syria around a hundred miles north of Damascus. As regards the site, the earliest settlement dates to around the middle of the 3rd millennium BCE. Emesa itself was known to the Classical world and after from the Seleucid period in the 1st century BCE. It was to become the capital of the Emesani dynasty, to which family Iamblichus belonged and from which the city takes its name. It was associated with the sun god El-Gabal; such Syrian solar-pantheistic deities were critical to the development of the Sol Invictus cult of ancient Rome. The symbol of this god was a holy stone (see this motif in *Geosophia*, with its connections with both Cybele and Vulcan).

Modern Western magic, whether represented by Hermeticism or the more hands-on approach of the grimoires, originates in the cultural fusion of the Roman Empire. We may point particularly to the Eastern Empire, with its roots in the kingdoms of Alexander and his generals. In acknowledging and building upon this historical fact, certain over-emphases are nevertheless often assumed.

In considering Egyptian and Jewish elements in magic, the city of Alexandria appears to be a

natural focus. There are various reasons why this is misleading. First and foremost, there is the modern understanding that ancient magical traditions were more grassroots than elite. Syncretic traditions represent cultural fusions within the matrix of Hellenism, not the ivory tower speculation of one city's intellectual elite. Secondly, in the fusions of this period Jewish influence was frequently accompanied by Chaldean and Persian thought. Alexandria had a large Jewish population, but was by no means alone in this respect. The city of Antioch in Syria was large and cosmopolitan; there a large Jewish population lived alongside a native astrological cultus rooted in Babylonian antiquity. The Roman Province of Asia Minor – where Persian rule preceded Greek – possessed notable cosmopolitan cities. Major centres of early Christianity may be numbered among them. These include the cities named in *Revelation* as the Seven Churches which were in Asia. To name but a few, Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province; Pergamon, whose library was the closest rival to that of Alexandria; and Thyatira with its prophetess likened to Jezebel. These too had large Jewish populations, and another important group, the so-called *god-fearing*; essentially pagans sympathetic to Jewish tradition. Such coexistence has obvious implications for the fusion of occult traditions in antiquity upon which Western magic is built. One important implication among many is that Solomonic magic was originally more of a folk tradition than a literary one.

Other cities require our attention besides, for while Hermeticism is naturally associated with Alexandria, there is no special reason to identify this Greco-Egyptian city with the origins of either Theurgy or the *Chaldean Oracles*. Certainly both are Hellenised: Hermeticism with its Egyptian connections, and Theurgy and the *Oracles* their Chaldean. Certainly too, Alexandria was the premier intellectual capital of the Hellenic world; including of course the Roman period. This status should not be exaggerated to the point of imagining Alexandria to be the only seat of learning in antiquity. More to the point, both Chaldea and Egypt had been influencing Greeks long before Alexandria was built. The Syrian influence was rather more consistent and prolonged, with major significance to our theme; involving as it did both astrological learning and such a central deity as Apollo.

Alexandria was a Hellenized Egyptian city; this means that in the cosmopolitan synthesis underlying the Western tradition, its innovative and progressive role is distinct from such older seats of Egyptian wisdom as Memphis, Abydos and Thebes. These represent older traditions and contemporary indigenous conservatism (*TEH*). In like manner Babylon represents more ancient strains of Chaldean wisdom, just as other Middle Eastern cities represent truly ancient strands of indigenous tradition rather than centres of cosmopolitan fusion and new syncretic forms. In late antiquity however, Alexandria competed with great cosmopolitan cities in Syria under the Seleucids and Romans. Of particular importance to this study are the cities of Antioch and neighbouring Apamea.

In Roman times the city of Antioch in Syria, founded 300 BCE by Seleucus I and with a large Mesopotamian population, rivalled Alexandria as the chief city of the East. It is thus equally likely that the *Chaldean Oracles* originated in Antioch or its environs; certainly Iamblichus had considerable interest in them. Antioch's neighbour, Apamea, was home to his school, and to Iamblichus himself. He as a great reformer of the movement, initiated the development of theurgic Neoplatonism.

BUCH REFORMERS, as remarked in *Geosophia* (11.7, 197), frequently look to older roots. For Iamblichus this meant Pythagoras as well as Plato and Aristotle, but Chaldean sources must also be included. The Chaldean links of Pherecydes, Pythagoras and Numenius, not to mention Iamblichus himself, make this a natural assumption. In any case, Iamblichus' teaching became so influential that both Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonist schools followed his lead. Meanwhile Apamea was also home to the oracular temple of Baal and his influential priesthood. For such reasons, while until recently I believed the *Chaldean Oracles* and Theurgy to originate in Alexandria, as do many, I am no longer convinced this is necessarily the case.

The mentor of Iamblichus, before he founded his own school, was Porphyry, who in turn had been the pupil of the founder of Neo-platonism, Plotinus. This places him in direct line of descent, and underlines his importance in the movement as a whole. At the same time it is well to emphasise that a common criticism of Neoplatonism, that it regards the world in a negative light – which it has been alleged makes 'pure' Christian eschatology superior – is not strictly true of his school. As the most influential Neoplatonist leader of late antiquity, this is a crucial point in establishing the credentials of Neoplatonism and its continuing relevance.

Porphyry it seems was not initially enamoured of Theurgy, and one of the surviving works attributed to Iamblichus is a response to his former mentor's criticisms. This discussion was nevertheless friendly, and reflects the intellectual honesty of Porphyry, who throughout his life sought to gain knowledge of such things as were obscure to him.

Whether this work was written by Iamblichus or one of his school is largely unimportant; it reflects the ideas of his school and is an authentic and important document. It is however known by various titles, including *Theurgy*. The title *On the Egyptian Mysteries* is an abbreviation of a fuller title bestowed upon it in the Renaissance by Ficino. This is *On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*. This is important, since while the reputation of Egypt in modern magic is well established, that of Chaldea has been largely overshadowed and reduced to a cliché. Chaldean contributions are frequently mentioned but rarely closely examined; it is not uncommon for them to be overshadowed by Kabbalah or considered a mere variant thereof. In terms of the Mysteries or magic Assyria is virtually forgotten; perceptions are perhaps confused by the militaristic image Assyria obtains from the Old Testament.

However, to the Greeks the terms Syria and Assyria were largely interchangeable regardless of period or the nationality of the ruling dynasty. As such it embraced not only Babylon – the seat of the Chaldean priestly astrologers – but also the great city of Antioch. While overshadowed nowadays by the prestige attached to ancient Alexandria this was easily one of the greatest cities of the Roman world. Indeed at times it was the greatest of all, being known of as far afield as China (97 CE). This city of course was the namesake of the residence of Saint Cyprian in Asia Minor and it is uncertain which Antioch he really represents.

Also part of Syria or Assyria in the same sense was the city of Babylon, renowned in esoteric lore throughout the ages. Thus the term simultaneously embraces the Chaldeans, as synonymous with the astrologer priests and magicians that originally lent this term its prestige.

In or around 304 CE, Iamblichus returned to Syria and founded his own Neoplatonist school based at Apamea in Syria. There are several cities of this name; the one in question is the one near Antioch. Antioch was later visited by the Emperor Julian, who bears the title *Apostate* given him by later Christian commentators, due to his eschewing Christianity and seeking to restore Paganism on the framework supplied by the theurgic Neoplatonism of Iamblichus. Julian was a Neoplatonist and Theurgist who venerated Iamblichus intensely. Antagonistic commentators are fond of depicting

Antioch as irreligious and the Emperor as unpopular there and there is certainly some truth in the story. However, the proximity of Apamea and its association with Iamblichus and his priestly ancestry is usually forgotten when reviewing such accounts. Antioch was certainly the logical and traditional base for Julian's ill-fated military ambitions, but his disappointment with the place may connect with more personal expectations.

Iamblichus devised a curriculum for studying both Plato and Aristotle. His commentaries on them however are largely lost, bar some fragments in other works. It is important to note however that, for Iamblichus, Pythagoras was the ultimate authority. That is to say, while no Neoplatonist considered themselves anything other than successors of Plato, some – by no means all – modern scholars consider Iamblichus and his two immediate predecessors as the founders of Neoplatonism. He however considered Platonism itself a direct descendant of Pythagorean philosophy. In this he echoes Numenius, a kind of proto-Neoplatonist, often described as a Neo-Pythagorean. Significantly, Numenius is the first Hellenistic writer to mention the *Chaldean Oracles* and his original home was also Apamea. There are indeed excellent grounds for considering Pythagoras and the later Platonists and Neoplatonists as a continuum.

We may question the virtues or otherwise of subdividing Classical thought, and contrast it with tendencies to view Christian theology as a continuous historical process. Theologians and academics, despite their different motivations, rarely escape a sense of an impermeable Christianity. That is, a belief system with its own unique character, strangely immune to influence from its pagan environs and neighbours. So distinct that comparison is unnecessary, trivial or downright plain heretical.

All this aside, it is worth repeating the point made in *Geosophia*, that both Pythagoras and his mentor Pherecydes were – like Iamblichus – of Syrian descent. It cannot but be assumed also, on the basis of available evidence and tradition, that all were well versed in Chaldean sidereal theology. This permissible assumption covers its technical and practical as well as symbolic and religious forms.

For such a major philosopher as Iamblichus it is remarkable that so little of his works have survived. The likelihood is indeed that some destruction by the early Church is responsible for this, given the capacity of his thought as a regenerative force in western paganism. Were it not for fragments preserved by Stobæus and others we would be even less informed than we are. Fortunately his successors, notably Proclus, recorded a good deal of his system. These fragments and descriptions, together with five works still extant and the surviving parts of his work on Pythagorean philosophy grant us many insights into his system. While contested by some commentators, Proclus grants the authorship of *Theurgy*, or *The Mysteries*, to him. While much may be made of differences both in style and from aspects of his teachings elsewhere, the treatise undoubtedly originated with his school.

The work represents, as acknowledged and outlined in *Geosophia*, a comprehensive philosophical system embracing the cult practices of his times. There are selective emphases involved, emphases that deserve examination. He underplays the importance of sites, such as famous oracles and temples, and stresses the importance of persons (diviners, philosophers, and – the term is not inappropriate – magicians). This I would justify in terms of his wish to keep abreast of social changes, and indeed it has more universal relevance today because of this editorial decision, if we may term it as such. We should remember that philosophers – Plato included, perhaps particularly – had social agendas, they were not historians, or scientists. While we have mentioned the intellectual honesty of Porphyry, emphases of this kind were entirely permissible in their approach, and involved no deliberate subterfuge. Indeed the dialectical method of the Neoplatonists is considerably more honourable and

open minded than much that followed. *Theurgy* reveals a good deal of the importance of this philosopher. It clarifies his position and importance for the history of thought generally. It also marks a pivotal moment in the development of Neoplatonism as the superstructure of Western magic; and thus his often unacknowledged importance for magicians in particular.

Plotinus was the founder of Neoplatonism, (if we have to distinguish it from Platonism, or even Neo-Pythagoreanism). His theoretical system embraced the divine, the cosmos and the mind; effectively a philosophical Unified Field Theory. It was however essentially theoretical, aside from the contemplative applications, a way of understanding things. Iamblichus took this a step further, and as intimated earlier, it is appropriate to see his work as a development on rather than a departure from that which went before. Iamblichus produced a more detailed analysis of the formal divisions of the emanation scheme and its subdivisions. This built on the work of Plotinus, introducing and elaborating where necessary. All was closely dovetailed throughout with number symbolism on the Pythagorean model. Again, this approach is implicit in what had gone before, and at least some of Iamblichus' additions served the practical applications he was to underline as essential. Of particular importance was the explicit personification of all the various elements of the scheme: be it the Logos or a decan or a degree of the zodiacal circle. In other words, these were not treated as abstract ideas, but divinities and daimons.

Two points require underlining concerning this supposed change.

Firstly, it is unlikely he considered this a radical idea, as it was entirely consistent with his Syrio-Chaldean heritage. The word heritage is both more correct and more informative than 'influences', which misleadingly implies they come from outside. They were not external to his background, Syria and Greece had been in fruitful contact for millennia; with some important and formative results for the magical tradition as covered briefly in *Geosophia*. These results concern the role of a solar deity in Orphic tradition, among other things.

Secondly, it was not without Platonic precedent either. A valuable example of such precedent is the apocalyptic world schema of 'The Vision of Er.' Here we encounter an astro-eschatological universe; its principles are persons, rather than nominal abstractions, whether they are rulers of planetary spheres, or fiery men dragging off impure souls for punishment. While writers like Numenius enhanced the astrological nature of this vision of the cosmos, Plato himself was certainly impressed by the astrological cultus of the Chaldeans. As seen in the previous volume, this same schema was a potent influence on the magicians who wrote and employed the magical papyri. Its chief figures were often invoked, the goddess Necessity being a special deity of the magicians of the time. While the characters in the 'Vision' are a smaller, simpler group than the model delineated by Iamblichus, they are so by nature of its narrative purpose. A far greater array of astrological and earthly deities and entourages are nevertheless implicit within it.

In practice greater detail – gods or lesser divinities of astrological degrees, elements and so on – is plainly required, or implicit. Since it is largely these that the magician usually deals with, an outline of the higher principles, reminiscent of later kabbalistic considerations of the Supernal Triad (Monad, Dyad, Triad) need not detain us too long. This is, after all, not a philosophical treatise; as *Geosophia* stipulated, Classical philosophy and religion in general are explanations. They follow after that which is explained: magical and eschatological thought and action, into which they introduce ethical and other considerations. It is to this basal level I wish to go, while nevertheless opposing the tendency to disregard Classical philosophy in modern occultism.

In the system of Iamblichus the higher worlds are themselves deities, with the Nous identified, critically, with the Demiurge who creates the known universe. A very similar doctrine – where this

principle is the Son, one of the Holy Trinity – was developed within the Platonising thought of early Christian theology, which of course owes a tremendous debt to Hellenistic thought. Although under kabbalistic influence we are used to thinking of Four Worlds, more common in magical tradition is a threefold schema. This is certainly true of the Neoplatonist universe, so that so far the cosmos of Iamblichus involves two classes of deities.

More fundamental to magical thought and action is the third class; personifications of astrological and natural forces. It is interaction with these that constitutes a major portion of magical practice, as also religious practice within certain parameters. While those above are reasonably numerous, when his schema reaches the third ‘Mundane’ class they become – not surprisingly – absolutely prolific. To begin with, as outlined in *Geosophia*, for each major division of the cosmos there is the basic theurgic subdivision of gods, angels, demons and heroes.

Thus, to take the Zodiac, it is firstly presided over by twelve celestial or Olympian gods. It is then sub-divided first into thirty-six decans and then 360 degrees. Each is personified, or more correctly, populated, for the god of each subdivision has an entourage at various levels of evolution. From the thirty-six decan gods seventy-two other gods are emanated. Examples of these may be found in the system of Ostanos and elsewhere. (So too the influence of Iamblichus is writ large in Agrippa’s *Occult Philosophy*. See his sections dealing with the classes of spirits, to which I frequently have cause to refer, in particular *TBOP* III.XVI).

As well as astrological deities such as these, there are the nature deities. Here too subdivision and incrementally expansive emanation plays a role. Twenty-one chiefs produce forty-two further deities on this level. As we might legitimately expect, whether in polytheistic terms or one of the more pantheistic forms of Christianity, a great many more follow. There is a host of guardian divinities, of individuals and also of nations. While operative upon earth these dovetail with astrological thought. We encounter the *genius of the nativity* first in Hellenistic thought, almost certainly from Syrian sources earlier than Iamblichus. So too in Ptolemaic astrology we encounter attribution of nations to astrological rulers; this of course means gods and angels, not some nebulous abstract principle. The process extends to specific localised places, such as streams, towns and even particular crossroads and boundaries, down to single residences of town or country.

Thus a host of spiritual beings extended through the Three Worlds from the One down to the manifest Universe in all its diversity. The complex mathematical structures he employed, and the attendant extension of the cast, may make this look like multiplication. In fact Iamblichus is fitting Neoplatonist theory to essentially encompass the existing world of gods and nature spirits etc. already implicit in regional beliefs of the entire Hellenistic world and beyond. As said above regarding the ‘Vision of Er,’ this increase was not essentially a departure from Platonism, whose usage served specialised illustrative purposes only, and should not be understood as one. The distinction between Iamblichus and earlier forms involves his reasons for the apparent extension of the *dramatis personae* in adapting the existing theory. He took a model hitherto serving a contemplative purpose, and adapted it to the more practical requirements of Theurgy.

In doing so he provided the perfect template for the grimoires. As Richard Kieckhefer remarks in *Forbidden Rites* (155):

The notion [in the grimoires] of a demonic hierarchy, with a multiplicity of named and ranked spirits, stems chiefly from the Neoplatonists, and above all Iamblichus. Proclus, drawing on Iamblichus’s elaborate categorization, spoke of *daimones* as ruling the fire, the air, the water, the earth and the underground region; to this Psellus added *lucifugues* (or light fleeing) demons, and

Johannes Trithemius lent the weight of his authority to this system.

This is a Pagan categorisation, adapted to Christian uses, but in which initially the majority of species were not considered demonic. Indeed Theurgic daimons are intermediaries of the gods to whose entourages they belong. While these gods certainly exercise authority over them, the relationship is more complex than the thwarting angels of recent scholarship. The stressing of this latter idea, while I feel overemphasising Doctor Rudd, has a legitimate point as regards the influence of such an angel vs. demon theme in the *Testament of Solomon*. Nevertheless Agrippa, and between him and Iamblichus stands Pseudo-Dionysus in the same vein, prefer the Hellenistic tradition; his hierarchy is plainly derived from Iamblichus in every detail (*TBOP* III.XVI).

More importantly for the present, Iamblichus is thus revealed as the primary ancestor of grimoire demonology, so too he represents the source of the accompanying theurgic theory and practice. It is from this crucial role – among other affinities – that there emerges a fitting comparison: of Iamblichus as a pivotal historical founder figure with his mythical near contemporary; Saint Cyprian, patron saint of magicians.

ACCORDING TO THE APOCRYPHAL *Confession of Saint Cyprian* (written 350 to 379 CE) he was initiated into numerous Mystery cults and rites. Aside from the anti-pagan cast, much of the material is quite representative of a magician of the fourth century of the Christian era; his bookshelf bearing the *Chaldean Oracles* and the *Testament of Solomon* besides magical papyri (technical hermetica) and philosophical works. Thus the *Confession* contains a virtual hit list of subjects to arise later. This is not surprising, since the *Confession* dates from approximately the period of the Emperor Julian; a fervent supporter of the Theurgic tradition, and a real threat to Christianity's socio-political ambitions. From these facts arise my comparison of Cyprian with Iamblichus, the leader of the Theurgic movement within Neoplatonism.

The text here, while abbreviated and imperfect, has the distinction of being the translation of Madame Blavatsky. In recompense for this esoteric source, I acknowledge a partial and posterior debt to Lynn Thorndike's work in confirming my own impression of the themes arising herein. Other academic studies support this interpretation, while also helping overcome some of Blavatsky's omissions; bracketed sections supplement Blavatsky. The numbering of the passages is my own, to facilitate reference within my remarks.

After an introduction where he renounces his pagan past – and the gods as demons – the *Confession* speaks as follows:

1 ... I am that Cyprianus, who, vowed to Apollo [Mēn] from his infancy, was early initiated into all the arts of the dragon.

According to the main tradition, Cyprian was a native of Antioch of Pisidia; famous for the religious site known as the precinct of Mēn Askaenos, who was identified with Apollo. There are other traditions regarding Antioch in Syria, relevant to some considerations, but not here. Following the Pisidian reading of our text, he here claims familiarity with the rites and Mysteries of Mēn from childhood. The cult flourished there from the 4th century BCE to 4th century CE. Mēn is an interesting and important deity. Iconography surviving from this time, which like Serapis includes British examples, shows Mithraic and Dionysian influence. Important too is the fact that he is often syncretised with Apollo, patron deity of the Orphic goetes and of the theurgists alike. He would typically have been associated with a goddess. Although there are archaeological indicators of a Cybele cult in the city, these may represent or have been imposed on an earlier Neolithic goddess. Hecate was associated with the god in Mysia and elsewhere, as she is in the *Chaldean Oracles*. In fact the upshot is not significantly altered either way; pagan Mysteries, and necromantic oracular functions, are typically connected with just such a shrine. In this respect it is a natural setting for the formation of the Cyprian legend.

A Lydian monument to Mēn of the period 164–65 CE mentions an angel as serving him, an instance of Mēn as a supreme god (CS 76) in pagan monotheism (or henotheism). Another Lydian inscription calls him *god of heaven, great heavenly Mēn, great power and deathless god* (my translation). Like Zeus Hypsistos, Mēn could plainly be invoked as supreme deity in Asia Minor at this period. His relations with Hecate or Cybele in such a context require clarification; it is feasible, even likely, that Hecate might be functioning as his angel. Like Ephesus and Thyatira the city had a large population of Greeks, Jews and Phrygians. Saint Paul travelled through the Roman province of Pisidia, and it must have witnessed the same three way controversies of Jewish, Christian and Pagan traditions.

The dragon cited in this passage has enduring significance in Christian and necromantic lore. A reference to the rite of Stepterion is likely in the reference to a dragon rite; as academic commentators have already surmised. Both Strabo and Plutarch connect this rite with Apollo's slaying of the dragon Python. The Red Dragon of the grimoires is identical, representing a partial recovery of the symbol. One aspect of its use in Christian polemic is to diabolise Apollo, by placing a hostile interpretation upon his association with Python. As discussed in *Geosophia*, the Pythoness also had a far worse reputation in Christian lore than the Sibyl, incidental as this may be.

2 Even before the age of seven I had already been introduced into the temple of Mithra:

The *Confession* moves from the 'Phrygian' prehistory of the Mystery cults, to the cult of Mithras existing in Roman times. Mithraism represents the superimposing of the God of Eternal Time onto the older solar cultus (represented by the Orphic cum Phrygian Apollo). As the *Confession* proceeds Cyprian is initiated into Greco-Egyptian magic, which we can view as representing the magical papyri and the older reputation of their homeland. Finally he is initiated into Chaldean magic, representing the *Oracles* and Theurgy. In the course of this chronological journey Cyprian reaches pinnacles of initiation, but the Sun has descended from first to second and finally third ranking god. This descent might be measured on a scale where first is most divine, and last is diabolical. In this historical process – here symbolised as a sliding scale – entities lower in rank than the Sun suffer still greater loss of status. Hecate descends from Great Goddess to lady of witches, ghosts and demons, and much of the pagan spirit world becomes diabolised.

The connection of – so to speak – the Roman Mithras with Asia Minor has been the subject of controversy. Strong tradition links the arrival of the cult in Rome with Pompey's expeditions against the pirates of Cilicia, but his land campaigns also involved Pamphylia and Pisidia, and the whole region saw extensive contact and colonisation. Nevertheless, other than aristocratic names, the evidence for a widespread Mithras cult in the region is apparently slender. One possibility is that he originates partly in an aristocratic cult, with inevitable military and political connections. Roman adoption would then be partly comparable to the role of Serapis in social and political union of Greeks and Egyptians. A supposedly sacrilegious rite performed by the pirates at a mountain shrine of Hephæstus implies earlier local traditions prior to Roman Mithraism; involving a deity other than Mithras, such as Hephæstus or Æshma.

There are various possibilities and aspects to the question. For our purposes however the mythic and iconographic connections make a good deal of sense. Mithras wears a Phrygian cap and his mysteries are in some way linked to the Mysteries of Cybele. So too he synchs in with the prevailing tendency towards a solar pantheistic deity, involving strong Syrian and Neoplatonist influences. His relation to a level of development of religious ideas in which Zervan or Aion is the highest conception of deity is noted herein at various points.

3 Three years later, my parents taking me to Athens to be received as a citizen, I was permitted likewise to penetrate the mysteries of Ceres lamenting her daughter [Demeter & Persephone], and I also became the guardian of the Dragon [strictly Erechtheus, but is Medusa implied?] in the Temple of Pallas [Athena].

4 Ascending after that to the summit of Mount Olympus, the Seat of the Gods, as it is called; there too I was initiated into the real meaning of their [the gods'] speeches and their clamorous

manifestations. It is there that I was made to see in imagination those trees and all those herbs that operate such prodigies with the help of demons; ...

The *speeches* likely refer to oracles. The *clamorous manifestations* indicate apparitions during Mystery initiations and by extension theurgic rites. While Eastern interpretations and elements had entered these rites many features nevertheless reflect the practices of much earlier Thracian traditions and those of Greek root-cutters. As will be seen, the depiction of tree and herbal lore as demonic is reflected in the practical differences between decan lore in the Jewish *ToS* and the ‘pagan’ *Sacred Book*. There is a subtext referring to medical magic, which makes sense in the context of magic of the period.

5 ... and I saw their dances, their combats, their snares, illusions and promiscuities. I heard their singing. I saw finally, for forty consecutive days, the phalanx of the gods and goddesses, sending from Olympus, as though they were kings, spirits to represent them on earth and act in their name among all the nations. [Here is the palace, as it were, from which they send forth the winds, for each to do its work on earth and among all nations.]

Regarding the first part of the passage Nilsson points to Asia Minor and pageants representing pagan myth. With the *sending from Olympus* decan lore is probably implied, the twelve Olympians ruling the signs, sub-divided into decans ruled by their subordinates. This matches the hierarchical patterns of Iamblichus. The reference to nations (ruled by different decan gods) and to winds (representing the Four Kings among the spirits), lend credence to this. References to the winds in the *PGM* are not infrequent, and they will be encountered periodically herein.

6 At that time I lived entirely on fruit, eaten only after sunset, the virtues of which were explained to me by the seven priests of the sacrifices. [Alt: my only meal was one of nuts after sunset. Being 15 years of age I was there initiated by the seven hierophants in the energies of each of them.]

Thorndike appears to accept the *Confession* as written by the Bishop of Antioch. This assumption aside his interpretation of passages 4 to 6 is worth quoting:

More stress is laid upon the power of demons and herbs in a description which has been left us by Saint Cyprian, bishop of Antioch in the third century, of some pagan mysteries upon Mount Olympus into which he was initiated when a boy of fifteen and which have been explained as Orphic rites. His initiation was under the charge of seven hierophants, lasted for forty days, and included instruction in the virtues of magic herbs and visions of the operations of demons. He was also taught the meaning of musical notes and harmonies, and saw how times and seasons were governed by good and evil spirits. In short, magic, pseudo-science, occult virtue, and perhaps astrology formed an important part of Orphic lore.

Given the polemical agenda, the account of ascetic practices (6) is – not surprisingly – kept to a minimum. Such practices were a major feature of theurgic practice, and contemporary Mystery cults also. The Theurgists were preceded in this by Cretan and Thracian ‘shamans,’ and subsequently in Orphism. So too the herbs, stones and water that featured in theurgic rites of purification depend on earlier tradition. As we learn from the biography by Marinus, the great Neoplatonist teacher, Proclus employed both Orphic and Chaldean rites of purification. These included bathing in the sea, ritual

baths and lustrations. Proclus himself refers directly to similar rites of the Mystery cults. In Theurgy such preparations were essential for the critical rite of ascension, as well as in other rituals undertaken by theurgists. Psellus, whose works refer to those of Proclus, confirms that such purifications were part of the Theurgic cult as revealed in the *Oracles*:

The Chaldean says that we cannot be borne upwards towards god, unless we strengthen the vehicle of the soul by material sacraments. For he believes that the soul is purified by stones, herbs and conjurations and consequently becomes more agile regarding the ascension.

Such purifications formed part of the preparation for their main ritual. Also to theurgic rites in general and to the ascetic life overall; we may be sure the same was true of the magicians. Lewy elucidates the influence of Syrian demonology on Mystery rites in the late period. Purifications were latterly believed essential to the performance of initiations; preventing the opposition of demons. It can hardly be doubted that this supplied the opposing polemicists with a valuable weapon.

The *seven hierophants* likely represent the seven planets, and their associated correspondences in plants, stones, animals and perfumes.

7 When I was fifteen, my parents desired that I should be made acquainted, not only with all the natural laws in connection with the generation and corruption of bodies on earth, in the air and in the seas, but also with all the other forces grafted on these by the Prince of the World, in order to counteract their primal and divine constitution.

[I came also to Argos at the time of the mysteries of Hera, and was there initiated in the counsels of the unity of air with æther, and of æther with air, and likewise of earth with water, and water with air. I came also to Elis and came to know Artemis Tauropolos in Lacedæmon in order to learn the blending and dividing of matter and the raising of oblique and savage narratives.]

Nilsson points out that Argos was a province as well as a city. There appear to have been more mysteries celebrated there than in any other Roman province: Lerna was the location of mysteries of Demeter, Epidauros of Asclepius, Hecate at Aegina and Poseidon on the Isthmus. He traces the association of Hera with Air to Plato and the Stoics, but the equation is at least as old as Empedocles. This astrological and elemental view of the gods was certainly part of the thought of the age.

[And what belongs to manlike divination I apprehended from the Phrygians and I learned how to inspect the liver; among barbarians I learned divination from birds and the contortions of beasts, and the observing of sounds of those good at knowing, and the shrill cries of each wood and stone and the sounds of the dead in their graves, and the noise of doors and the palpitation of limbs. I learned also to know the motion of blood in bodies according to its energy, and the compositions and extension of warts, and the throwing of words and numbers into words, and of words into numbers, and the superficial effects of disease on the bodies as though natural, and the natural as though feigned, and oaths which are heard and not heard, and agreements in hostility. Nothing on the earth nor in the sea nor in the air was hidden from me, neither in the way of apparitions, nor in the way of knowledge; no changeful things, no mechanical, no artificial things, not even legerdemain with the text of Scripture, and all such things.]

8 At twenty, I went to Memphis, where, penetrating into the Sanctuaries, I was taught to discern

all that pertains to the communications of demons [that is, spirits, or daimones] with terrestrial matters, their aversion for certain places, their sympathy and attraction for others, their expulsion from certain planets, certain objects and laws, their persistence in preferring darkness and their resistance to light. There I learned the number of the fallen Princes, and that which takes place in human souls and bodies they enter into communication with ...

The description of leaders of spirits as Princes in a 4th century text is reminiscent of later grimoire hierarchies, one of many signs of continuity. This continuity indicates long term dependence on early sources including Hermeticism and Iamblichus.

9 I learnt the analogy that exists between earthquakes and rains, between the motion of the earth and the motion of the seas; I saw the spirits of the Giants plunged in subterranean darkness and seemingly supporting the earth like a man carrying a burden on his shoulders.

10 *When thirty, I travelled to Chaldea to study there the true power of the air, placed by some in the fire and by the more learned in light. I was taught to see that the planets were in their variety as dissimilar as the plants on earth, and the stars were like armies ranged in battle order. I knew the Chaldean division of Ether into 365 parts, and I perceived that every one of the demons who divide it among themselves was endowed with that material force that permitted him to execute the orders of the Prince and guide all the movements therein. They [the Chaldeans] explained to me how those Princes had become participants in the Council of Darkness, ever in opposition to the Council of Light.*

Fittingly, for a magician of the Greco-Roman period where magic was defined by the themes of the magical papyri, his career is said to have begun among the Memphite priesthood. Resemblances in the doctrines learned here and in Chaldea (the 365 parts of the spirits' rule) indicate more than a shortage of ideas. The Chaldean contribution to the Greco-Egyptian magic was substantial. True, Greek and Egyptian names and forms were frequent in the dramatis personæ of magic, but the cosmology was dominated by Chaldean ideas. Indeed all religions in the region were strongly influenced by 'astrological' ideas conceived in terms of a pantheon of gods and spirits. That the entities here personified as evil are celestial (as indicated by *stars & Ether*) rather than infernal is extremely significant.

Much of the generally negative perception of 'Pagan' spirits in the *Confession* is, naturally, polemical rather than actual. In (9) Blavatsky omitted a passage concerning among other things the forms of demons. Part of its importance is in affirming the relationship of the *Testament of Solomon* and the *Confession*. It naturally involves no formulæ and is essentially moralistic and also rather incoherent in places. A few of the demons' appearances are described, typifying the vices they personify. It is far from a complete list and their astrological attributions and any remedy for them as in the *Testament* are never apparent. More important is that Cyprian enumerates them as 365 in number, plainly associated with contemporary magical ideas. As the number of days of a solar year this number was sacred to important solar pantheistic deities; Abraxas and Meithras (the earlier spelling of the latter had the value of 360).

The 365 spirits (of the solar circuit) are – the text claims – vain and empty, full of pretence of wisdom, virtue and justice with which they mislead the philosophers of Greece. The polemical distortion of rival teachings – at the very root of early Christian demonology – could hardly be

clearer.

In this passage Cyprian's sojourn in Chaldea contains many interesting features. A negative portrayal of theurgic ideas – associated with the *Chaldean Oracles* – is undoubtedly part of the subtext. By the *air* is meant the luminous sky and its metaphysical associations. The *Pistis Sophia* among other sources illustrates the contemporary belief that this was the realm of the decans.

Chapter 39 vs. 7: And I am become as a decan who is [i.e. dwells] in the air alone.

That air's nature can be interpreted as either fire or light (*by the more learned*, that is the philosophers) is deeply significant. The older more 'primitive' ideas, no longer philosophically fashionable, involve fire; this element is strongly associated with the Goetic strata, which while devalued is nonetheless where the magical elements of Theurgy originate.

Naturally the Chaldean lore Cyprian is taught concerns astrology, in contemporary magical form. The division of time into 365 parts, each ruled by spirits ranged under chiefs is familiar, associated as they are with what to later magicians were Solomonic or even kabbalistic ideas. This passage too has connections with the lore embodied in the *Testament*. Nevertheless the *Confession* was addressed to a pagan audience and the ideas concerned are embodied in so-called Gnostic gems and other Pagan magic. This Pagan identity and origin is long prior to the efforts of theological spin-doctors and the neglect of history by later occultists.

11 I became acquainted with the Mediatores and upon seeing the covenants they were mutually bound by, I was struck with wonder upon learning the nature of their oaths to observe them.

Note well that despite the distance theurgists tried to establish between themselves and the Goetes, Theurgy emphasised both a pact and a 'necromantic' initiation. The Mediatores and the covenants formed with them reflect theurgic cosmogony and practice, and contemporary magical approaches from which they derive. The diabolical pact is an artefact of 4th century Christian polemic and represents an inversion of the theurgic compact. As understood by their opponents the nature of the spirit and the post-mortem consequences of the compact are entirely reversed.

A PARTICULAR FORM of ritual practiced by the Chaldean Theurgists and their Neoplatonist heirs was the conjunction. Similar ritual procedures, as with all theurgic practice, can be found in contemporary magic of the goetes. It is known that Proclus made use of such rites. The term used was *sysiasa*, and is known from magical texts as well as from the philosophers. It translates as *conjunction*, namely of the operator with a spirit or god.

Such a spirit or god was known as the assistant daimon, or *daimon paredros*. This was a general purpose arrangement in magical practice; through incantations and other procedures the magician conjoined themselves with such a spirit for their magical purposes. Many examples are to be found in the papyri. In essence the conjunction is a form of pact underlying Western magical practice. Needless to say, this far predates what has been alleged to be the late appearance of the pact. This disposes of the idea of the pact as a supposed romantic distortion of Solomonic magic in the blue grimoires.

Through Psellus (11th century Byzantine) we know that the founder of Theurgy, the first Julian, performed such a conjunction on behalf of his son, the second Julian. Through this ritual Julian the Theurgist was conjoined from infancy with *all the gods and the soul of Plato*. This is important for theurgy, since it rendered them magically capable of aligning their magico-religious principles with Platonic philosophy. For us it has additional significance: the conjunction's effects are not limited to gods and spirits, it also concerns souls. The underlying conception is one of practical eschatology or necromancy.

Analogies with Hermetic practice will follow in due place, it is sufficient for now to note the practice of the conjunction as central to theurgic praxis from its beginning.

From Proclus it is known that the practice of conjunction among the theurgists involved particular elements: divine names proper to the day and night, to the particular month and the year appropriate to the specific ritual. In this Theurgy bears a striking resemblance to Abano's *Heptameron*, and the resemblance need not surprise us. It defines an approach to magic founded first and foremost upon astrological principles. This cannot be underlined too strongly, since cabala is so often credited with this role.

This chronological structure speaks of a time-god whose presence in grimoire practice is far from residual. Appropriately enough Proclus also mentions invocations of the Lord of Time by the theurgists. In the *Oracles* this god is Aion, identical with Zervan in the traditions of the Babylonians, Sabaoth is a frequent synonym in related traditions. In the papyri very similar procedures are found, these syncretic rites are recognisably the direct precursors of the Christian grimoires. So too the identity of the Supreme God in the grimoire tradition and its immediate precursors is not as clear as may be imagined.

For example, only one name of God is invoked throughout the *Testament of Solomon*, three times by Solomon and once by Michael the archangel, as follows:

Vs. 5 [Solomon]: And it came about through my prayer that grace was given to me from **the Lord Sabaoth** by Michael his archangel. [He brought me] a little ring, having a seal consisting of an engraved stone... [Michael] 'Take, O Solomon, king, son of David, the gift which **the Lord God has sent thee, the highest Sabaoth.**'

Vs. 52 [Solomon]: **I adjure thee in the name of the God Sabaoth**, to tell me by what name thou

art frustrated along with thy host.

Vs. 73 [Solomon]: Then I Solomon invoked the name of **the Lord Sabaoth**, and questioned each [of the decans] in turn as to what was its character.

The Tetragrammaton is conspicuous by its absence even from the ring of Solomon. So too nowhere in the text do we find strings of divine names as in the later grimoires. Even the formulæ that command the demons – varied as they are – do not contain them. It is no accident that the name which does appear is Sabaoth; which also appears frequently on magical engraved gems of the period. The conception of God embodied by Sabaoth in this context involves Chaldean influence, as indeed does the Solomonic medical magic of which the *Testament* is the monument. In other words, just as Solomonic magical medicine is partly rooted in Babylonian ideas (see Lenormant's *Chaldean Magic*), so too Sabaoth represents a Jewish conception parallel to Zervan and Aion; he embodies eternal time, while subordinate gods and spirits represent its parts.

In the papyri occur several variant compilations with the name of *The Eighth Book of Moses* (see *PGM* XIII.1–343, 343–646 &c.). Various statements regarding time gods occur, which Lewy compares with Proclus' statements quoted earlier. The context is appropriate, for the god Aion is invoked in this text. So too the role of time gods is strongly underlined:

53–59: before which you say the gods of the hours ... and the gods of the days and those of the weeks, and their compulsive formula; for the god will not listen but refuse you as uninitiated unless you declare the lord of the day and the hour ...

Take note that where Egyptian influence is uppermost in the papyri, the god of the hour is likely to rule a decan rather than a planet. Very similar material appears in the next variant text:

379–381: call on the god of the hour and him of the day, so that you may have sponsorship from them. If you do not [first] invoke them the god will not hear you, as being uninitiated. Now you will find the gods of the hours and those of the days, and the compulsive formula for each in the *Key of Moses* ...

In this way the magician preceded invocations or other operations by an act of conjunction. Particularly conjoining themselves with specific spirits connected with the time of working. Thus the invocation of Aion as Lord of Time is the paradigm of this process, even when employed for lesser results. Indeed, it remains the paradigm of such processes; even when the role of the Lord of Time is unsuspected in a later magical system.

A Chaldean conjunction is delineated by Psellus, drawing in turn upon Proclus. The operation described is known as a *raising up of plants*. To prepare this the magician enlists the assistance of the daimon of the plants, a similar procedure applying to stones. Such spirits govern natural materials of the required nature, as the deputies of the god; of which more shortly. This is accomplished by consecrating the plants where they grow. In the papyri this is achieved by sprinklings of natron, perfuming with incense and by circumambulation. After this the plants are plucked from the ground, lifted up and their spirit invoked.

That this and the conjunction which follows are forms of pact is plain from the context. Psellus calls the following ritual a *hidden covenant*, affected by an offering of spices, plants and stones; crocus, myrrh and Apollo's laurel. These were buried in a circle marked out on the ground. The

intention of the ritual to come was then spoken aloud by the ritualist. On the next day he returned to the place, and disinterred the *hylic substances*; they were then swiftly held aloft with the left hand.

Along with this gesture a group of four distinct powers were invoked in order. Our source does not name, but rather describes, these. The first is the teacher of the ritual performed. This teacher or patron Lewy interprets as Apollo; this is consistent with Lewy's understanding of the *Oracles*, and also conforms to the Orphic tradition of goetia outlined in *Geosophia*. Apollo in the Chaldean context is likely a cover name for a sun god of Syria or Asia Minor. In equivalent Solomonic contexts this patron is Michael. Nor should we forget the widespread identification of Apollo and Horus, who appears to be mentioned in the *Oracles*.

1 But God is He having the head of the Hawk. The same is the first, incorruptible, eternal, unbegotten, indivisible, dissimilar: the dispenser of all good; indestructible; the best of the good, the Wisest of the wise; He is the Father of Equity and Justice, self-taught, physical, perfect, and wise – He who inspires the Sacred Philosophy.

Eusebius, *Præparatio evangelica*, Liber 1:x

However as noted by Thomas Stanley and others:

This Oracle does not appear in either of the ancient collections, nor in the group of oracles given by any of the medieval occultists. Cory seems to have been the first to discover it in the voluminous writings of Eusebius, who attributes the authorship to the Persian Zoroaster.

But we digress.

After Apollo, next are deputies or daimons who rule the hylic substances. Next, in accord with the principles outlined above, is the ruler of the day. Again a Solomonic equivalency is readily found. It is notable, given the instruction in the *Eighth Book* above, that this precedes the invocation of Aion in next place. Last, but by no means least is *the demon lord of the Four*. Lewy interprets this last in astrological terms, as *the Year*. A more immediate Solomonic equivalent to the term cannot fail to suggest itself. Lewy is right of course to associate the term with the circuit of the Sun, however the Four in Solomonic demonology would be Kings of the four directions; associated with the solar quarters in the year. The chief of these is Oriens, itself a title associated with solar religion of the Syrio-Roman type.

Although Psellus uses the term *covenant* he does not further elaborate on the term. It is plain enough from parallel passages in the papyri, of which the so-called Mithraic liturgy is by no means the only example. The term *covenant* describes the conjunction with an assistant daimon; the spirit to whom the ritual is addressed. In terms of a hostile theology, theurgic ritual depended on pacts with devils.

12 Believe me, I saw the Devil; believe me I have embraced him and have conversed with him; when I was yet quite young, he saluted me by the title of the new Jambres, declaring me worthy of my ministry [initiation] ... He promised me continual help during life and a principality after death. Having become in great honour [an Adept] under his tuition, he placed under my orders a phalanx of demons, and when I bade him good-bye, *Courage, good success, excellent Cyprian*, he exclaimed, rising up from his seat to see me to the door, plunging thereby those present into a profound admiration.

Jambres (or Iambres) and Iannes were the magicians of Pharaoh who opposed Moses; the insinuation

regarding Cyprian's magic is plain. Similarly both magicians are mentioned in verse 125 of the *ToS*; the demon Abezithibou confesses to having aided them, thus identifying Solomon's magic as forbidden and ungodly. The appearance of Jambres in the *Confession* suggests the polemic was aimed at Hellenising Jews as well as Pagans, espousing or sympathetic to solar theology and late pagan monotheism.


To summarise, the account of Cyprian's career in the *Confession* credits him with initiation into the Greek and Phrygian Mysteries; those of Demeter and Persephone among others. Despite the clumsiness of this purported pedigree, there is nothing intrinsically unlikely about crediting such interests and qualifications to a magician of the time. As Fritz Graf points out, the papyri are steeped in the language of the Mysteries, and there is no good reason for assuming these to be borrowed goods. Rather, as elaborated in my *Geosophia*, the Mysteries are the authentic backdrop of the goetic tradition.

A magician such as this would be able to assert with feeling and sincerity such a speech as this from the papyri:

*I have been initiated;
I have descended to the Chamber of the Idæan Dactyls;
I have seen the Holy Things!*

I call upon you who have all forms and many names, double-horned goddess, Mēne. Whose form none knows save IAO alone, Creator of the Universe; Who shaped you into the 28 shapes of the world:

This claim has certain riders more implicit than explicit in the *Confession*. A pagan magician, far from worshipping demons disguised as gods, would have concerns not specifically underlined rather than countered or parodied in that text. Rather than dryly list and describe these influences, it is instructive to consider what Cyprian may have had on his bookshelves. Besides philosophical works, extant and influential 'occult' texts of the day included: the Greek magical papyri, the *Chaldean Oracles* and the *Testament of Solomon*. Cyprian would thus be aware of principles present in Theurgy; this whether via low-Platonism mixed with practical Hermetica, or as a full blown philosopher magus such as Apollonius of Tyana. He, rather than King Solomon, represents a magician contemporary with all these seminal texts and influences, at the juncture of Jewish, Pagan and Christian traditions convergent in the grimoires.

HAT IS OMITTED in the hostile account of Theurgy and technical Hermeticism is the salvationist goal and basis, the practical eschatology. This is perhaps not surprising, as a miracle worker with an eschatological programme is supposed to be unique to Christianity.

It becometh you to hasten unto the Light, and the Rays of the Father; from whom was sent unto you a Soul endued with much Mind.

Chaldean Oracles, 160

The primary sacramental ritual of the theurgists was the immortalisation of the soul. This goal, with its obvious eschatological context, resembled and drew upon similar sources to general necromantic practice among the contemporary goetes. The neophyte lay down as if dead, covered by a sheet, which did not extend over the head. Sacrifices for the dead were performed on behalf of the initiate, followed by the separation of the soul from the body by appropriate rites. In first place occurred the conjuration of the soul of the initiate by the theurgist in charge of the rite. Thereafter the candidate invoked the *three rulers* in accordance with the *Oracles*. These rulers of the light can be identified as:

- . the Lord of Time, Aion
- . the solar ruler whom the oracles term Apollo
- . the Lord of the Air through whom the solar rays are transmitted (in grimoire terms, the chief of the Four Kings, Lucifer-Oriens).

This achieved they approached a manifest ray of light and inbreathed its substance. This produced a state of union of the separated soul with the 'mystic ray,' thus permitting their spiritual ascent. This rite, in common with theurgic action generally, draws on the earlier solar theology and goetic ritual. Many aspects of it have a direct bearing on our next main topic, the *Testament of Solomon*, as well as the pagan literature to which it was a partial response.

A Theurgic Interlude

I became acquainted with the Mediatores and upon seeing the covenants they were mutually bound by, I was struck with wonder upon learning the nature of their oaths to observe them.

Confession of Saint Cyprian

THEURGY, as demonstrated by Lewy, was developed from three sources. Platonic philosophy and oriental religious ideas were so to speak the intellectual background, but what they allegorised and reinterpreted was the older magic. Indeed in his partial reconstructions of theurgic ritual Lewy frequently remarks upon resemblances of theurgic practice to the magical papyri and the activities of the despised goetes. It is these resemblances, widely recognised by scholars (Dodds, Cumont, Lewy etc), which primarily concern us. Lewy's study, showing how the interpretative layers were added to goetia, facilitates also their partial removal.

First it is necessary to examine the new layers, not least insofar as they inform the later grimoires, whose grandfather is undoubtedly Iamblichus. Whether Platonic or Oriental these can briefly be described as concerning 'new' conceptions of deity. Two in particular inform the superimposed layers of interpretation. Firstly there is the Supreme Being; whether the One of the Neoplatonists or the Ormazd of Persian monotheism. This is an entirely transcendental deity, facilitating the adoption of Neoplatonism by Christians (firstly among the Church Fathers, subsequently by Renaissance magicians). Secondly there is Aion, a god of Time and Eternity; related to the Persian Zervan, but adapted to Chaldean ideas. Sometimes one of these is present, sometimes both, with accompanying variations; throughout the inter-related ritual and textual literary tradition.

By contrast the ritual material appropriated by Theurgy as represented by the *Chaldean Oracles*, which still informs Western magic, did not necessarily concern either of these. It drew primarily upon Syrian and Egyptian solar theology and older chthonic practices, from which level the active dramatis personæ in theurgic ritual derive. That is to say, in their Greek personæ, Apollo and Hecate still take the dominant roles; the new 'greater' gods are more often implied by a superimposed interpretation. These two active deities are supplemented by the Four Winds and their spirits; of these I will have a good deal more to say as this study proceeds. Iamblichus and the theurgists distinguished themselves from the goetes, whose practices nevertheless closely resembled theirs. It would be unwise to deduce from this that the goetes contemporary with Theurgy maintained intact the older religious conceptions themselves. Aion and other conceptions of a higher deity abound in the papyri, as do elements taken directly from Plato. There are however strong elements of archaic traditions, for example from the cult of Artemis.

Nevertheless Lewy's stratified analysis of theurgic ritual and its cosmology are important for modern magicians in a variety of ways. The insights involved assist us to understand the reliance of ceremonial magic of later times upon Iamblichus, and by extension the theurgists and *Chaldean Oracles*. The cosmology of the grimoires differs little from that of the theurgists; so little that it is a very simple matter to map theurgic cosmology upon the Tree of Life beloved of recent revivalist schools. The Supreme God, or that part of him we may apprehend, corresponds to Kether. This conception of deity draws upon Zoroastrian and Platonic ideas; these two influences acted upon the traditions of the region as a mutually reinforcing feedback loop over several centuries. Immediately

next in rank, in Chokmah – the sphere of fixed stars – is the time god Aion. It will be necessary to speak further of him and his relation to Zervanism at various points in our study. Beneath both of these come the planetary worlds, at the centre and heart of which is the Sun god, third in rank according to this conception.

Lewy contrasts the above model with that of the Mithraic cult, as envisaged by himself and Cumont; with which interpretation I generally concur. Like the above this model was essentially Syrian with Zoroastrian influences. It is dissimilar however in the absence of the Zoroastrian cum Platonic God. In this more ‘primitive’ cosmogony the highest deity is Aion, and next in status is the Sun god personified by Mithras.

Since Zervan or Aion represents eternal time, and both Sun and Moon are measurers of time, there is a conceptual link between them. In these symbolic schemas and astrological paganism, this was represented by Saturn – Kronos – as Lord of Time and outermost planet; linking the world spheres with that of the stars. In this ‘between’ zone are found concepts of a demiurge or logos, frequently retaining solar attributes. Saturn nevertheless retains equally strong lunar, nocturnal associations in magical thinking.

This Zervanist model was built upon a still older structure, which Lewy refers to as Syrian solar theology. In this schema the Sun god is both central and ‘first’ in rank. The relationship between Hecate and Apollo is necessarily simplified for comparative purposes; this cosmogony has Three Worlds, and Hecate is present in and key to all of them. One might say that the relationship of the male god of each level with her confirms their power. Kingship as a contract between hero and Great Goddess was discussed more fully in *Geosophia*.

This model, wherein Sun and Moon are pre-eminent among the planetary gods, underlies all the later ones. It is important to note the descent of the Sun god from first to second and then to third place. At the same time however the practicalities of theurgy resembled the older rites; Apollo and Hecate were the deities most prominent in ritual. So it remains with the grimoires; the planetary gods provide the structure and demarcate areas of work, while the solar angel Michael is honoured above regular planetary angels. The Christian deity’s relation to Michael is the cabalistic equivalent of the relation of Zervan and Ahura-Mazda to Mithras and the Chaldean Apollo respectively.

The solunar emphasis distinguishes the archaic model underlying Theurgy and Hermeticism from more fatalistic schemas dominated by the planetary forces. The deities of Sun and Moon far exceed them in power and importance; for the luminaries possess redemptive power over fate.

While theurgic ritual frequently resembles general magical practice as manifested in the papyri, such practice neither exists nor develops in a vacuum. Various pre-existent cultural forces inform this consensus magic, involving varied beliefs within a cosmopolitan community. However, the ritual interpreted by the Theurgists is much more than a mélange. Lewy held that immediately below the interpretations of the theurgists is an earlier Syrian solar theology. There is much truth in this, although it can scarcely be doubted that both Orphic and Egyptian solar conceptions play a considerable part.

Our examination of the rituals will involve drawing out the older elements and clarifying the layers. The primal cult aspect will be the main concern, with some attention paid to the superimposed layers as they relate to grimoire practice.

Careful use of the table opposite is very revealing concerning the structure of religious ideas in late antiquity. It is important not to view the three models as representing progressive development in

consecutive stages. These models could function simultaneously within a single religion, with some blurring and overlap. In essence however, each represents a different understanding of the cosmos. While interpretations and doctrines differed, the archaic level supplied much of the internal dynamics and practical methodology in all three forms. In this respect Goetia is, as I have previously claimed, the bedrock of the entire Western magical tradition. Understanding these layered structural distinctions facilitates far greater understanding of sources, as well as appropriate and coherent adaptation.

With some facility the individual columns of this table are useful analytical devices in their own right. Such use facilitates access to the complex syncretism employed in early Hermeticism and the papyri.

	1 . ARCHAIC	2 . CHALDEOMITHRAIC	3 . TRANSCENDENTAL DUALISM
COSMOGONY:	<i>(Divine pair &c.)</i>	<i>(God as Eternity)</i>	<i>(God outside Creation)</i>
<i>Major deity</i>	'Apollo'	Zervan aka Aion aka Sabaoth	One of Platonism, Ahura Mazda, Ain-Soph
<i>Major executor</i>	'Hecate'	'Apollo' aka Mithras	Logos or Demiurge
<i>Chief Assistants</i>	Angels	'Hecate'	'Apollo' (or Michael plus angels)
<i>Ambivalent</i>	Daimones	Angels	'Hecate'
<i>Demonic</i>	'Angry Ghosts'	Demons	Fallen angels
<i>Damned</i>	N/A	N/A	Arch-demons, Satan, Ahriman

Comparative use of column 2

	COSMOGONY: JUDEO-CHALDEAN	LATER JOVIST
<i>Major deity</i>	Sabaoth	Zeus
<i>Major executor</i>	Michael-Metatron	Apollo
<i>Chief Assistants</i>	Angels	Gods
<i>Ambivalent</i>	'Jewish demons'	Daimons
<i>Demonic</i>	'Children of Lilith'	'Angry Ghosts'
<i>Devalued</i>	Qlipoth	Tartarus

The Testament of Solomon

*

*

... the territory that the *Testament* inhabits is not only geographically vast, but also temporally so: it stretches backwards into much older Jewish lore and the traditions represented in the Græco-Egyptian magical papyri, and then stretches forward into the *Arabian Nights*, medieval folklore, Renaissance grimoires and even modern novels and films.

Sarah Iles Johnston, *The Testament of Solomon
from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance*

Also there is the vision of the fire-flashing Courser of Light, or also a Child, borne aloft on the shoulders of the Celestial Steed, fiery, or clothed with gold, or naked, or shooting with the bow shafts of Light, and standing on the shoulders of the horse; then if thy meditation prolongeth itself, thou shalt unite all these Symbols into the Form of a Lion.

Chaldean Oracles, 198

Moreover, while in trance I undergo three transformations: a man who craves the bodies of pretty boys, a creature with wings flying up to the heavenly regions. Finally I assume the form of a Lion.

The demon Orniias in the *Testament of Solomon*

Introductory Remarks

THE EARLIEST GRIMOIRES feature spirits of the four directions and their chiefs or kings, who under various names can be traced back at least to the 2nd century CE and are prominent in magical and anti-magical writings from then on. So far as the grimoire literature specifically is concerned, they are found in both the *Hygromanteia* and *Liber Juratus*, far predating Weyer and Agrippa, and the grimoires that postdate them. While *Juratus* uses unfamiliar names this does not indicate a different idea. While unanticipated perhaps by modern practitioners, traditionally spirits often had multiple names – even secret identities – which while confusing is undoubtedly a feature of the literature from earliest times. Dispelling some of the confusion surrounding the elemental chiefs is the purpose of this section of the current work.

In the case of the *Hygromanteia* the names are instantly recognisable. They represent an important strand of the subject as it appears in various later grimoires.

The Chiefs according to the Hygromanteia

EAST	NORTH	WEST	SOUTH
Loutzipher	Asmodai	Astaroth	Belzeboul

In his study of the grimoire, Joseph Peterson observes that the three chiefs of the *GV* are probably derived from this group, with the omission of Asmodai. This is certainly one of the many ways in which the *True Grimoire* reflects very early traditions of the Solomonic cycle. At the same time we must be aware of similar absences and failures of correlation in other grimoires. A threefold and fourfold hierarchy appear to co-exist from the beginning, with some crossovers.

Typhon, Echidna, and Python, being the progeny of Tartaros and Gaia, who were united by Uranos, form, as it were, a certain Chaldean Triad, the inspector of all the disordered forms.

Chaldean Oracles, 74

Greek names conceal older identities, yet this trinity of the oracle, resolved into a single ‘inspector,’ is reminiscent of the Maioral in Kimbanda. There is certainly no reason to dismiss the hierarchical details of the *True Grimoire* as inferior in any respect, especially given the confusion apparent in other grimoires. Indeed its recently demonstrated capacity to take goetic studies forwards commends it.

One of the most significant examples of a fourfold division of spirits and chiefs is in another highly regarded work, the *Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*. While not without difficulties, this example is most interesting, as the chiefs of several different texts appear there together.

The Chiefs according to Abramelin

FRENCH TITLES					GERMAN TITLES
<i>Princes</i>	Lucifer	Leviatan	Satan	Belial	<i>Four Kings</i>
<i>Sub-Princes</i>	Astarot	Magot	Asmodee	Belzebud	<i>4/8 Dukes</i>
<i>Sub-Princes</i>	Oriens	Paimon	Ariton	Amaimon	<i>4/8 Dukes</i>

No attribution to directions or elements is given in *Abramelin*; also the column format in the German edition obscures the two sets of dukes. I suspect all editions may involve slight misplacements in the rows, more severely in the columns. Leviathan of course would certainly best suit elemental water (column of Ariton).

Among other notable features of this source is that the second line follows the chiefs in the *Hygromanteia* except that Lucifer has been replaced by Magot aka Magoa.

Note too that different early Christian sources, as well as Jewish ones, differ as to whether Belzebuth or Asmodeus is the single chief of demons. It is necessary to appreciate the degree to which they are interchangeable, with Samael as well as with each other, within the traditions concerned. One Midrash in which Asmodeus serves this role in a Jewish context also includes a preliminary meeting of Solomon with a male and a female demon, a parallel to Beelzeboul’s role in the *Testament of Solomon*. In any case they remain prominent in later demonology, which has a more complex hierarchy that integrates various traditions. Contradictions inevitably arise but commonalities permit a fairly stable pattern to emerge. It is not unlikely in the least that this or a similar fourfold division (with one integral superior) dates from at least the fourth century, despite its seeming absence from the *Testament*.

The third line is the same group as given in Agrippa, which has wide currency in a variety of grimoires, give or take some variants of name and attribution. There is no doubt in either source that Astaroth is counted among the most prominent spirits. This is also the case with the *True Grimoire* and elsewhere. The *Goetia of Solomon* is no exception to this rule. Weyer, main source of the *Goetia*’s spirit catalogue, simply deliberately scrambled and cut an earlier list of spirits. The outright omission of Lucifer and Belzebuth was noted as early as Scot if not before.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the spirits the *Goetia of Solomon* takes from Weyer are a random selection where chiefs and kings are lumped in with subordinates without differentiation. In other words despite its many interesting features, when it comes to understanding the spirit hierarchy specifically it is by far the least reliable source. The use of the title *Duke* among many superior spirits in the German *Abramelin* is very helpful in resolving difficulties originating with the jumbled

spirit list of the *Goetia*. Since clarifying the traditional hierarchy is a work in progress, the term *Arch-Duke* is useful to distinguish known superiors from others.

LBS & LBA, OR TRIPPLICITIES & QUADRUPPLICITIES

THE WORK OF SKINNER & RANKINE presents us with a dichotomy. Much is made of the manuscripts of Doctor Rudd, where a group of three possesses great status, namely Lucifer, Belzebuth and Satan (L:B:S). This appears to be a variant of a similar group, namely Lucifer, Belzebuth and Astaroth (L:B:A). Both forms can be found in various grimoires, L:B:S being mirrored in the highly interesting *Livre des Esperitz* (French, 16th century), which has a related spirit catalogue and a hierarchy featuring the Four Kings (and seemingly omits Astaroth altogether). In Stephen Skinner's contribution to *Both Sides of Heaven*, the L:B:S trio is first mentioned as being independent of angelic authority, they rule in their own right. Here Skinner and I are in complete accord. A difficulty follows however when in the same article the number is brought back up to four.

Sloane MS 3824

DIRECTION	<i>East</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>North</i>
CHIEF	Sathan	Lucifer	Beelzebub	Dansiation
KING	Oriens	Paymon	Amaymon	Egin

It should be noted that the Four Kings are specifically mentioned alongside the directions in the MS; this agrees with Agrippa and other sources. So far, so good, but inferring that the four greater chiefs here are either correctly identified or reliably attributed in the same order does not follow. Firstly, Lucifer's association with the East in earlier sources has far greater authority (the L:B:S acronym also makes more sense if Lucifer comes before Satan in the table). Also, judging from other works made available by this industrious duo, the possibility that Dansiation is a variant of Dantalion seems reasonably high. This spirit is among those the *Goetia* adds to Weyer's list, which probably indicates rapid promotion rather than a traditional place in the superior hierarchy.

Meanwhile Peterson, in his edition of *Verum*, argues that the L:B:A trinity derives from a group of four spirits in Greek manuscripts; Asmodeus being somehow lost in transmission. There are certainly links between the Chiefs and the Kings, even though the L:B:A trinity is also known from Byzantine sources (*LDA* 267; Delatte's *Anecdota* 459–460 from *P* f146v.). At its simplest, there is a group of three to four Chiefs and another of four – never three – Kings. Together or separately they form the basis of several inter-related traditions. Thus for my part L:B:A and the Four Kings given by Agrippa has been the most useful place to start a close examination of the default hierarchy of a long-lived and interconnected genre; the grimoires and their sources. Bear in mind none of this was explored by the 19th century revival, and work in the 20th century began rather late. Add to this the fact that the best informed investigators have only considered comparing notes fairly recently.

The best way forward as things appear to me, is to work with the three Chiefs (L:B:A) and four Kings, not as superimposed layers, but as distinct aspects of the hierarchy (see *TG*, 'A Unified

Hierarchy of Goetic Spirits' and its fourth table). This is mirrored in astrology by the division of the zodiac into quadruplicities (fourfold, elemental) and triplicities (threefold, alchemical: cardinal, fixed and mutable). As an association with astrology is far more fundamental to the spirits than Qabalah; the analogy is therefore apt, and potentially far reaching in future research.

Asmodai, as previously mentioned, takes a similar role to Belzebuth in Jewish demonology and is also not present in the L:B:S/L:B:A triads. Such factors suggest that when present he can be closer in nature to the elemental kings; with whom the three chiefs also have commonalities. The indications throughout the genre – for example in Weyer where Asmodeus and Amaymon have an affinity – suggest it would be better to regard the leadership of the elemental or directional kingdoms as a court or staff, rather than an autocracy.

And one of us He commanded that we should teach Noah all their medicines ... And we explained to Noah all the medicines of their diseases, together with their seductions, how he might heal them with herbs of the earth. And Noah wrote down all things in a book as we instructed him concerning every kind of medicine. Thus the evil spirits were precluded from [hurting] the sons of Noah.

Jubilees 10

THE TESTAMENT OF SOLOMON is the earliest document of explicitly Solomonic magic. As such, despite difficulties and corruptions, it is of incalculable importance for that tradition. As Solomonic magic is a major element of Western magic as a whole, the *Testament's* importance cannot easily be overstated. There are however internal contradictions within the *Testament*. Also there are important but misunderstood or overlooked themes at work in the text. As some of the following discussion is intended to clarify, there are also senses in which the *Testament* as commonly known is not best understood as a magical text.

The following chapters are not primarily an analysis of the *ToS* but of its spirit catalogue, individual spirits within it and the subsequent influence upon grimoire spirit hierarchies. My reading – while serving distinct purposes – acknowledges the recent ground breaking work of Todd E. Klutz (*RTS*); as well as McCown, Duling, Arnold and Greenfield. However, my purpose is not literary exegesis but rather to trace the influence of the text on subsequent grimoires. Especially as a start point to re-evaluating the Kings and Queens of the grimoires; in an era when the former are scarcely understood and the latter almost entirely overlooked.

References to variant manuscripts and recensions by letters as followed in academia are kept to a minimum. These technicalities are bewildering enough even with the relevant reference material to hand. So too I make only minor use of chapter numbers. The most readily available text for the general reader – that of Conybeare, which happily is derived from Klutz's preferred manuscript – does not employ them. For reference I primarily employ the verse numbers of Conybeare's text. Reference to the relevant sources can rectify this omission should the reader wish to pursue it. I prefer instead to indicate identifiable passages and events in the text while retaining intelligibility for the lay reader. The relevant text of the *Testament* is found as an appendix in Vol. II, permitting side by side consultation.

Summarising, from at least the 1st to late 2nd century CE two sections of the *Testament* appear to have circulated independently as authentically Jewish texts. These are the opening part, in which the King encounters Ornias, and the oldest part of the text: Solomon's interviews with the thirty-six decans, or the *world-rulers of darkness*. These differ remarkably both in genre and point of view from other sections and most particularly the final part. Following these distinctions, the *Testament's* development and its internal problems are considerably clarified. Essentially Klutz puts forward the well argued position that a later redaction adapted the older text(s) with the specific intention of undermining Solomon's status; that of patron of a Jewish tradition of magical medicine founded on astrological principles. Torijano shows how the figure of Solomon as exorcist derives from equating him with Hellenistic kings; who assumed some of the attributes of the 'divine man.' The literary prototypes of this figure were of course Empedocles and Pythagoras. The portrayal of Solomon as Hellenistic king also explains the origins of amulets portraying Solomon on horseback.

Besides the anti-Solomonic editing, subsequent pro-Solomonic versions made further adjustments to the *Testament*, including merging with the probably nascent *Hygromanteia* (Klutz, 33). It is for such reasons that the literary exegesis is necessary and controversial, as well as bewildering for non-specialists. In the original form of the text Solomon appeared as the revered originator of a system of medical magic. The most ancient fragments of the *Testament* (the earliest is 6th century) generally consist only of the decans material, and an origin in Egypt is likely; one manuscript even employs the Coptic month names. As a Hellenistic Jewish work it subsequently incorporated the Ornias episode. Via the influence of the *Testament* or parallel tradition this can also be found in the Talmud; with the important difference that the demon in the Talmudic account is Ashmedai, not Ornias. In any case the Jewish *Testament* has subsequently been heavily amended in the interests of some form of anti-Solomon Christian polemic, perhaps of the 4th century. While subsequently rehabilitated, in the early Christian era Solomon represented a serious rival to the healer and exorcist Jesus. Thus different forms of the text suit quite different agendas, and the academic exegetes have indirectly assisted modern magicians by clarifying some of this.

The Testament and Asia Minor

MY TAKE ON THE CHRISTIAN POLEMIC departs from that of Klutz mainly in drawing a comparison with the agenda displayed in *Acts of the Apostles* 19:13–19. This concerns Saint Paul’s triumph over supposed vagabond Jews of Ephesus. Judging by the context these could well have been ‘Solomonic’ healers and exorcists, who moreover certainly possessed magical books (*Acts* 19:19). Klutz’s scriptural objections to earlier analyses linking the *Testament* to Ephesus appear more than a little strained; considering he also cites *Acts*, regarding cities with magical reputations. My take is closer to that of Arnold (*EPM*), who makes an excellent case regarding the importance of Ephesus, including the high status of Artemis in magic and religion of the period. As regards the latter, his insight that the zodiacal symbols on statues of Artemis Ephesia represent superiority to fate deserves special emphasis. His work also clarifies the importance of understanding Jewish diaspora involvement in magic in Asia Minor when interpreting Saint Paul. The implications however reach far beyond biblical exegesis, including the origins – and original nature – of Solomonic magic, and of grimoire angels.

Ephesus

ARNOLD QUOTES BRUCE MANNING METZGER: *Of all ancient Græco-Roman cities, Ephesus, the third largest city in the Empire, was by far the most hospitable to magicians, sorcerers, and charlatans of all sorts.* Similarly he cites Otto Meinardus: *Perhaps even more than Pisidian Antioch, Corinth, and Antioch-on-the-Orontes, this city ... swarmed with soothsayers and purveyors of charms.* The mention of Pisidian Antioch, putative birthplace of Saint Cyprian, adds further interest to this passage. To summarise, Arnold makes an excellent case for Ephesus as *the leading magical centre for Asia Minor*, in which the goddess of the city played a major role, with influence extending throughout the region and internationally.

Klutz’s citations downplay Ephesus, making much of the region of Samaria’s links with Simon Magus (*Acts* 8:4–24) and of Paphos with the sorcerer Elymas. I grant that Samaritan magic deserves more study than often meted out (some of what we take to be Kabbalistic magic is likely old

Samaritan magic pure and simple). Nevertheless, his case that in *Acts* these cities exceed Ephesus – where Paul’s two year mission is plainly in part anti-magical – relies solely upon the presence of a single named magician. This is no argument whatever if the magic encountered in Ephesus – whose reputation for magic and magical books in *Acts* is unquestionable – was Solomonic. Solomonic magic is an important topic, and the name of Solomon larger – and more problematic – than Simon and Elymas. Moreover, Paul’s mission in Asia Minor – exemplified by *Acts*, *Galatians* and *Colossians* – involved powers and principalities; angelic titles that epitomise the Jewish-pagan fusion in Asia Minor and are deeply influential on the conceptions encountered in the papyri. These angels include big names, Jewish angels; Michael, Raphael and Uriel; and the Greek angels Artemis and Hecate. All are plainly relevant to the *Testament of Solomon*.

Artemis, Hecate and Jewish magic

EPHESUS – where Paul opposed ‘Solomonic’ magicians – was the major city of the Roman province of Asia Minor, the location of Artemis Ephesia’s temple; one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Additionally the Ephesia Grammata, famous words of power, originated there. Some of them appear in the *Testament of Solomon*, which also names the snare into which Solomon fell: *the bonds of Artemis*. Arnold quotes Anaxilas regarding the Ephesia Grammata in relation to *fine Ephesian charms in little sewed bags*, a detail that cannot but incite comparison with Hoodoo mojo bags. Arnold, concurring with an Ephesian linkage to the *ToS* is not alone either in suggesting linkage of Jewish magic with veneration of Hecate (CS 145) with whom Ephesian Artemis is linked (CS 143) by syncretism and the presence of a Hecate shrine at the temple &c.

A powerful piece of evidence from Asia Minor is the complex, multipart Pergamon magical apparatus (*EPM* 16, CS 63–64, 143). As well as three amulets with names of Jewish angels, the bronze table and apparatus bears images of Hecate and praise phrases from her cult. Arnold also sees as Jewish the amulet, found at an Ostian *compitales* (crossroads shrine), and mentioned by Peterson, Skinner and Rankine (*VKS* 27) and myself, important for bearing images of both Solomon and Hecate. Ostia of course was a very cosmopolitan Roman port, where a sizeable Jewish population may be assumed.

Arnold points to other contexts where a juncture of Jewish magic and Hecate occur. This includes *PGM* texts (such as xxxvi.187–210). This casts added light upon the precinct of Mēn at Pisidian Antioch, as also the Jewish sybil at Thyatira. Mēn was seen as a pagan high god in some forms of the cult and it is interesting to note that Mēne is a title of Hecate, used in *PGM* vii.756–94, possibly illustrating such Jewish connections with Phrygian magic, mystery cults &c. I have remarked on the lunar pantheism of this rite elsewhere. Such evidence might well indicate syncretism of Mēn with IAO. Bonner, whose work on ancient amulets is formidable, mentions an amulet with an image of Hecate and the inscription: *IAO, Sabaoth, protect*. This is by no means unusual. That Hecate bore the title of angel (as does Artemis in the *PGM*) suggests a route into Jewish folk magic, with other pagan principalities and powers, standing beside more conventional Jewish angels (themselves suspect in Christian eyes for many centuries).

Magic, Jewish and Pagan

TO RETURN TO THE TESTAMENT, in fact the Christian polemic and its antecedents do not represent a two-sided monotheistic dispute; as the central role of Ephesian Artemis (the Roman Diana of Ephesus) in both *Acts* and the *Testament* amply demonstrates. It is certainly true that Jewish magic had absorbed pagan elements that might facilitate Christian attacks on a wholly Jewish audience. However we should be wary of assuming that Christian polemicists were only concerned with correcting the errors of their fellow monotheists. Comparison of the equally polemical *Confession of Saint Cyprian* with the *Testament* is instructive. To the Christian polemicists both Artemis and Solomon must bow to a higher magic. Several times while undermining Solomon the false worship of the pagans – who mistake the demons for deities – is also stressed. So too is Solomon's fall into this same snare (*of Artemis*), and of the whole world until the coming of Christ. According to this polemic – which defines the final form of the *Testament* – Solomon's magic did not save him, and its power perished with his fall. The rule of the demons then resumed until Christ came to triumph over them. Comparison with the *Confession of Cyprian* reveals similar disputes at work, concerning Christianity and specifically pagan magic (Theurgy and Hermeticism). From these disputes a strange contrast emerges between the fall of Solomon and the beatitude of Cyprian. The magician, always, is too close to the pagan and demonic; what differs is the *last things* – their individual eschatology.

While I have no objection to identifying Egypt as the home of the older Jewish parts of the *ToS*, Ephesus has to be seriously considered as the location of the later polemic, supplying significant parts of the dramatis personæ. This aspect of the question brings in Asia Minor in both Jewish and Christian traditions, several aspects of which emerge elsewhere in this study. Somewhat reluctantly, as in *Geosophia*, I must neglect Montanism and only lightly touch on Chaldean or Jewish sibyls. This introduction to such issues must be sufficient; the textual examination itself must be copious enough. Now to move swiftly from introduction to examination; raising further salient points on the hoof.

The work begins by introducing itself and its author:

1 Testament of Solomon, son of David, who was king in Jerusalem, and mastered and controlled all spirits of the air, on the earth, and under the earth. By means of them also he wrought all the transcendent works of the Temple. Telling also of the authorities they wield against men, and by what angels these demons are brought to naught.

Here it is worth noting how *of the air, on the earth, and under the earth* bears a close resemblance to the Headless Ritual (*PGM* v.96–172). So too a defining principle of the magico-medical methodology, pitting angel against disease demon, is stated clearly. There follows an account of how Solomon met with the demon Ornias; who, however he came to be here, so far as I can ascertain is not a figure of preceding Jewish demonology. By verse five Solomon is seeking wisdom and power to command demons and receives a magical ring from the Lord Sabaoth by Michael his archangel.

*With it thou shalt lock up all demons of the earth, **male and female**; and with their help thou shalt build up Jerusalem. [But] thou [must] wear this seal of God. And this engraving of the seal of the ring sent thee is a Pentalpha.*

By the power of the ring he obtains power over Ornias, and sends him to fetch the chief of the demons, Beelzeboul. Beelzeboul in turn brings Onoskelis and Asmodeus. Sarah Iles Johnston's well

supported remarks on this deserve quotation:

... just as Solomon receives the ring that empowers him to command demons from God, so do the magicians who used curse tablets rely on Hecate, Hermes and other gods to compel the dead souls to do their bidding.

After this Solomon speaks again with Beelzeboul before a long parade of demons is introduced.

Beelzeboul's second interview with Solomon separates the chief of spirits plus Ornias, Onoskelis and Asmodeus from the main spirit catalogue; including, for example, the spirits of the 36 decans. Of the four, Beelzeboul and Asmodeus are instantly recognisable from sets of chiefs and kings ruling the other spirits in various grimoires. It is tempting to see in Ornias' name a distortion of Oriens, another of these kings, and in Onoskelis an alias of Astaroth. This would make the four first named spirits the prototypes of the chiefs and kings of later hierarchies.

The Chiefs according to the Hygromanteia

EAST	NORTH	WEST	SOUTH
Loutzipher	Asmodai	Astaroth	Belzeboul

According to Abramelin

FRENCH TITLES					GERMAN TITLES
<i>Princes</i>	Lucifer	Leviatan	Satan	Belial	<i>Four Kings</i>
<i>Sub-Princes</i>	Astarot	Magot	Asmodee	Belzebud	<i>4/8 Dukes</i>
<i>Sub-Princes</i>	Oriens	Paimon	Ariton	Amaimon	<i>4/8 Dukes</i>

Tempting though this is, it is as well for the present to merely note the possibility. Nevertheless, these spirits are separated from the main catalogue by the reappearance of the ultimate chief, and the names Ornias and Onoskelis both reoccur in the *Hygromanteia*. Oriens in any case is also known from the MSS tradition of the *Hygromanteia* (IA 287, note 6).

The traditions present in the *Testament* continue in the *Hygromanteia*, wherein Astaroth is counted among the four chief rulers of spirits. So too the latter text bears traces of the old planetary gods, though under the authority of the One. It describes Venus as female, and makes other more significant references to female entities. They may be Neoplatonist potencies of God, but equally they are personified and possess gender and attributes, like astrologically interpreted Olympians. The presence of the planetary gods, in what is essentially a Christian Neoplatonist form, has excited some attention. The presence of familiar chiefs, including the controversial figure of Astaroth, has also received comment. There are other figures present whose importance is only beginning to emerge. Among the most significant are figures from the spirit catalogue of the *Testament*, in particular Onoskelis.

The following table identifies the spirits of the *Testament of Solomon* among whom, for reasons that will become clear, I include Sheba, though represented as a mortal queen in the text itself.

Pleiades and decans are numbered in grey as sub-groups as well as within the overall listing. Sheba/Sympilia is in square brackets as a special case. The last two spirits are italicised as representing largely polemical constructs.

The Spirits of the Catalogue

1	Ornias	21	Ocheikon	41	20 Mardero
2	Beelzeboul	22	1 Ruax	42	21 Alath
3	Onoskelis	23	2 Barsafael	43	22 Audameouth
4	Asmodeus	24	3	44	23
5	Lix Tetrax	25	Arotosoel/Aratosael	45	Nefthada/Nepthada
6	1 Apate	26	4 Horopel	46	24 Akton
7	2 Eris	27	5 Iudal	47	25 Anatreth
8	3 Klothod	28	6 Sphendonaêl	48	26 Enethuth
9	4 Zale	29	7 Sphandôr	49	27 Phêth (Axiôphêth)
10	5 Plane*	30	8 Belbel	50	28 Harpax
11	6 Dynamis*	31	9 Kurtaêl	51	29 Anostêr
12	7 Kaxiste	32	10 Metathiax	52	30 Alleborithm
13	Akephalos	33	11 Katanikotaêl	53	31 Hephesimireth
14	Rabdos	34	12 Saphathoraél	54	32 Ichthion
15	Leontophoron	35	13 Bobêl/Bothothêl	55	33 Agchoniôn
16	Three-headed Dragon	36	14 Kumeatêl	56	34 Autothith
17	Obyzouth	37	15 Roêlêd	57	35 Phthenoth
18	Winged Dragon	38	16 Atrax	58	36 Bianakith
19	Enepsigos	39	17 Ieropaêl	59	[Sheba]
20	Kunepegos	40	18 Buldumêch	60	<i>Ephippas</i>
			19 Naôth/Nathath		<i>Abezithibou</i>

Introducing the Spirits

Our preamble concluded, it is time to introduce the spirits of this foundational text. Some will be briefly introduced, others will receive a fuller treatment and a select few possess major significance throughout this volume and beyond.

Ornias

B O FAR AS CAN BE ASCERTAINED Ornias appears fully formed in the *Testament*. There is no trace of a prior existence in Jewish demonology under that name. He is interesting insofar as he brings Beelzeboul to Solomon, acting as a magical go-between. The *Testament* material aside, the more developed lore surrounding him is known from the *Hygromanteia*, especially in relation to the female demon Onoskelis, of whom more anon. Via the *Talmud* he can also be identified with Asmodeus, who requires an extended section after this overall survey of the spirit catalogue. This identity may well support the case for linking Ornias and Oriens. As regards the *ToS*, Ornias plays an important role in the opening and closing anti-Solomonic interpolations.

Beelzeboul

T HE TESTAMENT mirrors the demonology of the New Testament in making Beelzeboul chief of demons. That this was a common belief in contemporary Galilee seems likely enough, though there is little mention of him in the Old Testament. Indeed Asmodeus or Samael, as well as Semjaza, may as easily be identified as the chief Jewish devil. Some overlapping of roles is apparent in variant manuscripts of this particular text, as well as in wider demonological lore.

These technicalities aside, the *Testament* establishes him as a key figure in many later spirit hierarchies. This role has been fairly well delineated in my *True Grimoire*, and is reprised by grimoire materials in these volumes. As regards his role in the *Testament* there remains comparatively little to say. It is notable that despite the power of his ring and of thwarting angels, Solomon's authority over demons derives in part directly from Beelzeboul. This can be perceived plainly in his first interview with the spirit.

15: And I questioned him, and said: *Who art thou?* The demon replied: *I am Beelzeboul, the exarch of the demons. And all the demons have their chief seats close to me. And **I it is who make manifest the apparition of each demon.** And he promised to bring to me in bonds all the unclean spirits.* And I again glorified the God of heaven and earth, as I do always give thanks to him.

There is an item of interest also in Solomon's subsequent discussions with Beelzeboul. Solomon bids him to:

Discourse to me about the things in heaven. And Beelzeboul said: *Hear, O king, if thou burn*

gum, and incense, and bulb of the sea, with nard and saffron, and light seven lamps in a row thou wilt firmly fix thy house. And if, being pure, thou lightest them at dawn in the sunlight, thou wilt see then the heavenly dragons, winding themselves along and dragging the chariot of the sun. And I Solomon, having heard this, rebuked him, and said: *Silence for this present.*

D.C. Duling interprets Solomon's rebuke as indicating the magical means to *fix thy house* is forbidden – presumably pagan – magic. Unfortunately he does not enlarge on this; however I came to a very similar conclusion, while exploring the little known technical hermetic text, the *Sacred Book* (not to be confused with the later grimoire, *Liber Sacer*) to be elucidated in Book 3. Meanwhile, the connection of the sun with a chariot drawn by celestial dragons is noteworthy. In artistic convention the chariot of Helios was drawn by horses, imitated in mosaics upon some ancient synagogue floors, reflecting Hellenising tendencies in contemporary Judaism. This passage however appears to allude more specifically to the chariot of Medea, who was of the family of Helios. Her status as supreme enchanter with roots and plants indicates the magic forbidden here.

Onoskelis

BOLOMON'S MEETING with Onoskelis is a critical encounter; it arises through Solomon asking Beelzeboul if there are females among the demons. This spirit is thus the exemplar of a female spirit in the subsequent grimoire tradition. While representing a strong individual identity, the name was originally a title of the Greek Empusa, connecting it to lamia lore of various strands; the name means *She of the ass's legs*, and unusual feet and legs are strongly associated with lamia in general. Both Psuedo-Plutarch's *Scholiast on Aristophanes* (3rd to 4th CE) and the Byzantine *Historia Ecclesiastica* of Sozemenos (400–450 CE) mention Onoskelis in connection with Ephesus. It would appear from these references that she was part of local tradition contemporary with the *Testament*.

Onoskelis of course is also known from the Byzantine Solomonic grimoire, the *Hygromanteia*. This is unsurprising, as overlapping or transformation stages between *Testament* and *Hygromanteia* appear in several manuscripts; the latter is at least partly derived from and inspired by the former. This is important for our understanding of the origins of Solomonic magic, but also the relative importance and antiquity of the principal dramatis personæ. Significantly, in the *Hygromanteia* appear listed magical properties of plants attributed to the zodiacal signs. Among these is a prescription for protection from Onoskelis (MTS 199, 333). These astrological treatments are not dissimilar in orientation at least from *Testament* magical medicine, suggesting they are early and important parts of the *Hygromanteia*.

In one version of the grimoire (MS *Neopolitanus II* c.33) a ceremonial basin divination has been added to the text as it exists in other manuscripts (MTS 135). This ritual, while not strictly part of the *Hygromanteia*, evidently reflects a shared background of magical lore in which Onoskelis is prominent. The ritual is both necromantic and spectacular, and is worth quoting for several reasons:

At the first hour of the first day, when the Sun is rising, take a new and empty basin. Then **go to an old meeting of three roads**, dig a pit and put the basin inside. Find a black horse at night. Ride it, while holding a human bone. You must say the following: *Xerion, Ariem, Salphrenas, Moroes, Mizxaoul, Emntdbl, Phorel, Phereel, Narkisou, Xympona, Saraphael, Berzebouel, Mounokhoth, Alael, Misoklesous, the demons of the West, the demons of Aries, the demons of the great Hades, the first among whom is the one called Orneas; Theth, Maldouor, Phartouel,*

Sarsanna, Karkinar, and his offspring Onoskelis; in the name Semiramel, O demons of the meetings of three roads, come to answer me.

Do not be afraid, but concentrate. You must also speak to them. When you are finished, recite: *Fiery chariots of heaven and king Sabaoth, Tetragrammaton, Eis Nazareos, Neos.*

Understand and divide.

There are many striking features in this rite, some of which I have emphasised for ease of reference. The ritual takes place where three roads meet. It specifically directs itself towards invoking spirits of such a location. These places were under the jurisdiction of Hecate and there can be no doubt that this is understood here. The name of the chief of spirits – according to the *Testament* and echoed in much later texts – is invoked. Orneas – a variant of Ornias in the *Testament* – is named specifically as a person of importance. Indeed this reference may contradict what appears to be the treatment of him as a rank and file spirit in the *Hygromantia* (MTS 101, 280).

Onoskelis is then named as *his offspring*; the *his* I believe refers to Orneas, who is named before the colon and string of names preceding. In any case such a familial relationship between spirits is not untypical of the demonology of the ancient period. In other words, the spirit possesses a myth of their own, such as is rarely found in the impersonal listings of the later Western grimoires. These suggestions of a fuller and detailed background suit the extended appearance of Onoskelis in the *Testament*. Clearly she is an individual of some importance. Finally it is reiterated that the spirits invoked, Orneas and Onoskelis included, are spirits of the three road locus ruled by Hecate. Which is to say they are prominent *lares compitales*, (see *Geosophia*, Book 6).

Asmodeus

AFTER ONOSKELIS, there is an important encounter with Asmodeus. He is such an important spirit that it will be necessary to return to him, as well as examining his place in the text. When Solomon asks the spirit, brought in bonds before him, to tell him who he is, Asmodeus retorts, with a malevolent glance: *and who art thou?*

Solomon remonstrates with the spirit, demanding an answer and receives the following eloquent reply:

But how shall I answer thee, for thou art a son of man; whereas I was born an angel's seed by a daughter of man, so that no word of our heavenly kind addressed to the earth-born is too proud. Wherefore also my star is bright in heaven, and men call it, some the Wain, and some the dragon's child. I keep near unto this star. So ask me not many things; for thy kingdom also after a little time is to be disrupted, and thy glory is but for a season. And short will be thy tyranny over us; and then we shall again have free range over mankind, so that they revere us as if we were gods, not knowing, men that they are, the names of the angels set over us.

This is an important speech in several respects. Firstly, it is informative regarding the Christian redactor's view of demons, as identical with the entities revered by pagans. In the self same line the concept of thwarting angels commanding the demons occurs again. While the *ToS* is the origin of this paradigm within Solomonic magic, in all likelihood theurgic hierarchy rather than dualist opposition between angel and demon was the original operative mainspring. There is ample literary and archaeological evidence that such a concept and process was commonly applied to the decans.

Asmodeus also contributes to the discourse concerning the *fall of Solomon*. That he rather than Onoskelis does so is significant, but other factors must also be considered. Foremost, Asmodeus is not infrequently encountered in company with a female demon. Solomon's fall is connected throughout with Artemis, who is thoroughly identified with Hecate, Persephone and Selene in the *PGM* and thus a crucial figure of magical cult – much the same may be said of Hecate's role in the *Chaldean Oracles*. Asmodeus links the grimoire tradition back to key concepts of the Great Synthesis; intimately connected with our discussion of kings and queens of the grimoires. His importance in this respect may be gauged by Kimbanda's syncretic equivalents of Asmodeus and Lilith: Exu Rei da Kalunga Pequena and Pomba Gira Rainha da Kalunga Pequena; Exu and Pomba Gira as King and Queen of the Cemetery.

There follows a point in the text stressed in the Introduction. This is Solomon's second interview with Beelzeboul, whom he seats in a place of honour. Beelzeboul speaks of destroying kings and inducing holy men and leaders to sin, evidently part of the overall discourse regarding Solomon's fall. A full discussion of these passages and the embedded themes to which they relate is beyond our purposes.

Another spirit is then mentioned, and the stage set for his future appearance. This is the spirit named Ehippas. His name translates as *on horseback*; this is interpreted by Klutz as part of the demolition job on Solomon, who appeared as the horseman slaying demons on amulets in use by certain communities the polemic addressed. While important in the context of the former author's work, no great purpose for us is served by extending this part of the discussion so we may move on.

Lix Tetrax OR Tephros

THE NAME OF THIS SPIRIT (vs. 33) varies in the manuscripts, and it is one of many complex passages of the *Testament*. The form Lix Tetrax is yet another linkage of the background of the text with the magical cult of Artemis (identical in this period with Hecate). Lix Tetrax's name is unquestionably derived from the magical Ephesia Grammata; known from the 4th–5th century BCE: ASKION, KATASKION, LIX, TETRAX, DAMNAMENEUS, AISIA.

These magical words take their name from the city of Ephesus, famous for the Temple of Artemis (Diana to the Romans and thus also the New Testament), upon whose statue this formula was legendarily found. It has been supposed that at some point a scribe of the *Testament* mistook words for names. However, another of the Ephesia Grammata is Damnameneus, the name of an Idaean dactyl invoked frequently in the *PGM*. There is in any case ample evidence that words of power employed in magic are often simultaneously envisaged as entities. The connection with Ephesus is one of many in the text; what stage of composition they collectively represent is for experts to determine.

There is however, more to the picture. The materials incorporated at this point in the *Testament* appear to reflect pagan practice. This is supported by the extremely marked deviation from the formula: demon inflicted illness bound by angel. There is first an introduction, of a piece with many in the text, the demon is brought forth, tells of its natural ill doings. However, when bidden to tell of his astrological nature he complies and then volunteers additional information:

For I have been bidden to restrain the convulsions of the hemitertian fever; and this is why many men pray to the hemitertian fever, using these three names: Bultala, Thallal, Melchal. And I heal them.

While there is a formula, there is no mention of the demon being responsible for causing the illness,

only healing it. Solomon, however, appears more interested in the harm the spirit can do!

And I said to him: *I am Solomon; when therefore thou wouldst do harm, by whose aid dost thou do it?* But he said to me: *By the angel's, by whom also the third day's fever is lulled to rest.*

Things get no more straightforward when Solomon inquires regarding the identity of this angel.

So I questioned him, and said: *And by what name [are you controlled]?* And he answered: *That of the archangel Azael.* And I summoned the archangel Azael, and set a seal on the demon.

Perhaps the text is merely corrupted, and the archangel's part in things misunderstood? That does not appear to be nearly sufficient explanation. The archangel is in fact no other than a chief of the fallen angels in numerous works of Jewish magic and Kabbalah. He is one of the *princes of devils offensive in the elements* in Agrippa. The name is known from a parallel, rabbinical form of the Four Kings: Samael, Azazel, Azael, and Mahazael, who appear in *Enoch*, Saint Irenaus (plainly identified as the Four Kings), the *Zohar* and elsewhere. He has been identified directly with Semjaza/Shemhazai, and appears in Faustian grimoires. Keep in mind that Lix Tetrax requires the aid of Azael in doing harm as well as healing. All considered, if Lix Tetrax is a devil (rather than a dactyl), then Azael would appear to be one of the arch-devils to whom he is responsible. In other words, their relationship – rather than celestial checking infernal – operates through the chthonic hierarchy alone. This and the related matter of the Four Kings are both germane to our theme. It is important to note how closely interwoven they are in a source document contemporary with the papyri and older than the grimoires.

Seven Sisters

SOLOMON then meets with a group who have been tentatively identified with the Pleiades; aptly enough, since they are seven sisters, who speak of themselves as goddesses. Each may be frustrated by the name of an angel (such, despite the claim of Asmodeus, is not exactly the case for all the spirits in the catalogue). Of these angels, Lamech is certainly the root of the first angel's name; Lamech is the father of Tubal Cain, also curiously the supposed son to whom *Abramelin* was bequeathed. In the latter connection I am reliably informed that Lamech would never be used as a Jewish proper name; a code may therefore be at work. Significantly the fifth or sixth is frustrated by the power of an angel named Asteroth. That this is Astaroth appearing in angelic guise should not unduly surprise us; her protective role predated the invoking of angels (see under Obizuth, below and passim).

The seventh on the other hand gives no such information. She speaks of the fall of Solomon, snared in *the bonds of Artemis*. This is Artemis as lunar goddess of witchcraft, synonymous with Hecate. This prediction of Solomon's fall anticipates the climax of the text. As seen the biblical account of his *descent into idolatry* mentions Ashtoreth and specifies her gender. The *Testament* plainly equates Hecate, Astaroth and Artemis, and their role in Solomon's career is strongly underlined throughout. In other words, the female gender of Astaroth is central and critical to the legend of Solomon. As the *ToS* is a foundational text of Solomonic magic this is a powerful counter to the argument of some ceremonial magicians that she be considered *a)* male as – apparently – in the *Goetia*, and *b)* distinct from any Pagan deity. Indeed the *Testament* enables us to determine just which such deity Astaroth represents at this formative stage of the grimoire tradition.

NO.	NAME	FUNCTION	ANGEL
1st	Apate	Deceiver, heretic	Lamechalal/Lamechiel
2nd	Eris	Stirring strife	Barochiachel/Barouchchiel
3rd	Klothod	Making enmity and separation	Marmarath
4th	Zale	Intoxicator, aiding Eris	great Balthiel/Balthioul
5th	Plane*	Error, necromancy, evil	Uriel/Ouriel
6th	Dynamis*	Power, raising up & tearing down tyrants	Asteraoth
7th	Kaxiste	Ligatures?	Withheld

* There is some disagreement of placing with fifth and sixth, the attributes remain consistent.

In my view the material concerning the Pleiades – or whatever else the Seven Sisters may represent – remains partly problematic. While astrological and employing some parallel terms it differs strongly from the decan material and, while embodying some genuine traditions, may be a deliberate pastiche. It offers little help in terms of understanding the origins of the *Testament*. It appears to serve the interests of the Christian polemicist, but contains both pagan astrological material and possible Jewish elements. There has been considerable speculation; this extends to questioning if the Pleiades rather than the planets were the original seven; Ursa Major cannot be discounted. Klutz does not much discuss the verses concerned, although he makes one cogent remark. They are differentiated from the decans by different use of similar terminology. He points out that whereas the decans are denominated the *world rulers of the darkness of this age*, that is the cosmokraters or archons, the Seven Sisters identify themselves as *elements* of the **world ruler** of darkness. In other words they serve and are parts of a singular figure, identified with Satan, whereas the autonomous cosmokraters belong to a less homogenised schema. I differ from Klutz in considering this older schema no less organised, though his distinction as to type certainly stands. In origin it is pagan, involving solar-panteism. Subsequently it is a salient feature of Sabeian magic such as *Picatrix*, and a powerful formative influence on the grimoires; readily detectable in spirit hierarchies, talismanic forms &c. This involves a well structured cosmogony that generates magical correspondences (*sympathia*).

Among the decans of the *Testament* Conybeare delivers there appear various lacunæ. One of these is in Taurus, a position appropriate to the constellation of the Pleiades. Even so, the verses concerning the seven sisters in the *Testament* are plainly not misplaced from those regarding the decans, which constitute the oldest, once independent, part of the text. The textual considerations are too complex, and far from our main themes, to pursue further. This is not to say we have heard the last of the constellation in question. This instance should warn us however that while there is a decan listing in the text, other spirits of the *Testament* may also relate to the decan genre, or prominent fixed stars associated with it.

SOLOMON'S NEXT ENCOUNTER is with a Headless Demon (*Akephelos Daimon*) who is important in a variety of contexts. Here we shall discuss his role in the text, although as will be seen, this also leads us further afield. This spirit speaks of *service at the crossways* (the word used is *enodiais*, related to Hecate's name of Enodia). Obviously this concerns Hecate and the crossroads as a magical site. It is magic of a type of which the Christian interpolator evidently disapproves, and pagan rather than Jewish in origin. In the *Hygromanteia*, as we have seen, such a site was connected with Ornias and Onoskelis. Since the demon performing this service is a headless spirit, the partial dependence of the *Testament* on major themes of the magical papyri is clear (*PGM* v.96–172, and *passim*). The crossroads role is multivalent in significance, referring also to the four directions and their rulers, who may be invoked there.

One of the demon's powers captures Solomon's attention, and it is not one of healing; it concerns destructive fire.

45: And I Solomon, on hearing this, said to him: *Tell me how thou dost discharge forth the fire? Out of what sources dost thou emit it?* And the spirit said to me: *From the Day-star [or, East]. For here hath not yet been found that Elbourion [Elboyriion], to whom men offer prayers and kindle lights. And his name is invoked by the seven demons before me. And he cherishes them.*

As Conybeare notes, *anatole* which he translates as Day Star can as easily mean East; interestingly the name Oriens – King of Fire – has the same ambiguity. I have not had access to other manuscripts in which this passage occurs (McCown's synthetic text relegates its occurrence in *MS P* to a footnote). Nevertheless, the East and the name Elbourion are likely to be relevant to our discussion of the Four Kings and related themes. Note that his name is invoked by the seven sisters, who he cherishes. The Helios-Apollo or Oriens figure commands the four horses of the elements, also the 36 cosmokraters. He is equally master of the seven planets (his name Sabaoth implies this, among other things). That he cherishes the seven sisters could therefore refer to the relations of a planetary court with an Aion or Zervan figure.

While we are dealing with a composite text, another relationship may explain this passage, which I believe is important. The Pleiades are a very major constellation in the lore regarding the lunar mansions. In several systems it appears they may originally have been the first mansion, just as the Spirit of the East rules the first of the decans. Thus this verse can be interpreted in terms of the solunar theology underlying Theurgy, that is, the relations of the Sun and Moon, and Apollo and Hecate. The first decan or mansion can easily represent the leader of the others, and thus be dedicated to an important aspect of the deity concerned in both cases. Note for example the appearance of the name Bael as the first of the demons of the *Goetia*, called *their first and principal king*.

Note too that in the papyri the Headless Demon, with whom we are currently concerned, is highly pantheistic (addressed as a supreme deity – both pagan and Jewish in influence – in whom power over all elements and directions is centred). Also, like the Headless Demon in the *Testament* he breathes fire. In context he represents as it were an avatar of just such a solar and fiery deity as Oriens; who might indeed also be addressed as Baal. However there are other considerations. Among these is the fact that the decans anciently represented constellations which rise in the East, rather than rule it. Also, while Oriens and Baal or Bael are names or titles of the Sun god, they are often distinguished from one another in the grimoires. Bael – principal king among the subordinate spirits – answers to Oriens as foremost of the Four Kings set over them. The origins of their positions lay in the solar hierarchy of antiquity, with Helios Apollo a demiurgic figure, the Four Kings representing

his rule over the quarters, and Bael of the grimoires the solar leadership of the decans.

The Headless One appears in the *Sacred Book* and the *Kyranides* as ruler of the first decan of Capricorn (opposite Sothis), and holds the equivalent position in mansion listings (*Codex Cromwellianus &c.*). This has a double significance. Like other spirits of the *Testament*, while detached from the list identified as decans, the Headless One is a spirit of an identifiable decan. More than this, he is King of one of the cardinal points, properly the South. The association with the East noted above is confirmatory rather than contradictory; it is where both Sun and decans rise, and association with both East and South is typical of Amaymon, Asmodeus and others.

Returning to our text, is this figure clearly distinct from the angel supposed to have power over the Headless Demon? In the *ToS* it would certainly appear so, although some ambiguity may be found in the following verse.

46: But I said to him: *Tell me his name*. But he answered: *I cannot tell thee. For if I tell his name, I render myself incurable. But he will come in response to his name*. And on hearing this, I Solomon said to him: *Tell me then, by what angel thou art frustrated?* And he answered: *By the fiery flash of lightning*.

This is curious, since not only is the Headless One of the papyri a breather of fire, he is *he who lighteneth and thundereth*. The closing lines are equally cryptic, the demon has been *sealed*, which took away his sight, hence the reference to being cured above. However it appears that Solomon's power over him is at least temporarily limited.

And I bowed myself before the Lord God of Israel, and bade him remain in the keeping of Beelzeboul until Iax should come.

The demon then is sealed but not bound, so is not allotted a task in the building of the Temple. A power named Iax may be needed for this to take place.

Rabdos

THE NEXT SPIRIT encountered – who appears as a huge hound, perhaps Anubis or Cerberus – is of interest for his claim to have once been a man and magician. This clearly connects spirits of the dead with Solomonic demonology, a feature later diminished or glossed over. His name of Rabdos (*staff/rod*) may indicate the golden rod of Hermes, which both 'hounds' might carry in their role of Psychopompos in the papyri. It could also connect him with Tiresias, whose connections with pagan sexuality may have commended him to the polemicist. In any case, the description of his earthly life could well be intended to criticise Solomon; also, though I doubt anything of the kind is implied, it describes pre-conversion Cyprian.

The name Rabdos and the form of a dog implies a further layer of exegesis. The first decan of Cancer anciently equated with the station of Sothis; the Dog Star (Sirius has now precessed to the second decan by Tropical conventions). A pillar or celestial pole was envisaged as reaching from North to South, represented by the first decan of Cancer and Capricorn respectively. Thus just as the Headless One represents the latter, Rabdos may represent a demonised and dislocated decan spirit associated with the former. Some elements of the association of doglike spirits with the solstitial signs have been covered before (in *Geo.* 11.6 'Nebiros' re. solstice rites and Anubis).

Conybeare dismisses Bornemann's suggestion that the thwarting angel Brieus is identical with the

Giant Briareus, on the grounds that the latter would not be made an angel. This may be an unwarranted assumption; as we have seen Astaroth was, and other pagan overlaps with connections to Asia Minor cannot be discounted. Moreover Briareus – see *Geosophia* – aided Zeus in defeating the Titans, whom he guards. Nevertheless, the name is not stable enough in the MSS to be certain, variants include: Briathoy, Briathayel, Brieo and Briario.

The text also appears to be very corrupt; Rabdos reveals the whereabouts of the shamir stone, guarded by a demon. Solomon sends for the stone and the demon. Thereafter there is a sealing of two demons, but it is Rabdos and the Headless One who are sealed – despite the Headless One having already been sealed. What has happened to the spirit brought on the advice of Rabdos?

Seemingly the name and details of this second spirit are lost. Might it be that a later copyist roped in the Headless Spirit from the previous section as a replacement? Or does this overlap further connect the two spirits as representing the North-South polarity? What appears a more likely explanation is that originally the spirit brought with the stone was the mysterious Iax, allowing Solomon to complete his work with the Headless Spirit. In this case has Rabdos replaced Iax? Likely we shall never know, however, we will be hearing of Iax again.

Araps or Rath

THE NEXT SPIRIT APPEARS in the form of a raging lion (*Leontophoron*). As one of several spirits conjured by Christian powers rather than Solomonic angels the section clearly involves the work of the polemicists. He is responsible for possession states (and apparently exorcisms, though this passage may be corrupt). He has legions under him, and all may possess the same person. This clearly reflects the New Testament occurrence of a spirit whose name is *Legion*. The number 644 and the name Emmanuel which has that value are potent against him, as are the three letters that spell the same number in Greek. There is a further reference to the miracle of the Gadarene swine, underlining the fact that this section involves interpolation. He also appears as a demon of the 20th hour of Sunday in the *Hygromanteia*. Names from the wider decan literature may equate (see the 25th decan of the *ToS* 1st Sagittarius). Two amulets from Asia Minor refer to Araaph, which is likely an alternative form of Araph (*CS* 64–67). The first, found in Cyzicus, was discovered at a Roman cemetery and has been dated to the second half of the 3rd century; it invokes Michael, Gabriel, Ouriel and Raphael, and also names Solomon, who is depicted on horseback. Interestingly Araaph is also referred to as an angel. Images of Helios, Selene and an eye of Horus appear alongside a lion, presumably representing Araps. Near Smyrna another such amulet was found which invokes the Lord Sabaoth and also names Solomon, but mentions no protective angels. Its Jewish provenance is undisputed, and both amulets provide evidence of Solomonic magic in Asia Minor.

Three Headed Dragon

AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT of the polemic occurs in relation to this dragon, as also the Winged Dragon to follow. He is frustrated, like the previous spirit, by Christian formulæ. Elements of the discourse further underline that the power and prestige of Solomon as healer and exorcist is being deliberately undermined in favour of Jesus. He foretells the future appearance of another spirit, Ehippas, already mentioned by Beelzeboul in verse 26.

The term *dragon* in ancient sources is synonymous with serpent, and Christian interpretation of the pagan symbolism is loaded with negative associations from *Genesis*. Note that the dragon motif also appears in the *Confession of Saint Cyprian*. So too the Red Dragon obviously connects with *Revelation* and with the blue grimoires. The motif therefore is loaded in various ways: as a negative

emblem of sexuality, idolatry and magic, and as a 'reclaimed' emblem of demonic magical power. Rather than grapple with historical and doctrinal issues, our best resort is to redefine the dragons in a manner useful to goetia. This dragon has three heads, which in grimoire symbolism indicates universality (see *TBOP* III.XVIII, and descriptions of spirits in *GoS*). This symbolism together with its origin in the *ToS* implies a high status figure or figures of a spirit hierarchy. It is also native to the decan and mansion tradition; see for example the last decan of Pisces in the *Sacred Book* (sinuous dragon) and the ninth symbol of *PGM* VII.756–94).

Obizuth

OBIZUTH APPEARS with her limbs dark or invisible like those of a ghost, only a Medusa head (*gorgoneion*) is seen. That the spirit is invisible (a ghost) aside from this talismanic mask is the key to the reversal in play. Essentially the polemical author is saying the pagan protective device is the visible part of the evil spirit. Before turning to this important subject it is well to examine the preliminaries of the encounter of Solomon with this spirit. As with the dialogue with Asmodeus, when questioned as to her identity, she retorts:

Nay, who art thou? And why dost thou want to hear concerning me? But, as thou wouldst learn, here I stand bound before thy face. Go then into thy royal storehouses and wash thy hands. Then sit down afresh before thy tribunal, and ask me questions; and thou shalt learn, O king, who I am.

In the *Who art thou?* of Asmodeus and Obizuth it is difficult not to hear echoes of *Acts* 19:15. There Jewish magicians attempting an exorcism in competition with Paul are addressed by the spirit: *Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?*

Once Solomon has done as she bid him he asks her again who she is. True to her word she tells her name and describes the affliction she causes to mothers and children, in the manner of Lamia and Lilith. So too she identifies herself as a fierce spirit of a myriad names and many shapes.

The claim of Obizuth to have a myriad names and forms is no idle boast. As Abyzou, Abizou, Obizu, Obyzouth and Byzou the spirit makes frequent appearances on ancient amulets and in magical texts. Her name relates to the Greek *Abyss*, which likely has Middle Eastern origins. Renowned scholar A.A. Barb connects her with the Mesopotamian Apsu/Abzu and thence to Tiamat. Her forms are predominantly fish-like or serpentine. She connects with the well known figure of Lilith, also the Coptic Alabasandria and the Byzantine Gylou, whose name also originates in Babylonian culture. Davidson lists numerous names of Lilith, and multiple names occur also with Empusa.

A great majority of such female demons derive from concepts of the primordial ocean, and are known in many cultures. Significantly the Sumerian ocean divided into sweet and salt water forms, and as will be seen a good many fresh water demons are in this class. Greek types are not uncommon; Lamia and Medusa are the classic individual types in whom divine qualities are still pronounced. Water nymphs can often be readily related to the form, as well as more obvious candidates like the Gorgons. A not infrequent attribute, as with the Sirens, are the powers of fascination and sexual enticement.

Obizuth has a wide array of direct aliases, many such appear on related amulets. One of the rarer names is Antaura (the name means *Contrary Wind*), who causes migraine headaches. She appears on an amulet in the form of an inscribed rolled silver leaf of the 2nd or 3rd century CE. This is the earliest 'Obizuth amulet' and was found in Austria at the site of the Roman military settlement of Carnuntum.

In the accompanying historiola Antaura is described as coming from the sea, crying like a deer and moaning like a cow. She is then confronted by the Ephesian Artemis. It is extremely significant that Artemis precedes Solomon, Arlaph/Raphael and Saint Sisinnios in this role. The continuity is total, as remarked by Ogden (*MWG* 260):

One [amulet] even preserves the derivative name Abra (pronounced *avra*) for the demon (in modern Greek Antaura would be pronounced *andavra*).

He also points out that the historiola is the most distinctive in ancient magical texts.

Early Byzantine amulets against Abyzou are numerous. On them she is depicted bound and kneeling while beaten by various protective figures. In the *Testament* this is Afarof, likely a form of Arlaph, which in turn is a coded reference to Raphael. On the Byzantine amulets the angel Arlpah or Solomon himself is shown beating Abyzou/Obizuth. Many of these amulets are to protect infants and their mothers from her Lamia-like malice. Her capacity as seductress and strangler is not absent however, and some of these talismans were made for men.

Regarding her appearance in the *ToS*, translator F. C. Conybeare's comment (*Jewish Quarterly Review*, October 1898): *Here we seem to have the Greek head of Medusa transformed into a demon*, while in the right direction, is not especially informative. Like other appearances of female spirits in this catalogue, investigation reveals the tip of a veritable iceberg of archaic magical lore. Much more background can be found in the frequently reprinted *Evil Eye* of Frederick Elworthy, in academic papers and elsewhere.

Such a face makes frequent appearances on Byzantine, Syrian and Palestinian amulets from the 6th century; generally adding saints, Solomon or an angel either beating a bound female demon or spearing her from horseback. Earlier prototypes, in which the gorgoneion was the main or only feature, existed from a more ancient period. It is possible that prior to the Byzantine examples there was an intermediate type, perhaps in a literary source. Russian examples, imitating Byzantine but often introducing native elements, are known from at least the 10th to 12th century, if not before. There was also interest in them in the Renaissance and later, but that takes us too far from our theme.

The origins of the gorgoneion are far, far older and its distribution very wide. There is no major reason to disagree with Gimbutas in seeing its origins in prehistory, and it is certainly a feature of archaic Greek art by the 8th century BCE. It also makes a frequent appearance in Etruscan funerary art. A digression will be necessary to fully appreciate this important amulet and the Lamia who haunts the *Testament*, the *Hygromanteia* and later grimoires. Note in the meantime that just such a head appears among the magical images of the fixed stars in Arab Hermetic works, associated with Algol. Accordingly Obizuth is identified with a specific decan and its equivalent mansion.

The Gorgoneion

THE GORGONEION has for long ages been reputed one of the most efficacious of amulets (King's *The Gnostics and their Remains*); nor is there any reason to doubt the primary identification made by Lucian: *What could be more potent than the face of the Queen of Hell?*

Its use for a variety of purposes, all protective, are illustrated by an example in King's text, simple in the extreme, a Gorgon's head with the legend *I protect so-and-so*.

The history of the symbol in Greek usage dates from the 8th century BCE, becoming common as devices outside temples in the 6th century. It is perhaps unsurprising that this was particularly the case in the region around Corinth. After all, Corinth possessed one of the oldest temples of Hera, was

the home of Melissa, a haven for Medea and where the Lamia was supposedly bested by Apollonius of Tyana. It is likely, as Harrison first suggested, that the head originated in a ritual mask; thus the disembodied head predates the legend of Perseus slaying the Medusa invented to account for it. Homer provides important testimony of the precedence of the head in myth. He mentions the head four times, never in connection with a body, or a decapitation episode.

Among the oldest examples are a coin from the Mysian city of Parium and a clay head at Mycenaean Tiryns from the 8th century, with a likely monumental example at Knossos in Minoan Crete (15th century BCE). A suggested further prehistory of several thousands of years is more than likely. Elworthy is worth consulting regarding its wide distribution; beginning with Greek, Etruscan and Roman examples, thence into Byzantine and medieval European usage. As an amulet it was apparently popular in Romano-British times, fashioned from jet. Similarly, it was among the most frequent devices on Classical coins, and this example was much followed by Anglo-Saxon kings.

Similarities have been remarked to the face of Bes; frequently used on Egyptian temples and palaces, but originating as guardian of the birth tent in predynastic village magic. The early importance in magic of his female counterpart Beset is likely relevant here. Resemblances have also been noted to the face of Kali or Bhavani, as well as certain Tibetan masks, and ritual masks from many cultures. Whatever these resemblances may indicate in terms of diffusion or archetypes, a traceable history of its use in Western contexts is well documented. A better known or more reputable amulet would be difficult to find; it possessed always an apotropaic power.



The connection with Medusa leads to the subject of the beautification of the image in Greek use. Prior to the 5th century BCE the face was always hideous. Wreathed with serpents, her tongue lolled out, tusk like teeth jutted from her mouth, her cheeks were distended and – entirely contrary to Greek artistic convention – her eyes stared directly at the onlooker. While female the face sometimes possessed a beard, likely originally representing streams of blood.

Gradually the aesthetic requirements of Greek art refined the original image, until the Medusa became a beautiful woman, and the gorgoneion followed suit. Refinement is of course entirely relative, Etruscan culture never made this change. Among the Greeks, the terror that turned men to stone came to be ascribed to a power projected from her eyes. This is ironic, since the evil eye was repelled by this very image. It is also instructive, as the very first literary reference to the evil eye

concerned the powers of Medea. This same power led to its frequent use on shields, but also the doors of kilns, and on mosaics at the doors of houses, guarding the entrance. From Etruscan Italy to the Black Sea, it recurred constantly as a protective and decorative device in ceramics, metals and textiles. A connection with a powerful and terrible goddess of remote antiquity need hardly be questioned.

Pterodrakon . Winged Dragon

THIS DRAGON has the limbs and wings of a dragon and breathes fire, but has human face and feet. The wicked sexual implications of the dragon in the polemic are more emphatic with the Winged Dragon. He describes his predilection for anal sex with voluptuous women, a passage so scandalous it is omitted in several manuscripts. So that the ‘error’ of Paganism in worshipping demons is stressed, the Winged Demon declares that he is worshipped as a god. An intriguing element of this passage is the revelation that his children *become Eros*. This may be elucidated in various ways, one of which is a slur on Plato’s Daimon of Love. Eros was an important figure in several cosmogonies, and his parentage accordingly is given in numerous forms. In the best known form his mother is Aphrodite, as befits the voluptuous form of our dragon’s preferred sexual partners. Since the dragon is the father in this story, it is interesting to note that Hermes is often understood to be the father of Eros. Strikingly the winged Eros is most particularly associated with another version of his parentage, namely Hermes and Artemis.

In other respects similar remarks apply as to the three headed dragon; as a loaded symbol if it is to serve any purpose for us then conscious reinterpretation is required. Thracian iconography, remarked on in *Geosophia*, is among the most useful. The negative symbolism, of a figure of evil attacked by mounted Saints (or King Solomon himself) is there entirely absent. The mounted hero of Thrace never attacks the dragon, for a very simple reason. As the Thracian rider represents the living dynast, the Sun in the sky, so the Dragon represents the deified Hero – the Underworld Sun – in chthonic guise. Interestingly, as regards the first of our two dragons, three heads is also important in Thracian iconography.

Enepsigos

SOLOMON NEXT SUMMONS ANOTHER FEMALE SPIRIT named Enepsigos. My reading is closer to Conybeare’s than Duling’s; that is, not *two heads* but two additional heads, and corresponding arms. Enepsigos also speaks of herself as having many names, residing in the Moon and having three forms for that reason *like the goddess I am called*. This cannot be other than Hecate Triformis. While both are understood in this period, her hovering near the Moon may imply Hecate as Persephone, rather than simply Selene. In the eschatological schema described by Plutarch and in Orphic sources, Persephone is queen of the Moon as the destination of travelling souls.

Her claim to manifest *as Kronos to the wise* is mysterious. The theurgists famously possessed an invocation of Kronos; could this have been a manifestation of Hecate, the Moon, as keeper of time? This would make sense in terms of the undercurrent of lunar pantheism detectable both in Theurgy and the magical papyri. Of particular importance is *PGM VII.756–94* where Hecate is the core of a complete lunar theology, as exalted as any contemporary solar pantheism, wherein she is mistress of the whole world and her only superior is the creator IAO.

The presence throughout the *ToS* of Hecate – identified more or less outright with Artemis – has already been remarked. As the embodiment of pagan magic of the period her presence is natural, while traces of her in contemporary Jewish magic are also strong. Antipathy to pagan magic

undoubtedly informed Christian polemic, whether composed for Jewish consumption or aimed directly at pagans. Hecate and Apollo are key figures in the influential *Chaldean Oracles*, the holy book of the Neoplatonist magus. So too their presence in the substrata of theurgic ritual is important to us for the recovery of archaic goetia. In this connection it is worth mentioning again the Ostian amulet, with Solomon on one side and Hecate Triformis on the other, excavated at a Roman crossroads shrine. This underlines – if such is necessary – that Hecate’s connection with Solomonic magic was and is as relevant to its practitioners as its opponents.

Kunopegos

MANUSCRIPT P has Kunopaston, but Kunopegos is the better reading. Pegasus comes from a similar root to the latter part of the name, and both mean to spring up, particularly in relation to water. This spirit appears as a *cruel sea horse*, his foreparts that of a horse, the rear that of a fish. He is a danger to mariners and the jealous guard of submerged treasures. He can further manifest as waves and in human form. Seawater is a necessity of his existence, so that Solomon has to fill the vessel in which he imprisons him with it. The constellation of Pegasus is adjacent to the marine constellation of Pisces; it is prominent among the asterisms of the mansions, as well as represented in the Denderah zodiac. Kunopegos may represent a former marine deity, many of whom were associated with prophecy, as well as to archaic conceptions of the Underworld.

The Giant

THE FORM OF THIS UNNAMED SPIRIT is shadowy like Obizuth’s; black representing the invisibility of ghosts in Greek artistic conventions. He bears a sword and identifies himself as a *lascivious spirit of a giant who died in a massacre in the age of giants*. The reference is to the Nephelim and the fallen angels who bred with mortal women, as in *Enoch* and elsewhere in Jewish lore. It is significant as implying that the Watchers were physical beings, and that after defeat by angelic forces they became ghostly. Interestingly he dwells among tombs and impersonates human dead, as other demons in the *ToS* do gods; both alleged deceptions of course demonise pagan belief. It is from such assertions that the transition from employing the dead in the papyri to demons in the grimoires derives. While he connects with authentic traditions in Jewish apocalyptic writings the polemical hand is clearly at work. Thus he answers Solomon’s query regarding the power that defeats him not with an angel’s name but a reference to the power of the cross.

His portrayal as a man with a sword may derive from a Greco-Egyptian decan or star image; to be explicit, Orion and/or Aldebaran, one of its stars. However in the *ToS* the spirit is not even dignified with a name. This is not the clearest indication in the text that spirits outside [chapter 18](#) also correspond with decan entities, although following them provides a stronger case. Now however it is time to examine the oldest and most relevant portion of the text that deals with them explicitly.

The Decans

THE OLDEST AND MOST INFLUENTIAL portion of the *Testament* deserves both full quotation and a dedicated chapter. The translation and notes which follow combine McCown's Greek 'eclectic text' of [chapter 18](#) with additional material from MS *P*. Duling's text and notes in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* are worth consulting; indeed the term *thwarting angel* appears to originate with Duling.

I ordered that another demon appear to me. The thirty six elements came to me, their heads like misshapen dogs. Between them, some had the appearance of a man, of a bull, they had the image of a ferocious beast, of a serpent, of a sphinx, of a bird. Seeing them, I, Solomon, asked: *Who are you, you the others?* They answered in one single voice: *We are the thirty six elements, the Masters of Darkness of this age of the world. But you can not, o King, damage or imprison us. However, since God gave you power over every spirit of the air, of the earth and of hell, we present ourselves to you as the other spirits.*

[MS *P* adds: *therefore do we present ourselves before thee like the other spirits, from ram & bull, from both twins & crab, lion & virgin, scales & scorpion, archer, goat-horned, water-pourer & fish.*]

Aries

1 I, Solomon, called the first spirit and said to him: *Who art thou?* and he answered: *I am the first face of the zodiacal circle; my name is Rhyax. I cause ill of the head to men and beat their brows. If I hear: 'Michael constrains Rhyax,' I flee on high.*

2 The second said: *I am called Barsaphael. I cause the pain on one side of the head of men who lie down at my hour. When I hear 'Gabriel, constrain Barsaphael!' I escape immediately to the heights.*

3 The third said: *I am called Artosael. I cause violent pains in the eyes. But if I hear 'Uriel, constrain Artosael!' I flee on high.*

Taurus

4 The fourth said: *I am called Horopel [Oropel] and I send boils, inflammation of the muscles of the throat and abscesses. When I hear 'Raphael constrains Horopel' I escape toward the heights.*

5 The fifth said: *My name is Kairoxanondalon. I bite the ears. When I hear 'Ourouel, constrain Kairoxanondalon,' I flee through the air.*

6 The sixth said: *I am called Sphendonael. I cause parotid tumours, and tetanic recurvation. If*

I hear 'Sabaël, constrain Sphendonaël,' I flee to the heights.

Gemini

7 The seventh said: *I am called Sphandor. I weaken the force of the shoulders and paralyse the tendons of the hands and paralyze the members. If I hear 'Araël, constrain Sphandor' I flee immediately to the clouds.*

8 The eighth said: *My name is Belbel. I twist the heart and the minds of men. If I hear 'Karaël, constrain Belbel,' I flee immediately through the air.*

9 The ninth said: *I am called Kourtaël. I send colics into the bowels. If I hear 'Iaoth, constrain Kourtaël,' I flee immediately to the clouds.*

Cancer

10 The tenth said: *I am Metathiax and I cause the kidney pains. If I hear 'Adonaël, constrain Metathiax,' I flee immediately through the air.*

11 The eleventh said: *I am called Katanikotael. I send disputes and litigations into houses. If someone wants to re-establish the peace, write upon seven leaves of laurel the names which disarm me: 'Angel, Eae, Ieo, Sabaoth, constrain Katanikotael!' You must first wash the leaves and then asperge this holy water in the house, and I disappear immediately.*

12 The twelfth said: *My name is Saphoraël. I send discords to men and I rejoice every time I irritate them. If someone writes 'Iae Ieo, sons of Sabaoth,' and carries these names on their neck, I disappear immediately.*

Leo

13 The thirteenth said: *I am Phobothel. I loosen the tendons. If I hear 'Adonai' I flee through the field immediately.*

14 The fourteenth said: *I am called Leroel, I bring chill, shivers and stomach pains. If I hear 'Iax, get out! do not be heated, because Solomon is more powerful than the eleven patriarchs!' I disappear immediately.*

15 The fifteenth said: *I am called Soubelti, I send the feverish chills and the numbness. If I hear 'Rizhoel, constrain Soubelti!' I flee immediately to the clouds.*

Virgo

16 The sixteenth said: *I am called Katrax. I inflict to men incurable fevers. Whoever wants to heal must smash coriander, and anoint the lips [with the juice] saying: 'By Dan, I conjure you! Flee from that image of God!' and I disappear immediately.*

17 The seventeenth said: *My name is Ieropa. I seat myself upon the belly of men and I cause convulsions when they bathe. If I meet a man on my way, with one strike I make him fall down. Whoever says three times in the right ear of the patient 'Iouda, Zizabou,' forces me to go away.*

18 The eighteenth said: *I am Modebel. I separate man from his wife. If someone writes the names of the eight patriarchs and puts [it] over the doorstep [or, in the doorway], I disappear immediately.*

Libra

19 The nineteenth said: *I am called Mardero. I bring incurable fevers shivering, but I flee immediately from the house in which you write my name [in some way].*

20 The twentieth said: *My name is Rhyx Nathotho. I sit over the knees of men. If someone writes 'Phounebiel' on a leaf, I disappear without delay.*

21 The twenty first said: *I am Rhyx Alath. I bring asthma to small children. If someone writes 'Rarideris' and carries it, I disappear immediately.*

Scorpio

22 The twenty second said: *I am called Rhyx Audameooth. I send the cardiac diseases. If someone writes 'Raiouoth,' I disappear immediately.*

23 The twenty third said: *I am called Rhyx Manthado and I cause the kidney pains. I disappear immediately if someone writes 'Iaoth, Ouriel.'*

24 The twenty fourth said: *My name is Rhyx Aktonme. I cause pains in the ribs. If one writes upon wood of a ship that has missed its port [lit. failed, i.e. wrecked] 'Marmaraoth of the air,' I at once retreat.*

Sagittarius

25 The twenty fifth said: *I am Rhyx Anatreth. I send fevers and convulsions in the entrails. I disappear immediately when I hear 'Arara, Arare'.*

26 The twenty sixth said: *I am called Rhyx the Enautha. I make absent the senses and change hearts. If someone writes 'Kalazael,' I disappear immediately.*

27 The twenty seventh said: *I call myself Rhyx Axesbuth. I cause to men diseases of the chest and hæmorrhoids. If someone conjure me through wine which is given to the diseased to drink, I disappear immediately.*

Capricorn

28 The twenty eighth said: *My name is Rhyx Hapax. I prevent people from sleeping. If someone writes 'Kok Phedismos' and if these words are attached to the temples, I disappear immediately.*

29 The twenty ninth said: *I am Rhyx Anoster. I send the hysteric condition and painful swellings in the bladder. If someone crushes [three] laurel seeds in virgin oil and anoints/massages the body saying: 'I conjure thee by Marmaraoth,' I disappear immediately.*

30 The thirtieth said: *I am Rhyx Physikoreth. I provoke the long diseases. If someone puts salt*

in oil and anoints the sick saying: 'Cherubim, Seraphim, help [him]' I disappear immediately.

Aquarius

31 The thirty first said: *I call myself Rhyx Aleureth. If anyone swallows the bone of a fish, I will disappear if someone put a bone of the same fish upon the chest of the sick person.*

32 The thirty second said: *I am Rhyx Ichthyon. I detach the tendons. If I hear 'Adonai, malthe,' I disappear immediately.*

33 The thirty third said: *I am called Rhyx Achoneoth. I cause the pains in the throat and in the tonsils. If someone writes 'Leikourgos' [grappiform, that is diminishing letter by letter], on the leaves [a leaf?] of ivy, I flee.*

Pisces

34 The thirty fourth said: *My name is Rhyx Autoth. I arouse envy and quarrel between friends. If someone writes the alpha and the beta I am defeated.*

35 The thirty fifth said: *I am Rhyx Phtheneooth. I cast the evil eye on all men. The eye much-suffering, inscribed, renders me unable to do harm.*

36 The thirty sixth said: *I am called Rhyx Mianeth. I am enemy of the body. I ruin houses and waste flesh. If someone writes 'Melto, Ardad, Anaath' in the hall of the house, I flee from the place.*

When I, Solomon, understood all that, I gave praise to the God of heaven and earth, and I commanded the spirits to carry water. And I prayed God that the thirty-six demons who bind men could enter into the Temple of the Lord.

CHAPTER 18 IS THE OLDEST PART OF THE TEXT and as seen deals with the decans. It is to be noted that originally the demons introduced themselves thus: *I O Lord King Solomon am N*, not *I am King N (RTS)*. The word *elements* in the preamble translates *stoicheia*, a technical term whose meaning underwent great transformations over time. Earlier in the *ToS* it was used to describe the seven female spirits; whether these correspond to the Pleiades or the planets an astrological context for the term remains. *Stoicheia* is also used by Saint Paul (*Galatians* 4:3), probably in an astrological sense. Such passages demonstrate awareness – and disapproval – of the proximity of contemporary religions to magic. This characteristic awareness is also shown in *Ephesians* 6 where an implicit reference to the decans is not unlikely:

11: Put on the complete armour of God; that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12: For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Principalities and Powers [viz, angelic Orders], against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places [viz, the air].

1 The name of the spirit is derived from *Rex*, being transliterated into Greek letters. The first of the decans is their chief, and *Rex* is a close equivalent of *Baal*. As a decan of Aries the physical correspondence to the head matches our contemporary astrological ideas. Michael too is a natural correspondence here. The thwarting angel paradigm is clearly in place, but – in terms of underlying ideas and influences – angel and demon are really more equivalent than opposite.

4 This spirit is missing from *MS P*, and thus from Conybeare's text. The name may derive from *Horus*, as seemingly does one of the demons of the *Goetia of Solomon*. More importantly, *Horus* underwent syncretism with *Apollo* in late antiquity.

5 *MS P* gives the name of the fifth spirit as *Iudal*, and the formula as *Uruel Iudal*.

8 *MS P* gives the angel's name as *Arael*.

10 Gundel suggests this spirit's name derives from a title of *Apollo*.

11 Here plainly the magician employs a spell or formula rather than the invocation of a specific angel. The correspondence of *laurel* with our *Apollo* is significant.

12 Again a formula or spell is employed rather than the thwarting paradigm. The importance of *Sabaoth*, who is often associated with vowel combinations, should be apparent. *MS P* gives the name of the spirit as *Saphathrael*, the affliction is still discord among men. The formula is given as *these names of angels: Iaeo, Iealo, Iolet, Sabaoth, Ithoth, Bae*, these to be worn at neck or ear when *the drunken fit* will dissipate. The last two names appear to be Egyptian, here combined with vowel combinations and with *Sabaoth* (the Lord of Time, of whom the Sun is the visible face).

13 *MS P* has: *I am called Bobel [sic], and I cause nervous illness by my assaults. If I hear the name of the great 'Adonael, constrain Bothothel,' I at once retreat.*

14 ^{MS} *P* has Kumeatel/Kumentael with shivering fits and torpor. There appears to be confusion between 14 and 15 in the ^{MSS}. In ^{MS} *P* the mysterious Iax occurs in the next verse rather than this, while the formula here is *Zoroel, imprison Kumentael*.

15 ^{MS} *P* has the spirit's name as Roeled and the same affliction and formula as 14 above. Iax was mentioned earlier in the *ToS* in connection with the Headless Demon.

16 ^{MS} *P* has Atrax, otherwise similar. *Dan* has been interpreted as Zeus, but this may be subject to error.

17 ^{MS} *P* has the spirit's name as Ieropael and the formula as *Iudarize, Sabune, Denoe*. The Greek terms used and the descriptions suggest epilepsy; a disease called sacred by the ancients and associated with Hercules.

18 A written formula is employed, protecting the door, rather than the invocation of a named angel. The eight patriarchs, according to Gundel, represent the primal Ogdoad of the Egyptians, but the savant can be over zealous with Egyptian associations. Jewish practice is apparent in ^{MS} *P*, where the spirit concerned is named Buldumech: *If anyone write down the names of thy sires, Solomon, on paper and place it in the antechamber of his house, I retreat thence. And the legend written shall be as follows: 'The God of Abram, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob commands thee – retire from this house in peace.'* And I at once retire.

19 Mardero is the twentieth spirit in ^{MS} *P* and the formula *Sphener, Rafael, retire, drag me not about, flay me not* is written *on the leaf of a book* and tied around the victim's neck. Here the manner of writing the spirit's own name, rather than an angelic opponent, is the missing key. Some instruction may have been omitted or lost, for example a diminishing name formula or 'wing.'

The nineteenth spirit in ^{MS} *P* is first called Naoth but the name Nathath is used in the formula. They take their seat upon men's knees, but the neck is mentioned in the formula. This suggests a female spirit who strangles males succumbing to her wiles. The formula *Phnunoboel, depart Nathath and touch thou not the neck* is written on paper, which causes the spirit to flee. The current text has a shorter form of this instruction.

20 See above remarks, as with several examples following, employment of a written name in this way represents another magical methodology at work. This spirit and the remainder of the list following have the title *Rhyx*, transliterated from *Rex*. Originally this was part of an address to Solomon: *O King Solomon, I am Nathotho* and so on. This was suppressed as giving too much honour to the king in subsequent polemical Christian redactions. In the case of this spirit the gender may not be male.

21 ^{MS} *P* agrees regarding the spirit's name bar the spurious title, the affliction too is the same. However, it gives a variant formula: write on paper *Rorex, do thou pursue Alath* and fasten around his neck.

22 ^{MS} *P* has an apparent lacuna at the twenty second spirit. However its 23rd is quite different from the above and that following:

The twenty-third said: *I am called Nefthada. I cause the reins to ache, and I bring about dysury. If any one write on a plate of tin the words: 'Iathoth, Uruel, Nephthada' and fasten it round the loins, I at once retreat.*

24 *Mar* can mean lord (or saint), and the name could thus mean Lord of Lords of the Air, which is meaningful in the context of such spirits. *MS P* has Akton rather than Aktonme, the material written on is copper from a shipwreck.

25 *MS P* has Arara, Charara for its formula. Duling points out that Arara appears in *PGM* 19a.48. Gundel's painstaking work on the decans lists an Aroi Aroi among the decan gods.

26 *MS P* has *I am called Enenuth*, and gives a variant formula: write *Allazool*, pursue *Enenuth* and tie it around the victim.

27 Greenfield is of the opinion that Axesbuth is derived from Ozibuth, similarly Gundel discerns *bythos*, depth, in the suffix. This again underlines that the Rhyx prefix is no guide to gender, let alone rank. The formula is obviously much abbreviated. *MS P* gives the spirit's name as Pheth, the same affliction and a more complete formula: *If one exorcise me in wine, sweet-smelling and unmixed by the eleventh aeon, and say: 'I exorcise thee by the eleventh aeon to stop, I demand, Pheth (Axiopheth),' then give the patient to drink, I at once retreat.*

28 *MS P* has Harpax and runs the two words of power together.

29 The word *hysteria* derives from the Latin for womb, which was subject to odd beliefs from ancient times onward; being believed to wander in the body. From this arose problems which magical medicine sought to address.

33 The wing shape typical of the papyri is clearer in *MS P*:

```
L E I K O U R G O S
E I K O U R G O S
K O U R G O S
O U R G O S
U R G O S
R G O S
G O S
O S
S
```

The name Leikourgos shows plain Greek influence, and the reference is to one of two persons. The first, Lycurgus the Spartan law-giver, suggests the magic of Apollonius of Tyana; among whose 'saints' the Spartan was counted. Second is the king torn to pieces in the myth of Dionysus, to whom ivy was sacred.

THE TESTAMENT DOES NOT END with the decans, the importance of which in the development of Western magic and its demonology in particular will require a further section to elaborate. Immediately after the decan section follows the latter part of the *Testament* consisting of [chapters 19](#) to [26](#), where his dignity and power are consciously undermined rather than emphasised. Klutz may be consulted in matters of textual analysis here, should the reader wish to pursue the matter. He points to structural connections between these later chapters and the sequence of events in *1 Kings 10*, hence the odd sandwiching of the incident with the elderly artisan between two passages involving Sheba.

The manuscripts of the *Testament* vary a good deal at this point ([chapter 19](#)), adding and subtracting matter. Duling's text gives one of the simpler and most significant readings, while dealing with the others in the notes. When the kings of the earth come to Solomon bringing metals and wood for the Temple:

Among them Sheba, Queen of the South, who was a witch (*goes*), came with much arrogance and bowed before me.

Later pro-Solomonic MSS of the *ToS* term her *the wise sibyl*, marking a line of descent for her as a Queen of spirits in the grimoires.

[Chapter 20](#) is completely given over to the reappearance of Orniias in the story and the incident of the old artisan and his son. Klutz enlarges on how these events do not show Solomon in a good light.

[Chapter 21](#) reintroduces Sheba, and involves Solomon taking the witch queen into the Holy of Holies, with a similar disapproving subtext.

[Chapter 22](#) brings a letter from Adarkes, King of Arabia, petitioning the great Solomon for assistance. This is the cue for the two demons whose coming was foretold in Solomon's interviews with Beelzeboul. These differ from all others in the *Testament*, in that they come on cue, not when Solomon calls, and they may not be bound by him. The first is the wind demon Ephippas who Solomon despatches a brave young servant to capture in a leather bottle. This spirit is well analysed by Klutz as a literary construct. His name means *on horseback* and the intention of the passage is to undermine Solomon's status, since he was commonly portrayed in heroic demon hunting guise riding a horse like a victorious Roman emperor. The other is described as a spirit dwelling in the Red Sea, and is a compatriot of Ephippas. The name of the spirit is Abezethibou, which appears to be a corruption of Obizuth. The latter is a far clearer cut and important figure, what is not clear is a real connection of Abezethibou with her in the polemicist's mind.

Inarguably, the intention in this part of the text to defame Solomon is the main force at work. Abezethibou confesses to having assisted Jannes and Jambres; magicians of the Pharaoh who opposed Moses. Thus, when Abezethibou and Ephippas undertake a task for Solomon's glorification, the reader has been prepared to compare it with this ungodly magic. Thus prepared, the end of the *Testament* concerns Solomon's fall into idolatry, the result of magic's sapping his moral fibre.

128: And I Solomon glorified God, and adorned the Temple of the Lord with all fair-seeming. And I was glad in spirit in my kingdom, and there was peace in my days. And I took wives of my own from every land, who were numberless. And I marched against the Jebusaeans, and there I saw a Jebusaeon, daughter of a man: and fell violently in love with her, and desired to take her to wife along with my other wives. And I said to their priests: *Give me the Shunammite to wife*. But

the priests of Moloch said to me: *If thou lovest this maiden, go in and worship our gods, the great god Raphan and the god called Moloch.* I therefore was in fear of the glory of God, and did not follow to worship. And I said to them: *I will not worship a strange god. What is this proposal, that ye compel me to do so much?* But they said: ... *by our fathers.*

As is next seen, Solomon's fall comes about through sex and pagan gods. Incidentally Raphan is the god Rephan who appears in the decan table of Firmicus, 1st Pisces; also known as Remphan.

129: And when I answered that I would on no account worship strange gods, they told the maiden not to sleep with me until I complied and sacrificed to the gods. I then was moved, but crafty Eros brought and laid by her for me five grasshoppers, saying: *Take these grasshoppers, and crush them together in the name of the god Moloch; and then will I sleep with you.* And this I actually did. And at once the Spirit of God departed from me, and I became weak as well as foolish in my words. And after that I was obliged by her to build a temple of idols to Baal, and to Raphan, and to Moloch, and to the other idols.

Eros appears several times in the *ToS*; there are other subtexts, but sex and paganism is sufficiently clear. Solomon's wisdom departs him through his honouring *strange gods*.

130: I then, wretch that I am, followed her advice, and the glory of God quite departed from me; and my spirit was darkened, and I became the sport of idols and demons. Wherefore I wrote out this Testament, that ye who get possession of it may pity, and attend to the last things, and not to the first. So that ye may find grace for ever and ever. Amen.

Klutz discounts the usual eschatological sense of *the last things* in favour of a reference to the sequence of events in the text. Here I must differ. Agreement with spirits, in theurgy, safeguarded the soul; that magic has the opposite effect is exactly what Christian polemic has ever asserted. This aside, the diminution of Solomon is sufficiently demonstrated as the intention of the redactor, while our intention is to clarify the spirit catalogue.

THE END OF THE SPIRIT CATALOGUE

BO FAR AS the spirit catalogue is concerned, my readers are confronted by a peculiar situation. Orniias reappears to usher in the closing passages and between him and two immensely powerful demons comes Sheba. Her place in the spirit catalogue is certain, and will be developed upon. Then there are Ehippas and Abezithibou who so far appear to be best understood as literary constructs, rather than pre-existent figures in cult or magic. By this reading their chief importance would be restricted to subtexts of the *Testament* in polemical redactions, rather than spirit hierarchies of the Solomonic genre.

However, as regards magical tradition there is plainly more to these two spirits. Firstly this passage parallels the *Confession of Saint Cyprian* 24, where his instructor the devil calls Cyprian *the new Jambres*, the rival of Moses who in the *ToS* Abezithibou confesses assisting. Secondly, as was seen earlier, the beginning of the *Testament* introduces four spirits, Orniias, Beelzeboul, Onoskelis and Asmo-deus; Beelzeboul then reappears, dividing this group from the main catalogue. Something very similar is at work here, give or take the two appearances of Sheba previously

explained. That is Ornias reappears before Sheba (second mention), Ehippas and Abezithibou (Obizuth?), thus to a degree mirroring the group at the beginning.

FIRST 4	Ornias	Beelzeboul	Onoskelis	Asmodeus
LAST 4	Ornias	Sheba	Ehippas	Abezithibou

The names are not presented in order of attribution or equivalence, only appearance. Note Sheba, Onoskelis and Obizuth; queens rather than kings.

It is difficult not to suspect a level of interaction of these groups with the Chiefs of the *Hygromanteia*, and the Four Kings of later demonology.

	EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
	△	▽	△	▽
<i>Hyg'</i>	Lucifer	Beelzeboul	Astaroth	Asmodeus
<i>ToS 1</i>	Ornias	Beelzeboul	Onoskelis	Asmodeus
<i>Kings</i>	Oriens	Amaimon	Paimon	Ariton
<i>ToS 2</i>	Ornias	Ehippas	Sheeba	Obizuth

Beelzeboul, Asmodeus and Samael are hard to disassociate and/or prone to merge.

THERE IS MUCH TO CELEBRATE in the recent appearance of the *Magical Treatise of Solomon*. That is, the *Hygromanteia*, translated and edited by Ioannis Marathakis; whose former study of invisibility spells was so penetrating. As regards the title *Hygromanteia* there has been some controversy. Some have doubted the connection of the text with the subject of water divination; academics Torijano and Greenfield have both supported the connection. Noted occult writers Skinner and Rankine have proposed another explanation for its use; a connection with the vessels into which Solomon conjured spirits. My sympathies are entirely with the academics. With them I consider it a wholly correct title, linking Solomonic magic with vessel divination as known from the papyri. Greenfield's thesis (in *Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology*) resembles my own, viz:

The obvious similarities between the main rite of the circle and the other hydromancies and katoptromancies which also appear here ... suggest that it is the basin or mirror that has dropped out of the main ritual rather than the other rituals being appended to something that originally had nothing to do with them. At some time prior to the fifteenth century then, if this is the case, there will have been in existence a ... [Solomonic] hydromancy text-book. This will have had at its heart a ritual for summoning demons to a circle by means of a water-basin or something similar, but it will also have included alongside this instructions and detailed information required for the complex preparations which preceded the summoning, involving the use of powers and concepts drawn from magical and catarchic astrology.

In this respect the publication adds weight to the thesis regarding the Art Armadel outlined in my *True Grimoire*. As Greenfield observes shortly after the quoted remarks, some materials of the *Hygromanteia* are very similar to the much older papyri. So too by comparison with the *Hygromanteia* the antiquity of many core features of the *Grimorium Verum* is established; removing the stigma of romantic invention that has too long attached to it.

One revelation a careful reader will note in the pages of the *Hygromanteia* is the conjuration of the Lady of the Mountains; or Kalē of the Mountains. What appears to be a comparable figure in shamanic lore is discussed in Clive Tolley's *Shamanism*; the *holy mountain maiden* performs an important role in initiation, supplying the shaman with water during his struggle with his future spirit helpers. Incidentally, the modern tendency to banish spirit visitors without further ado has probably led to many cases of failure to become a shaman!

Returning to Kalē, among her other names are Sympilia and Sibylia, in which guise she appears in Scot, and a related spell in the *GV*. Descended directly from the Sibyl (Sibylla) she is an important but hitherto overlooked or neglected figure in the grimoire tradition, as the *Hygromanteia* among other documents makes plain. While described in the polemics as a *goes*, Sheba is called *the wise sibyl* in later pro-Solomonic MSS of the *ToS*. In *Abramelin*, which Mathers handles rather better than Dehn, an oblique reference to Sibyls suggests the pseudonymous author knew more.

Turning first to Sibylia's role in the *Hygromanteia*, there are several points of interest to highlight, some of which require comparison with themes explored in our former volume. Sibylia in the *Hygromanteia* is referred to as Kalē, a well defined figure of Greek folklore, also called Lamia. Her name Kalē can be interpreted simply as *beautiful*, or in a more nuanced way as *the kindly one*; either sense being partly euphemistic and certainly no general guide to her nature. She is often depicted as inhumanly beautiful but having the legs of a goat or an ass like Onoskelis. In the *Hygromanteia* on the

other hand she has a serpentine lower body, though human legs, rosy cheeks, well defined breasts and long blonde hair. Importantly, as well as coloured garments she wears a crown. Her name of Lamia reminds us of the Libyan sibyl discussed in *Geosophia*. The term *lamiae* refers also to a type of spirit; a circumstance often encountered in relation to the beings and rulers discussed in this volume. The rituals in which she figures in the *Hygromanteia* are both worth close examination.

One such ritual (*MTS* 131) requires the operator to go to the mountains. Upon a rock serving as a table an offering is laid involving finely coloured pieces of silk cloth, with a bowl of honey and pine kernels, along with a slip of parchment bearing magical words. This offering is timed for noon on the 1st August. The magician then hides, awaiting the imminent appearance of the Lady of the Mountains. She will ask out loud who did this good thing for her. The magician is to respond then, and ask for *such and such a thing*. The Lady will bid him to leave and grant his wish.

The date of this rite is significant of course, corresponding to one of the major Sabbats in witch lore. Both mountains and pine trees are connected with Cybele, although provisionally we should not be over eager to make this connection. (The initial of Cybele should really be a *k* or hard *c*, etymological connection with the Sibyl while often assumed is not necessarily a given).

An example of a wish the Lady will grant follows in the text. It is, in my opinion, quite clear from the phrase *such and such a thing* that this is an example rather than the sole permissible object of the rite. Nevertheless the example is extremely significant. The silken cloths used in the rite are now hung from the neck of your horse, parchment talismans are attached to each leg, bearing the legends: *wind slayer, high-flying eagle, victory and power*. The horse will then run – likely originally fly – like an eagle. Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek myth, is the child of Medusa, a circumstance that is unlikely to be coincidence. A winged horse for a magician is powerfully suggestive of shamanic journeys. There are also traditions where the Lady gives a magical handkerchief or belt to the magician, enabling them to call upon her at will. This theme doubtless connects with the ring bestowed by her in grimoire rituals. The handkerchief and the cloths hung from the horse are tantalisingly similar results of invoking her.

A more extensive rite of hers in the *Hygromanteia* is a mirror divination process (128) for finding a thief, knowledge of treasure locations etc. This ritual is a form of the Art Armadel process discussed in *True Grimoire*. It also bears significant points of resemblance with the Sybilite rite in Scot, and the differences in the earlier text are enlightening. The ritual includes the preliminary summoning of an intermediary. He is responsible for laying a table, and arranging and cooking a feast for Sybilite and her companions. All these events are witnessed in the mirror and the stages of the rite closely resemble those given by Griffiths in his seminal *Fragment of a Græco-Egyptian work upon Magic*. The continuity from the papyri to the *Hygromanteia* to Lane's eye witness account of magic in 19th century Egypt is patent (*Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*).

Like many such rites this involves a boy seer. In addition the magician requires a mirror and the knife of art. With the knife a Circle is drawn (the description is significant: *like a grave on the ground*). Much like the circle I refer to in *TG* it is surrounded with pentagrams. When complete the knife is thrust in the middle, a gesture typical of Greek folk magic, while the black hilted knife is well known on Crete. The mirror is then held over the knife during the conjurations that follow.

Sympilia is invoked that a cook may come who appears as a lame horseman, his servant is sent for lambs from the highest mountain. The Cook is bid cook them and Sympilia and her court are invited. The Cook arranges tables, seats, cloths and so forth, all gold and silver. So too bread and wine are made ready. They then come and take their seats and rejoice before the magician gets down to

business. In the papyri and in Lane's account this rejoicing would be the spirits enjoying their feast together, before the magician speaks to one of them separately. The *Hygromanteia* may have originally taken this form, but as it now stands the feast is delayed a while longer. Sympilia is asked to send her servant to Solomon at Lakedaimonia:

... in order to give him the talisman that is nailed by steel and sealed by the trigram.

Upon this talisman when it is fetched the company is sworn to answer truthfully to the magician's questions. They are then addressed regarding the question in hand. After this:

When the boy rises, you must take the mirror, and recite: *Go eat, drink, and come back whenever I invoke you again.*

Then, take the knife and clean the spot where the pentagrams are drawn. You can repeat it at another time, if you want.

A major difference between this and the later English Sibylia rite, is the lame demon as it were appearing in the role of the deceased spirit employed in Scot. This lame demon appears in Greek folklore as the Sibylia's son. In that context he can also be the king of goblin-like demons (*kalikantzaroi*). Alternatively he can be outright identified with the devil. Despite his lameness he is very fast. The likely equivalence of Ornias and Asmodeus has been mentioned. So too the latter shares the status of king of demons with Belzebuth. In this light another passage from the *Testament* takes on additional meaning:

I then asked of the demon if there were females among them. And when he told me that there were, I said that I desired to see them. **So Beelzeboul went off at high speed, and brought unto me Onoskelis ...**

We have here a fast moving and high ranking demon fetching a female demon. Given the paucity of material regarding Beelzeboul in earlier Jewish lore, this part of the story probably originated with Ornias/Asmodeus. Similarly Onoskelis and the Sybil appear to be closely associated. The relationship of a lame demon with an important Lamia figure has definite connotations of which many readers will be aware. In short, we are reminded of the familial relations of Asmodeus with Lilith, among other similar combinations. Moreover Kalē is the obvious syncretic source for one of the names of Lilith recounted in various sources (see Gustav Davidson, appendix 351–352).



There are other aspects of the above ritual that require elucidation. Lakedaimonia – another name of Sparta – is a strange destination. As Marathakis notes, it has no relation to Solomon, and the author may have imagined it had a connection with daimones. On the other hand a talismanic object associated with the proto-Sibyl Cassandra was made in Sparta (See *Geosophia*: ‘Sibyllinia’). This was the Palladium, fashioned in Lakedaimonia by Abaris from the bones of Pelops. As discussed previously this powerful talisman is a predecessor of such potent objects as the Seal of Solomon. Identification with another potent talisman associated with the Sibyl follows from the fact that the talisman is nailed up by Solomon. This mirrors another reference half-hidden in the *Testament* regarding Solomon and the Head of the Gorgon:

And I Solomon having heard this, and having glorified the Lord, ordered her hair to be bound, and that she should be hung up in front of the Temple of God ...

As Greenfield notes, the Sibyl was similarly suspended – in a jar or cage – at the temple of Apollo at Cumæ. Another location he mentions is the temple of Herakles at Argyrus; this was in Sicily, where the gorgoneion was a frequent motif. Rather than view his suggestion as an alternative, it is important to read it as parallel. Virgil’s sibyl after all was a guide to the Underworld, and who better?

The linkage of Lamia with the Libyan sibyl is more than an isolated connection. As was seen in *Geosophia* the Sibyl legends of Norcia connected her with Sheba of the Solomonic legend. In the manuscripts of the *Testament* – often merged with the *Hygromanteia* – Sheba is usually called a *goes*, translated as *witch* in a derogatory sense. A more positive variant tradition is found in MS D (Dionysus Monastery, Mt. Athos, 16th century) where instead she is termed *the wise Sibyl (Sibylla Saba)*; likewise manuscript No. 2011 Bibliothèque Nationale terms her Sibylla. Italian witch lore is replete with references to the wise sibyl and Sibyllia; as has been shown, this was a widespread motif in European magic. A very similar motif can be found in Sicilian fairy lore, where she is queen of these spirits. Sicily was anciently strongly connected with the cult of Persephone, and as seen above connects also with the gorgoneion and classical Sibyl lore. Incidentally the title of Sheba in scripture and the *Testament of Solomon* alike is *the Queen of the South*; in folklore Solomon mistook her for Lilith on account of her legs, and Lilith is frequently associated with the South wind. Similarly Jewish demonology allots a special place to the Queen of Sheba. She was considered one of the queens of the demons and is sometimes identified with Lilith – for the first time in the Targum (*Job* 1), and later in the *Zohar* and the subsequent literature.

In short, while it may appear odd to include Sheba in the spirit catalogue, when considered as a name of Sibyllia this is far from being the case. Traditions surrounding them and their common identity are numerous and could be recounted ad nauseam; in essence however the matter reduces to this: Sibyllia is a Queen of spirits, connected with Sheba, Lamia and Lilith. At very least from the 4th century CE her role in folklore and literary tradition is extensive and continuous; there need be no hesitation in pronouncing her first among the Queens of the grimoires.

To the angel of the church in Thyatira write: *These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first. Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols.*

Revelation 2:18–20

THE CITY OF THYATIRA was founded by migrants from Lydia, under whom it first bore the name Pelopia. Seleucus I, the founder of the Seleucid dynasty, greatly extended it and added to its population towards the end of his reign. While its own trade was significant, the real importance of the city consisted largely of a strategic position on a major military and trade route. The city was not of major importance in itself, but served a significant strategic role for various empires in the region, from Seleucus to the Romans. Thyatira was also remarkable for possessing more trade-guilds than any other city in the Roman province of Asia. As well as dyers, leather-workers, tanners, potters and others, there was a guild of bronzesmiths. Hephæstus appears on a coin of the city complete with anvil, tongs and hammer, preparing a helmet for Athena who awaits his finishing touches. As a major deity of the region his presence here reflects more than the local requirements for military equipment.

The chief deity of Thyatira was the hero and Lydian sun-god Tyrimnaios who was identified with Helios and Apollo. He bore the name Helios Tyrimnaios Pythios Apollo and the titles Propolis and Propator. In the Roman period this worship became linked to the emperor worship cult. Such a figure was common in Lydian and Phrygian cities in the region. There are aspects to his cult in Thyatira that assume importance given the role of the sun-god in Roman religion under Syrian influence. For example, the Emperor Elagabalus, himself descended from a line of Syrian priests, appears on a coin of the city. He is portrayed with his hand in that of Apollo Tyrimnaios. The Emperor and god stand on either side of a flaming altar.

Another deity of the city was Artemis Boreitene, a form of Apollo's sister linked to Ephesian Artemis and the Persian dæva Anahita (Anaitis to the Romans). Whether connected with this deity or not, Thyatira also revered another important female figure: Sambethe, the Sibyl. Sambethe is variously known as the Chaldean, or Hebrew, or Persian Sibyl, and her cult flourished in the Chaldean's precinct. A strong tradition of Jewish influence pervades its memory, as well as these indications of mixed oriental influence that are undoubtedly important. The sanctuary arose from or was the apparent site of a fusion of Jewish and Pagan conceptions. The oracular nature of Sybilline tradition was a principal element of this syncretism.

It is without any doubt Sambethe – or a woman prominent in her cult – that is referred to so disparagingly in *Revelation*. Incidentally, the message to the angel of Thyatira is by far the longest to any of the Seven Churches. Seleucus the first had a policy of settling Jews in his cities, although it is not known for sure whether this was the case in Thyatira. *Acts 16:14* provides circumstantial evidence that there was such a community. Paul and his companions met a gentile woman from Thyatira in Macedonia; Lydia of Thyatira is described as *god-fearing* which term indicates a gentile with sympathies toward Jewish religion. It is curious that her name is the same as that of the city from which the founders of Thyatira came; an ancient seat of the worship of Apollo, associated with

prophetesses.

The eminent Professor of Semitic studies, Emil Schürer, suggested the Sambethe precinct came into being through a Jewish community. A community in which Jews and gentiles exchanged ideas may well have been associated with it. An alternative suggestion among some modern Christian exegetes, that Jezebel merely encouraged the Christian community to be accommodating to the pagan trade-guilds, does not address her role as prophetess. Schürer on the other hand held resolutely that this Jezebel was the priestess of the Chaldean Sibyl.

Do you think, Sir, said I, that these noblemen prefer to trace their origin to the Sylphs?

... Is it not more glorious for these illustrious men to be descended from beings so perfect, wise and powerful than from some foul hobgoblin or infamous Asmodeus?

Comte de Gabalis, Discourse IV

THE REHABILITATION OF ASMODEUS being, apparently, beyond so great a savant as the Comte, it would be unreasonable of me to attempt it. Was he not a demon before he entered Jewish lore from Persia, let alone the Christian grimoires? Nevertheless, common assumptions concerning him, and his identity with other figures of Jewish and Persian lore, are under informed. In any case being known as ‘reasonable’ is something I can live without.

According to the common theory, Asmodeus originates in a figure of Zoroastrian religion: Æshma, the messenger of Ahriman; a demon (*dæva*) of wrath whose attribute is a bloodied mace. Affinities certainly exist between Æshma and Asmodeus, although linguistically there appear to be no grounds for deriving Asmodeus from Æshma Dæva as is often claimed. One of several problems with doing so is that the construction Æshma Dæva is unknown in Persian writings.

In Christian lore Asmodeus obtained his clearest definition from the pre-Christian *Book of Tobit*; likely written in the 2nd century BCE though set six centuries earlier and once thought to date from that time. Therein Asmodeus is responsible for slaying seven bridegrooms of Sarah before he is finally defeated by the angel Raphael and a ritual involving the burning of the heart and liver of a fish. This explains the formula given against him in the *Testament of Solomon*, which in its original form dates from the 1st century CE. Interestingly he is portrayed as fleeing – or being banished – into Egypt; his binding by Raphael perhaps being limited to preventing his return. This is reminiscent of the flight of the Olympians from Typhon, and may reflect an identification of Egyptian deities with demons. That the Egyptians also considered foreign places as the realm of the demonic is an ironic rider. The association of both Set-Typhon and Asmodeus with the constellation Ursa Major draws such themes together. Other affinities will emerge as we go on.

The *Tobit* story may follow a common pattern in Judaic religious literature in which older gods and heroes are recast as humans, historicising older myth. Certainly Sarah’s father, Raguel, shares his name with an angel, and the number of her slain husbands may point to an older pagan myth involving seven gods.

So too mention must be made of the fact that in Zoroastrian lore the Dævas are evil, opposing the good Ahuras, while in Hinduism the Asuras are evil, opposing the good Devas. The true origins of the dichotomy in Indo-European language involve ancient religious reforms and transformations, whose precise nature may never be known. Nevertheless the Persian Dævas appear to have a prehistory as national gods; a cult abolished or opposed by Zoroaster. Not, as has been said elsewhere, entirely successfully – particularly in the one time provinces of the Persian Empire such as Asia Minor. At the same time, as mentioned, some dævas continued to receive cult long after the reforms of Zoroaster, not least in the region of Anatolia, an area of pivotal importance for Goetia. Major deities such as the goddess Anahita are in fact dævas. Æshma has been termed a storm demon in studies of Zoroastrian lore, and this could point to an original form akin to primitive forms of Zeus and regional Baals.

An intriguing parallel to the story in *Tobit* resides in Kimbanda; the description of Pomba Gira as *woman of seven husbands*. *Tobit*’s account may well involve an inversion of a rival cult’s

mythology; perhaps with the *husbands* being planetary suitors as in the myths of Sophia. Also relevant are the seven demons cast out of Mary Magdalene (*Luke 8:2*). These seven spirits receive no clear identification, which together with the centuries old distortion of Magdalene's role suggests layers of mystery. The famous dance of the seven veils has been interpreted as a Gnostic rite of liberation from fatalistic planetary demons. This would identify the spirits with the planetary vices (which Frisvold identifies with the *kiumbas* in a Brazilian context); such underlying themes could make Asmodeus the hero of the story in an older form.

This aside, perhaps greater clarity regarding Asmodeus still lurks in the context of Judeo-Christian demonology. There are a good many points that require highlighting and clarification before any reappraisal of him – particularly in relation to other figures – can be consistent and meaningful. Firstly, as in any mythological study, it is important to consider his parentage.

In the *Testament of Solomon* he claims: *I was born of angel's seed by a daughter of man*. According to Nahmanides and others of later date, this refers to his siring by an angel named Shamdon upon Naamah, sister of Tubal Cain. However Shamdon appears to be a duplication of Ashmedai (both names derive from the same root, ShMD, the differences being regional). Nevertheless, such a parentage would make him equivalent to a Giant (*Nephelim*) in Hebrew lore, and a demigod or hero in Greek; to be specific, intermediate in nature between humans and higher species. There are different versions of his birth in Rabbinical lore: according to some accounts he was the offspring of Adam's laying with Lilith. According to others his father was either Adam or Tubal Cain, and his mother the sister of Tubal Cain, Naamah. Tubal Cain is the likely Semitic root of the name Vulcan, probably representing the same kind of duplication as with Shamdon. Such recurrent duplication suggests they are the same myth, involving dual forms of the same figure.

Naamah herself is ambivalent in nature. As sister of Tubal Cain she is *a daughter of man*, but as Nahema she also appears as a demoness who resembles Lilith in all respects. There is a tradition of four queens of devils in which both figure; in this tradition Lilith is foremost of the four. According to Hayyim Vital (the successor of the great kabbalist Isaac Luria; 1543–1620) four queens of the demons rule over Rome (Lilith), over Salamanca (Agrath), over Egypt (Rahab), and over Damascus (Naamah). Given the connection of Lilith with the South wind these correspondences should be considered nominal and suggestive only. Note however the highly significant similarity of Lilith as first of four queens to that of Oriens as head of the Four Kings. The groups of Kings and Queens are further linked by the presence of Asmodeus in their myths. A popular tradition of German Jews which likely connects with Vital's Four Queens credits them with rulership over the four seasons. At the turn of each season their menstrual blood poisons the waters, and it is therefore prohibited to drink water at the change of the seasons. The essentials appear below:

QUEEN	DIRECTION	CITY (SIC)	CITIES AS CULTURAL REFERENCES
Lilith	North	Rome	Hecate
Mahalat	South	Egypt	Alabasandria
Naamah	East	Damascus	Lilith &c
Agrat (aka Igrat)	West	Salamanca	Maria Padilha

According to some kabbalistic traditions the mother of Asmodeus was another succubus or Lamia figure, Agrat Bat Malat. This tradition makes his father King David. Taking Lilith and Naamah as near equivalents, the fathers being human in each case, all these accounts converge in meaning.

Asmodeus by these traditions springs from a mortal copulating with a demoness. In essence then, whatever version we follow, his nature – and sphere of influence – are determined by his parentage. All clearly place him lower in the chain of being than such figures as Lucifer, Belzebuth and Astaroth, whose nature involves no mortal admixture. He is nevertheless foremost among those demons sprung from such couplings and wields great dominion upon the earth.

That a lamia, under whichever name, is his mother (as well as sister and bride) is highly informative. In loose usage the children of Lilith are lilim (Hebrew) or lamiaë (Greek), female demons of like nature to herself. Hecate has the same role of mother or chief of the lamiaë in Greco-Roman religion. Essentially a lamia can be either a demoness or a spirit of the dead of either gender. So too in Hebrew, Lilith is the mother of she-demons and also demons in general, male and female. These figures in both Greek and Hebrew lore frequently shift between demons and dangerous ghosts, in fact such distinctions between these as appear in later cultures are largely artificial.

Ashmedai

A GREAT PROBLEM in the common theories regarding Asmodeus is that the talmudic Ashmedai is notably less demonic. While they are frequently equated their identification with one another is problematic and disputed. Ashmedai resembles a friendly satyr or in more colloquial terms, a Robin Goodfellow; though possessing awesome power and penetrating insight. He is fairly well intentioned, highly intelligent and jocular; also capable of acts of kindness.

In haggadic lore indeed Ashmedai, far from being a permanent resident in Hell, has no connection with it at all. On the contrary, he ascends from his mountain retreat to heaven each day to participate in learned theological discussions before returning to Earth to eavesdrop on their earthly equivalents. When Solomon sends men to trap him by making him drunk, he at first refuses to drink, mindful of religious prohibitions against drunkenness. When, overcome by thirst, he falls into their clutches he is brought to Solomon. Imprisoned and set to work, he eventually tricks Solomon in return. Solomon wonders wherein the power of demons resides, since their king can be held prisoner by a man. Ashmedai asks Solomon to remove his magical ring in order for him to explain. He then reveals himself in his true form; when he dips his body to one side one wingtip touches the earth, the other heaven. Such vastness is of course convergent with that accredited to Typhon. Next he picks Solomon up and hurls him four hundred parasangs distance from Jerusalem, assumes his form and rules in his place, including access to his wives. Given the arrogance and cruelty modern sentiment readily perceives in Solomon's treatment of this rough but pleasant demon, we cannot but sympathise with his revenge.

On Solomon's return the deception is eventually uncovered, though Solomon has difficulty proving his identity. It transpires that the demon disregarded religious law in his relations with Solomon's wives, and also never appeared without his slippers on (to conceal his feet, those of a rooster). Armed with a second or recovered ring of power Solomon confronts his rival, who takes flight. We may be forgiven for taking pleasure in the fact Solomon is unable to once more fetter his guest.

All this is very well, say proponents of the identity of Ashmedai with Asmodeus. However the Haggadah are late, many features of the story are not truly connected with the demon but only the humbling of the sinful King. The haggadic tradition is influenced too by the *Testament of Solomon*. The wings of Orniat may have supplied those of Ashmedai, and other elements of the story

undoubtedly originate there. In other words detailed though it is, the haggadic tradition tells us nothing of the original nature of Ashmedai and does not disprove his origin in the Persian fiend. This dispute however is not ours, the 'Persian fiend' being less interesting than – say – a pre-Zoroastrian *dæva* receiving cult in the mountains of Asia Minor throughout the period!

So, never mind where he got the wings from, what about those feet? The rooster's feet are present throughout Jewish lore, while the *Goetia of Solomon* tells us he has the feet of a goose. Interestingly, the goose is a bird of Aphrodite, with whom Asmodeus (as will be shown) shares a correspondence with Taurus. The *Key* mentions a goose quill pen (*KoS* II.xiv) without provisos; the *Book of Saint Cyprian* however stipulates it is used in the signing of pacts, and indeed prefers it for all purposes. This is interesting, as the *KoS* reference also places the goose pen first, with the instructions for pen, ink and colours. It mentions additional pens – from swallow and crow – in the following chapter, thus ceding priority to the goose pen. I have discussed elsewhere that the primary purpose of parchment and writing in the Solomonic grimoires involves the pact.

What is important overall however is that, one way or other, the feet of Asmodeus are somehow abnormal. There are a variety of mythological variations, one human foot, one cock's, and perhaps most importantly of all, one leg longer than the other. Asmodeus is proverbially *the limping devil*. He has a limp, and a close association with Tubal Cain, the Bible's first blacksmith. Hephæstus, the god of blacksmiths who *fell from heaven* also had a limp. This god was covered rather thoroughly in a former volume, but the connections are powerful. Hephæstus was the Greek name for a major indigenous deity in the region, so important he had more temples than Zeus. Longstanding confusion has existed between Chaldean and Zoroastrian peoples and cultures in this region. This as well as later religious agendas has obscured the local fire cults and worship of the *dævas*. All considered, placing *Æshma* in the context of the region where Tubal Cain traditionally dwelt is a very natural step.

Leave this aspect of his complex identity aside for now. Ashmedai also lusts after mortal women, just as in later demonology Asmodeus is as often depicted as a demon of lust as of wrath. In French diabolism of the pre-Revolutionary period he is invoked in works of lust along with Astaroth as *princes of Amity*. This lustful nature is not proof of identity with *the fiend* Asmodeus either, though it merges readily with our hero's maternal lineage.

Nevertheless, there remain the linguistic difficulties; that *Æshma Dæva* does not appear in Persian, while a derivation of *dai* from *dæva* cannot be demonstrated. Even so it is clear that the Asmodeus of the *Testament* is, appropriately for *Æshma*, both murderous and a bringer of discord.

More clarity arises when Jewish demonology is considered in greater detail. Naturally some of the traditions are later than the period of Persian influence. Nevertheless, as in our studies of Roman tradition (particularly the Lares and the Manes), it is less important to know the original form when considering the subsequent influence on magical tradition as we receive it.

Briefly, there are three forms of demons in Jewish lore:

The first – known as Jewish demons – were created by God on the sixth day, the Sabbath intervening before he could give them bodies. These demons are neither evil nor hostile to man. They serve God, and even study the Torah. They may grow resentful of humans, for, among other reasons, envy of their physical forms. These spirits came to dwell between the Earth and the Moon, in other words they are sublunary spirits; a type we have met with fairly frequently. Not innately hostile, they can be roused to enmity to a particular human through the actions of the person concerned. Such people are explicitly bad characters, and include the evil sorcerer or witch. Such persons are

detestable to these spirits; the devout need have no fear of them.

It is of this type of aerial demons that Ashmedai is king in talmudic tradition. A further point is best made well in advance of discussion of the third, klipothic type of demon in Jewish lore. There is an account in the *Zohar* of Ashmedai being Solomon's teacher and moreover bestowing a book of magic upon him; it is to this first category of spirits that this tradition belongs. Ashmedai as the real author of the *Key of Solomon* is rather a turn around, at the least.

The second type consists of the more dangerous children of Lilith. Though many traditions concerning them regard them as wholly evil, there is also variation regarding their precise nature. There are the numerous daughters of Lamia figures who resemble their mother or queen in all respects. There are also male and female demons considered as ruled by and conceived by her. So too her children or subjects are often synonymous with the dead.

If nothing else, the latter demands pause for reflection. As seen in the study of the Roman dead, fear of the dead does not preclude reverence for them, customs and traditions often reflect both, and dividing lines move back and forth. The same ambivalence of attitude applies equally to such figures as Hecate, originally a Great Goddess. Later when devalued to queen of ghosts and witches, this view nonetheless co-existed with her role as major goddess of the Theurgists. Similar considerations apply to Persephone, and indeed her female attendants.

The problem so far as defining our hero is concerned is his relations with Lilith. As a king of demons he is even on occasion married to all four demon queens! Many traditions consider lamiaë and their queen wholly evil; Lilith is a fearsome figure in Jewish lore. Nevertheless there is room for considering this second type of demon as ambivalent and intermediate. Briefly, three points validate this; Ashmedai is as strongly linked to this class of spirit as the first; traditions concerning the dead are ambivalent rather than wholly demonic, and positive forms of the Lamia figure – who is a negative reflex of a divine female – are by no means unknown. A case including king, queen and subjects is a hard hand to beat, still less dismiss.

The third class of Jewish demons involve the kabbalistic concept of Sitra Akhra. Without going into too much detail, Sitra Akhra is the source of evil in Creation, and its occupants are the klipoth. While a far more esoteric conception than the popular view of Hell and evil demons, this represents the closest to it in Jewish thought. Anything originating in Sitra Akhra is inimical to man, dangerous and evil. Nevertheless it requires stating that the Kabbalists distinguished between three klipoth beyond redemption – destined for destruction at the end of things – and others greater in number destined for redemption (a Jewish equivalent of the doctrine of Restitution).

Here again we encounter complications in our understanding of Asmodeus. The demon Samael – himself far from clear cut – is sometimes said to dwell in Sitra Akhra, and traditions concerning Asmodeus are often shared by Samael. For example Lilith as Queen of demons is as often paired with Samael as Asmodeus. Samael and Lilith in some traditions are resident in Sitra Akhra and deemed King and Queen of the klipoth. As has been seen however, such traditions cannot be deemed definitive or universal. Just as Jewish demonology is nuanced, so too is Western demonology, and the equivalent folklore and its preceding mythology. There are great difficulties in considering the klipoth as equivalent to grimoire spirits, not least their resemblance to savage and implacable beasts, and their residence in a realm wholly distinct from our own – not too different from Tartarus as regards inaccessibility and separation. Tartarus for most confined there is inescapable; it is not a natural residence of those trafficking intelligently with wise men, or those considered dangerous but moving readily among us. Movement to and from such places is exceptional at best.

Matters of the klipoth and the implicit dualistic view of the problem of evil cannot be entirely or easily dismissed. Nevertheless, there is much to be learned from considering the sublunar sphere as the true centre of Western demonology and spirit work. So too our view of Asmodeus has to be nuanced, by some readings hostility from Asmodeus may be richly deserved. Both powerful and potentially dangerous, the *Zohar* nevertheless teaches that he was the benefactor of Solomon.

Other Guises and Surprises

THE JEWISH ENCYCLOPÆDIA makes oblique mention of Solomonic legends in which Asmodeus also goes by the name of Saturn, Marcolf or Morolf. One might imagine these legends appear in kabbalistic or pseudo-epigraphic sources. Though there are Hebrew texts on parallel lines, this is not the case. Although influenced by Jewish literature at some points these legends appear in a surprising variety of languages: Russian, German, Latin and French, as well as Old English with precedents in Anglo-Saxon culture. There are strong influences from Germanic cum Scandinavian poetic and wisdom traditions. Traces of the same lines of descent can be found in Grimms' *Fairy Tales*: the spirit Mercurius found in a bottle is most closely descended from Marcolfus.

Incidentally Marcolf, as well as a supposedly rustic and uncouth trickster who frequently outwits Solomon, is inclined to misogyny. This may or may not represent Solomon's reputation with foreign queens and their goddesses. Where lust and chastity are concerned myth takes some strange turns.

There are intriguing elements of letter mysticism in some of the Marcolf/Saturn tales, quite distinct from Kabbalah. These include an account of the powers in the letters of the Paternoster. Runes are encountered alongside the Latin letters, and this tradition is a major source for knowledge of English runes. So too the association of Woden with Wednesday and Mercurius is referred to directly. Although apparently separate from this literature, the connection of rune giving Woden with Germanic Wild Hunt and Monstrous Horde traditions should be mentioned. Woden in this guise provides another angle on Asmodeus, demon kings and their followers in European tradition.

In this literature Marcolf predates the English texts that feature Saturn. Nevertheless Saturn is plainly used as representing pagan – in this case Chaldean – wisdom. Saturn in these tales is ostensibly not the planetary god but a king of Chaldea with whom Solomon disputes. Some interpreters of the Marcolf tales profess to derive Marcolf from Moloch, citing unpleasant affinities with Saturn as Kronos. Naturally the cultural influences on this textual and oral tradition have been argued at length regarding their primacy and proportion. Hebrew influence for some components is inarguable, and Christian elements are obvious; without doubt however European paganism and folklore are a major component.

The plot thickens considerably when one considers the name Hasmoday or Chasmodai that occurs in magical and geomantic writings of the German magus Agrippa. In these guises Ashmedai is a spirit of the Moon, and I say guises advisedly. This spirit is perhaps best known in connection with the well known planetary magic squares of the *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*; specifically the magical square of the Moon, from which a sigil of the spirit may be extracted. The square in question is notorious for the length of the name of its Intelligence of Intelligences, the supposed ruler of the spirit. This name has five separate parts, beginning with Malach (or Malcha), the Hebrew for which could as readily be transliterated as Moloch.

So far so good, however, the same planetary spirits associated with these magic squares appear again in the geomancy of the *Fourth Book*, with different simpler sigils (and no controlling angels).

Chasmodai is still attributed to the Moon, and rules the figures *Populus* and *Via*. This makes it all the more surprising that the sigil of the spirit here is identical to the reaping hook symbol of the planet Saturn – associated with the Asmodeus character in the Marcolf literature. Interestingly enough, more or less contemporary with the publication of Agrippa's works our 'Oriental' Four Kings begin to be mentioned in connection with existing Germanic Monstrous Horde traditions.

This underlines the organic cross-cultural naturalisation process at work in magical mythologies. Classical and indigenous traditions interweave with Jewish or Christian influence both in popular tradition and the grimoires. A true assessment of the task of revitalising Western magic via the grimoires recognises the critical role of mythology (the study of myth); whether Jewish, Christian or Pagan, or indeed all at once.

In practice it may also suggest lines of work via geomantic symbols, magic squares and runes in rituals of Asmodeus.

Thus prepared a new examination of the spirit as he is best known to modern occultism is possible; it is time to turn to the *Lemegeton*. A retranslation of Weyer's spirit list should be on the academic agenda of modern occultism; for the time being a composite of Scot and Mathers may serve:

32. Sydonay alias Asmoday [or Asmodeus], is a **Great King**, strong and mighty. He is seen **with three heads**, whereof the first is like a bull, the second like a man, the third like a ram; he hath a serpents tail and belches flames out of his mouth. He hath feet like a goose, and **sits upon an infernal dragon carrying a lance with pennon in his hand**; he goeth **before all other under the power of Amaymon**. When the conjuror hath a mind to call this spirit, **let it be abroad**, let him be wary and **standing on his feet**; if his cap be on his head, he will cause all his doings to be bewrayed, which if he do not Amaymon will deceive him in all things. But so soon as Asmoday is seen in the form said, let the conjuror call him by name saying *thou art Asmoday*; he will not deny it, and presently will consent to bow to the magician. He gives the ring of virtues; he absolutely teaches geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and mechanical arts. To all demands he answers fully and truly, he makes a man invisible, he shows the places where treasure lies, and guards it, if it be under the legions of Amaymon; he has under his power 72 legions.

There are several salient points here. Firstly, his status as a great King is underlined by his three heads, representing universality. He is mounted on a dragon, representing status certainly and quite possibly subtexts found in *Testament*, *Cyprian* and theurgic solar cult. He bears a flag, suggesting high standing in more feudal terms. These and his high standing with another named king underline a two tier system of directional and/or elemental kings (not necessarily consistent as to persons and directions). Let us spell this status out. All the spirits of this particular hierarchy are several times referred to collectively as kings, and at least nine of the 72 bear the title, and some of the princes may be such. Transferral of the title *king* from Solomon to the decan spirits in the evolution of the *Testament* may make us wary of such use. All this aside, Asmodeus is without doubt to be counted among one of two groups of four superior to the others, wherein the title *great King* is wholly appropriate.

I suspect some errors may have crept in regarding the conditions necessary to conjure Asmoday. Mention has been made already of diverse ornithological ideas regarding his feet. Such corruptions aside, it is undoubtedly appropriate to consider special conditions pertaining to conjurations of Asmodeus. *Let it be abroad*, whether correctly translated or no, implies that no house can contain

him, and he should only be conjured in the open air. That the magician should also be standing and bare headed throughout are also highly appropriate notes of respect.

Three other important forms of his name occur in Solomonic and associated lore. As Asmodal he is among the angels of God invoked in the preparation of Wax and Virgin Earth in the *Clavicle (KoS II.XVIII)*. This ritual is necessary for the making of the liming pot for pacts, among others. The existing geomantic connection of the spirit commends this rite for preparing earth for use in geomancy. Agrippa, citing Trithemius, lists Asmodel as the angel of Taurus (in which incidentally the Moon is exalted). The form Ashmodiel also appears. This angelic status notwithstanding the form Asmodel is also found – as the ruler of the East – in tabulations of the Kings; evidently identical with Asmoday or Asmodeus. This should not unduly surprise us, as many astrological demons, angels and deities exhibit considerable inter-changeability. In fact the attribution to a corner of the Earth and a sign underlines the status of our Kings in the same astrological hierarchy as the decan spirits.

*Angels of the Zodiac
(collated variants)*

ANGELS	OLYMPIANS
♈ Malchidael	Athena
♄ Asmodel	Aphrodite
♁ Ambriel/Amriel	Apollo
♁ Muriel	Hermes
♈ Verchiel	Zeus
♈ Hamaliel	Demeter
♁ Uriel/Zuriel	Hephaestus
♈ Barbiel	Ares
♈ Advachiel/Adnachiel	Artemis
♈ Hanael/Anael	Hestia (or Dionysus)
♁ Gabriel/Cambiel	Hera
♁ Barchiel	Poseidon

Note Asmodel/Asmodeus (lust) corresponds to Aphrodite; Uriel to Hephæstus &c.

Adapted to Elemental Schema

	EAST △	SOUTH ▽	WEST △	NORTH ▽
<i>cardinal</i>	Malchidael	Anael	Uriel	Muriel
<i>Fixed</i>	Verchiel	Asmodel	Gabriel	Barbiel
<i>Mutable</i>	Advachiel	Hamaliel	Ambriel	Barchiel

Note greater emphasis on Asmodel if fixed signs are taken as elemental rulers.

Although they are hierarchically superior to men, angels are thought to have significant contact with the human world, sometimes in the role of teachers. They also display an affinity with humanity in their ability to perform both good and evil works. While this new notion of angels was by no means universally accepted, it is the dominant conception of angels in those texts of Jewish magic and mysticism that influenced Christian angel magic.

Katelyn Mesler in *Invoking Angels*

THIS IS NOT PRIMARILY a book about angels, who nevertheless have considerable connection with the subjects concerned. There are other issues I wish to highlight more, but some attention to angels is inevitable. Asmodel's status as a King of demons and astrological angel highlights the old connections of Jewish angelology with Western magic in its formative phase; where our main interest in angels resides. My strategy – in *The True Grimoire* – gave birth to the phrase 'I don't do angels,' meaning I was going back to the roots of Goetia, and later ideas about angels were counter-productive. Having become accustomed to the older context, it is time to reintroduce them in their primitive syncretic form, rather than after a mistaken modern semi-secular gloss. As mentioned elsewhere, Goetia is as relevant to angels and gods as to *demons fowl*, and neither angels nor demons are universally good or bad. Both indeed are relevant to this study, and particularly as concerns the decans.

Angelic Orders

ORDER	WORLD	ANGELIC CHOIRS <i>From Dionysus the Areopagite</i>	EARLY cosmology (<i>Pherecydes</i>)
<i>1st Order</i>	Super Celestial	Seraphim Cherubim Thrones	-Infinite Space Fixed Stars
<i>2nd Order</i>	Celestial	Dominations Virtues Powers	Five planets Sun Moon (Higher)
<i>3rd Order</i>	Sublunar	Principalities Archangels Angels	Moon (Lower) Earth Underworld

The Decans and Angelology

Angels and decans converge as topics at several points. These are, in approximate hierarchical order, as follows:

- . The Angelic Vice-regent, related to or identical with the Chief of the decans.
- . Thwarting angels controlling the demons of the decans (these angels are close approximations of Pagan decan gods). In this paradigm 'good' angels control 'bad' demons.
- . Ambivalent angels (of the decans &c.), with near to total identity with *a*) the thwarting angels, *b*) principalities & powers, and *c*) pagan gods ruling the decans &c. Powers can also personify the

zodiac and other astrological factors, or natural forces etc. Often astrological and natural angels themselves are interpreted negatively, related to fallen angels and so on; however they are also identified as benign third order angels. Both pro and anti interpretations can be found in occult sources, as elsewhere.

. Kharakteres, magical symbols addressed as persons, representing the decans (and other astrological entities) collectively. The ubiquity of characters in indicating persons and symbols relates to the important term *stoicheia*, with several layered meanings of the same kind.

Each of these will be addressed at relevant points. In the meantime some context can be established for angels in general.

Meaning and Origin

THE TERM ANGEL ORIGINATES in the Greek for *messenger*, and passed into Latin through transliteration. The archetypal Greek angel was Hermes, although the goddess Iris had a similar role and bore the title in the Classical period. The term was also applied to Hecate in respect of her communicating with the realm of the dead, and to Apollo as oracle and Vice-regent of later conceptions of Zeus as transcendent high god. Apollo's chthonic connections should also be borne in mind in our understanding of this title, thus obviating reliance on transcendental forms.

Originally Hermes' angelic role probably derived from his psychopompic function, rather than delivering divine messages from Olympus to earth. He is even referred to as the messenger of Persephone in the early Imperial period (1st–2nd century CE). Under Jewish influence, the role of angels in paganism developed massively by the 3rd century CE. This was particularly the case in magic or folk religion. Their role was important in Neoplatonist Theurgy, and subsequently significant in Gnosticism, but the role of popular religion was prior and decisive, as exemplified by the *PGM*, amulets &c. Thus by the 2nd–3rd century CE angels were revered in Egypt and Asia Minor, in pagan contexts as well as Jewish, and the greatest fusion of pagan and Jewish ideas concerning them was in the sphere of practical magic.

As regards pagan angels, the angelic nature of Apollo is perhaps the most controversial. Syncretised with Mēn (who was frequently paired with Hecate and Cybele), and already possessing his own chthonic roles, Apollo could be an old school 'underworld angel.' On the other hand in the late period Apollo is often endowed with a demiurgic power, with Zeus as the high god and Apollo as his Vice-regent; thus a 'pagan monotheist' and celestial type of angel. This latter role is exemplified by an inscription of the Oracle at Claros (perhaps 200 CE), couched in language reminiscent of a theurgic oracle quoted in *Comte de Gabalis*. God is described with monotheist epithets; self-born, untaught, without a mother and dwelling in fire. Apollo on the other hand, speaks of himself as *an angel* and *a small part of God*. An altar on the same site, dedicated to the Most High God, suits a Platonic supreme deity, or an IAO of the papyri, acceptable to Hellenised Jews and to pagan monotheists alike. In modern practical usage, since a solar-chthonic deity makes equal sense in archaic Goetia as in late antiquity, and the Vice-regent role in later systems has the same basis, the controversy is largely academic.

Hecate, who bears the title *angel* is a mistress of the crossroads; a marshal of ghosts and demons, of elementals in their hosts and their worlds, and a guide – or leader – of souls. Her soteriological and eschatological significance in the *Chaldean Oracles* appears to mirror various forms of folk

belief in Asia Minor, including various degrees of Jewish involvement.

The nature of angels in magic, originating in this period, is far from simplistic, with Vice-regent angels, angels corresponding to natural forces and astrological bodies, angels controlling demons (who also correspond to the same forces and bodies), and fallen angels. Initially in Judaic belief even evil angels dwelled in one or other of the heavens rather than Hell.

Distinguishing angels who control demons from demons who are angels represents somewhat of a quandary, and some grasp of the original context is essential. The concept of thwarting angels debuts in Western magic in the *Testament of Solomon*; it received its title from modern academia, and was subsequently popularised in modern occultism by Skinner and Rankine. Such would appear to be a workable pedigree, presenting few problems for a traditionally minded occultist. For various reasons however this is far from being the case.

One such reason is the complex relationship of Jews and pagans prior to and during the early Christian period; for such syncretism as we see in the *PGM* undoubtedly includes conscious Jewish contributions. That is, the syncretism involved Jewish adoption of pagan ideas as much as pagan adoption of Jewish. This was very much the case in Asia Minor. The Jews of Asia Minor had been moved there from Babylonian communities by the Seleucids. They had never been to Jerusalem, or the Syrian and Palestinian centres of Jewish orthodoxy, such as it was. Indeed, archaeology has discovered synagogues in Palestine itself where the pavements are decorated with astrological motifs, demonstrating Jewish susceptibility to Hellenistic ideas often ignored by older academics and unsuspected by many occultists. As such the Jews of Asia Minor were saturated with Chaldean astrological ideas, as well as Persian. In the Jewish syncretism, ideas about astrological gods and other pagan entities were often reshaped in terms of angels.

Astrology and Angels

THE ASTROLOGICAL BASIS OF RELIGION in late antiquity is another recurring aspect of this study. It prevailed throughout the Roman world, being the dominant methodology for interpreting the world. It had, with some exceptions, a fatalistic cast in which the planets, stars and constellations were seen as gods and angels ruling human fate.

PGM IV.545–71 encapsulates the predicament underpinning the general worldview. The operator sees the divine order of the skies with its presiding gods rising and setting. After gazing on the disk of god and the source of the winds, they see the gods staring and rushing aggressively in their direction. A formula is required to make them benevolent, so that: *the world above is clear and circling, and that none of the gods or angels is threatening you ...*

Capable of inflicting disease and other unfortunate consequences upon human beings, such gods and angels were feared, even demonised, as much as venerated. This astrological fatalism has important implications for perceptions of angels in magic, as may be seen throughout the *PGM* and in amulets and defixiones of the period. To begin with, our modern perceptions of ‘angels good, demons bad’, which might tend towards a dualistic interpretation of the thwarting angels paradigm, is completely misleading.

Angels as agents of an astrological universe could be associated with planets, signs and decans. As such their nature could be and frequently was ambivalent if not outright dangerous. There were also protective angels, whose nature is important to grasp; they are frequently executors of Apollo-Helios, and some in particular are very close in nature to him. In fact the most important of the protective

angels are Vice-regent angels; of whom Metatron is a well known later type. As the Sun was conceived in this demiurgic role throughout the period, solar angels, especially Michael precede the Metatron figure. Invocations of Helios, IAO and Michael are common syncretic formulæ.

Such mediator figures were invoked in Judaism under the influence of Hellenistic culture, particularly in Asia Minor. Arnold, following Lightstone's *The Commerce of the Sacred*, is explicit on other features of the diaspora concerning angels: the fear of demons and invocation of protective angels was a specific feature of popular Judaism; belief in demons was ubiquitous; some priests functioned essentially as shamanistic holy men mediating angelic powers for protection and other magical purposes. Jewish elements of the *PGM*, as well as the *ToS* and *Sepher Ha-Razim*, support this thesis. Arnold differs from Lightstone, as do I, in seeing these features as unique to the diaspora in Asia Minor; similar tendencies can be detected in Palestinian contexts, as well as in Judaism in Egypt and Syria. The question nevertheless remains whether shamanic elements existed in normative Judaism at an earlier date, or whether – as was certainly possible – these priests were influenced by the Greek shamans.

Jewish magic strongly resembles pagan magic, with the proviso that good and bad angels substitute for pagan deities and their entourages (*CS* 59). Those angels who were concerned with a given planet or decan might command a lesser spirit on your behalf, but equally were associated with an instrument of fate making them ambivalent, or even identical with the demon commanded. Overall Michael emerges as the most prominent of the angels invoked. Such angelology is a feature of popular religion as exemplified by magical practice, and was as common in Jewish communities as in pagan, with which they were often in close contact. This contact likely extended to Hellenising cult practice, as exemplified by the precinct of the Jewish Sibyl at Thyatira.

As Arnold clarifies, Asia Minor is home to a good many inscriptions which mention angels (*CS* 61). He outlines the positions of various scholars respecting this prevalence. This discussion involves specific kinds of religious expression found in the kingdoms of Caria, Lydia and Phrygia, all of which give prominence to angels. The angels have been interpreted as essentially pagan, representing mediator figures; either deputies of a supreme god emergent in pagan monotheism, or on the model of Underworld figures such as Hecate.

Such competing supreme gods have already been mentioned, but local examples include Theos Hypsistos, and also Mēn. Hermes is of course typical of pagan mediators with Underworld roles. Apollo (often syncretised with Mēn in Asia Minor) should be considered, especially as, like Hecate, *angel* is one of his contemporary titles. That Mēn in this period appears both as supreme god (*CS* 76) and – as Apollo – an Underworld angel, is particularly interesting; his relations with both Cybele and Hecate are relevant to local traditions, to important shrines and to themes in the *PGM*. Against these interpretations stand other scholars arguing for a specifically Jewish angel cultus, but evidence for two way syncretism is undoubtedly present.

The Decans



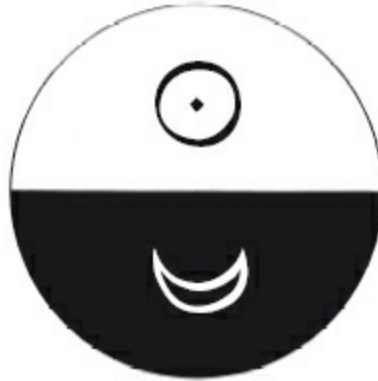
IT IS WAY PAST TIME to acknowledge where my interest in the decans and lunar mansions began, and appreciation of their importance in the history of magic. These themes, though long all but ignored by modern occultism, were enthusiastically researched by the Warburg Institute as being of immense cultural significance. It is still impossible to improve on the succinct comments of Frances Yates: *Into the Hellenistic astrology which is the background of the philosophical Hermetica an Egyptian element had been absorbed, namely the thirty-six decans ... [which] were really Egyptian sidereal gods of time who had become absorbed in the Chaldean astrology and affiliated to the zodiac.* Thus indeed the decans originate with the ancient Egyptians, whose year began with the heliacal rising of the star Sothis (Sirius) in Cancer. The corresponding decan was attributed to Sothis; who ‘looked back’ at the decans to come.

Simplistically speaking the decans would rise with the Sun for ten days each year until the reappearance of Sothis, the first and last. As this cycle continued and the decans progressed to the West they descended into the underworld, not to reappear for 70 days. There is wide agreement that they are the origin of the 24 hour clock, and also of planetary hours. At the time of the heliacal rising of Sothis in the summer twelve decans rose before dawn. Ten hours of daylight, to which were added an hour of twilight at either end of the day, gave us the 24 hour clock. Initially these hours were equal divisions of day and night. In time the equinoctial hours when day and night are of equal length, were adopted as standard. This historical excursion is important to establish that by the ‘god of the hour,’ mentioned in various magical papyri, was intended the current decan lord rather than a planetary ruler. This is an indicator that the decans are of general rather than specialised significance in the evolution of grimoire magic.

From the time of the Middle Kingdom they appear frequently painted on coffin lids. Many lists of decans are known, involving considerable variation. In the New Kingdom royal tombs contained lists of the decans; extended to royal officials in the time of Rameses I (1292–1075 BCE). In the tomb of Rameses VI (1145–1137) the decans are depicted worshipping the resurgent god of the Sun. Their reputation appears at first to have been wholly benign. Up to the Late Period they were depicted in temple and tomb art. Tombs of the 18th and 19th Dynasties have ceilings painted with the decans, elaborate versions in the tombs of Rameses IV and Seti I both portray their night journey as for 70 days they travel through the underworld. The origins of their ambivalent reputation begin in the 21st Dynasty (1075–945), when some officials began to wear amulets protecting them from particular decans.

Initially independent of the zodiac, in the Ptolemaic era these decans were assimilated to the Greco-Babylonian system; they have been a feature of Western astrology ever since.

The subject of the decans obviously involves the Sun, a ruler of fire and pre-eminent by day. With such an emphasis it is necessary to keep sight of other things concerned in our study; matters terrestrial, lunar and nocturnal.

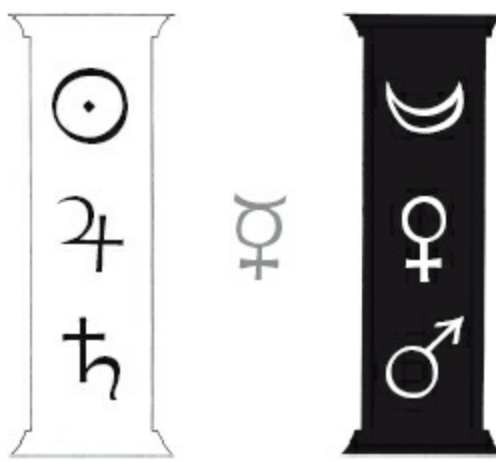


One way of achieving this involves Hellenistic astrology, the framework within which much of ancient occultism was structured in the Synthesis period. In the past I have referred to elements of Paganism and myth hidden in technical details of astrology. This is particularly true perhaps of the decans and lunar mansions.

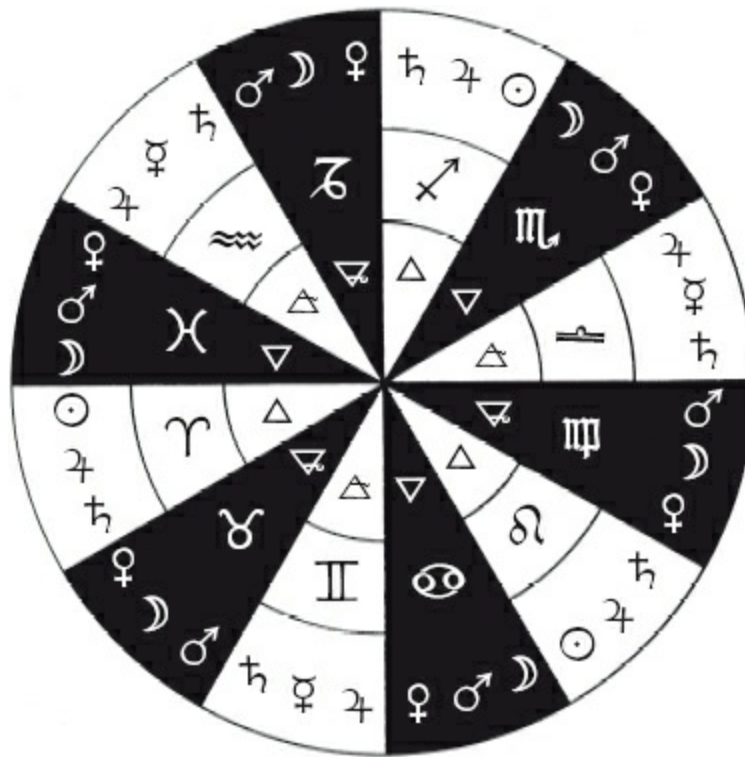
Various features of Hellenistic astrology bear on this; of particular interest is the idea of planetary sects. This divides the planetary gods, and their elemental and zodiacal counterparts, into diurnal and nocturnal sects. These sects are ruled by the Sun and Moon respectively, with additional details as follows.



Mercury is either diurnal or nocturnal depending whether he is placed before the Sun, as Morning Star, or behind as Evening Star. Similar criteria may be applied to Venus, in practice. In the schema as it stands in tabular form however the role of Mercury is emphasised. His ability to switch between camps connects to his messenger functions in myth.



In the zodiac, three signs for each element are attributed to three ‘planets.’ These rule the triplicity to which each sign belongs, who function also as rulers of the decans known as Trigon Lords. The first decan of Aries, in the day time, is naturally enough ruled by the Sun as Trigon Lord (above and beyond any other planetary association, such as Mars). The natural association of this decan with an Eastern, fiery and solar god such as Bael is underlined by this attribution. Connections with various spirit hierarchies and ritual processes will also be seen.



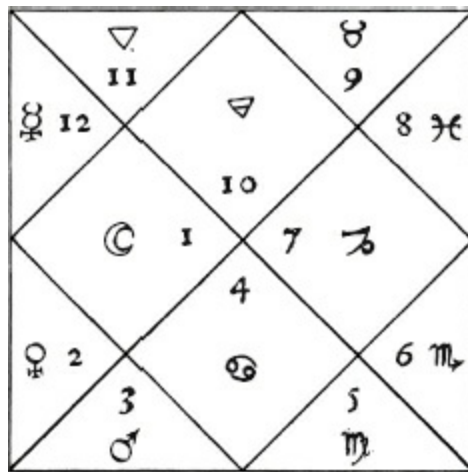
There is a wealth of other associated mythic thinking involved, as well as technical astrological matters. For example, the division into solar and lunar, diurnal and nocturnal matches the involvement of aerial spirits (decans and mansions) with Apollo and Hecate in theurgic eschatology. Over-simplifying slightly, this involves benign spirits inclined to help, and potentially malign ones requiring intercession. In the astrological schema neither diurnal nor nocturnal is wholly good or bad; their various energies require balancing and right placing for maximum benefit. Note also that the Aries/Libra axis is diurnal and solar; the Cancer/Capricorn axis is nocturnal and lunar.

There are many interesting features of this rulership, for example as it plays out in relation to the elements and their signs:

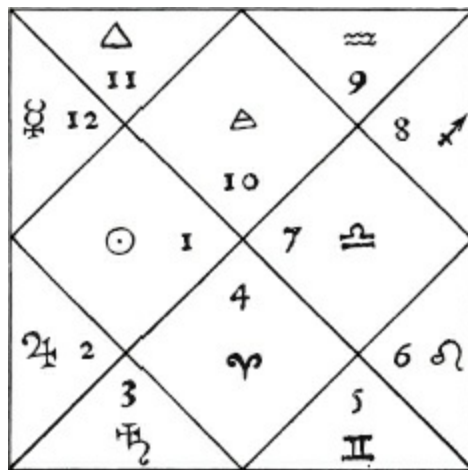
ELEMENT				DAY RULER	NIGHT RULER	CO-RULER
<i>Fire</i> <i>Diurnal</i>	♋	♌	♍	☉	♃	♄
<i>Earth</i> <i>Nocturnal</i>	♈	♉	♊	♀	♁	♂
<i>Air</i> <i>Diurnal</i>	♈	♉	♊	♃	♄	♃
<i>Water</i> <i>Nocturnal</i>	♊	♋	♌	♀	♂	♁

Compare the solar and fiery signs with the aerial ones. In the latter Mercury rather than the Sun takes his place with Jupiter and Saturn. Despite his variable status, Mercury rather than the Sun is a ruler of Air. The absence of the Sun, indeed both luminaries from the aerial hierarchy is deserving of meditation. In magic the Sun, Moon and Winds function as a trio; the god of the winds is a distinct personality from both luminaries.

Nocturnal Sect



Diurnal Sect



1 LUMINARY

7 CARDINAL

2 BENEFIC

8 MUTABLE

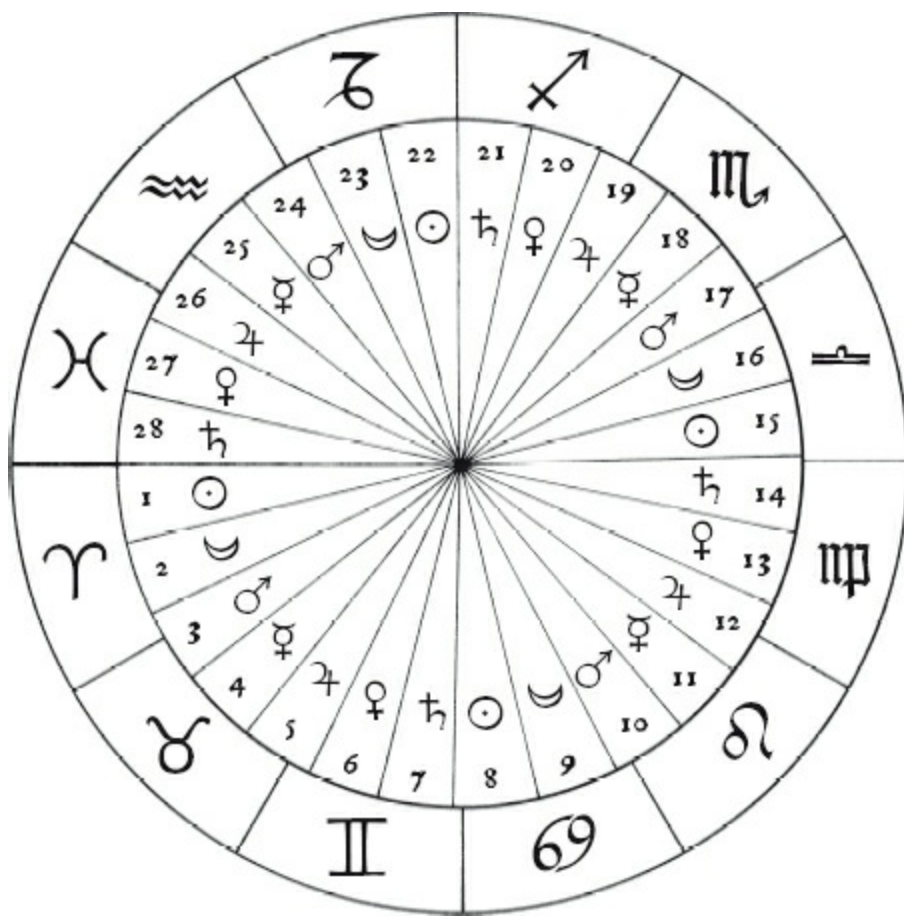
3 MALEFIC	9 FIXED
4 CARDINAL	10 ELEMENTS
5 MUTABLE	11 ELEMENTS
6 FIXED	12 EVENING/MORNING STAR

There are also astrological technicalities worth mentioning here. The diurnal planets are considered better placed above the horizon in a chart for the hours of the day. During the night however, diurnal planets are considered better placed below the horizon. So too, nocturnal planets should be above the horizon at night, below it by day. This area of concern was one of the most emphasised dignities of the planets in ancient astrology. The difference between day and night charts was taken very seriously indeed. That the Part of Fortune (Tyche) has different formulæ, depending on whether it is calculated by day or by night, also reflects these ideas. Again, cosmological thinking, both mythic and magical, is represented in astrology; it can also, so to speak, be reverse engineered from astrology into magical and mythical expressions.

Note also that Saturn as a diurnal planet is considered far more benign above the horizon, his proper place, than below it. Saturn as a diurnal planet, in the sect of the Sun, reflects mythic and cosmological ideas. Saturn was regarded as the star of the Sun in Chaldean lore. Their relationship via their timekeeping roles has been mentioned. Kronos as ruler of the Golden Age, or of the Fields of Elysium, is encoded in these technical details of astrology. The placing of dark and cold Saturn in the diurnal sect, and hot, fiery Mars in the nocturnal, involves sophisticated astrological thinking also; negating their worst sides by preferring the compensating factors.

The signs as well as the planets are considered masculine and feminine, matching their diurnal and nocturnal associations. Thus while decans and mansions appear to function independently, there is an intermixture of solar and lunar currents within the workings of every chart, with both factors present at all times. This too is reflected in ritual, with the solunar patrons bestowing help from benign spirits, protection from malign ones.

Zodiac with Lunar Mansions



The decans were always called 'gods' by the proponents of the Egyptian tradition.

A. Bouché-Leclercq, *L'Astrologie Grecque*

THE DECAN SPIRITS began as gods. In the fusion of ideas in antiquity, wherever Egyptian influence was strongest this identity was retained. This included Hellenised astrologers like Hephestion of Thebes whose astrology was transposed from the Sothic to the Aries start point. Hephestion (otherwise Hephæstion) was an astrological writer of Egyptian descent in the early 5th century. His *Apotelesmatika* involved sympathies with the more mythological astrology of Dorotheus of Sidon (1st century) among others and a wish to reintegrate it with the dominant rational astrology of Claudius Ptolemy (2nd century). He is an important source as a compiler of the earlier strains of Hellenistic astrology when the emergent synthesis underlying the Western system was taking shape. The details he provides of the decans in Greco-Egyptian astrology are among the most authoritative we possess.

Elsewhere, under Chaldean or Jewish influence, the decans developed or endured various other guises: syncretic arrays of cosmopolitan deities; opposed gods in pairs; demons with thwarting angels; demons pure and simple. In all these forms however, once absorbed into the astrologically based synthesis of the Hellenistic world they exerted a powerful and lasting influence. Their elastic hierarchical structures, which are and always were self-contained pantheons, had a powerful influence on all subsequent Western demonology in and out of the grimoires. The Egyptian influence upon words of power in magical texts consists of exactly such lists of nigh unintelligible names. The spirit images of the *Goetia of Solomon*, of surreal zoological forms, emerged with all their various characteristics from those of the mansions and decans. Equally the tabulated amuletic images, stones, herbs and animals, sympathetic and antipathetic, either originated or comprehended much traditional lore in their expansive embrace.

With so extensive a role it is important to understand from the outset the underlying principles, practical and theoretical. It must be borne in mind that the Egyptian decans were not originally similar to the Hellenistic conception. The number was not originally fixed at 36, the decans were not of equal size; moreover their names and order changed a good deal (*HWA* 20). More importantly they originally evolved quite separately from the zodiac, nor were they confined to the ecliptic. Like the mansions they were originally wholly identified with stars and constellations. Even though connected with the Sun's rising in the East, they stretched even further from the ecliptic than do the lunar mansions, extending to the tropics. In the papyri and earlier they also had a relationship of some kind with the Polar constellations. Originally the term *decan* was not a definition, the form *bekan* is found in Egyptian, among other names; the resemblance to *deka* meaning ten in Greek is completely coincidental. Nevertheless, the importance of the numbers 10 and 36 in Pythagorean thought commended this division to the Greeks, while zodiacal and planetary concerns and attributions were imposed in line with the Chaldean system.

In accepting conventional astrological ideas into our modern handling of the decans – and indeed the mansions – it is necessary to emphasise certain provisos. Firstly, the conventions of Tropical astrology employed do not cancel the importance of individual star positions and constellations, only enable calculations in relation to them; outlining my objections to beginning with a Sidereal astrological system would require too much of a digression even by my standards. Secondly, distance from the ecliptic is largely irrelevant; any star – even Polaris – can be related to a degree of celestial

longitude. Reinhold Ebertin's existing work with the fixed stars has already introduced this concept to our era (*Fixed Stars and their Interpretation*), contradictory though it is to conventional astrological dogma:

Some fixed stars are of very great declination from the ecliptic. Some ... are of the opinion that fixed stars with large declination, and if more than 23 degrees away from the celestial equator, are of no use in practical interpretation. Practice, however, does not bear out this opinion. Moreover, practice shows that this declination does not appear to matter at all.

In this way both mansions and decans can retain their stellar character and observational importance within a Tropical schema. At the same time, in accord with astrological thinking and post-Sothic decans, the solstitial and equinoctial points are granted similar status to the important fixed stars and constellations.

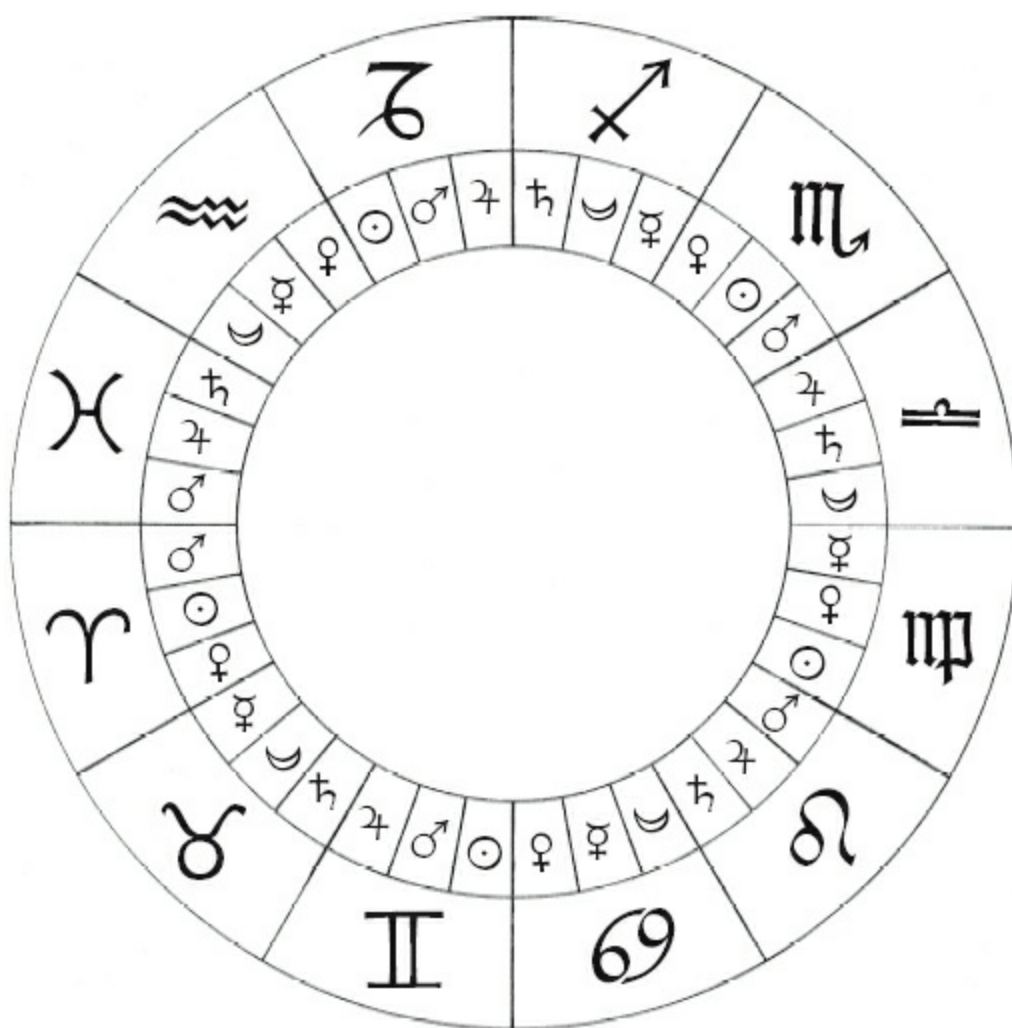
Sothis

THE FIRST DECAN OF CANCER holds a salient position in many themes running through this schema. Cancer represents the Gate of Men as Capricorn the Gate of the Gods, a critical polarity in the sidereal eschatology emerging from Egyptian and Chaldean traditions (*Geo*, appendix II). Direction, decan and star each leave an imprint on the grimoires' dramatis personæ and practice. As one of the four cardinal points both a decan ruler and a ruler of the quarter emerge from the astrological synthesis of ancient myth. In the older Egyptian systems Sothis was the leader of the decans as they followed the Sun out of the underworld from the East. The former leader of the decans in ancient Egypt, most important star in their astronomy, marker of the year and major goddess. She comes – via decan lore and its influence on Solomonian magic – to a status in the spirit hierarchies still extant; this despite later perceptions of demons as male only.

Nevertheless, the nature of decans and Sothis in particular is complex. Sirius brought both the Nile flood and blasting solar heat, fertility and epidemics. Sothis is derived from Sopdet, the feminine name of Sirius in Egypt. Sopdu, signifying scorching heat, was a male war god linked to Horus. This male deity was also associated with the heliacal rising of Sirius. So too solstices were connected with Anubis in Greco-Roman times at the latest. Accordingly the spirit hierarchies of latter times inherit male figures as well as female from deities of this star in ancient Egypt. However, this is very definitely not a case of either/or, but all.

The deceased in the Pyramid texts is spoken of as the son of Sothis, Sekhet and Sheskentet. Sekhet particularly was a form of Hathor who was identified with Sirius; rising as a star with the sun god Ra, like a crown on his forehead. A much misunderstood goddess in modern times, she had important underworld roles. The dead could have no rest, food or safety without her powerful aid and support. She participated in the weighing of souls and gave her decree for the happiness of the individual after death. The hopes of the dead were frequently associated with Sirius, through the intercession of Nuit they hoped to shine in the sky as Sothis does when it rises before the Sun. Sothis was also identified with Isis, an association which increased as Isis became the premier Egyptian deity of late antiquity.

Decan Rulers
(Chaldean order)



While the Egyptian background includes much complexity, as well as changes over time, the brief outline here brings out several salient points to our overall purpose. There is a female figure associated with Sirius, with provision for a male chief in all male series such as the Four Kings. The nature of this starry decan is as connected with eschatological matters as with fertility, and has a pronounced dark or hot side, connected with both excess of solar heat and with epidemics. The goddess Hathor exemplifies many aspects of this background more adequately than what is usually understood by Venus; although the latter, as a primeval goddess, more than meets the same criterion. As the decan is by definition stellar rather than planetary or elemental, the highest echelons of the spirit hierarchy are associated with it.

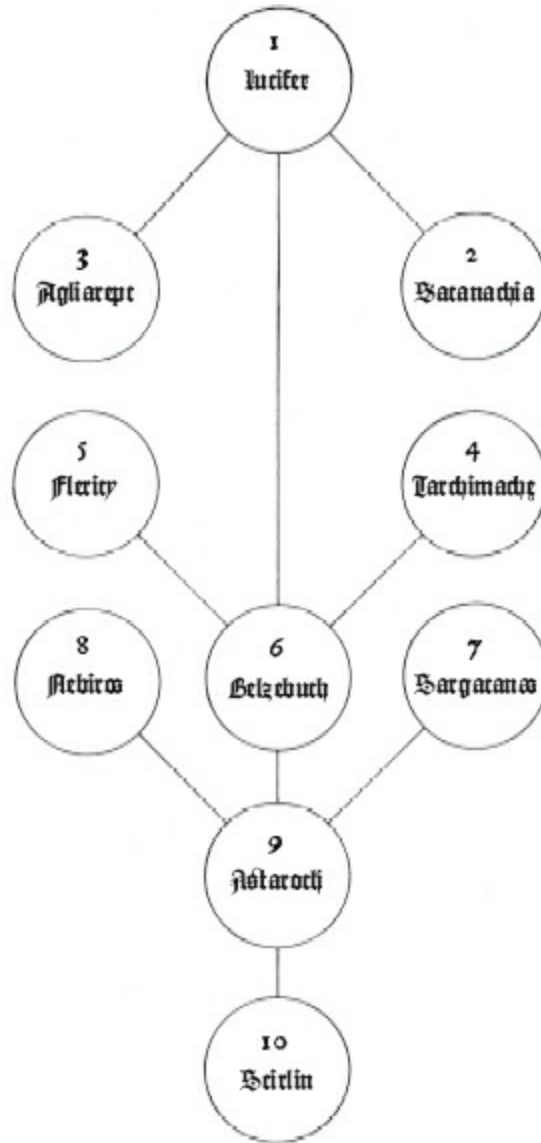
In texts attributed to Hermes and to Enoch magical images of Sirius are spoken of. These agree that the images are that of a beautiful young woman, or of a hare. As Festugière observed, the hare – Lepus – is between Orion and Canis Major, and one could therefore conjecture that the list to which the engraving originally belonged included the hare in place of the dog. He offered another and better explanation. Sirius, in these texts, is connected to Venus: the golden hare is a classic symbol of love. So too he noted that the relationship between star, stone, plant and talisman can be usefully compared with similar prescriptions of the decans. A talisman comprises firstly a figure engraved on a stone, below which was inserted a fragment of the plant. Secondly a sign or magical character such as those reproduced in the manuscripts. Agrippa plainly had access to various such texts, and reproduces some of the details. Unfortunately he also combines elements from such texts, mixed together, and spreads references to stones, plants, magical images and characters in various chapters. Thus the simple combination of image, character, stone and a single plant has become obscured by collation

into lists from other sources. The ring of Sirius comprises a beryl beneath which is savin; *juniperus sabina*. The stone is engraved with a beautiful woman – the connection between Sothis and Venus reaches into myth before astrology – and the sigil of Sirius. Agrippa also mentions mugwort, dragonwort and the tongue of a snake as pertaining to Sirius; which however do not belong to this particular ring.

Note well that the planetary attribution to the decans beginning and ending with Mars attributes Venus to Sirius and Sol to Chnoumis preceding it. Also, due both to precession and to calendar reform in Roman times, Sirius no longer occupies the same position at the Summer solstice. Sirius has nowadays precessed into the second decan of the sign. The role of Anubis in relation to the solstice line – a fixed astronomical point – is not dependent on Sirius. Therefore in our times we can rightly associate Nebiros with the solstice line while Astaroth equates with Sirius. In fact a very simple allocation of the chiefs and deputies to the first nine ‘mansions’ produces exactly these positions. This schema places the Chiefs and Deputies on the Tree of Life, the Chiefs to the Middle Pillar, the Deputies to the sides, and then attributes them to the mansions following the same numerical order.

Figure of Chiefs on the Tree of Life





This attribution starts with Lucifer in 1st position, with his two deputies crowning the two side pillars, 2nd & 3rd, 4th and 5th side positions are allotted to the deputies of Belzebuth, who is placed centrally and 6th. The 7th & 8th positions are allotted to the deputies of Astaroth, whose position is 9th and central. 10th and last is Scirlin, the principal intermediary of the grimoire. This adapted sequence is then applied when attributing the spirits to the lunar mansions as follows in the next table.



Mansions and Spirit Catalogue of the Grimorium Verum

This attribution has various features of significance. Firstly, Lucifer and Klepoth are represented by the first degrees of Aries and Libra respectively. These are important positions, related of course to

the Kings and Queens. The high status of Klepoth in Kimbanda syncretism is more than echoed here. That Paimon – also related to this station – is the most feminine of the Kings, is also no coincidence. The first degrees of Cancer and Capricorn are represented by Nebiros and Segal by this attribution. The aptness of the Nebiros connection has been covered in an earlier volume (*Geosophia* II). For his part Segal bears the name of Exu World Turner in Kimbanda, appropriate to this relation to the North/South axis of the planet. There are various points of interest in the animal symbolism; note in particular the association of the horse with Scirlin the intermediary spirit.

1	CAT		0° Lucifer	OX
			12° Satanachia	VULTURE
			25° Agliarep	BULL
2	DOG (JACKAL)		8° Tarchimache	SCARAB
			21° Fleruty	FALCON
3	SNAKE		4° Belzebuth	CRAB
			17° Sargatanas	DOG
4	SCARAB		0° Nebiros	WOLF
			12° Astaroth	SERPENT
			25° Scirlin	HORSE
5	ASS		8° Claunech	SHE-GOAT
			21° Muisin	ASP
6	LION		4° Bechaud	YOUNG HORNED GOAT
			17° Frimost	HE-GOAT
7	GOAT		0° Klepoth	BABOON
			12° Khil	CAT
			25° Mersilde	LION
8	BULL		8° Clithert	LEOPARD
			21° Sirchade	FIELDMOUSE
9	FALCON		4° Hiepact	DEER
			17° Humots	DRAGONESS
10	BABOON		0° Segal	MARE
			12° Frucissiere	BITCH
			25° Guland	SHE-WOLF
11	IBIS		8° Surgat	COW
			21° Morail	CAMEL
12	CROCODILE		4° Frutimier	DOVE
			17° Huictigaras	SPHINX

*Kharacteres of the Decans
(Sothic order)*

SIGN	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD

Sibylia

IMPORTANT AS THIS EMERGENT QUEEN of the grimoires is, her place in this section is comparatively brief. Alone among the monarchs, the Sibyl, under her various names, appears so far to be the least connected with the decans. Nevertheless an ancient relationship between the Aries and Libra decans is shown by comparing the names of Libra and Aries decans in their most pristine Egyptian form.

ARIES	LIBRA
1st Chontare	Tpa-Chont
2nd Chontarche	Chontare
3rd Siket	Spt-Chne

A relationship between the Aries point and the Libra point equivalent to the Cancer/Capricorn axis represented by Sothis and Akephalos can thus justifiably be expected. Nevertheless, the decans as such do not yet appear to strongly connect with the Sibyl. Nor need they do so in order to consider her role among the four chiefs; equated with the stations of the luminaries, with the winds, seasons &c. One important relationship between the Sibyl in the West and a corresponding figure in the East is

self evident. This is the relationship between the Sibyl and Apollo, echoing Hecate paired either with Apollo as in the *Oracles* or with Mēn as in Phrygia. The implicit lunar associations may have some bearing on the apparent absence of links between the Sibyl and the solar decans. In contemporary magic the equinox symbolism employed in Thelemic magic is worthy of note; associating Horus with Aries (ruled by Mars, exaltation of the Sun) and the goddess Maat with Libra.

Paimon

OFFER IN RECOMPENSE a lucubration upon the gender of the Four Kings as popularly understood. There are significant deviations between the text of the *Goetia* & that of Weyer. The intermediate English version given in Scot, while derived from Weyer is far from perfect (the translator was not Scot incidentally; he picked the text up during his researches). Reliable assignment of gender in or via the translated catalogue(s) and the Latin is far from reliable throughout, and this is particularly notable in the case of Paimon; our ‘King of the West.’ That the Paimon of the *GoS* is one of our Four Kings – not a subordinate spirit – is also shown by the frequent attendance of two lesser kings, musicians and a sizeable retinue, which speaks amply of superior status. I give an alternative translation of some of Weyer’s opening lines here:

Paimon [when] constrained by divine vertue to stand before the exorcist putteth on human shape, sitting on a dromedary, and weareth a glorious crowne, and hath a female face.

Hermetic style magical images may well represent the oldest aspect of the tradition Weyer and others transmit, and even with an ‘all angels are male’ paradigm in place we should be alert to contradicting echoes of earlier tradition. Regarding this passage, Scot has *he putteth on a man’s shape* which is a viable translation, but there is no *he* in the Latin as in Scot/*GoS*, and *human* is equally valid for *hominis*. Incidentally, in Weyer there is no aside regarding the speed of a dromedary as in Scot.

Scot’s source gives Paimon *an effeminate face* but *vultu fæmineo* translates literally as *female face*; *femina* is female, woman; *femineus* is woman’s, of women, unmanly. Although a Latinist will notice masculine pronouns appear subsequently, the image of the spirit leaves considerable room for doubt regarding original gender. Davidson’s *young woman mounted on a dromedary* is supported by reference to de Plancy’s *Dictionnaire Infernal* for pictorial documentation; which shows at very least some ambiguity. The *Livre des Esperitz* says unambiguously that Paimon *appears in the likeness of a crowned woman, highly resplendent, and mounted upon a dromedary*. The visual appearance and the conception of spirits of both genders in Jewish and pagan lore strongly suggests masculinisation was secondary; occurring with the ‘all male rebel angels’ Christian overlay.

Mathers’ derivation of Paimon (in *Abramelin*) from *pomn*, a tinkling sound or small bell, suggests the apotropaic jewellery of high status Middle Eastern women in antiquity, and the similarly apotropaic bells on camels. In this and other respects, Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, who rode a camel to war with Rome, is an appropriate hypostasis; not however as appropriate as Sheba riding in pomp to the court of Solomon.

This westward elucidation concluded, the sunlight now returns.

THROUGHOUT MY RESEARCH I have become increasingly aware of a continuous and influential strain of solar theology in Western magic from Orphism onwards. This theme is associated with both fire and the Sun in various guises. Certain Greek gods, among others, were or became associated with this persistent influence. For ease of understanding consider Hephæstus aka Vulcan and the Orphic Sun gods (*Geo* passim). Egyptian solar theology to which the decans are integral was a powerful influence upon late pagan solar pantheism. In such syncretism Ptah was commonly equated with Hephæstus; for example by Herodotus, Manetho and Apollonius of Rhodes (*Geo* II, 'Nebiros'). The fiery themes earlier embodied by Vulcan in Asia Minor, and in Mystery rites, fused readily with the solar theology emanating from Syria and Egypt at this time.

Egyptian traditions exerted considerable influence upon the solar theology emergent throughout the Roman world of this period. Influential as the Egyptian decans undoubtedly were, as the structural driver of the synthesis, Chaldean astrology gave this syncretic theology many defining features. The Greco-Syrian roots of astrology as mathematics plus the influence of the rational Ptolemy tended to diminish Egyptian ideas about constellations. By contrast the Eastern origins of Apollo and Helios, eastward leaning Orphism and the Syrian links of Pythagoras represent powerful undercurrents of archaic Goetia.

This solar theology thus embraces what may be termed Baal theology as well as that of the Egyptian sun gods (for example: Khephra theology. *PGM* VII.505–28. f 84). Nor, as will be seen at various points, is this pantheistic theology exclusively solar. Very similar ideas concern the Moon.

With the Egyptians, therefore, there is another domination of the elements in the realm of generation, and of the powers in them; **four of these powers being male and four female, which they attribute to the Sun. And there is, likewise, another government of Nature's dominion in generation, which they assign to the Moon.** By dividing the heavens into two, or four, or twelve, or **six and thirty parts**, or the doubles of these, they give to the parts a greater or lesser number of rulers. **And over all these they place one ruler, who transcends the rest.**

Iamblichus, *The Mysteries* VIII 3

Just such a rulership of the elements, winds and decans in the four directions can be seen in our Four Kings; of which quartet Oriens is the superior of the four. Incidentally Iamblichus goes on to say that despite this important, indeed defining allocation of the terrestrial (i.e. material) gods, the Egyptians also revere the intelligible (that is, transcendental powers). In this he is misled by Hermetic ideas that he takes to be Egyptian (*TEH* 139). The older Egyptian cosmology, in common with the archaic world in general, was essentially materialist in terms of physics and ontology; even ideas of a Creator conceived him as intra-cosmic rather than external. Prior to Greek philosophical influence they did not think in terms of a matter/spirit duality as in Platonism. The ancient gods were, so to speak, *physically numinous*. It was how *physical* was interpreted that differed, since visions and dreams were also physically numinous. Hence even words for spirit often translate back to wind or breath, not ethereal but physical. Whether or not we share this world view, it is essential to recognise how it is distinct from transcendentalist and dualist conceptions.

Ontology aside, the male and female rulers, which originate in Egyptian cosmology, are intimately involved with the decans and lunar mansions. Of the two there is a greater wealth of material concerning the decans, but ample sign of a similar pattern in relation to the mansions (*PGM* VII.756–

94, also the known equivalence of the first mansion and decan of Capricorn). This Egyptian influence had a potent impact on later spirit hierarchies, as it were avenging the triumph of Chaldean astrology.

To illustrate the role of solar theology and the decans in Hermeticism it is necessary first to review several verses of two key texts of the philosophical *Corpus Hermeticum*. All these texts take the form of dialogues between Hermes Trismegistus and one or other of his pupils. Interestingly, these two texts are both addressed to Asclepius, as is the *Sacred Book*. This philosophical background facilitates reviewing the practical aspects of decan magic, with its literature, ingredients, spirit catalogues and other implications.

Less poetically known as C.H. XVI, our first text broaches the subject of solar theology and the decans in the following verses:

4 See then in Earth a host of founts of Water and of Fire forth-spurting in its midmost parts; in one and the same [space all] the three natures visible – of Fire, and Water, and of Earth, depending from one Root. Whence, too, it is believed to be the Treasury of every matter. It sendeth forth of its abundance, and in the place [of what it sendeth forth] receiveth the subsistence from above. **For thus the Demiurge – I mean the Sun – eternally doth order Heaven and Earth**, pouring down Essence, and taking Matter up, drawing both round Himself and to Himself all things, and from Himself giving all things to all. **For He it is whose goodly energies extend not only through the Heaven and the Air, but also onto Earth, right down unto the lowest Depth and the Abyss.**

For the universality of the Sun god – encompassing elements, heavens and underworld – see *Geo* II.7: ‘The Magical Papyri.’

7 For He is stablished in the midst, wreathed with the Cosmos, and just as a good charioteer, He safely drives the cosmic team, and holds them in unto Himself, lest they should run away in dire disorder.

The chariot and the team of horses – who represent the elements or cosmic forces – are typical of solar-pantheistic deities of the period. As established in *Geosophia* this imagery belongs to Helios, a principal deity of the preceding Orphic movement; it is common upon gems portraying Abraxas in the Greco-Roman period. His rule over the elements includes personified ‘elementals’ of all ranks.

10 Moreover, as His Light is continuous, so is His Power of giving Life to lives continuous, and not to be brought to an end in space or in abundance. For there are many choirs of daimons round Him, like unto hosts of very various kinds; who though they dwell with mortals, yet are not far from the immortals; but having as their lot from here unto the spaces of the Gods, they watch o’er the affairs of men, and work out things appointed by the Gods – by means of storms, whirlwinds and hurricanes, by transmutations wrought by fire and shakings of the earth, with famines also and with wars requiting [man’s] impiety; for this is in man’s case the greatest ill against the Gods.

These daimons subordinate to the Sun essentially belong to the decans, although signs and individual degrees should also be understood here. The ills with which they afflict humanity correspond approximately to those of the *Testament* but are evidently not arbitrary. This is their appointed role; and in this context man is not necessarily undeserving of their actions.

12 The Sun is the preserver and the nurse of every class. And just as the Intelligible World, holding the Sensible in its embrace, fills it full, distending it with forms of every kind and every shape – so, too, the Sun distendeth all in Cosmos, affording births to all, and strengtheneth them. When they are weary or they fail, He takes them in His arms again.

Notable here is the description of the Sun as parent of all forms. As a demiurge he is the craftsman of

all; that this applies to the daimons is clarified in the next verse. This will be resumed subsequently in the text of the *Asclepius*, in direct relation to the decans.

13 And under Him is ranged the choir of daimons – or, rather, choirs; for these are multitudinous and very varied, ranked underneath the groups of stars, in equal number with each one of them. So, marshalled in their ranks, they are the ministers of each one of the Stars, being in their natures good, and bad, that is, in their activities (for that a daimon's essence is activity); while some of them are [of] mixed [natures], good and bad.

14 To all of these has been allotted the authority o'er things upon the Earth; and it is they who bring about the multifold confusion of the turmoils on the Earth – for states and nations generally, and for each individual separately. For they do shape our souls like to themselves, and set them moving with them; obsessing nerves, and marrow, veins and arteries, the brain itself, down to the very heart.

15 For on each one of us being born and made alive, the daimons take hold on us – those [daimons] operating at that moment [of the wheel] of Genesis, who are ranged under each one of the Stars. For that these change at every moment; they do not stay the same, but circle back again. These, then, descending through the body to the two parts of the soul, set it awirling, each one towards its own activity. But the soul's rational part is set above the lordship of the daimons – designed to be receptacle of God.

Astrological ideas are clear in this account of the rule or dominion of specific time demons over individuals according to their horoscope. The tendencies within an individual's chart represent the working of Fate determined by these spirits. This would extend to particular medical tendencies as well as personality traits.

16 Whoever hath a Ray shining upon him through the Sun within his rational part – and these in all are few – on them the daimons do not act; for none among daimons or gods has any power against one Ray of God. As for the rest, they are all led and driven, soul and body, by the daimons – loving and hating the activities of these. The reason, [then,] is not the love that is deceived and that deceives. **The daimons, therefore, exercise the whole of this terrene economy, using our bodies as [their] instruments. And this economy Hermes has called Heimarmene [Fate, Ananke].**

A detail it is essential to take on board is the following. The Hermetica are not quoted directly by Iamblichus or Proclus as the *Chaldean Oracles* are. Nevertheless, the ideas he attributes to his 'Egyptians' include Hermetic strands and there is frequent concord of sources and ideas (*TEH*). Compare the *ray* spoken of here with that descending in the rite of theurgic conjunction. This redeeming ray is sourced through the Sun rather than from him as in the older solar theology.

17 The World Intelligible, then, depends from God; the Sensible from the Intelligible [World]. The Sun, through the Intelligible and the Sensible Cosmos, pours forth abundantly the stream from God of Good, – that is, the demiurgic operation. And round the Sun are the Eight Spheres, dependent from Him – the Sphere of the Fixed Stars, the Six Spheres of the Planets, and one Circum-terrene [sublunar]. And from the Spheres depend the daimones; and from these, men. And

thus all things and all [of them] depend from God.

18 Wherefore God is the Sire of all; the Sun is Demiurge; the Cosmos is the instrument of demiurgic operation. Intelligible Essence regulateth Heaven; and Heaven, the Gods; the daimones, ranked underneath the Gods, regulate men. This is the host of Gods and daimones.

The role of solar theology and the decans in the root texts of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, in which they follow their technical antecedents, is established in our next text:

19 ASCLEPIUS: *Which deities do you call the heads of things, or sources of beginnings, Thrice-greatest one?*

TRISMEGISTUS: *Great are the mysteries which I reveal to thee, divine the secrets I disclose; and so I make beginning of this thing with prayers for Heaven's favour.*

The hierarchies of Gods are numerous; and of them all one class is called the Intelligible, the other the Sensible.

The former are called Intelligible, not because they're thought to lie beyond our senses; truly these are the Gods we sense more truly than those we call the visible, as our argument will prove, and if you are attentive, you will see ...

There are, then, [particular] Gods who are the principals of every genera, after whom come those of the genera below that principal. These are the Sensible gods, each similar to its own dual source, who by their nature affect all things Sensory; each part through each other part, their work by them illuminated.

The Principal of Heaven – whatever is understood by it – is Zeus; for through Heaven Zeus gives life to all.

The Principal of the Sun is Light; for the good gift of light is poured on us through the Sun's disk.

The 'Thirty-six,' who have the name of Horoscopes, are in the [self] same space as the Fixed Stars; of these the Principal, or prince, is he called Pantomorph, or Omniform, who fashions the various forms for the various genera.

Pantomorph or Omniform, and equivalent titles represent the sungod, viz Cumont's Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism:

When astrology and the Semitic religions caused the establishment of a solar henotheism as the leading religion at Rome, Attis was considered as the sun, *the shepherd of the twinkling stars*. He was identified with Adonis, Bacchus, Pan, Osiris and Mithra; he was made a *polymorphous* being in which all celestial powers manifested themselves in turn; a *pantheos* who wore the crown of rays and the lunar crescent at the same time, and whose various emblems expressed an infinite multiplicity of functions.

This is the 1st 'decan' named under various lordly titles, who at least for our modern minds must be distinguished from himself in solar mode. Interestingly the same title (polymorph, translated multiform) appears in a list of attributes of Hecate in *PGM* VII.781.

To continue with our present text:

Also the Seven known as spheres have Principals, their proper rulers, which they collectively call Fortune and Heimarmene. Thereby all things are changed by nature's law; perpetual stability being varied with incessant motion.

The Air, moreover, is the engine, or machine, through which all things are made – its Principal is the second [Zeus?]) ... to mortals the mortal and to like the like.

These hierarchies of Gods, then, being thus in this way related, from bottom unto top, are thus

connected with each other [too], and tend towards themselves; so mortal things are bound to mortal, things sensible to sensible.

The whole great hierarchy, to Him the Highest Lord, is not many things, but rather One. From One all things depend and flow – although believed to be separate and innumerable. In their union there is one [thing], or rather two, from which all things are made; from Matter, by means of which all other things are made, and by the Will of Him, by whose nod their variety is made.

These extended quotations from the Hermetica demonstrate clearly the presence of a solar theology, in which the decans play a formidable part. In these Hermetic texts they retain many traces of their original Egyptian character. They are conceived of as higher than the planets, and indeed the zodiac – from which they were initially completely distinct. It is no leap to assume that they equate with star daimons and time gods encountered in theurgic rituals of conjunction (see [Part 1](#)). This is how in my opinion a highly evolved Theurgic rite – the rising up of plants – came to be mirrored in miniature in the low magic of the technical Hermetica.

Such miniaturisation is a regular feature of magic in the Roman period, temple rites scaled down to individual practice being but one form it takes. In order to appreciate this particular example it is necessary to understand the commonest form of talismanic magic in the technical hermetica, the use of engraved gems with magical roots or plants in the making of magical rings and magical images. Lapidary manuals and fragmentary texts relating to this art survived from antiquity – often via Arab Hermeticists like Mashallah (*LAG*) – to influence Ficino, Bruno and Agrippa. Magical amulets of this type were once erroneously referred to as Gnostic gems, it being supposed that magicians must have been imitating religion rather than the other way round. These items are common enough in the archaeological record, and I refer to several of them in the course of this work. Hermetic manuals instructing the magician in the lapidary art are thus part and parcel of popular magic in antiquity and among the precursors of the grimoires. This will be covered more adequately via the text of the technical hermetic manual *Liber Sacer* or the *Sacred Book*, an event long overdue in modern magic, which follows after a little more introduction.

The Vice-Regent

ANGELIC VICE-REGENTS in Jewish tradition are an important aspect of our study. My research for this book, pursuing angels and magical tradition, brought me frequently to studies of early Christian polemics against both; in particular concerning the letters of Saint Paul. Solomon, the patron of Jewish exorcism and healing, represented a rival for Christ, whose miracles concern both areas. Similarly, mediator angels were competition for Jesus as mediator between God and man. However, contemporary Jewish communities were all the more ready for the Christian message because of the role such mediators already played in their traditions. This is plain even in much later occult symbolism, where Jesus and angelic Vice-regents are associated with the same qabalistic spheres.

In *Guardians of the Gate: Angelic Vice-Regency in Late Antiquity*, Guggenheim award winning professor Nathaniel Deutsch refers to the *angelic vice regent* as a *mythological figure*; and goes on to place this important figure, by no means always an angel, *within the broader study of myth*.

Different though our goals are, his assessment is of the very first importance here. The Vice-regent is a central figure in traditions of angelology, is a form of the intermediary spirit central to the Art Armadel ritual form discussed in *True Grimoire*, and of the first importance both to Goetia and to New World traditions. Deutsch goes on to indicate the connections of the Vice-regent with various mythological themes, including the creation of the world. This is performed *either as a demiurgic figure* or alternatively *a close associate of the demiurge*. The relevance of this to the solar theology and its central figures is evident. Central figures, moreover, whose connections with our subject are of the very first importance.

Such figures possess some or all of the following attributes, here given as titles. Besides the demiurgic role he is also Guardian of the Gate. For our purposes this is of an eschatological realm, not limited to a monotheistic abode of God as in Deutsch's thesis. He is a Ruler, sometimes a king of men, or a commander of angels or other divine beings, or both. Deutsch relates other attributes: Judge, often in an eschatological sense, which can in any case be implied, and Priest. With relevance beyond the particular theological case our author pursues, he indicates the role of the Vice-regent as divine hypostasis (as Apollo is the 'visible face' of the One of the Chaldeans).

He has also a definite ambivalence, essential to his role, embodied by other important characteristics. This Deutsch calls *composite or hybrid ontology*, that is, he has characteristics of more than one level of being, whether divine, angelic or human. It need hardly be pointed out that angelic could equally be expressed as daimonic; both angel and daimon represent an intermediate state between man and god. However a mediator figure may be half way between any of these categories, men and angels or daimons, or between god and the lesser divinities, and so on.

Many of these characteristics are equally true of another important mythological type, namely the Trickster. Again not every trickster possesses all of them, any more than every Vice-regent in every mythology does. Also, while the Trickster and Vice-regent possess similarities, it is necessary to distinguish them carefully from one another. The relationship of both with the high god is equivocal, but the Vice-regent nevertheless acts with higher sanction or delegated authority; the Trickster, usually lacking it, operates by means of cunning and the trickery from which he takes his name. The convergence of the two roles is nevertheless highly significant. The Guardian of the Gate is a title

equally appropriate to either, and the gate represents, of course, a liminal space between worlds. A particularly important form of this 'space' is the crossroads, and the equivalence of gate and crossroads is illustrated in the mythology concerned in the present study. The junctions of the zodiac and the Milky Way are the Gate of the Gods and the Gate of Men. This, illustrates too that the gates presided over by such figures are implicitly or explicitly eschatological.

Deutsch, a major scholar himself, invokes many great names of the scientific study of myth to his aid. Their opinions regarding the roles these mythological types possess have great relevance in their work, and also that of the magician.

Worlds meet where the Vice-regent or Trickster operate, they are central to mythology, and in fact essentially embody its language. The mystical and religious transformations humans experience are exemplified by the mediator types (Vice-regent or Trickster). The dualities mediated can take many forms, as the scholar of this or that religion or tradition will know. An analogy Deutsch raises in passing is the novice in a male puberty rite, who is neither man nor boy as the Vice-regent is neither man nor god. This is particularly interesting since the Classical Apollo is often represented as an ephebe; an idealised candidate for the rite of passage of adolescent youths. This same figure, through ancient syncretism, was a 'pagan' equivalent for figures such as Metatron; a focus of Deutsch's thesis. More central for us are 'folkier' angels such as Michael, whose nearness to Helios-Apollo is keenly felt throughout the *PGM*.

Michael either is or is close to a solar demiurge and is the commander of angels in general. Such a solar chieftain is particularly closely associated with the decans, and his name is associated with the first of them. Michael is the thwarting angel of the first of Solomon's decans (*ToS*). He can thus compel hostile angels as well as command benevolent ones, and holds a truly remarkable place in magical traditions, including the Goetic.

Deutsch and his cited authorities, even while at variance in some respects, speak of the Trickster (and by implication the Vice-regent) as embodying the logic of mediation whereby myth and transformation are expressed. More than mythological figures, which might be said of characters with lesser roles, they are mediators, in a mythic narrative to which they are actually essential. So too some argue, they are more than that. They symbolise or embody the very process of myth-making, since without mediation all other roles would be static and two dimensional. Myth as a descriptive and prescriptive dialectic is expressed and lives through them.

This same logic of mediation underlines an important role which many such figures possess; the intermediary role in magic, wherein such figures are typically invoked before all others. Here too, absence of the intermediary represents stasis; no living ritual tradition exists where their role is absent. The importance of the Armadel model in magic has been discussed already. Without necessarily returning to the 'ritual school' of mythological studies, the parallel is plain; ritual, like myth, is expressed and lived through the same logic of mediation, the intermediary is essential to both.

A figure closer to the centre of our theme is mentioned several times in relation to this argument; namely, Hermes. The formula *Hermes Metatron Yah* can even be found on Aramaic incantation bowls (Deutsch, 167). Hermes, like Metatron, could be represented as a boy or an old man. The same polarity is found in manifestations of Legba, who can appear as a tattered old man with a stick, or as a young boy. Hermes as Logos brings both Trickster and Vice-regent together in one person, even if by means of syncretism, for example by combination of Hermes and the Egyptian Tahuti or Thoth.

As the 'enemy of boundaries,' if only to establish new ones, or the spirit of disorder, if only to reaffirm the status quo, the trickster should remind us of another god of the *PGM*, the *enemy of Osiris*,

Typhon-Set. Thrice Great Hermes and Typhon-Set in different ways approach a junction of the Trickster and Vice-regent; whether either ever transcended – or can transcend – the distinctions involved remaining arguable. Typhon-Set was certainly involved with solar pantheism, and had power over angels and gods, but some aspects of the Trickster cannot sit well with the role of Vice-regent. The Trickster can – like the cunning and ferocious Set – be an ‘outsider,’ a rival or an enemy of the high god, he can certainly trick one, as Prometheus and Hermes do. Equally – like the Vice-regent – he can be an accomplice or enforcer of the high god. Indeed for the roles to draw yet closer, which, despite their similarities, most of the time they do not, this aspect of the Trickster has to be present.

An important figure who comes very close to transcending the boundary between Trickster and Vice-regent can be found in the New World traditions. At the root of the Exu of Kimbanda is the African Trickster, Eshu, who is also Marshal of the court of the gods. This echoes the mystery cited by Frisvold in his *Exu: the Maioral is in truth the Archangel Michael*. The role of Marshal is extremely close to that of Vice-regent, and, bringing the Vice-regent and Trickster so close marks Eshu as extraordinary. The sophistication of Kimbanda cosmology and its relevance for Goetia as here expressed are doubly underlined.

AS MENTIONED, in the course of composing this Encyclopædia the role of a solar demiurge became a prominent aspect of the work. To be precise: late Hellenistic Syrian and Chaldean ideas concerning a solar-pantheistic deity and the origins of the ‘King of Fire’ in subsequent demonology. His enduring importance has emerged increasingly in my research, first surfacing in the *True Grimoire* (129–130, 167). This status is present in the magical papyri, in Arab and Byzantine magic and elsewhere. One name or title of this spirit is Magoa, meaning Magus or magician. Additionally he is clearly identical with the king of spirits identified as Oriens (a title of the Sun god of Imperial Rome, a god moreover with strong Syrian connections).

So far as his continued presence in the grimoires is concerned, the matter of the Four Kings is of cardinal importance, and examples abound. In particular, Oriens in *CIm* 849 is portrayed as a benevolent ruler, indeed a virtual creator god. Kieckhefer’s inexplicable hypothesis is of a chief deity constructed by magicians in medieval times; developing upon the primacy of the East among directions in the prevailing culture. The likelihood however is that the primacy concerned is considerably earlier. Indeed it is unlikely the author’s necromancers or the clerical underground would be involved in feats of original deity construction, but perfectly feasible they would retain an existing tradition. Such a tradition surrounding a solar demiurge exists in the *Chaldean Oracles*, in Neoplatonism of the theurgic cast and throughout late Hellenism. Indeed Cumont, as quoted in *Geosophia*, considered this solar-pantheistic deity the crowning achievement of late pagan theology.

My translation of an invocation from *CIm* 849 illustrates the status of Oriens in the magical tradition as outlined:

Oh, benign Oriens, the immensity of the Universe, Heaven and Earth, the celestial and terrestrial orders, were made by your will and foresight. Strengthen my understanding in this work, by the dominion of your never-ending kingdom. King, awe-struck in my supplication, I pray you:

By your kings that hold and bind, heal and strengthen, and by all your royal power, by Sotuem, Sortfen, that in a dream this night there comes to me Haram, the benign spirit, to inflame my heart and mind, that I may know to find a treasure, if there is one in these parts, or in others, and lead me, and there let him make the sign of the very reality of the true and the perceived.

By thy most holy and most sacred treasure, the sun bright gleaming, white, and resplendent, that your excellence sendeth forth and your manifest and benign power returneth.

By all your dignities and rulerships I call witness in my solemn undertaking: vouchsafe to send a Spirit of truth in a dream this night to reveal a hidden treasure.

This may be done towards the east, and still kneeling. Say this prayer three times. When you enter the bed, say, nine times:

Oriens, Oriens, Oriens, I pray, I ask, and I desire thee, most merciful Oriens in order to fulfil my vow, and be thou willing to overlook my transgressions.

By your kings ... strongly suggests leadership of the Four Kings, while their powers mirror those of

the decans in the *Testament* and its pagan model. Similarly by *Sotuem*, *Sortfen* may well mirror the Theurgic practice of conjunction; invoking lesser time gods of the day and hour to assist invocation of Aion. It is also reminiscent of the two deputies allotted the Chiefs in the L:B:A hierarchies. The inclusion of deputies' names in invocations to chiefs follows from Theurgic usage in any case.

Finally, the *little death* of sleep and dream mirrors the night journey of the Sun god; permitting him to be invoked to assist in this context. We might hypothesise the spirit Haram to represent Hermes Chthonios, his messenger. The invocation is in any case extraordinarily interesting. So too it clearly involves the matter of the Kings; and shows that even at this date they could be conceived as potentially benign.

The evolution of this deity in ancient times contains many nuances; at some points a solar deity pure and simple, at others a deity whose visible face is the Sun, who as Lord of Time may simultaneously correspond to Saturn; he also has considerable overlap with the primary chief of the decans. His importance however represents a unified whole, and is evidenced at the root of the Western tradition. This includes the papyri and Jewish angelology (influenced, like Jewish magic, by Chaldeo-Persian and Pagan traditions). His connection with the four solar stations may be seen in this latter as easily as in other traditions. As Boel he is an exalted throne angel of the 1st or 7th heaven who holds four keys to the four corners of the earth, and also governs Saturn. Boel is a powerful presence in the papyri, and is instantly recognisable in Solomonic texts; whether as king of the Salamanders or in the Prayer for Success in the *True Grimoire*. Most important in some respects is his identity with the Apollo of the *Chaldean Oracles*, which role places him centrally in the Orphicogoeitic substrata of all subsequent Western magic.

This deity then is at the root of our traditions regarding the Four Kings. Due to the variations feeding into this tradition at various points there are ambiguities depending on our sources at any given stage of study. Oriens is the chief of the Four Kings and also very closely related to the first of the decans; other deities and figures have represented aspects of himself or the totality at different stages. These include chief devils such as Asmodeus (a Dæva of earthly fire in demonised guise, by my reading). Unifying or distinguishing some of these figures can appear very difficult, although in practical terms the problem is not nearly so great.

The spirit of the first decan of Aries, as intimated already, is the chief of the 36 spirits. As regards the Four Kings – and Queens – the first decan of each equinoctial and solstitial sign represents one level of their identity. They relate to solar and lunar positions at the four quarters of their cycles; directions, times of day, month and year and so forth. There are essentially two levels at work here, the four spirits as rulers of four divisions within the decan and mansion listings, and four spirits exterior and superior to those listings. Naturally these two levels are not always clearly distinguished, but the distinction is present nevertheless.

Chenlacori, the first of the decans in *Liber Sacer*, holds his sceptre or weapon above his head to symbolise his dominion as leader. Ostanes' table calls him Aidoneus, a name of Hades, or better in this context, Dis Pater.

Oriens and Uriel

THE MOST PROMINENT ANGELS of Judaic and Christian traditions frequently converge with the Four Kings theme, with its Greco-Chaldean background. There are coherent traditions linking the angel Raphael to Boel and Bael. The whole Four Kings theme connects with solar vice-regents, of whom Michael is certainly a pre-eminent type, more recognisable in the *PGM* than the grimoires, but ever present. His reputation for conquering – or commanding – demons makes him the patron of magicians and exorcists of many traditions. Similarly the angel Uriel appears to be convergent with Oriens. Firstly Uriens, Urian &c. are known variants of the latter name, and appears frequently in Germanic and other folklore, with likely Jewish influences. He appears – as Urian – in Goethe's *Faust*, where he presides over the Walpurgis celebrations on Mount Brocken. In this, as other contexts, his name is synonymous with the devil, aptly since Lucifer is close to identical with Oriens of the grimoires.

Secondly Uriel has a rather dark reputation; Enoch speaks of him presiding over *thunder and terror*. As good a place as any to begin recounting this is with the so-called reprobated angels. A church council convened in Rome in 745 CE reprobated seven angels, which is to say they were no longer recognised or approved by official doctrine. This was by no means the beginning of the Church's opposition to angel worship; which frequently involved magical practices both by the clergy and the laity. Problems with angels can be traced to Paul, as in *Colossians* and *Galatians*. The unorthodox nature and wide distribution of angel magic in Judaism and Christianity need not be considered in detail. What matters is that the reprobated angels included Uriel, Raguel and – tellingly – Sabaoth; these are prominent in the papyri and the *Testament of Solomon*, as well as on many ancient amulets.

Uriel (Greek Ouriel) means Light, or Fire, of God, and though uncanonical the name is truly ancient, and signs of his veneration for apotropaic or magical purposes are widely known. The literary traditions identify him as a regent of the Sun (probably all four angels could claim this, as could the Four Kings). *God's fire* and solar connections make his a significant name in linking the angels with the kings. Solar and fiery connections imply angelic equivalents of Helios and Vulcan. Like Raphael, Uriel presides over Hades, while Michael's chthonic connections are writ large already; in the syncretic iconography of the period Michael holding balances mirrors Anubis as an underworld judge and psychopomp. In the same way that angels were used in Jewish magic as substitutes for pagan figures, 10th century Arabs credited Solomon with the discovery of iron tools (Sarah Iles Johnston, 'The Testament of Solomon from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance,' in *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*). This effectively assimilates one patron of magic to another, Solomon substitutes for an Idæan Dactyl. To take this prescriptively, given his prevalence in the *PGM* Damnameneus is a likely candidate.

Uriel in *II Esdras* represents hopes of salvation in the new age of Christ, while the equally uncanonical *Book of Adam and Eve* has him preside over repentance essential to eschatological hopes. While the apocalyptic literature often portrays collective or universal eschatology, it is not a great stretch to connect the dramatis personæ with individual eschatology, and from there to magic in general; the very sphere where late pagan, Jewish and Christian folk beliefs overlap. Just as ministering angels converge with our aerial spirits as protectors of ascending souls; so the chief angels converge with our kings, their commanders, among whom of course is Uriel. As Ouriel he

appears in the *ToS* and is among the angels of the papyri; in the rite called Sword of Dardanos his name is among those on the sword (*PGM* IV.1716–1870). Amulets of the 1st through to the 6th centuries name him frequently prior to his reprobation in 745; and later magical traditions reflect this background, with varying degrees of camouflage.

Among the most important references to Uriel in the grimoires, as many readers will be aware, are the Operation of Uriel Seraphim (*MS Grimoire of Armadel*) and its analogue *Divination by the Word of Uriel* (*GV*); (for an in context account see *True Grimoire*, ‘The Art Armadel’). In this he plays the role of intermediary or angelic vice-regent, accessing any or all of the seven angels: Alithael, Anael, Raphael, Gabriel, Cassiel, Sachiël, Samael. The first of these is likely a mistranscription for Michael; which makes Uriel his superior in this particular system. There is a good bit of interchange of roles among the four elemental angels, much as with the Kings.



The Technical Hermetica

IN APPROXIMATELY 200 CE Clement of Alexandria mentions 42 books of Hermes carried in procession by Egyptian priests. The first priest was the invoking priest, carrying two books of sacred prayer; directly after him came the astrologer with four astrological texts. It was once believed that some of this literature survived in the Hermetic tradition. Indeed, while the theoretical or philosophical Hermetica first appear in this period, the practical or technical Hermetica – dealing with astrology, magic and alchemy – bear a closer relationship to the ancient wisdom literature (*TEH* passim) and commence at an earlier date.

An anonymous practical Hermetic author of the 2nd century BCE wrote an astrological work attributed to Nechepso and the prophet Petosiris; dealing with Egyptian mysteries and astrological magic. Nechepso himself was a 7th century Pharaoh, to whom such works came to be attributed. According to Proclus he possessed a theurgic invocation of the goddess Necessity, and was learned in divine and angelic hierarchies. There is every reason to identify some of these angels with the daimons of the decans. The fragments of these writings preserved by Firmicius Maternus (4th century CE) constitute a master key of decan magic. While distinct, it is the closest of the pagan forms to Solomonic. The tables of Maternus follow with his text – roughly translated from Latin – which gives them context. When the comments of Maternus are compared with the *Testament* the heavy Pagan influence on the ‘Jewish’ material becomes very clear. A pagan form of the same conjuring method is demonstrably prior and – given this key – fully recoverable.

SIGN	DECAN	GOD OF DECAN	POWER OF DECAN
♈	1	Arouris	Assicean
	2	Anubis	Lencher
	3	Horus	Asentacer
♉	1	Serapis	Asicath
	2	Helitomenos	Viruso
	3	Apophis	Aharph
♊	1	Taatus	Thesogar
	2	Cyclops	Verasua
	3	Titan	Tepisatosa
♋	1	Apoltun	Sothis
	2	Hecate	Syth
	3	Mercophta	Thuisimis
♌	1	Typhon	Aphruimis
	2	Perseus	Sitlacer
	3	Nepthe	Phuonidie
♍	1	Isis	Thumis
	2	Pi-Osiris	Thopitus

♁	3	Cronus	Aphut
	1	Zeuda	Serucuth
	2	Omphta	Aterechinis
♂	3	Ophionus	Arepien
	1	Arimanius	Sentacer
	2	Merota	Tepiseuth/Tepsisen
♃	3	Panotragus	Senciner
	1	Tolmophta	Eregbuo
	2	Tomras	Sagen
♄	3	Zeraph	Chenen
	1	Soda	Themeso
	2	Riruphta	Epima
♅	3	Monuphta	Homoth
	1	Brondeus	Oroasoer
	2	Vucula	Astiro
♆	3	Proteus	Tepisatras
	1	Rephan	Archatapias
	2	Sourut	Thopibui
♇	3	Phallophorus	Atembui

Decan definition of Firmicius Maternus

Each sign is formed from three decans possessing a great Divinity and a Power (potestatis), and by them all prospering or misfortune [of health] is decided. So Nechepso gathered together decans making defects of health and decans which make healthy. So, as one nature overpowers another so one god is overpowered by another; by contrary natures and contrary powers healing of all illnesses is found in the offices of the divine reason.

Greco-Egyptian astrological magic developed from the 3rd century BCE onwards. Increasing links with Babylonian practice and belief are evident in the development of this magic. The most important of the Hermetic astrological works, the *Liber Hermetis*, involves themes from the 3rd century BCE including the Egyptian division of the zodiac into 36 decans. Hermetic decan magic – transmitted to later Western magic through Byzantine contacts, the Arab *Picatrix* and Agrippa – anciently involved correspondences to stones, herbs and animals, as well as magical characters, coloured inks and so forth. The images of the Latin *Liber Hermetis* were undoubtedly influential on Renaissance astrology and remain prominent in modern astrological magic. However, astrological technique aside, on the specific subject of decan magic this work has a very serious rival: the *Sacred Book*. This Greek decan book has far more complete correspondences: animals, plants and stones, as well as decan names known from monumental inscriptions, and images of the gods more identifiably Egyptian in origin. On this subject a good deal more is to follow anon.

Decan Gods of Liber Hermetis

SIGN	1ST DECAN	2ND DECAN	3RD DECAN
♃	Aulathamas	Sabaoth	Disornafais
♄	Jaus	Sarnatois	Erchmubris
♅	Manuchos	Samurois	Azuel
♆	Senep-tois	Somachalm-ais	Charmine
♇	Zalois	Zachor	Frich
♈	Zamendres	Magois	Michulais
♉	Psinues	Chusthis- is	Psamiatois
♊	Necbeuos	Turmantis	Psermes
♋	Clinothois	Thursois	Renethis
♌	Renpsois	Manethois	Marxois
♍	Ularis	Luxois	Crauxes
♎	Fambrais	Flugmois	Piatrix

Accompanying these names are images (ultimately of Egyptian provenance) and climes (zones of ancient geography). The decans have an attribution to the planets in Chaldean Order, commencing and ending with Mars. Most entries stipulate medical afflictions. Unlike *The Sacred Book* there is no plant list.

As understood by the Egyptians, the Hermetic writers, and by Iamblichus' theurgic school, the zodiac, the decans and the individual degrees were powerful beings rather than abstract sidereal influences. Pamphilus (Alexandrian grammarian, 2nd century CE) was closely acquainted with Greco-Egyptian decan lore and spoke of the sacred plants empowered by the star-daimons, as revealed in books of the Egyptian Hermes (*TGH* 1.68). The so-called magical images of the decans (*TBOP* II.XXXVII) originally represented stellar deities or their subordinate daimons; an origin far clearer in their *Liber Sacer* form. Excerpt VI of the *Hermetic Anthology* of Stobæus (below) describes these star daimons as *sons* or *children* of the decans. Thus the decan demons of the *Testament* originate in traditions of at least the Ptolemaic era, strongly associated with practical Hermetics based on the principles of sympathia. The lore associated with them is complex, involving plants, stones and formulæ. It is strongly connected with the god-making formulæ of Hermetic and Theurgic traditions. These applications of the wider practical Hermetica and diverse theurgic operations anticipate the extra-medical applications of the post-*Testament* Solomonic tradition.

AS MENTIONED, fragments of Hermetic writings from the 2nd century BCE were preserved by Stobæus. Excerpt VI is given in slightly abbreviated form below. The emphasised sections show the chief areas of interest.

Tat. In your former General Discourses you promised to explain about the thirty-six decans; I therefore ask you to tell me about them now, and to explain their working.

Hermes. I am quite willing, Tat; and **of all my teachings, this will be of supreme importance, and will stand highest among them. I bid you mark it well.** I have told you before about the zodiacal circle, which is also called the animal-bearing circle, and about the five planet-stars and the sun and the moon, and the several circles of these seven bodies. ... I desire you then, in your thoughts about the thirty-six decans also, to bear in mind what I have told you, that so my teaching about the decans also may be intelligible to you.

I told you, my son, that there is a body which encloses all things. You must conceive the shape of that body as circular; for such is the shape of the universe. ... **[B]elow the circle of this body are placed the thirty-six decans, between the circle of the universe and that of the zodiac, separating the one circle from the other; they bear up, as it were, the circle of the universe, and look down on the circle of the zodiac.** They retard the all-enclosing body, for that body would move with extreme velocity if it were left to itself, but they urge on the seven other circles, because these circles move with a slower movement than the circle of the universe.

And subject to the decans is the constellation called the Bear, which is centrally situated with regard to the zodiac. The Bear is composed of seven stars, and has overhead another Bear to match it. The function of the Bear resembles that of the axle of a wheel; it never sets nor rises, but abides in one place, revolving about a fixed point, and making the zodiacal circle revolve, transmitting the world from night to day, and from day to night. Let us understand then that ... decans stand round about all things in the cosmos as guardians, holding all things together, and watching over the good order of all things.

... [T]he decans are exempt from the things that befall the other stars. They are not checked in their course and brought to a standstill, nor hindered and made to move backwards, as the planets are; nor yet are they as are the other stars. **They are free, and exalted above all things; and as careful guardians and overseers of the universe,** they go round it in the space of a night and a day ... [T]hey act on us most potently. If they act on the heavenly bodies, how could it be that they should not act on us also, both on individual men and on communities? **The force which works in all events that befall men collectively comes from the decans; for instance, overthrows of kingdoms, revolts of cities, famines, pestilences, overflowings of the sea, earthquakes, none of these things, my son, take place without the working of the decans.** For if the decans rule over the seven planets, and we are subject to the planets, do you not see that the force set in action by the decans reaches us also, whether it is worked by the decans themselves or by the children of the decans or through the intermediary of the planets? ... You must know that there is yet another sort of work which the decans do; they sow upon the earth the seed of certain forces, some salutary and others most pernicious, which the many call

daemons. They do not possess bodies made of some special kind of matter, nor are they moved by soul, as we are; for there is no such thing as a race of daemons distinct from other beings; but they are forces put in action by these six and thirty gods.

Celsus

ASIDE FROM COPIOUS HERMETIC REFERENCES, there is the account given by Celsus (defending so-called demon worship in his *Against the Christians*). Here the names are plainly derived in several cases from the Ptolemaic god names of a few hundred years earlier. More importantly, there is no thwarting angel paradigm at work; the decans are simply invoked.

The Egyptians say ... that thirty-six daimons, or ethereal gods of a kind, have distributed man's body among themselves, apportioned into the corresponding number of parts ... One daimon then is appointed to take care of one part, another of another. Of these daimons they know the names in the local speech, as for instance: Khnoumen and Khnakoumen, and Knat, and Sikat, and Bion, and Eron, and Erebian, and Ramanor, and Reianoor, and the rest of the names used in their tongue. By invoking these daimons, they cure the sufferings of the various parts.

*Ptolemaic Decan Gods**

SIGN	1ST DECAN	2ND DECAN	3RD DECAN
♈	Sit	Chnoumis	Charchnoumis
♉	Etet	Photeth	Tum
♊	Oueste-Bikuti	Aphoso	Soychoue
♋	Tpechonte	Chontare	Chontachre
♌		Sptchne	‘Reoyu
♍	Sesme, Sisesme	Konime	Smat
♎		Sru	Sisru
♏		Tpechy	Chy
♐	Tpebioy	Bioy, Tpibioy	Chontare
♑	Chontarche	Siket	Chouy
♒	Eru, Aroy	Remenaare	Thosolk
♓	Oyare	Sothis	

* This Sothic table corrects that given in *Geo I: Astrologia* starting at Sothis rather than 0° Aries.

Behind the profusion of different names and images, certain key ideas are present in several variants. The tables of the decan gods according to Ostanes give some interesting alternatives of syncretic Greco-Egyptian origin. Aidoneus, a name of Hades, is the name of the first decan of Aries. This – and the second name, Persephone – gives us a precedent for considering the first decan as leader of the rest. Compare with Baal in the hierarchy of the 72 spirits in the *Goetia of Solomon*.

Names of the Decans according to Ostanes

SIGN	1ST DECAN	2ND DECAN	3RD DECAN
♈	Aidoneus	Persephone	Eros
♉	Charis	Horai	Litai
♊	Tethys	Cybele	Praxidice
♋	Nike	Herakles	Hecate
♌	Hephaëstus	Isis	Sarapis
♍	Themis	Moirai	Hestia
♎	Erinys	Kouros	Nemesis
♏	Nymphai	Leto	Kairos
♐	Loimos	Kore	Ananke
♑	Asclepius	Hygieia	Tolma



Dike

Phobos

Osiris



Oceanus

Dolos

Elpis

In the same way compare Rhyax, the name of the first of Solomon's decan demons, derived from *rex* transliterated into Greek letters. In the later cases where a similar prefix appears before subsequent demons of the catalogue it is likely the titles originate in a suppression of *My name, O Lord Solomon, is ...* and *My name, O King, is ...* In this case however, it is differently spelt and with no name following. Some manuscripts term him Krios, fairly straightforwardly from Kurios, Lord; which translates Baal into Greek even better than Rex does Latin. Thus the spirit's name is his own, unconnected with the underhand borrowing of Solomon's title.

The Hades of the Ostanes list strongly suggests the Sun as Dis Pater, here in the role of leader of the decans. The syncretic logic involved is certainly clear, even though many convergent themes are involved. To name but two, the Sun below the Earth becomes the Lord of the Underworld (the prototype in this tradition being the Sumerian Utu, Akkadian Shamash, god of law and deliverer from disease). So too regarding the medical associations of the decans, Apollo, now fully solar, was always a god of disease and his son Asclepius a healer. Also accentuated is the Orphic association of Hades (Dis Pater) with the Sun and Persephone with the Moon.

It is clear from numerous technical Hermetica that the decans were an important aspect of this literature. The chapter on the decans in *Liber Hermetis* is – like the corresponding section in the *ToS* – the oldest part of a composite text. The fragment from Stobæus also clearly places great emphasis upon them. This is in keeping with the role they have in the so-called philosophical Hermetica (*Corpus Hermeticum*), where too their role is emphasised. This is part and parcel of an archaic fiery and solar theology, overlaid with ideas of a higher deity. The *Sacred Book* represents a more primitive form of the Hermetic decan tradition, with a host of interesting implications for our purposes.

1

I have for you the forms and figures of the thirty-six decans that belong to the zodiacal signs, and it is necessary for me to show how to engrave each of them between the horoscope, the good daimon and the position appropriate to the body part. If you do thus, and carry this ring, you will possess a powerful phylactery:

For the conditions sent to all men due to the influence of the stars are cured by these decans. So if you offer honour to each – through its own stone, plant and image – you will possess a powerful phylactery. For nothing happens without this decanic provision; it can be seen that it covers all eventualities.

2

The circle of the zodiac unfolds according to the same parts, members and harmonies as the world; it is distributed as follows:

3

Aries is the head of the world, Taurus the neck, Gemini shoulders, Cancer breast, Lion the back, shoulder blades, heart and ribs, the Virgin the belly, Libra buttocks, Scorpio the pubis, Sagittarius the thighs, Capricorn the knees, Aquarius the legs and Pisces the feet.

4

Thus, each zodiacal sign has power over the stones, shapes and forms of the decans themselves, and, after having placed the plant beneath the stone engraved with its image, it will be a phylactery. Wear it as a powerful and blessed relief for your body.

5

Aries: the first decan has the name of Chenlacori, and has the form represented here: his face is a little child, his hands are raised up holding a sceptre above his head. He dominates the affections of the head. Engrave it on the Babylonian stone, and beneath it put the plant isophryn, fix it in an iron ring and carry it with you. Abstain from eating the head of a boar. In this way you earn the goodwill of each decan, by engraving the stone with his name.

6

Aries 2nd decan. This is called Chontaret and Chau[chein] and has the following form. The decan has a dog's face; he holds a sceptre in his right hand and a disk in his left, and is wrapped with strips to the heels; he governs the nostrils and all conditions thereof. Engrave on siderite, and beneath place wild rue in a gold ring and carry on you. Avoid eating the flesh of the crane.

7

Aries 3rd decan. This is called Siket and has the form of a woman; on her head is a disk, in her right hand a sceptre, and in her left a water vessel, she is wrapped with bandages to her heels. She governs the ear, uvula and teeth. Engrave it thus on the stone bostrychitis, [a gem resembling braided hair. Pliny, V.]. Place beneath it the plant [called] plantain, the ring in whatever metal you wish, and carry it with you. Do not eat ram tripe.

First decan of Taurus. This decan is called Chôou and has a ram's head; he is dressed as Osiris down to the feet, and both hands hold sceptres which rest on the shoulders. This decan governs the neck. Engrave therefore the stone selenite, and beneath it place the plant spherite [citron], contained in what you wish, and carry with you. Do not eat conger eel.

Second decan of Taurus. This is called Aron and has the form of a woman holding in her hands a sceptre, standing with both feet together and covered in bandages down to the feet, like Osiris. She governs the tonsils and neck. Thus engrave it on the stone of Aphrodite, and place beneath it the plant dittany, set in a ring of gold [or silver?], and carry it on you. Do not eat eel.

Taurus, third decan. This is called Romenur, the form is that of a dog-headed man, he wears a disk on his head, in his right hand he holds a sceptre while his left hand is lowered behind him, he has a belt [which] hangs to his knees. He governs the mouth and throat. Engrave on the stone hyacinth [a type of topaz] and place beneath it the plant bugloss. Enclose in a gold or silver ring and carry with you. Avoid eating eel.

The first decan of Gemini is called Xocha. The form is this: he has the face of an ass, carrying in his right hand a small key, with his left hand hanging, wearing a pleated garment to the knee. He rules the tops of the shoulders. Engrave the image on the stone [called] diamond and, place beneath it the plant orchis, set in what you wish, and carry. Refrain from eating [electric ray/torpedo fish].

Gemini, the second decan is called Ouari and appears with the face of a goat, holding in his right hand a stick and with his left hand on his thigh; wearing a pleated garment to the knee. He governs the arms. Engrave it on the stone [called] panchrous [all colours] and place beneath it the plant [called] cinquefoil; set in what you wish and carry, abstaining from skaros [a sea fish].

The third decan of Gemini is called Pépisoth and takes the form of a woman, holding in her right hand lightning and in her left a vial. She is winged and wears a great crown on her head. Engrave it on the stone called heliotrope, and place beneath it the plant [called] libanotis [rosemary]; set in a ring and carry, refraining from wild boar meat.

First decan of Cancer. This is called Sotheir [Sothis]; it has the face of a dog and a body like a coiled snake, and is set upon a pedestal. It regulates the conditions that occur in the flanks. Engrave it on the stone dryite [precious stone found beneath trees. Pliny, I], and place beneath it the plant called mugwort; set it in what you wish and carry, refraining from eating the stomach of the white sow.

The second decan of Cancer is called Ouphisit and has the form of a woman, with the body of a bird,

wings outstretched as if ready to fly, and a braid/basket [crown?] upon her head. It regulates conditions of the lungs. Engrave it on green jasper, and place beneath it the plant peony. Set it in what you wish and carry, abstaining from any food touched by a dog.

16

The third decan of Cancer is called Chnoupfos and has the form of two women's faces looking in opposite directions; one wears a little headdress and the other a diadem. Her throat is necklaced by dragons. This [bust] is set upon a pedestal. She governs the spleen. Engrave on the stone euchaite [prob. aetites of Albertus Magnus]. Beneath it place the plant spherite, set and carry. [The food taboo is missing.]

17

The first decan of Leo is called Chnoumos [Chnoumis]; he has the head of a lion looking skyward surrounded by solar rays and its body is that of a coiled snake. He governs afflictions of the heart. Engrave it on agate, and beneath it place lady's mantle; set it in what you wish and carry, abstaining from sparrow's eggs.

18

The second decan of Leo is called Ipi and his form is this: a naked man, carrying in his right hand a sceptre, in his left a whip, on his head a lunar crescent. He governs afflictions of the shoulder blades. Engrave it on the stone selenite, placing beneath it the plant chrysogonus [chrysanthemum?]; set it in a ring of gold and carry, refraining from beans.

19

The third decan of Leo is called Phatiti and has the form which follows: a man with a predator's or goat's [?] head, he holds his right hand high, as in greeting, and he bears a vial in his left. He rules diseases of the liver. Engrave upon the stone helite, and place the plant [missing] beneath, set in what you wish and carry, abstaining from tuna.

20

First decan of Virgo. This is called Athoam and has the following form: a dog's head wearing a great crown, the rest of the body is hot/burning [fiery in colour?] and it stands on a pedestal. It governs afflictions of the stomach. Engrave it on corallite, and beneath it place the plant weasel's eye [probably lesser snapdragon, *Misopates orontium*]; set it in what you wish and carry with you, refrain from eating the liver of the white sow.

21

The second decan of Virgo is called Brysous and has the following form: the head of a horned goat, wrapped in bandages down to the feet, holding in his right hand a sceptre and in his left a jar [canopic?]. It regulates conditions of the bowels. Engrave it on the stone dendrites [probably coral], place beneath it the plant liquorice set in what you wish and bear with you. It gives blessed relief, but you must abstain from the flesh of the crane.

22

The third decan of Virgo is called Amphatham and has the form which follows: her feet together,

bandaged from the breasts to the feet, carrying a sceptre with both hands and wearing a small headdress [mound or ball shaped?]. She regulates conditions of the navel. Engrave it on the stone euthizon [a glass like stone?] and place beneath it the plant catananche [a form of vetch much used in magic]. Set in what you wish and carry. Refrain from foal tripe and bear meat.

23

The first decan of Libra is called Sphoukou and has the form which follows: an old man wearing a belt, his left hand held high in the air as to receive something and the right hand hanging, holding a vial. It regulates the conditions of the fundament. Engrave the stone jaspagate, and place beneath it the plant polium [*Teucrium polium*, felty germander], set it in what you wish and carry, abstaining from eating duck and bitter almonds.

24

The second decan of Libra is named Nephthimis and appears as follows: he stands on a fountain with two streams which meet as one. Bandaged from the breast to the heels, he has a thick curly beard and a jar in one hand. He governs the urethra, bladder and urinary tract. Engrave it on the stone called sardonyx, and place beneath it the plant called vervain; set and carry, refraining from mulberries.

25

The third decan of Libra is called Phou and his form is snake headed, set with a great crown and wearing a tight garment. It regulates the conditions of the anus, haemorrhoids, calluses and sores. Engrave it on an emerald, placing beneath it the plant low vervain; set and carry, abstaining from minced meat (hash) and leg of pork.

26

The first decan of Scorpio is called Bôs and appears with the head of a bull and four wings; girdled with a belt, holding in his right hand a vial and in his left a sceptre. He governs pain at the opening of the penis, ulcers and inflammations. Engrave it on a hematite, and place beneath it the plant called Mercury; set and carry with you. [Food prohibition missing.]

27

The second decan of Scorpio is called Oustichos. The form has its feet together, wears a stole and stands upon a scorpion. It governs the genitals, all growths and warts. Engrave on the stone called pyrite, and place beneath it the plant heliotrope [scorpion tail]; set and carry with you. [Food missing.]

28

The third decan of Scorpio is called Aphébis. He is goat headed with both his hands upon the rudder; he is bandaged from the breast to the heels. He governs the testicles, and inflammation in one or both. Engrave it on carnelian or sardonyx of Egypt, and place beneath it liquorice or peony; set and carry with you, refraining from sweetmeats.

29

First decan of Sagittarius is called Isebos. His left hand is lowered and covered by his garment, with an arrow [spear?] held in his right, he is wrapped in colourful bandages from his breast to his heels

and his head is also bound. He governs the thigh tumours called buboes. Engrave thus on the Phrygian stone, and place beneath it the plant called sage; set and carry, avoiding [water fowl with red legs/beak].

30

The second decan of Sagittarius is called Teuchmos and has an ichneumon's [weasel's] face; in his right hand is a flask, in his left hand a sceptre. This decan stands on a steep round bank [?]. He regulates bone setting. Engrave on amethyst, and place beneath it the plant called adractitalos [dragonwort?]; set and carry, refraining from eating turtle.

31

The third decan of Sagittarius is called Chthisar. He appears as an old man wearing a great crown, bandaged from the breast to the ankles and carrying in his right hand a flask, in his left a sceptre. He governs the thighs and sends them pain and causes ulceration. Engrave it on the stone aerizon [stone clear as air], and place beneath it the plant called knapweed; set and carry on your person, abstaining from chicken brains.

32

The first decan of Capricorn is called Tair; the form is headless, but the rest of the body is human with a scarab girt about his chest with a leather band; he carries in his right hand a vial, his left hand rests upon his thigh. He governs the knees and their complaints. Engrave it on a serpentine, and place beneath it the plant delphinion [larkspur, centaury]; set and carry, avoiding eel.

33

The second decan of Capricorn is called Epitech. It has the head of a pig, the rest of the body similar to the first decan; wearing a belt, in the right hand a vial, in the left hand a sword. It regulates the elbows. Engrave it on the stone chalcedony, and beneath it place anemone; set and carry, refraining from moray eel.

34

The third decan of Capricorn is called Epichnous and wears a mask, he holds in his right hand a vial, in his left an arrow or dart and wears a girdle. It governs the same as the second decan. Engrave it on the stone anankite, and place beneath it the plant chameleon [thistle]; set and carry, refraining from crayfish.

35

The first decan of Aquarius is called Isy and Isro-thro. The image has the head of a dog, and is bandaged from the breast to the heels. He governs the shins and causes the abscesses and ulcers that occur there. Engrave it thus on the stone knekite [?], and place beneath it the plant asurum [wild ginger, coltsfoot]; set and carry. Avoid millet bread contaminated by insects.

36

The second decan of Aquarius is called Sosomnô and is bandaged from the breast to the heels, carrying an Ankh and wearing a great crown. He governs the knees and calves. Engrave on a lodestone, and place beneath it the plant gladiolus [pimpernel]; set and carry with you. Avoid leg of

pork.

37

The third decan of Aquarius, called Chonoumous, is in human form and bandaged from chest to ankles. He wears a great crown; in his right is a jar, in his left a sceptre. He governs the parts named above. Engrave it on the stone of the Medes, and place beneath it the plant thyrion [blue succory], set and carry, avoiding donkey meat.

38

The first decan of Pisces is called Tetima and is robed in indigo fabric, bandaged from the breast to the ankles; holding in his right hand a vial with his left hand resting on his thigh. He governs the feet and sends them abscesses. Engrave it on a beryl, and place the plant vervain beneath it; set and carry, avoiding lioness meat.

39

The second decan of Pisces is called Sopphi and the image is of a man. He is naked, but wears a cape thrown back over his shoulders. He holds a vial in his right hand and presses the index finger of his left hand to his lips; and has a great crown on his head. [He governs the same part as the first decan.] Engrave it on the stone perileukios [a stone edged or encircled with white], place beneath it the plant libanotis [rosemary]; set and carry, avoid eating sheep liver.

40

The third decan of Pisces is called Syrû. It is invisible [black?] and is called sinuous dragon; he has a beard and a great crown set on his head. [He governs the same part as the second.] Engrave on the hyacinth, and place chamomile beneath it; set and carry. [Food omitted, but a related MS says: *Do not sit on the floor.*]

Comparative Table of Egyptian Decans

TROPICAL SERIES	SIGN	SOTHIC SERIES	HIEROGLYPHIC	HEPHESTION	HERMETIC
1		27	Chontare	Chontare	Chenlachori
2	♈	28	Chontarche	Chontachre	Choutaret, Chauchein
3		29	Siket	Siket	Siket
4		30	Chau	Chôou	Xôou, Sôou-Sôe
5	♉	31	Eru, Aroy	Ero	Aron, Aero
6		32	Remen-Hare	Rombromare	Rombromaros, Romenos
7		33	Thosalq	Thosolch	Xocha, Zoxa
8	♊	34	Uaret	Ouare	Ouari
9		35	Phu-Hor	Phouori	Pepisoth
10		36	Sopdet	Sothis	Sotheir, Sothis
11	♋	1	Seta (Set-Sit)	Sit	Ouphisit
12		2	Knum	Chnoumis	Chnouphos
13		3	Char-Knum	Charchnoumis	Chnoumos, Chnoumites
14	♌	4	Ha-Tet	Epe	Ipi
15		5	Phut-Tet	Phoupe	Phatiti
16		6	Tôm	Tôm	Athoum, Iathoum
17	♍	7	Uste-bikot	Ouôteuchôti	Brôous, Brusouos
18		8	Aposot	Aphoso	Amphatam
19		9	Sobchos	Souchôe	Sphouchou, Seiou
20	♎	10	Tpa-Chont	Ptechout	Nepthimis &c.
21		11	Chontare	Chontare	Phou
22		12	Spt-Chne	Stôchene	Bôs
23	♏	13	Sesme	Sesme	Oustichos
24		14	Si-Sesme	Sisieme	Aphemis
25		15	Hre-Ua	Reouô	Sumos
26	♐	16	Sesme	Sesme	Teuchmos
27		17	Konime	Komme	Chthisar, Chachthisar
28		18	Smat	Smat	Tair, Cheitaeir
29	♑	19	Srat	Sro	Epitech, Tepeitech
30		29	Si-Srat	Isro	Epichnous, Chnoumous
31		21	Tpa-Chu	Ptiau	Isu, Isro-thro
32	♒	22	Chu	Aeu	Sosomnô
33		23	Tpa-Biu	Ptebouo	Chonoumos, Chhonoumos-Ptibiu
34		24	Biu	Abiou	Tetima, Testima-Obiou
35	♓	25	Chont-Har	Chontare	Soapphi, Somphein
36		26	Tpi-Biu	Ptibiu	Surô

THE SUBJECT OF THE DECANS is important, but general principles are still emerging, and the emphasis here is on making them available to traditionally minded magicians. In essence then, this vastly complex subject, involving precession of the equinoxes, Sothic and Tropical astrology and more, must be summarised and made accessible. My handling of the characters, an important part of this lore, is composed accordingly, establishing some broad principles without omitting important factors, or over complicating either. Individual further research thus has considerably better chance of a clear shot.

To begin with, there is a terminology of magic, and the term *characters* (Gk. *kharakteres*) has been part of the Western magical vocabulary since around the 2nd century. The grimoires are full of them, linear figures, akin to ancient alphabets, their lines and curves tipped with small circles. More elaborate sigils of spirits are often referred to with the same term, and for good reason. The simpler forms are undoubtedly the oldest type; singly they represent individual spirits; equally, often a series of *kharakteres* represents spirits in a defined group.

The original conception behind them was – academia and magical tradition agree – chiefly astrological. Though not exclusive, a particular association of *kharakteres* is with the decans. They are originally non-alphabetic (although analogies with *stoicheia* tends that way); magical signs rather than an earthly script. Nevertheless it appears that later Hebrew based alphabets, such as Celestial Script, derive from decan characters.

Meanings of Stoicheia

PRACTICAL STOICHEIA

Letters, characters

The alphabet, ABC'S

Foundation or principles (of a science or institution)

Fundamentals

PHILOSOPHIC STOICHEIA

The physical elements

The planets or stars

Elemental or chthonic spirits

Spirits of stars, planets, decans &c.

The division into Practical and Philosophic is my own; a magical or philosophical belief in the significance of wordplay and nuance explains the convergence of letters and spirits in *kharakteres* via *stoicheia*.

Despite their quasi-alphabetic appearance, understanding them as a means of communicating with or instructing spirits is overly simplistic. It is quite apparent from various inscriptions that in some sense the characters are identical with the spirits themselves. They are referred to as *most holy lords*, *kharakteres*, and in other personalised forms. Thus they represent the presence of the powers concerned, rather than an instruction to them. In this they are close in nature to the magical images and sacred animals which also represent presence rather than being a sympathetic correspondence like the minerals and plants. The distinction operates approximately thus: minerals and plants can provide sympathetic inks or surfaces to make characters with; the drawn character itself is an indwelt image.

An authoritative inscription of magical characters of the decan gods survives from the ancient

world (see Gager 56, fig. 7 and note regarding *similar even identical* series found elsewhere). It is interesting to note that this lead cursing tablet was found in Apamea. Of the 36 symbols employed the last in the series enables us to be sure that the series does not begin with zero Aries. It is a known symbol of the decan god Chnoumis/Chnoubis, derived from an earlier Egyptian god. His image, a lion-headed serpent with seven rays ascending from the head, often appears with this exact symbol on magical gems. Hephestion writes of him confusedly, saying that he is a star of Leo in the sign of Cancer. Attributions to both can be found, and it is not certain that the difference concerns constellation versus Sign. Other indications place him at the end of Gemini, immediately before zero Cancer, representing the old Sothic start point of the decan series. The Chnoumis ‘dragon’ is related to the serpent Ouroboros, fittingly for the last decan of the Sothic zodiacal dragon.

*Chnoumis/Chnoubis
from an engraved agate*



Lion-headed Chnoubis, with nimbus and seven double rays around the head. In the free space on the left: Chnoubis-sign set vertically, below Chnoubis: two six-pointed stars. On the right, an inscription in two lines: $\chi\nu\omicron\upsilon\mu\epsilon\omega$, a variant of $\chi\nu\omicron\upsilon\mu\Box\zeta$ or $\chi\nu\omicron\upsilon\mu?$ Below: $\alpha\beta\rho\alpha\sigma\alpha\chi$ (Αβρασάξ).


An approximate but useful association of the kharakteres with the individual decans thus follows, attributing the first character to Sothis rather than zero Aries and distributing the remainder accordingly. How precession and other matters have affected individual elements over time can wait, there is a good deal of data in the generalised picture obtained from this clue. The Aries point, the new beginning of the decans, has an interesting character associated with it. A variant of the circled cross, the horizontal line is doubled. It is reminiscent of the Egyptian hieroglyph for town, which resembles a crossroads. The astrological crossroads is represented by our Four Kings and their signs.

Thus the doubled horizontal line can be read as the East/West axis of Aries and Libra. This symbol is thus an important schematic of many principles of the decan system.

The second sigil is one of the non-unique types in the series, shared with the first decan of Taurus and all three of Aquarius. There may be various reasons for these repeats. Another case is the first two decans of Gemini, the third one being different. Comparing the corresponding mansions suggests that this duplication stems from the disparity of numbers between decan and mansion per sign. That is, two decans bearing the same symbol may correspond to one spirit of the mansions.

Less speculatively, our Chnoumis sigil being the last of the Sothic or old series, makes the mansion of Nebiros the first. Curiously, considering that Sothis has precessed from this degree in more recent times, the mansion following is that of Astaroth; marking the *GV* hierarchy as up-to-date astrologically.

The Headless One

 WHEN ENCOUNTERED IN MEDICAL MAGIC the Headless Spirit is a fever demon. In other forms however the Headless One is one of the most important spirits of our study. Massively important in the magical papyri, Betz sees his origins as being in the earlier Egyptian religion, and notes how he is equated in the papyri sometimes with Osiris and sometimes with Besas. My own research, now republished with some amendments as *The Headless One*, notes a further important and extensive linkage; with Typhon-Set. Much of the apparent confusion can be drastically reduced by taking into account two factors. Firstly, this deity shares in the solar-pantheism of the period, and is linked to other deities as a cumulative effect of this tendency (see for example the ‘Ode to the Sun’ where both Osiris and Typhon are viewed as solar). The other is his positive identification in various texts (*Liber Sacer*, *Kyranides*, *Codex Cromwellianus* &c.) with both the first decan and the first lunar mansion of Capricorn. This is of course the zodiacal opposite of the first decan of Cancer, which in the ancient period was represented by Sothis. His association with Osiris may be as much due to this as the solar-pantheism, of which in any case the decans are a major expression.

This second point is reinforced in various ways by the ancient literary evidence. *PGM* II.64–184 is a classic example of solar pantheism in the papyri and involves the Headless Spirit; it is given as an alternative procedure of a preceding Apollonian invocation. Among its details is the drawing of a scarab at the entrance of the magician’s bedchamber. In isolation this is a curious detail and could be read in several ways. However the Headless Spirit in *Liber Sacer* is also ‘dressed’ with a scarab. In Egyptian astrological symbolism of the period the scarab substituted for the crab of Cancer. The Headless One as deity of Capricorn has an important relationship with Sothis; he is, so to speak, Osiris to her Isis.

As is evident by now, Capricorn is one of the solstitial signs, which with the equinoctial signs forms the cardinal grouping; with which the Four Kings and their counterparts are identified. The Capricorn solstice represents the Gate of the Gods in the eschatological soul travelling schema of the ancient star lore concerned. As the matched pair of Sothis its importance precedes the Hellenistic astrological reworking; that is, Sothis and the Headless One enjoy traces of ancient seniority from the pre-Aries history of the decans. Echoes of this old school seniority can be felt in the high status accorded to Amaymon in the grimoires, and may be involved in his occasional shifts between South and East.

MAGICAL RINGS, in the words of Cornelius Agrippa, *were always much esteemed of by the ancients*. His instructions provide us with a methodology for the text above, and illustrate the relevance to later grimoire magic of the technical Hermetica. The appropriate star ascending and well aspected, for example to the Moon, the stone and herb associated with it are used in making a ring. The root or other plant matter is placed beneath the stone in a space made for that purpose. Such a ring bears an image engraved on the stone as well as magical characters; appropriate incense is also employed in the rite of consecration. This rite bears cross comparison with the theurgic ritual of conjunction. The ring substitutes for the circle, wherein a plant is ‘buried’ (under a stone) and a magical link is thus formed with a star daimon, forming a tacit pact. In the same way the theurgic rite receives commentary back from the hermetic technicalities; when forming pacts with individual decan spirits by the raising up of plants, particular stones and plants are concerned. A potent and versatile magical technology, involving material ingredients alongside spiritual agencies, is at work throughout. Pythagoras and other later thinkers tended to idealise the root-cutters – see the partial unveiling of the relationship between chthonic cults and later spiritual movements in *Geosophia*. Simultaneously of course these later occultists imposed their own ideas retrospectively on these important predecessors. The same process is inevitable but conscious in our recovery of archaic Goetia from its Neoplatonist vehicle. Certain themes and ideas are brought over with the archaic core; some as welcome additions, providing useful structure, while also providing a valuable interface with later celestial tradition that retains a shared inheritance from antiquity. There is also extraneous baggage, such as the thwarting angel paradigm in large part represents. Here ‘cutting back to the roots’ has metaphorical as well as practical and historical meaning.

In the lore of the decans there is a major stratum of herb lore that undoubtedly reflects far more ancient practice independent of subsequent Greco-Chaldean astrology. So too the informed reader will notice how many plants in the following list are famous in post-Classical Western magic. They are often associated with planets and signs in later texts, although Hermetic association with the decans may well precede this Chaldean usage; the Egyptian contribution to Western occultism and herbalism alike makes this at least possible, even likely. Equally however in later lore we find the same herbs in contexts where lunar tides, key festivals or pure expediency determine timing; which may well have been true of the root-cutters and others. Through all these changes the root-cutter’s archaic plant alphabet is traceable – through consecutive and overlapping magical traditions or ‘languages’ – from prehistory to the present day.

The term *root doctor* is commonly employed in New World magic; a pleasing concatenation of terms for practitioners widely separated in time whose pharmacopœia involves considerable continuity. The difficulty some critics have seen in uniting archaic Goetia with New World magic is massively undermined by revealing these commonalities, whose importance in either context rarely receives the attention given Kabbalistic components in the post-Agrippa grimoires.

Practical Pointers

AS REGARDS LIBER SACER a few technical questions require investigation, most prominently the matter of the ring metal. The text appears to have lost details of which metal is required for most of the decans, to be replaced by *what you wish* after a few specific and explicable examples.

Aries 1 and 2, iron and gold respectively, point to a system of planetary attributions. Unfortunately the two main schemas both start the same way; the Chaldean Order and the Trigonal attribution both commence with Mars and the Sun, but continue quite differently. The Chaldean Order follows the order of the planets: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury and Moon, beginning with Mars and repeating as necessary. The Trigonal Order, erroneously thought to be of Oriental origin is just as Hellenistic (*LAG*). This attributes the three decans of each sign to the planets ruling the elemental triplicity; beginning with that ruling the individual sign. Thus again the first two decans are attributed to Mars and the Sun (rulers of Aries and Leo). Second and third Taurus both include references to ring metal, gold in the first case, gold or silver in the second. Had it been the other way around then the Trigonal (Moon second decan Taurus) might be suggested. Finally the second decan of Leo is attributed to gold here, but both systems reference Jupiter. It is just possible that Leo's defining star, Regulus, has influenced the choice of gold. In practice the reader must make their own decision; bearing in mind that attribution of planets and signs to the decans is a syncretic combination of Chaldean with Egyptian ideas, wherein they originally played no part.

So too Agrippa's methodology in astrological terms may well differ from the original. A preliminary deciphering of *Liber Sacer*'s instructions in Hellenistic astrological terms is as follows. By *horoscope* is certainly meant the first house, where presumably the decan is rising. *Good daimon* is more ambiguous, indicating either the eleventh house or the Part of Daimon. By *position appropriate* is surely intended a sign or decan ruling the part of the body, tautological as this might be as the text currently stands. Bringing these into good relation at the time of charging the ring represents the magical timing concerned.

Prior to examining the stones and plants listed in *Liber Sacer* a few words are necessary concerning these and other correspondences, their diffusion and various other points. These are not animal, vegetable and mineral but the reverse: stones, plants and animals.

The Stones

The grounds for inclusion evidently exceeded mere self adornment. Several entries are enigmatic, even to scholars, and references to them in other texts are rare; *knekites* for example is only known from Pliny and the text in hand. This sketch is only the beginning of a line of inquiry. For purposes of comparison and completeness I include here a table of attributions taken from the so-called Orphic Lithika.

AS NAMED	IDENTIFICATION	DEITY
Crystal	Quartz	Helios
Agate	Dendritic Agate	Demeter
Zamilapis	-	Dionysus
Chrysolite	Chrysoberyl*	Helios
Lodestone	Magnetite	Ares
Sideretis/Ophite	Serpentine	Phoebus Apollo
Jet**	Jet	Mene (Horned Selene)
Coral	Coral	Demeter
Stone of blood	Hematite	Ouranos
Nebrite	Nebrite cowry	Bacchus as Bromios

* Completely distinct from beryl.

** Not used to propitiate the deity but to protect from her less desirable influences.

The widespread use of amulets in Jewish culture in the Hellenistic era has several similar features. In particular, the employment of parchment and metal talismans in the grimoires is plainly a later development. Arnold writes (*CS* 38): [Jewish] *amulets were made out of a variety of objects, but most often precious stones*. Employment against demons and disease, often synonymous, were common, among other purposes. They might be engraved with the menorah or other cult object; the names of patriarchs or of angels, Michael and Gabriel particularly; or magical characters and signs. Among the latter the resemblance of decan characters to the Jewish celestial writing (*KoS* 127) has been noted elsewhere. So too, as Arnold notes, pagan names, figures, and symbols also appeared on Jewish amulets. Similarly invocations of Helios, Aphrodite as evening star, and of Hermes and the Moon appear in the *Sepher Ha-Razim*, along with 36 angels of the first heaven likely to signify the decans.

The Plants

In commenting upon the attribution to the decans of plants (and indeed minerals) I do not intend to give a reconstructionist pharmacopoeia. Nevertheless some notes highlighting the connections of this ancient lore are hopefully of use. The magical traditions of ancient Europe had herbal magical lore roughly comparable to various better known folk magical traditions. These traditions persisted from the earliest times through various phases of philosophy and religion. Important as the following material is it is only fair to say that we cannot attribute to the early root cutters the doctrines of later philosophers who retrospectively idealised their traditions. It will however strike modern occultists that, even through the hermetic lens, these root cutters sound rather akin to root doctors in New World traditions. This is not entirely surprising, influential as the Hermetic lore was upon the grimoires and books of secrets. At the same time it retains many characteristics from more remote antiquity, and we should remember that it is folk tradition which the Hermetic philosophers – among others – were reinterpreting.

Frequently one is struck by the recurrence in different order of the same herbs, stones and animals to the fixed stars, mansions and decans, as given in various differing texts. A similar rule extends to the planets, as also to the signs, although the animal set is much closer to the dodekaurus than the zodiac (*Geo* II.7 ‘The Magical Papyri’). Like pre-literate magical signs, animal, vegetable and mineral, they become involved with the ‘alphabet’ of astrology. This is not to say the archaic and the syncretic ‘languages’ are merged at random. Rather that it is important that both languages are heard, while their harmony centres on particular agencies upon whom emphasis is subtly but consistently maintained.

A representative set of such attributions can be found in several manuscripts, and mingled with others throughout Agrippa (for example, the plants in *TBOP* I.32). These are essentially Hermetic although later attributions to Enoch, Solomon &c. are found. The earliest manuscripts are frequently Arabic, but the imagery betrays Hellenistic origins. A planetary interpretation of the fixed stars (Venus/Sothis, Mars/Orion &c.) is also plain. I collate the raw data here in organised form; references may be sought in Festugière and Bouché-Leclercq.

NO.	STAR	STONE	PLANT	IMAGE	ALTERNATIVE IMAGE
1	<i>Aldebaran</i>	Ruby	Euphorbia (Spurge)	A fighter, god or man	Orion with sword
2	<i>Pleiades</i>	Crystal	Fennel	A young girl	A lamp
3	<i>Caput Algol</i>	Diamond	Hellebore	A man’s head with long beard & bloody neck (sic)*	
4	<i>Capella</i>	Sapphire	Horehound	A man ready to rejoice in a concert of instruments (sic)**	
5	<i>Sirius</i>	Beryl	Savine (Juniper)	A beautiful girl	A hare
6	<i>Procyon</i>	Agate	Primrose	Three young girls (Hecate Triformis)	A cock
7	<i>Cor leonis</i>	Garnet	Celandine	A seated dignitary	A cat or lion A raven or dove
				A black man robed in	

8	<i>Ala Corvi</i>	Onyx	Impatiens	black	(Enoch gives serpent rather than dove)
9	<i>Spica</i>	Emerald	Sage	A man carrying goods for sale***	A bird
10	<i>Arcturus</i>	Jasper	Plantain	A man who dances or plays	A horse or wolf
11	<i>Alkaid</i>	Magnet	Chicory	A man in deep meditation	A bull or calf
12	<i>Alphecca</i>	Topaz	Rosemary	A crowned man	A chicken (eagle, cock?)
13	<i>Cor Scorpionis</i>	Sard and Amethyst	Long aristolochy	A man wearing a breastplate, his sword in hand	
14	<i>Vega</i>	Chrysolith	Savory	A man set to run	A vulture
15	<i>Cauda Capricorni</i>	Chalcedony	Marjoram	An angry man	A deer or goat (Enoch gives goat)

* An error by a copyist, the *beard* is a lolling tongue of a gory mouth; the image is the female gorgoneion.

** Another error, the instruments are of war, the man is armed and ready to fight.

*** A goddess carrying an ear of wheat, associated with the constellation Virgo, is likely intended.

BEHENIAN STAR	AGRIPPA'S HERBS	OTHER CORRESPONDENCES FROM AGRIPPA
<i>Algol</i>	Mugwort	
<i>Pleiades</i>	Diacedon, Fennel Frankincense	Quicksilver
<i>Aldebaran</i>	Milk thistle, Matri-silva	
<i>Capella</i>	Mint, Mugwort, Mandrake	
<i>Sirius</i>	Mugwort, Dragonwort	The tongue of a snake
<i>Procyon</i>	Pennyroyal	
<i>Regulus</i>	Mugwort, Mastic	
<i>Alkaid</i>	Chicory, Mugwort, Flowers of Periwinkle	The tooth of a wolf
<i>Gienah</i>	Burr, Narcissus, Henbane, Comfrey	The tongue of a frog
<i>Spica</i>	Trefoil, Periwinkle, Mugwort, Mandrake	
<i>Arcturus</i>	(Agrippa gives no additional plants)	
<i>Alphecca</i>	Trefoil, Ivy	
<i>Antares</i>	Saffron	
<i>Vega</i>	Chicory, Fumitory	

Deneb Algedi Mugwort, Catnip,
Mandrake

In Agrippa the above correspondences are mingled with others pertaining to the 15 Behenian stars, distributed among various books and chapters of *TBOP*. Below are listed the plants remaining after extraction, as they are of considerable interest. Two plants above all stand out; their importance throughout the art is readily understood.

Hermetic Plants attributed to the Signs

SIGN	PLANT (various mss)	SOLOMONIC VARIANT
♈	Sage	Yarrow
♉	Vervain	Trefoil
♊	Creeping vervain	Pimpernel
♋	Comfrey	Mandrake
♌	Cyclamen	Black horehound
♍	Calamint	Nightshade
♎	Scorpion tail (Heliotrope)	Speedwell
♏	Mugwort	Houndstongue
♐	Red or blue pimpernel	Anarkardios (?)
♑	Impatiens	Tragion (also mentioned by Pliny)
♒	Fennel	Buttercup
♓	Long aristolochy	Aristoloché

After Festugière. See also *Hygromanteia*, table 8, p. 80.

The Animals

IT WILL NOT HAVE ESCAPED the observant reader's notice that Egyptian gods were frequently represented as animals, or humanoid with animal heads. One of the oldest deities, Taurt, never assumed humanoid form, but remained a composite beast. So too, it is likely – or useful to conceive – that the sacrificial animals of the Greek gods were their earlier non-anthropoid forms; for example preceding Dionysus portrayed as a youth was the goat. The study of the animal symbolism of both mansions and decans is highly complex for this and other reasons.

As with the herbs, while their distribution in various schemas is irregular, a consistent 'alphabet' of animal symbols is very apparent. As noted by Gundel, familial relations between the zoological images of decans, mansions and dodekauros are close; the zodiacal images meanwhile are tangibly more distant from all three than they are from each other. The origins of the mansions – which in my opinion most epitomise this form of symbolism – are uncertain, but given their lunar calendar is likely Chaldean. So too, perhaps, is the dodekauros with Greco-Egyptian participation or adaptation. This suggests that the development of mansion symbolism in relation to the decans followed neo-Chaldean lines, which is not inherently unlikely. All were widespread in the Roman period, so that for instance a dodekauros/Olympian schema may be found in inscriptions and in much later lore.

In *Liber Sacer* the majority of animal symbols are used differently from the stones and plants; they represent a force antipathetic to the decan, which is to be avoided. Sympathetic animal symbolism therefore will be dealt with separately, meanwhile turning to the individual stones and plants of *Liber Sacer*.

Aries

Babylonian Stone The primary position of this stone in this list is not accidental. An integral part of goetic lore, I quote the description in *TG*:

Heliotrope, or bloodstone, has a distinguished occult history ... *The Book of Secrets* attributed to Albertus Magnus says *the necromancers call it gemma babylonica*. His *necromancers* are in fact identical with the *Magi, or Babylonian priest magicians* mentioned by Pliny on the subject of the same stone. In his account the magicians claimed that the stone heliotrope combined with the plant of the same name conferred invisibility. In shamanic terms invisibility is the power to move unimpeded in the world of spirits. Bloodstone was also believed to confer long life and fame.

The Orphic *Lithika* associates hematite with the god Ouranos.

Siderite From the Greek *sideros* meaning iron, siderite is likely identical with the mineral formed of iron carbonate which now bears the name. It is a loose term, covering a variety of similar ores, but the properties are similar.

Bostrychitis This is a stone resembling braided hair according to Pliny. He cites Zoroaster as his source, which implies a connection with magic of the period. This was likely iron alum (aka alun de plume, alunogen, feather alum or hair salt) or amianthus aka satin asbestos.

Taurus

Selenite A collective name for several forms of gypsum, called also satin spar, desert rose and gypsum flower. Albertus Magnus describes it as *horned*, which describes its mineral form adequately and likely explains the derivation from Selene the Moon (exalted in Taurus).

Stone of Aphrodite The identity of this stone is uncertain at the time of writing. Stones attributed to Venus (ruler of Taurus) in grimoire lore in some order of likelihood include: pearl, diamond, emerald, amethyst and carbuncle.

Hyacinth There are two entries under this name in the text and the term is not restricted to one stone in our own times. Yellow zircon also bears the name and is perhaps the stone intended here.

Gemini

Diamond The most highly prized precious stone, as well as the hardest and purest. Further comments are likely superfluous.

Panchrous OR *Panchrus Stone* Also mentioned by Pliny. The name means many coloured, appropriate

to Mercury ruler of Gemini. An opal is likely intended, the colours being as much an effect of the light as a physical quality of the stone.

Heliotrope The bloodstone. This stone is replete with goetic lore, and among the most important in the tradition (see first entry, also *TG*, Pliny).

cancer

Dryite Pliny cites this as a precious stone found at the root of trees; from *dryus*, an oak, and by extension other trees.

Green Jasper Jasper too is a form of chalcedony, and various colours are known. Parameters of ancient and modern classification have shifted, as with other stones. Green jasper was among the most common types in antiquity.

Euchaite This is probably the same as *aetites* or *eagle stone* mentioned by Albertus Magnus as *echites*. In this case a small geode which rattles is most appropriate; in the words of the *Kyranides*: *the Eagle-stone is with Child and Rattles*.

Leo

Agate Another famous ancient stone much used in cutting. A form of chalcedony, it is often associated with volcanic formations, possibly explaining its attribution here to Leo, a fiery solar sign (see Manetho's king list in *Geosophia*).

Selenite See 1st Taurus, there are several kinds so duplication is not necessarily a given.

Helite Probably halite is meant; salt crystal either clear or pink halite. Soluble in water so must be kept dry.

Virgo

Corallite The modern meaning indicates the skeleton of a coral polyp, and the original sense is likely the same.

Dendrites Could be the dendrite agate, which displays branch like markings in place of the bands associated with other agates. Another possibility is the true coral, a possibility strengthened by proximity to the previous entry. In addition the Orphic Lithika associated both stones with Demeter, who is represented by the constellation Virgo.

Euthizon A glass like stone may be intended.

Libra

Jaspagate Also known as jasp-agate. A variety of quartz consisting of jasper and agate.

Sardonyx A form of onyx with red bands rather than black.

Emerald Strictly, a green variety of beryl. Mentioned with ruby in *GV* as suitable for engraving with sigils in the pact process.

Scorpio

Hematite Natural iron ore, often red in colour which gave it its ancient name, but other colours are frequently found. Commonest in jewellery and other modern uses is the silver grey. The red should be preferred for use in this context.

Pyrite A common mineral, a sulphide of iron with abundant folklore associations. Solar and lunar types are distinguished easily by colour, the darker solar, lighter lunar.

Carnelian OR *Sardonyx of Egypt* It is difficult to assess why two stones are given here unless it is for convenience. Both stones were widely used in Egypt, and engravings of gods and heroes upon the sardonyx were popular with Roman soldiers.

Sagittarius

Phrygian Stone A stone used in dyeing in the ancient world, Pliny describes it as resembling pumice. Possibly an alunite, or a basic sulphate containing aluminium and potassium.

Amethyst A widely known violet to purple form of quartz, in ancient belief considered to prevent drunkenness.

Aerizon Likely a stone as clear as air. It is also mentioned in the *Kyranides*, set in a gold ring it promotes favour of lords.

Capricorn

Serpentine A stone of smooth and scaly appearance of a green colour, which still bears the name.

Chalcedony Among the earliest stones used by man, and most frequently employed for cutting and engraving throughout history. Colours vary considerably. Many semi-precious stones are in fact forms of chalcedony, making certain identification difficult, as does the likely divergence of biblical and classical terminology.

Anankite Appears in the Orphic *Lithika*, and is also called *letaios* or *galaktite* and described as *with strange milk replete*. Its properties are to soothe the soul and rouse pleasant thoughts. Its milkiness has other properties; ground and fed to suckling goats (which possess ritual and Dionysian significance) it promotes milk. The same power aids human mothers.

Aquarius

Knekites This ancient term is known only from here and in Pliny. It resembles the Greek word for yellow, but given the different classification of colours current in the ancient world it is probably a pale rather than yellow stone. The most likely identity is with a form of grey porphyry known to have been mined in Egypt at that time.

Magnet The natural lodestone is required here, the name magnet comes from Magnesia, an area of Asia Minor where it was mined in ancient times. See *Geosophia* passim.

Median Stone Various explained as either the stone of the Medes or the stone of Medea, both of which imply magical powers. Such a stone has also been termed *Medea nigra*; this is black as the name suggests, and an ink stone employed in ancient pigments is identified with it. Aka atramentum, a mixture of metallic sulphides.

Pisces

Beryl A generic name in our times, in ancient sources such as this the sea coloured green-blue variety is intended. Appropriate to Pisces for obvious reasons.

Perileukios Identity uncertain, but must be a stone edged with white.

Hyacinth The reddish or orange hyacinth may be intended here, as this decan is associated with Mars.

THE LONG HISTORY OF EGYPTIAN USE of herbs and roots was no less ancient in neighbouring Crete. Such knowledge was thus well advanced in Greece throughout antiquity. The earliest practitioners of medicine in ancient Greece were known as *root cutters*, and they undoubtedly practiced magic also (the *Hymn to Demeter* promises protection from their potions). Theophrastus, the father of Botany, considered the root-cutters somewhat eccentric in their manner of collection of herbs and roots. At the same time he was complimentary about their knowledge and legacy, including safe methods of extracting medicines from truly dangerous plants. These practitioners undoubtedly underpin the long history of Greek magic and medicine, disciplines considered inseparable for much of mankind's history.

As has been shown in *Liber Sacer*, the use of roots and stones was simultaneously an offering as well as involving sympathia. Such a process thus propitiates decan gods or spirits, whereas bindings and ritual curses as in the *Testament of Solomon* do not. In my opinion the verbal and written formulæ accompanying the decans in the *ToS* indicate motion away from Hermetic herb lore, under cultural pressure. On the sole occasion in the *ToS* that detailed magical use of plants is mentioned the spirit responsible is told to shut up (vss. 31, 32.). In the period of synthesis, reluctance to make offerings to entities other than the Supreme God may have led to an increase in verbal formulæ. In other words the entire thwarting angel paradigm might be traced to wilful neglect of plants and stones! The reduction of such formulæ in more spirit friendly approaches therefore has self evident implications.

Aries

Isophryn Neither academics nor rare occult sources translate or comment upon this plant name. *Isos* means equal to, suggesting the plant of the same name as the stone could be intended (heliotrope, see 1st decan stone). Alternative derivations include *phrynos* – toad-stool, and *ixos pheroyn* – bearing mistletoe; the *Book of Secrets*, whose nomenclature is corrupt, nevertheless gives the Greek of mistletoe as Esifena and there may have been variants in local Greek dialects.

Wild Rue A plant of ancient Persia, known as syrian rue, esphand, harmal, &c. It has a great wealth of magical associations as well as psychoactive properties.

Plantain Though different plants named lamb's tongue might qualify, the lore surrounding plantain is a good indicator.

Taurus

Spherite A generic name for fruits such as oranges and lemons. Citron is a natural equivalent in more recent magical texts.

Dittany of Crete Another plant with strong magical associations from early times. It originates on the island of Crete, and was used by Aphrodite to heal her son Aeneas during the Trojan War (the as yet unidentified stone of this decan is also associated with Aphrodite). dittany of Crete is famed in

modern times as an incense of manifestation, possibly misinterpreted from the older associations. It is also a hypostasis of the rusalki, of whom more later.

Ox Tongue Also known as alkanet, bugloss &c. A few important herbs go under similar names, and the roots are employed in Hoodoo and other magic.

Gemini

Orchis A genus of orchid, several species of which originate in the Middle East (Anatolia, Persia &c.). The Adam and Eve roots of Hoodoo practice are from this family.

Cinquefoil An important magical herb often associated with Mercury (the *five fingers* reflecting non-cabalistic number lore).

Rosemary The Greek name is libanotis, which also means incense. Rosemary has a very long history in magical, medicinal and culinary use. It possesses ancient and abiding associations with memory, whether improving it or inspiring happy memories within a marriage or after a death. Sprigs were burnt at Greek shrines, and in Medieval times it was widely used to repel evil spirits and witches, as well as disease. As the name suggests it is also associated with Mary, mother of Jesus, which may mask older dedications.

Cancer

Mugwort One of the most important of all magical herbs. A tea made from the leaves enhances clairvoyance, especially via skrying; the infusion may also be used to purify the skryer's mirror or crystal. It is a close relative of sagebrush and other purification herbs, but far more traditional in Western magic. Many practicing magicians keep large stocks.

Pivoine Peony is another magical staple, and the roots are much used to this day. Protection, healing, good fortune and other purposes are all associated with it. Its use in Greek magic relates to the god Paeon. Latterly called a pupil of Asclepius, his cult in Greece is earlier, being named in Linear B. Paeon is also a title of Apollo. Given the relevance of magico-medical themes to both, the links between the two gods deserve examination.

Spherite Citron, see above.

Leo

Lion's Foot The scientific names are *Alchemilla vulgaris* and *Alchemilla xanthochlora*, reflecting alchemical traditions especially surrounding dew caught in the leaves. Other names include dewcup and lady's mantle &c.

Chrysogone Possibly the chrysanthemum is intended; in European and New Orleans tradition strongly associated with funerals, though other associations exist elsewhere.

[missing from text]

Virgo

Weasel's Eye Probably lesser snapdragon, scientific name *Misopates orontium* previously *Misopates antirrhinum*; known as weasel's snout.

Liquorice (American Licorice) The root is widely used in Hoodoo for power and command workings.

Catananche A form of vetch associated with love spells. It bears the botanical name *Catananche cærulea* and is also known as Cupid's dart, blue cupidone and blue succory. Dioscurides knew of two types, which accounts for its appearance in this text under two names (see Aquarius decans). He records its magical use in Thessaly, and presumably similar knowledge of it among the Magi, the Romans and Dacians.

Libra

Polion Teucrium polium popularly known as felty germander, used in Persian traditional medicine. This plant should be handled with care as it has toxic effects on liver and kidneys.

Vervain Verbena officinalis, aka standing vervain, verbena &c. Despite its unspectacular appearance this is a very famous magical herb, highly regarded in many cultures for protective powers and used in ritual magic. For example, wreaths of vervain surround the candlesticks in the *Grand Grimoire*. Albertus Magnus included it among the *seven herbs that have great virtue*, likely taken from a Hermetic source, similarly it is the thirteenth herb of the *Book of Secrets*. It was among the nine most esteemed herbs of the Saxons; famed too among the Greeks and Romans long prior to Hermeticism. It is known and revered in other traditions including Celtic (Druid, Welsh and Manx) and Egyptian as well as in grimoire lore. It is either 'the herb' or among the primary herbs of several canonical lists (Greek, Roman, Druidic and Saxon).

Creeping Vervain Verbena bracteata is almost as famed as upright vervain, and often appears alongside it (i.e. in *TBOP*, Scale of the Number 12).

Scorpio

Mercury One of the most toxic of herbs in the British Isles, extremely dangerous.

Scorpion Tail Otherwise known as heliotrope, an important plant in the goetic tradition, often associated with bloodstone.

Pivoine See under Cancer decans.

Sagittarius

Sage Hardly requires comment, an important magical herb with a variety of associations. It is the twelfth herb of the *Book of Secrets*.

Andraktitalon Given the familial connections of the decan herbs and those of the planets and signs I believe this to be dragonwort. Of various herbs bearing this name the strongest contender is undoubtedly *Dracunculus vulgaris*. This plant has many other names, including the highly evocative voodoo lily, snake lily and black dragon. Its Greek name to this day is drakondia and it is native to the Balkans, Crete, the Aegean islands and mainland Greece as well as SW Anatolia. An unidentified lily is named in the *Book of Secrets*.

Centaury Highly appropriate to the sign Sagittarius by reason of its name. The plant was indeed named after the famed centaur Chiron, who we met in *Geosophia* as the tutor and even initiator of Orpheus, Achilles and other heroes. The name is generic, denoting a large group of plants in the gentian family. Red gentian or feverwort has a long magical pedigree, being found in Albertus Magnus' *Book of Secrets* and the *Petit Albert* among other places. Aside from medicinal uses it traditionally protects from snakes and evil spirits (if indeed these were differentiated originally).

Capricorn

Larkspur Given the geographical distribution in the wild this has to be the genus *Consolida* rather than the poisonous *Delphinium*, and folkloric and magical traditions confirm this. It was used in protective magic, including the Summer solstice traditions described in *Geosophia*.

Anemone Sacred to Adonis and named after a Greek wind god, this herb has interesting magical associations. A supposed Egyptian tradition held that the first anemone seen in spring should be wrapped in red cloth (a red flannel bag springs to mind) and would then have protective properties so long as it was undisturbed. In *Geosophia* II 'The Magical Papyri' a Byzantine tradition was discussed associating anemone with Hermes in planetary magic drawn from ancient sources.

chameleon A type of thistle mentioned by Theophrastus, the Greek herbalist after whom Paracelsus was named by his botanist father. The black chameleon was likely the Mediterranean *cardopatum corymbosum* and the white *carlina gummifera*. Both roots contain an acrid resin employed in Greek medicine.

Aquarius

Asarum A widespread family geographically, the ancient texts refer to *Asarum europaeum*. It is often termed wild ginger due to the taste of its roots. Also hazelwort and wild spikenard. *Asarum canadense*, a Canadian relative, is well known as coltsfoot with the interesting variant of ass's-foot.

Burnet Pimpernel, saxifrage. A large family, related to primrose, and with a large part in traditional herbal lore, medicinal and magical. The different varieties should be carefully distinguished.

ThyrSION Another name of catananche according to the *Herbarium* of Dioscurides, who mentions two interchangeable types. See Virgo decans.

Pisces

Vervain See under Libra decans.

Rosemary See under Gemini decans and in *The True Grimoire*.

Chamomile An important medicinal herb in Egypt and among the Greeks and Romans. Its importance has led to it being called the *European ginseng*.

This last plant brings us to an important point. Modern studies have thoroughly vindicated chamomile's role in ancient cultures whereas studies of verbena have so far been rather sparse. Such neglect is in part due to the lack of botanists, biologists &c. among classical professors. Thus, through specialisation, academia consistently wastes a massive literary inheritance of classical medicinal lore. In a not terribly dissimilar fashion, in the early stages of the Occult Revival neglect of hermetic lore resulted from early emphasis upon Qabalah and Masonic ritual; also the unavailability of the *PGM*, *Liber Sacer* and other works in English translation. This situation has had widespread repercussions, one of which deserves emphasis at this particular point of the present work. Appreciation of the affinities between the roots of Western magic and New World traditions has been difficult, requiring special emphasis by authors such as Frisvold and myself. The importance of the stones, plants and animals in the above material is particularly relevant in this very respect; highlighting as it does the affinities between Western magic and Hoodoo, among other such traditions.

An Introduction

AS PREVIOUSLY SEEN, the decans began as gods, which is to say the earliest conception of them was as deities of stars and constellations, and the earliest magical images of the decans took the form of Egyptian gods.

The lunar mansions, on the other hand, began as animals. The Egyptian decan images are more rather than less bestial than other Egyptian deities. In contrast, the lunar mansions represent a major source of animal symbolism; subsequently transferred to the decans and elsewhere. Without making a complex study more detailed still, the sources of these symbols may be briefly discussed. The source of the lunar mansions themselves is controversial, with advocates of Babylonian and Chinese origins among others. An oral tradition among nomadic peoples might precede either one. That the mansions are part of the Hellenistic synthesis regardless of origins is certain, as are some other aspects of their development. It is clear enough that symbolism formerly proper to the lunar phases and the days of the lunar month was transferred to the mansions; one set of 28 being considered apt to another. Thus earlier Greek *lunaria*, lunar almanacs, are one source of such symbolism. Supposedly rustic Boeotia was home to some of these traditions.

Although Gundel deals primarily with the decans, aspects of mansion lore, including the animal symbolism, were essential to his study. The animal alphabet he and Weinstock discuss is compared to the zodiac and to the dodekaurus. It is with the latter that the lunar animal alphabet has most in common. This alphabet was deeply influential, forming part of a major undercurrent in western occultism embodied by the long neglected lunar mansions. For example in the account of things considered lunary in Agrippa (*TBOP* I.xxiv) a major list of animal symbols occurs, in which appear beasts, fish and fowl associated with the mansions, and indeed the decans as their derivative:

Lunary Animals: all kinds of Dogs; the Chameleon; Swine, Hinds, Goats; Baboon; Panther; Cats; the Civet-Cat; Otters, and such as prey upon fish; Mice; Geese, Ducks, Didappers, all kinds of water fowl as prey upon fish, as the Heron; Wasps and Bees; small Flies and Beetles; but most Lunary of all is the two-horned Beetle, horned after the manner of a Bull: which digs under Cow-dung, and there remains for the space of twenty eight days, in which time the Moon measures the whole Zodiac, and in the twenty ninth day, when it thinks there will be a conjunction of their brightness, it opens the dung and casts it into Water, from whence then come Beetles. Amongst fish these are Lunary, catfish [*Bagre marinus*]; the Tortoise, the Echeneis, Crabs, Oysters, Cockles, and Frogs.

Having thus briefly introduced a complex subject, rather than develop historical tangents and variant lists from diverse cultures, it is better to approach things more useful to the general reader. There are essentially two aspects to be discussed from this perspective: parallel systems, and practical applications.

In the *PGM* an important invocation of Hecate lists various correspondences, including 21 animal forms (including multiform) and seven other symbols: ox, vulture, bull, beetle, falcon, crab, dog, wolf, serpent, horse, she-goat, asp, kid, he-goat, baboon, cat, lion, leopard, field mouse, deer, polymorph, virgin, torch, lightning, garland, herald's wand, child, key (*PGM* VII.756–94). It is a reasonable assumption that seven animal symbols have been omitted in order to include the seven cult

symbols of Hecate at the end. Needless to say, Hecate in this context is a lunar goddess, and the animal symbols also relate to her cult and divine forms. Such a proliferation of animal symbols suggests a Mistress of Beasts, and the assimilation of Hecate to Artemis and Astaroth is implicit. Another Hecate invocation from the papyri in which seven further animal symbols occur enables a reconstructed alphabet of 28 animal symbols. These additional symbols are: dragoness, mare, bitch, she-wolf, cow, camel, dove and sphinx (*PGM* IV.2302–2310). There are other sources for animal symbols of the mansions that could further increase our total of animal symbols, but this is not necessary. Restricting ourselves to the 20 symbols of the primary example instead makes a stronger case in the following comparative analysis.

Lunar Animals from PGM

OX	WOLF*	BABOON**
VULTURE	SERPENT**	CAT**
Bull**	HORSE	LION**
SCARAB***	SHE-GOAT***	LEOPARD*
FALCON**	ASP (OR ROYAL URÆUS)	FIELD MOUSE*
CRAB*	YOUNG HORNED GOAT*	DEER***
DOG***	HE-GOAT*	POLYMORPH

** indicates Dodekauros; * Agrippa's Lunary Animals, *** both

The Bull (3) rather than Ox (1) is an ancient symbol of divine power in the Middle East and relevant to Lucifer as the supreme power among the spirits; the crescent horns can mark his importance as the first lunar mansion. In the *Grimoire of Honorius* Lucifer is offered the humble mouse (19), recalling Lucifer's links with Apollo (Smintheus). The vulture (2) is an important Egyptian royal symbol, its wings representing the Upper and Lower kingdoms, while Maut (the vulture goddess) is one of the principal Great Goddess figures.

As with the plant and stone alphabets, so here; the precise order of the 'letters' is of secondary importance. What matters is the retention of the individual symbols in the Great Synthesis; organised according to the astrological principles that defined it. Indeed, there are several ways in which these symbols might be used in Moon magic. For example, rather than a list of 28 individual symbols, a set of seven repeated four times would be equally traditional and workable in practice. These might be differentiated by colour or elemental association, so that in each group of seven there was a cat of a different colour or element. Some 'Moon magicians' might even make do with the same animal symbol throughout; a cat is always lunar regardless of mansion or lunar phase. As with the mineral and herbal lists, hermetic animal symbols of the planets and other astrological categories can be referred back to the mansions. On this hypothesis a traditional planetary animal table can illustrate what is said above in regard to the mansions:

PLANETARY MODEL	ANIMAL	MANSIONS AS SIGN DIVISIONS
Saturn	Mole	Cardinal
Jupiter	Deer	
Mars	Wolf	
Sun	Lion	Fixed
Venus	Goat	
Mercury	Ape	Mutable
Moon	Cat	

Note that six out of seven of these animals appear in the list taken from the invocation of Hecate, illustrating that both derive from the same alphabet. To further illustrate these principles, bear in mind that both zodiac and dodekaurus were anciently associated with the Olympic deities. Thus, employing the animal symbols of the latter, Agrippa's 'Orphic Scale of the Number 12' can be adapted as in the following table. Again, the majority of these symbols can be found in the Hecate invocation. So too certain features become clear, such as the appearance of male and female animals and birds, and occasionally their young. Many such associations have a long history in relation to this or that deity and country of origin. It is very clear that some old symbols have been tweaked towards Egyptian equivalents; for instance the crab, the crayfish and the scarab beetle converge in many instances.

The employment of animal symbols in magic has many aspects and precedents. The shamanic links, involving totems and transformations, are among the most important. It is important to encourage effective magic by adaptation within our own environment, rather than simply imitate un-adapted forms in an artificial way. Egyptian lore appears to preserve and adapt tribal magic within a part agricultural, part urbanised civilisation. This deserves our attention, whatever other attractions the culture may or may not have for us. For us, the prevalence of animal imagery in Egyptian lore enables combination of archaic and primal features with more conventional and civilised ritual methods.

The pure theriomorphs in Egyptian lore are often ambivalent, close to the demonic as understood in other cultures. There is no separate term for demons in Egyptian, but the more ambivalent deities and their retinues often possess wholly animalistic forms. Nevertheless there can be little doubt that the semi-anthropomorphic deities evolved from earlier totems. Others however never evolved human forms, such as the goddess Taurt; this did not place her among the 'demons' but underlined her primal power. So too there are many examples of employing theriomorphic deities in protective roles; these are the fighter demons, which resemble the hostile spirits but are employed against them. This is strongly reminiscent of shamanic contests, where the shaman and his opponent transform into or send animal spirits. Incidentally the boundary between transformation into an animal, and the employment of a spirit in animal form, is often extremely tenuous. The preference for one or the other interpretation is often regional, and rarely watertight.

OLYMPIC DEITY	DODEKAUROS SYMBOL (SEE PGM)	PARTIAL SECONDARY LIST IN PGM	BIRD & BEAST FROM ORPHIC TABLE
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Athene ♀	Cat	Monkey (Ape)	Owl, She-goat
Aphrodite ♀	Dog	Unicorn	Dove, He-goat
Apollo ☿	Snake	Cat	Cock, Bull
Hermes ☿	Scarab (Crayfish)	Bull	Ibis, Dog
Zeus ♂	Ass	Lion	Eagle, Stag
Demeter ♀	Lion	Ass	Sparrow, Sow
Hephæstus ♂	Goat	Crayfish	Goose, Ass
Ares ♂	Bull		Magpie, Wolf
Artemis ♀	Falcon	Ibis	Jackdaw, Hind
Dionysus ♀	Baboon (Ape)		Heron, Lion
Hera ♀	Ibis		Peacock, Sheep
Poseidon ♂	Crocodile		Swan, Horse

This brings us fairly naturally to the concept of assumption of beast-forms; essentially a more primal application of the 19th century occultists' assumption of god-forms. Unlike the use of Egyptian gods as models for astral transformation, this approach requires no specific precedent for the employment of this or that animal. That is, the magician may employ any appropriate animal form; semi-anthropomorphic and 'traditional' Egyptian or not as the case may be. Some of the creatures named above will naturally suggest an Egyptian deity, others will not. Either way the creature may be employed magically; with spirits appearing in that form, or the magician assuming that shape.

Tolley's study of shamanism is extremely enlightening as regards animals. His identification of an *animal mother* (Vol. 1, 203) is reminiscent of the Mistress of Beasts (Potnia Theron) in Greek lore. Given that some features of shamanism are – so to speak – generic, other aspects of his study are equally important. A shamanic interpretation suggests lines of descent for our animal alphabets. He identifies animal attendant spirits of three main types: birds, fish and beasts (especially, but for our purposes not exclusively, the reindeer).

In shamanic lore the bird forms are often considered most powerful. As well as permitting movement and other powers – such as fighting – they permit the shaman to visit the sky god or other powerful intercessor. Land animals are intermediate, they are also important for movement and fighting, and connect with hunting magic. Some beasts represent the object of the hunt (reindeer may also be farmed); others – like the bear – represent powerful gods or ancestral figures. The aquatic creatures, including but not limited to fish, represent the power of visiting the Underworld. Thus the shaman's power is defined by the animal spirits with which they are able or unable to work.

ELECTED ANIMAL SYMBOLS

It is impossible to be exhaustive on the subject of magical animals; let alone cover them adequately in relation to spirits, the dead and the Moon. A select few are mentioned here, mainly to highlight

interpretative issues.

The Horse is an important magical animal, arising several times in the course of this study without being sought. A magical horse as an ally of a shaman enables travel in the spirit world, and is a mark of rare power. Horse skulls are not uncommon protective devices in old British buildings, and the water horse or kelpie is an important folklore figure with whom we will later become better acquainted. That these two powerful motifs occupy the same geographical area may imply a degree of kinship at a very early date. The pre-classical precedents of mare-headed Demeter – and the early chthonic Poseidon with whom she was paired – underline the chthonian implications (*Geo*) rather than explaining folklore parallels with no apparent linkage. There is no leap to comprehending the horse in *Chaldean Oracles* 198 in mythic and magical terms. Through Vodou terminology a *horse* can also represent the relationship between spirit and human in states of possession. Transformation into a horse is suggested by various folk motifs, both old and revived. Note well that while aspects of the symbol may originate in different cultures, they are common currency and likely to influence each other, something practitioners should welcome without attaching historical assumptions in the process.

Frog and Toad are related symbols, positive and negative poles of the same conception. For our purposes the root idea is a perceived resemblance to a human being (as in the Cyprian grimoires, see Part 5). The toad then is a diabolical reflex of the same symbolism. Some flexibility is required to manage the potential meaning of one or the other, allowing for the tendency of formerly positive symbols to slip into their negative reflex; for recuperation by adoption of the supposed negative.

The Cat is a classic lunar symbol as well as an emblem of witchcraft. There are a variety of spells in which the cat features which, while not encouraged, underline the importance of the symbol. The Roman goddess Diana, a cognate of Artemis, Hecate and other goddesses of the Moon and of magic, could take on the guise of a cat. All in all the symbolism of the cat is very extensive and does not require much underlining here. In Part 5 the occurrence of the cat in Cypriatic iconography is discussed along with the toad and bat.

The Bird and the Bat, as a polarised pair, at a simple level much of the symbolism is here duplicated in positive and negative modes, like the frog and toad. Considered separately the bat is by no means always a negative symbol and birds are far from uniformly positive. As with the frog and toad it also pays to be alert to the likelihood of inversion of a positive symbol into a negative equivalent, and vice versa. Wings of the bird or bat are also found attached to other creatures, such as the horse or serpent; transferring the avian symbolism and heightening its power.

Serpent, Dragon and Crocodile share many characteristics, and are in large degree interchangeable. The snake, viper or asp is an important symbol, but it is not a dragon, while a serpent or great worm most definitely is. For various reasons, a hippopotamus is a potential dragon, but it will never be a cobra. Possession of legs or wings is not required, but they do not exclude a creature from the Draconic genus.

Thus in the syncretism of the Great Synthesis, as seen already, Egyptian forms could be substituted for Greek and vice versa; scarab for crab, crocodile for serpent and so forth. How much or how little of older contexts of individual symbols is to be assumed when collated into syncretic alphabets is a

difficult point to summarise. The schemas have an astrological basis, but the astrology is highly mythic and its parts comprehensively personalised. On the numinous and practical level, modern individual and experiential interpretation will go where it will. What is certain is that animal transformations are a potent magical technique, and, drawn closer already with stones and herbs, cements the reunion of ritual magic with shamanism.

ABANO, Peter de [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Heptameron [ref1](#)

Abezithibou [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Abramelin [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)

Abraxas [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Abyzou [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Adonis [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Aerizon [ref1](#)

Æshma [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Agate [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

AGRIPPA [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#)

Fourth Book [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Three Books of Occult Philosophy [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)

Ahura Mazda [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Aion [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)

Alabasandria [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

ALBERTUS MAGNUS [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)

Aldebaran [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Alexandria [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)

Algol [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Amaymon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)

Amethyst [ref1](#)

Anankite [ref1](#)

Andraktitalon [ref1](#)

Anenome [ref1](#)

Angelic Vice-regent [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

Antaura [ref1](#)

Antioch [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)

Anubis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)

Apamea [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Aphrodite [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)

Apollo [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#), [ref30](#),
[ref31](#), [ref32](#), [ref33](#), [ref34](#)

Aquarius [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)

Araps [ref1](#)

Aries [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#), [ref18](#)

ARISTOTLE [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Ariton [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

ARNOLD, Clinton E. [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

The Colossian Syncretism [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)

Art Armadel [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Artemis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#)
Ascension, rite of [ref1](#)
Asclepius [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#)
Ashmedai [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Ashtoreth [ref1](#)
Asia Minor [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#)
Asmodai [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Asmodeus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#),
[ref30](#)
Astaroth [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#)
Astrology [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#)
Asurum [ref1](#)
Azael [ref1](#)

B

Baal [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
Babylon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Babylonian stone [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Bael [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Barbatos [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Bat [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Beelzeboul [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)
Belzebuth [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Beryl [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Bes [ref1](#)
Bibliothèque Bleue [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
BLAVATASKY, Helena Petrovna [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Bloodstone [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Boel [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Book of Saint Cyprian [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Books of Moses [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Bostrychitis [ref1](#)
BOUCHÉ-LECLERCQ, A. [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
L'Astrologie Grecque [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Brieus [ref1](#)
BURKERT, Walter [ref1](#)
Burnet [ref1](#)

C

Cancer [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#)
Capricorn [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#)

Carnelian [ref1](#)
Cat [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Catananche [ref1](#)
Catholicism [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Celsus [ref1](#)
Centaury [ref1](#)
Cerberus [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Chalcedony [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Chaldea [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Chaldean Oracles [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#),
[ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#)
Chaldeans [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Chalybes [ref1](#)
Chameleon [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Chamomile [ref1](#)
Chiron [ref1](#)
Chnoumis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Christianity [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#)
Chrysogone [ref1](#)
Cinquefoil [ref1](#)
Clerical underground [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Codex Cromwellianus [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Comte de Gabalis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Confession of Saint Cyprian [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#),
[ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#)
Conjunction (rite) [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
CONYBEARE, F.C. [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Corallite [ref1](#)
Corpus Hermeticum [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref6](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Covenant [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Creeping Vervain [ref1](#)
Crocus [ref1](#)
Crossroads [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Cross, sign of [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
CROWLEY, Aleister, [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
CUMONT, Franz [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism [ref1](#)
Cybele [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
CYPRIAN [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#), [ref30](#),
[ref31](#), [ref32](#), [ref33](#), [ref34](#), [ref35](#)

Dactyls [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Dammameneus [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Dantalion [ref1](#)
DAVIES, Owen [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Decans [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#), [ref30](#),
[ref31](#), [ref32](#), [ref33](#), [ref34](#), [ref35](#), [ref36](#), [ref37](#), [ref38](#), [ref39](#), [ref40](#), [ref41](#), [ref42](#), [ref43](#), [ref44](#),
[ref45](#), [ref46](#), [ref47](#), [ref48](#), [ref49](#), [ref50](#), [ref51](#), [ref52](#), [ref53](#), [ref54](#), [ref55](#), [ref56](#), [ref57](#), [ref58](#),
[ref59](#), [ref60](#), [ref61](#), [ref62](#), [ref63](#), [ref64](#), [ref65](#), [ref66](#), [ref67](#), [ref68](#), [ref69](#), [ref70](#), [ref71](#), [ref72](#),
[ref73](#), [ref74](#), [ref75](#), [ref76](#), [ref77](#), [ref78](#), [ref79](#), [ref80](#), [ref81](#), [ref82](#), [ref83](#), [ref84](#), [ref85](#), [ref86](#),
[ref87](#), [ref88](#), [ref89](#), [ref90](#), [ref91](#), [ref92](#), [ref93](#), [ref94](#), [ref95](#), [ref96](#), [ref97](#)
Demeter [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
Denderah zodiac [ref1](#)
Dendrites [ref1](#)
DEUTSCH, Nathaniel [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Guardians of the Gate [ref1](#)
Diamond [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
DIOCLETIAN [ref1](#)
Dionysus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
DIOSCURIDES [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Dittany [ref1](#)
Dodekaurus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
DOROTHEUS [ref1](#)
Dragon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#)
Dragonwort [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Dryite [ref1](#)

E

Egypt [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#)
Eighth Book of Moses [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Elbourion [ref1](#)
Elementals [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
El-Gabal [ref1](#)
ELWORTHY, Frederick [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Evil Eye [ref1](#)
Emerald [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Emesa [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
EMPEDOCLES [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Empusa [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Enchiridion [ref1](#)
Enepsigos [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Enoch [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Ephesia Grammata [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Ephesus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#)
Ephippas [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)

Eros [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Eschatology [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#)
Euchaite [ref1](#)
EUSEBIUS [ref1](#)
Præparatio evangelica [ref1](#)
Euthizon [ref1](#)
Exu [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

F

Fallen Angels [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
FELL, John [ref1](#)
FESTUGIÈRE [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
FIRMICIUS MATERNUS [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Fixed Stars [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Folk magic [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Four Kings [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#)
Four Winds [ref1](#)
FARISVOLD, Nicholaj de Mattos [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Frog [ref1](#)

G

Gabriel, Archangel [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Gate of Men [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Gate of the Gods [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Gemini [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Geosophia [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#),
[ref30](#), [ref31](#), [ref32](#), [ref33](#), [ref34](#), [ref35](#)
GIMBUTAS, Maria [ref1](#)
Gnostic [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Gnosticism [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Goat [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
GOETHE, Johan Wolfgang von [ref1](#)
Faust [ref1](#)
Goetia [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#)
Goetia of Solomon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#)
Golden Legend, The [ref1](#)
Gorgoneion [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
Gorgons [ref1](#)
GRAF, Fritz [ref1](#)
Grand Grimoire [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
Great Goddess [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Greek Magical Papyri [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#), [ref30](#), [ref31](#), [ref32](#), [ref33](#), [ref34](#), [ref35](#), [ref36](#), [ref37](#), [ref38](#), [ref39](#), [ref40](#), [ref41](#), [ref42](#), [ref43](#), [ref44](#)

GREENFIELD, Richard P.H. [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Traditions of Belief in Late Byzantine Demonology [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Green Jasper [ref1](#)

Grimoire of Pope Honorius [ref1](#)

Grimorium Verum [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)

GUNDEL [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

Gylou [ref1](#)

H

Hades [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)

Hathor [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Headless Demon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

Headless Ritual [ref1](#)

Hecate [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#), [ref30](#), [ref31](#), [ref32](#), [ref33](#), [ref34](#), [ref35](#), [ref36](#), [ref37](#), [ref38](#), [ref39](#), [ref40](#)

Helios [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)

Heliotrope [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

Helite [ref1](#)

Hematite [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Hephæstus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

HEPHESTION [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Hermes [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#)

Hermetica [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

Hermeticism [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#)

HOMER [ref1](#)

Hoodoo [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)

Horse [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#)

Horus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)

Hyacinth [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Hydromancy [ref1](#)

Hygromanteia [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#)

I

IAMBlichus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#)

Theurgy, or, On the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Iannes [ref1](#)

Iax [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)

Iberian folk magic [ref1](#)
Isis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Isophryn [ref1](#)

J

Jambres [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Jaspagate [ref1](#)
Jezebel [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Judaism [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Judgment Day [ref1](#)
JULIAN THE APOSTATE [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
JULIAN THE CHALDEAN [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
JULIAN THE THEURGIST [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Jupiter [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Justina [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)

K

Kabbalah [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Kalē [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Kali [ref1](#)
Kalikantzaroi [ref1](#)
Key of Solomon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Kharakteres [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
KIECKHEFER, Richard [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Forbidden Rites [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Kimbanda [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
Kingship [ref1](#)
KLUTZ [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#)
Rewriting the Testament of Solomon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Knekites [ref1](#)
Kronos [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Kunopegos [ref1](#)
Kyranides [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

L

Lamech [ref1](#)
Lamia/Lamiæ [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)
Larkspur [ref1](#)
Laurel [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Leikourgos [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Lemegeton [ref1](#)
LENORMANT, Francois [ref1](#)
Chaldean Magic [ref1](#)
Leo [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Leviathan [ref1](#)

LÉVI, Eliphaz [ref1](#)
LEWY, Hans [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#)
chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy [ref1](#)
Liber Hermetis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Liber Juratus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Liber Sacer [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#)
Libra [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
Lilith [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#)
Lion's foot [ref1](#)
Liquorice [ref1](#)
Livre des Esperitz, Le [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Lix Tetrax [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Lodestone [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Lord of Time [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
LUCIAN [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Lucifer [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#), [ref18](#)
Lunar Mansions [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#),
[ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#)

M

Magnet [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Mahazael [ref1](#)
Mandrake [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
MARATHAKIS, Ioannis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Marcolf [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Marduk [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
MARINUS [ref1](#)
Mars [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
Medea [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Median Stone [ref1](#)
Mediatores [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Medusa [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
Mēn [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
Mēne [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Mercury [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Metatron [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Michael, Archangel [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#),
[ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#)
Mithraism [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Mithras [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Moon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#)
MS *P* [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Mugwort [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)

Myrrh [ref1](#)

N

Natron [ref1](#)

NAZIANZEN, Gregory [ref1](#)

Nebiros [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

Necessity (goddess) [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Nechepso [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Neoplatonism [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#)

Neoplatonists [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

Nephelim [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

New Testament [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

New World [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#)

NILSSON, Martin P. [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Norwegian Black Books [ref1](#)

NUMENIUS [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

O

Obizuth [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)

OGDEN, Daniel [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Old Testament [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Onoskelis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)

Operation of Uriel Seraphim [ref1](#)

Orchis [ref1](#)

Oriens [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#)

ORIGEN [ref1](#)

Orion [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Ornias [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#)

Orpheus [ref1](#)

Orphic [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#)

Orphic Lithika [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Osiris [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

OSTANES [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)

Ouroboros [ref1](#)

Ox tongue [ref1](#)

P

Paimon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)

Panchrous [ref1](#)

PARACELSUS [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Part of Daimon [ref1](#)

Part of Fortune [ref1](#)

Pegasus [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Peony/Pivoine [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Perileukios [ref1](#)
Persephone [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#)
Persia [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
PETERSON, Joseph [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Petit Albert [ref1](#)
PGM/PDM [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#),
[ref30](#)
PHERECYDES [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Phrygian Stone [ref1](#)
Picatrix [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Pisces [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
Pistis Sophia [ref1](#)
Plantain [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
PLATO [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#)
Platonism [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
Pleiades [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
PLINY [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
PLOTINUS [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Polion [ref1](#)
Pomba Gira [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Porphyry [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Potnia Theron [ref1](#)
Prayer for Success [ref1](#)
Proclus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#)
Prometheus [ref1](#)
PRUDENTIUS [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Pruslas [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
PSELLUS [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Pterodrakon [ref1](#)
PTOLEMY [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Pyrite [ref1](#)
PYTHAGORAS [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
Python [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Q

Qabalah [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

R

Rabdos [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Raising up of plants [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
RANKINE, David [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Raphael, Archangel [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
Restitutionism [ref1](#)
Revelation [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Rhyax [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Robin Goodfellow [ref1](#)
Root cutters [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Rosemary [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
RUDD, Doctor [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Rue [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

S

Sabaoth [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)
Sacred Book [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#)
Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage [ref1](#)
Sage [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Sagittarius [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Saint Sisinnios [ref1](#)
Salamanders [ref1](#)
Salvation [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Samael [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
Sambethe [ref1](#)
Sardonyx [ref1](#)
Satan [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Saturn [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
SCHÜRER, Emil [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Scorpio [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
Scorpion tail [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
SCOT, Reginald [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
Sekhet [ref1](#)
Selene [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#)
Selenite [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Semjaza [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Sepher Ha-Razim [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Serapis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Serpentine [ref1](#)
Seven Sisters [ref1](#), [ref2](#). *See also* Pleiades
Shamanism [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#)
Sheba [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Sibyl [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#)
Sibyllia [ref1](#)
Siderite [ref1](#)
Sirens [ref1](#)
Sirius [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
Sitra Akhra [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
SKINNER, Stephen [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)
SMITH, Morton [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Solar theology [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)
Sol Invictus [ref1](#)

Solomon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#),
[ref30](#), [ref31](#), [ref32](#), [ref33](#), [ref34](#), [ref35](#), [ref36](#), [ref37](#), [ref38](#), [ref39](#), [ref40](#), [ref41](#), [ref42](#), [ref43](#),
[ref44](#), [ref45](#), [ref46](#), [ref47](#), [ref48](#), [ref49](#), [ref50](#), [ref51](#), [ref52](#), [ref53](#), [ref54](#), [ref55](#), [ref56](#), [ref57](#),
[ref58](#), [ref59](#), [ref60](#), [ref61](#), [ref62](#), [ref63](#), [ref64](#), [ref65](#), [ref66](#), [ref67](#), [ref68](#), [ref69](#), [ref70](#), [ref71](#),
[ref72](#), [ref73](#), [ref74](#), [ref75](#), [ref76](#), [ref77](#), [ref78](#), [ref79](#), [ref80](#), [ref81](#), [ref82](#), [ref83](#), [ref84](#)

Solomonic magic [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#)

Sothis [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#)

Spherite [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Spiritism [ref1](#)

Stepterion, rite of [ref1](#)

Stobæus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Stoicheia [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

Stoics [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Sun [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#),
[ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#), [ref28](#), [ref29](#), [ref30](#),
[ref31](#), [ref32](#), [ref33](#), [ref34](#), [ref35](#), [ref36](#), [ref37](#), [ref38](#)

Supreme God [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

Sword of Dardanos [ref1](#)

Sympathia [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Sympilia [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)

Syria [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)

Sysiasa [ref1](#). *See also* Conjunction

T

Talmud [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Targum [ref1](#)

Tartarus [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Taurt [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Taurus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#)

Testament of Solomon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#),
[ref14](#), [ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#), [ref25](#), [ref26](#), [ref27](#),
[ref28](#), [ref29](#), [ref30](#), [ref31](#), [ref32](#), [ref33](#), [ref34](#), [ref35](#), [ref36](#), [ref37](#), [ref38](#), [ref39](#), [ref40](#), [ref41](#),
[ref42](#), [ref43](#), [ref44](#), [ref45](#), [ref46](#), [ref47](#), [ref48](#), [ref49](#), [ref50](#), [ref51](#), [ref52](#), [ref53](#), [ref54](#), [ref55](#),
[ref56](#), [ref57](#), [ref58](#), [ref59](#), [ref60](#), [ref61](#), [ref62](#), [ref63](#), [ref64](#), [ref65](#), [ref66](#), [ref67](#), [ref68](#), [ref69](#),
[ref70](#), [ref71](#), [ref72](#), [ref73](#), [ref74](#), [ref75](#), [ref76](#), [ref77](#)

Theurgy [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#),
[ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#), [ref19](#), [ref20](#), [ref21](#), [ref22](#), [ref23](#), [ref24](#)

Thrace [ref1](#)

Three Headed Dragon [ref1](#)

Thwarting Angels [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#),
[ref15](#), [ref16](#)

Thyatira [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#)

Thyrion [ref1](#)

Tiamat [ref1](#)

Titans [ref1](#)
Toad [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
TOLLEY, Clive [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Shamanism [ref1](#)
TORIJANO, Pablo A. [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Trickster [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
TRITHEMIUS, Johannes [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
True Grimoire [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#),
[ref15](#), [ref16](#), [ref17](#), [ref18](#)
Tubal Cain [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Typhon [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)

U

Underworld [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#), [ref14](#), [ref15](#)
Uriel [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#)
Ursa Major [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

V

Venus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Vervain [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#)
Virgin Mary [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Virgo [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)
Vision of Er, The [ref1](#), [ref2](#)
Vulcan [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)

W

Weasel's eye [ref1](#)
WEYER [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#)
Wild Hunt [ref1](#)
Woden [ref1](#), [ref2](#)

Y

YATES, Frances [ref1](#)

Z

Zervan [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#)
Zeus [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#), [ref9](#), [ref10](#), [ref11](#), [ref12](#), [ref13](#)
Zohar [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Zoroaster [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#)
Zoroastrian [ref1](#), [ref2](#), [ref3](#), [ref4](#), [ref5](#), [ref6](#), [ref7](#), [ref8](#)