

Ophiuchus

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Fall Equinox of 1993 e.v.

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

93 from Sekhet-Bast-Ra. This is our first newsletter of the Ophiuchus. We hope that you will find our newsletter informative and useful. This is a scholarly newsletter with occasional bit of humor. Since we are in the middle of the cultural wasteland and bible belt, we would enjoy criticism and response to our newsletter.

The first newsletter contains the first of nine installments of a pamphlet that was written by Richard Burton on his pilgrimage to Mecca and other sacred sites of the Islamic religion. He masqueraded as a Muslim. He writes with insightful information on the pilgrims, actions on the part of the pilgrims, a descriptions of sacred sites, information on Mohammed, etc. Also included, is an article written by A.E. Waite on Dr. Gerard Encausse, which was originally published by the now defunct Occult Review magazine.

The last article is called "Cultural Variations and Magick in Theory and Practice". It contains information on different cultural rituals and practices from the past and present, which view ideas, theories, and different points-of-view that are expounded on in Magick in Theory and Practice. The first variation is a Mayan

version "Of Bloody Sacrifice".

Finally, there is a calendar of events for approximately the next three months. A initiate of the Order in good standing may attend our Gnostic Mass and the Rites of Eleusis. As long as they give adequate notice, which can be obtained by writing us in advance. Our newsletter will be published four times a year. For individual of the O.T.O. the price is \$2.00 each or \$5.00 a year in the U.S. (outside U.S. will be prorated to make up for postage difference). Future issues of Ophiuchus will contain information on and written work by the Saints of the Gnostic Mass, Crowley material, other cultural variations, book reviews, the best letters to the editor, etc.

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Richard Burton

Most are probably familiar with Burton's books such as the Arabian Nights, the Kasidah, Sindh and the Races that in Habit the Valley of the Indus, Highlands of Brazil, First Footsteps in East Africa, the City of Saints and across the Rocky Mountains to California, etc., but the articles and pamphlets are slowly becoming rare finds. The following is a travel guide that Burton wrote for Mecca. It describes his pilgrimage to Mecca. The pamphlet was written in nine stages. The article also gives information concerning another Gnostic Saint, Mohammed. The pamphlet was first issued in 1865 by the British Museum.

Stage I.

The Pilgrims Land at Jeddah

We are about to describe one of the most important scenes in the Mohammedan's life. A pilgrimage to Mecca, followed by a visitation to Medina, are, under certain limitations, obligatory upon all true believers, and many who have led evil lives date their reformation from the first sight of the holy shrines.

There is little doubt that this pilgrimage, like all others, began with a mixture of commerce and religion: the latter element now predominates. In former years, when travelling was more difficult, the hadjee (Haji), or pilgrim, wore, after his return home, a green turban. The custom is now obsolete in the more civilized

lands. Maids, wives, and widows go through the ceremonial enactments, and "O pilgrimess!" is the civil address to women of the lower orders in Egypt and other Moslem lands.

Jeddah, the port of Mecca, and the capital of the Tehama province, lying on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, is the favorite landing-place of pilgrims. It is a truly tropical picture. Above, a pitiless sun rains yellow fire through air as blue as the turquoise. Below, is an ultramarine sea, streaked emerald green, showing where shoal water overlies golden sand, and dotted with coral rocks that form the dreaded "Gateways of Jeddah." Between the two lies the thin line of red-yellow ground, utterly sterile, with here and there sandy downs and rocky, pointed hills - an iron land. The town is a long streak of dull-brown ruins and white houses glaring as twelfth-cakes. The material is coralline-limestone, and the habitations are oblong, like the old brick houses of England, but decorated with the picturesque alcoves and the huge hanging balconies of carved wood which the overland traveller sees for the first time at Malta. Jeddah is rudely fortified, and in 1817 it beat off thousands of wild Wahhabis or Arab Puritans.

Many European vessels lie off the port during pilgrimage time, and in these days there are steamers from India and Egypt. The native buildings are of immense variety, and motion is given to the scene by canoes, fishing-boats, and catamarans, darting rapidly in all directions: their

leg-of-mutton and gullwing sails (often mere sheets) turned from white to tender blue and lustrous green by the dazzling reflection of the water, recall to memory a shoal of dolphins off the Cape of Good Hope.

The pilgrim also are a motley throng. The blue-eyed and red-haired Moslem from Moscow meets his swarthy Chinese-like brother from Java or Yun-nan. The fierce Albanian with peaky face, bristling mustachio, and hand on pistol-stock, swaggers by the bumpkin from Sind or the Hindostan man, cat-like with stealthy tread. There are handsome Syrians with pale faces and curly yellow beards; Jew-like Moroccans conspicuous for huge noses and rugged faces; ferocious-looking Kurds and Afghans, dignified Osmanlis with Circassian features, and gentlemanly Constantinopolotans, all jostled by the mop-headed Somal of East Africa, and the wild black Takruri, whose burning desire to sight the holy shrines has hurried their painful steps across half the breadth of terrible Africa. The tall, well-bearded Persians, in conical lamb-skin caps, surmounting classical features, so like one another that all seem brothers, keep aloof from the crowd; they are heretics and they have reason to fear the large quarter-staves carried by the local police. (note * It was not till Burton got to Cairo at the beginning of his pilgrimage that Burton discovered the disrespect shown to the Persians. He started from London as a Persian Mirza, but changed to a 'Pathan', born in India of

Afghan parents, at the advice of his friend Haji Wali.)

But these men, so different in appearance, almost all wear the same dress. Passing certain points on the coast they exchanged their normal garb for that called "Ihram", or "Mortification". It is nothing but two cotton cloths, each six feet long by half that breadth, white with narrow red stripes and fringes; in fact, it is nearly the same as that adopted in our Anglo-Turkish baths. One of these sheets is thrown over the back, and, exposing the right arm and shoulder, is knotted at the side. The waist-cloth extends to the knee, and, tucked in at the middle, supports itself. All heads are bared to the rabid sun heat, and the insteps suffer severely.

Assuming this garb, the pilgrims recite: "Here am I! O Allah! Here am I! No Sharer hast Thou - Here am I! Verily the Praise and the Grace are Thine and the Empire; No Sharer hast Thou - Here am I!"

The directors of the pilgrims' consciences now order them to avoid quarrels, bad language, and all immorality: they must religiously respect the sanctuary by sparing the trees, and by avoiding to take animal life; they may, however, slay, if necessary, the "five nuisances" - a crow, a kite, a rat, a scorpion, or a biting dog. They must abstain from perfumes washes, and cosmetics, from paring the nails and from dyeing, shaving, plucking, and cutting the hair; and, though they may take advantage of shade, and

even defend themselves from the sun by upraising the hands, they must never cover the head. For each infraction of these ordinances they are ordered to sacrifice a sheep; and it is popularly said by Moslems that none but their Prophet ("Apostle" or "Messenger" is a better translation) was ever perfect in the intricacies of pilgrimage. It is copious and full of exceptions as the Arabic language itself.

The women do the same as the men: this alone disproves the world-wide calumny against Mohammedans - namely, that half humanity has no soul, and consequently no future. Pilgrimages exchange the "lisam", that coquettish fold of muslin which veils instead of concealing the lower part of the face, for a hideous mask of split, dried, and plaited palm-leaves, pierced with "bull's-eyes" to admit the light. This "ugly" is worn, because during the ceremonies a woman's veil must not touch her features. The rest of the outer garment is a long white cotton sheet, covering the head, and falling to the heels. One can hardly help laughing when these strange figures first meet one's sight, and to judge from the shaking of their shoulders they are as much amused themselves.

The following is an article written by A.E. Waite for the Occult Review magazine on Dr Gerard Encausse (Jan 1917).

Papus: A Biographical Note

The war has removed one of the most interesting and notable personalities from the occult circles of Paris. Dr. Gerard Encausse, more familiarly and indeed universally known as "M. le docteur Papus," this being his pen-name, has died in Paris from a contagious disease contracted in hospital, where he was serving as a military surgeon. For more ample biographical particulars we may have to wait a considerable time, owing to the suspension of practically all the French periodicals which represented his particular field of activity. So far as it extends, much of our present knowledge is referable to M. Henri Durville's Psychic Magazine, which in one of its recent issues has a sketch of le maitre occultiste. Meanwhile it is satisfactory to know, as we can no longer count him among us, that the indefatigable occultist has passed away in the service of humanity and in the sacred cause of his country. Biographical facts concerning him have always been curiously scarce, which can be hazarded upon this side of the subject may call for correction later on. He was born at La Corogne in Spain on July 13, 1865, his father being a French chemist - Louis Encausse - and his mother a Spanish lady. After graduating in medicine and surgery, his attraction to the psychical and occult side of things was shown by a passing connection with the Theosophical Society in Paris. In a brief note - autobiographical in respect of ideas - appended to the fifth edition of his 'Traite'

Elementaire de Science Occulte, he tells us that under the materialistic influence of the medical Ecole de Paris he became an ardent evolutionist, but discovered very soon the incompleteness of this doctrine, which preached the law of struggle for existence but knew nothing of a law of sacrifice. In the opinion of Papus, this latter dominates all phenomena. The idea concerning it seems to have reached him independently, but he found it subsequently in the writings of Louis Lucas, in old Hermetic texts, the religious traditions of India, and in the Hebrew Kabalah. He found also the doctrine of correspondences, which became for him - as for many others like him - a general key, not only to the mysteries of philosophy and religion but to those of science, and to the inter-relation of all sciences by means of a common synthesis. Very curiously also, as it will seem to many, he found much to his purpose in the rituals of old grimoires, and this led him to the general literature of magic, as well as to a sympathy with its claims and practices. He left the Theosophical Society for reasons which he explains in his Traite Methodique de Science Occulte and which do not concern us, especially at this date. It was not long before he began to establish independent groups, in collaboration with others whose names are also well known. They represented what he calls the Resurrection of Occult Science. There was a Groupe Independant d'Etudes Esoteriques, and above all

there was the Ordre Martiniste, which made use of a simple ritual, arranged in three degrees, modestly conceived and well arranged. Out of these there grew ultimately a Faculte des Sciences Hermetiques, which issued diplomas to students, and occasionally causa honoris, to persons who had attained distinction as mystic or occult writers in France and some foreign countries.

The Martinist Order was extremely successful and the Supreme Council of France, with Papus as its president, had branches over the whole world - in Italy, Sweden, Germany, Switzerland, England, Belgium, Spain, Denmark, Holland, Austria, even in Russia and Rumania, Egypt and Indo-China. There was also a vast membership in America, both North and South, but the Lodges of the Northern Jurisdiction broke away from the Paris Supreme Council, partly over questions of Masonic procedure and partly on other grounds which are too complex and controversial for enumeration here. It is desirable to mention one point, at least, in favour of the Martinist Order. Unlike so many organizations which assume in modern days a Masonic or kindred origin, it did not make false and fantastic claims regarding its sources. Papus never concealed the fact that he and no other was the author and fount of its rituals. He connected it indeed with the name of L.C. de Saint-Martin as a sort of traditional founder, but not - so far as can be seen - in a direct way. It was rather an attempt to carry on in an incorporated

from the work which the French mystic is supposed to have done individually among his admirers and disciples.

The foundation of this group, moreover, represented what must have been not only an early interest but also a dedication of Papus to the saintly personality, wide influence and philosophical illumination of Saint-Martin. His understanding of the philosophy in particular differs from our own in England, and - in accordance with French romantic tradition, which has no base in history - he regarded Saint-Martin as a reformer of High Grades in Masonry, and the inventor of a Rite of his own. But these things are accidents, comparatively speaking at least. One important result was that the interest led to personal research and that this brought Papus into relation with persons and things belonging to Martinist tradition. Valuable documents came into his hands, so that he was able to throw great light, in a work devoted to Martinism, on the mystical and occult schools of Lyons, on the life of Martines de Pasqually, the first master of Saint-Martin, and to some extent on the mystic himself. In this manner the Order of Martinism justifies itself by the subsequent work of its founder, whose literary history, were it only in this connection, is honorable to himself and of lasting value to students.

Papus was also a friend and perhaps at first a guide of the Marquis Stanislas de Guaita, another light of occultism in Paris at the end

of the nineteenth century. De Guaita founded a Kabalistic Order of the Rosy Cross, which was carried on in great secrecy, and when he died at an early age it is said that its direction passed over to Papus. It neither had nor claimed any connections with the old mysterious Fraternity, but seems to have been quite sincere in its motives. Some valuable texts have been published from time to time under its auspices. Outside these activities, Papus took a hand in exposing the Leo Taxil conspiracy against Masonry and the Latin Church. When the star of peace again shines over the life of France, and when the occult circles reassemble, the pleasant personality of Papus is certain to be missed, and it is difficult to say precisely how his vacant place will be filled at the head of the various groups.

Though he appears to have broken away alike from the tradition and practice of the orthodox medical school, earning the usual consequences in its open and secret hostility, he was a successful and popular physician, and his clinic in the Rue Rodier is said to have been crowded. The little monograph in the Psychic Magazine affirms that he died for his country, literally worn out by his exertions on behalf of the wounded. The claim is therefore true, and of him it may be said that death crowned his life. Personally I shall always remember our pleasant communications during his two brief visits to London, now many years ago.

As it is customary for French occultists to

acknowledge masters, it may be desirable to mention those to whom Papus more especially deferred. They were Eliphas Levi in the philosophy of magic, Lacuria in the mystery of numbers, and Hoene Wronski in the doctrine of synthesis, applied to a projected "reform of all the sciences".

Cultural Variations and Magick in Theory and Practice

The Mayan version "Of Bloody Sacrifice"

Around 1100 BC ev, the ancient Mayans began to settle the Copan Valley (Schele & Freidel 1990). By 50 BC ev, the Mayans were erecting massive architecture and had stratified social classes. They also had irrigated agriculture, a system of writing, an extensive trade network, and a complex calendar system. Finally they had advanced mathematics, which had definition for zero three centuries before the Old World (Schele & Freidel 1986). As time moved on the Mayans continued to make great strides in progressing to become one of the great cultures of the New World. The Mayan noble to the New World person was a symbol of power. They were considered to be living gods. These nobles used the symbols of their culture to perpetuate their power and rule. The most potent symbol was blood. Whether it was a blood-letting ritual, a sacrifice, or a ball game, the Mayan noble believed that they fed the gods and the world with blood. Also the world was controlled by blood.

This article gives a brief overview of the available material on the blood rites of the Mayan culture.

To understand the power that the Maya saw in blood, one has to know something about the world view of the Maya. The Maya saw the world in a very different way than most cultures. Everything was alive and was magical, but it could be controlled. The Maya believed that if one could balance the powers of akbal (darkness) and mirror (light), then one could control the world around him. The Maya did this by raising fields in swamps, created irrigation ditches for agriculture, and connected rivers with canals. By creating these works the Maya believed that they were controlling the power of water. The Mayans were imitating nature's design of streams, rivers, and lakes. The Maya also created pyramids and underground chambers to imitate mountains and caves. Also, the Mayans observed the skies. They recorded the stars with exact precision. In fact many of the star charts of the Mayans match with existing ones in China (Aveni 1980). They believed that the stars represented people who had conquered the Death Lords (heros or heroines). One can begin to understand that in the Maya view the whole world was magic. Each river, mountain, cave, etc. had a spirit, god, and/or monster attributed to it. At the same time everything was god or Itzam Nam (the supreme god of the Maya). However, what helped create and sustain the gods, was the giving of blood (Schele & Miller 1986).

Blood was the force behind the smooth operation and continuation of the world. The Mayan believed that blood was the single most potent energy of all.

One of the most important duties that a noble held was the ritual of blood-letting. Although the origins of the this ritual are unknown, blood-letting allowed the Mayan noble to have contact with his/her ancestors, gods, spirits, etc. The ritual ensured the fertility of the crops, victory in battle, empowered the gods and kept the world alive. If knowledge from an ancestor or a god was sought, the noble would pierce the tongue if the noble was a woman or the penis if the noble was a man (Schele & Miller 1986). A cord with tied pieces of jagged, sharp obsidian would be run through the open wound. The blood would be caught in a bowl of streams of paper. The bloody paper would be offered to the god or ancestor. While the noble participated in the ritual, the noble would have what is called a "Serpent Vision". This "Serpent Vision" was a dream-like state in which the god or the ancestor would appear to the blood-letting noble. In reality the vision was the product of the great loss of blood, which causes the release of endorphins in the brain (Schele & Miller 1986). This causes an effect similar to the hallucinogenic drug, opium. The other form of blood-letting ritual was that the noble would pierce his/her genitalia and do a dervish-spin like dance. The blood would be caught by strands of paper that were tied around

the wound (Kerr 1989).

While the blood-letting ritual seems brutal, nothing compares to what the Maya did to the losers of a war. The Mayans were a very war-like people, but the only ones who were involved in warfare were the nobles and the warriors (Everyone else was never bothered with. It was against the law.) The losers of a war were dragged back to the city of the victors where they were brutalized and bound. The ball game was supposed to be a reenactment of the war for the entire feudal kingdom to see. The ball game is similar to basketball with hockey sticks and anything goes. Sometimes, a decapitated head of the losing lord's son would be used as the ball. The losing nobles were taken on the ball court, injured, and often had one leg and/or arm bounded up in or to ensure their defeat. After being brutalized and humiliated on the ball court, the losing team was sacrificed to the gods.

However, not all the losing team was sacrificed right away, the noble captives were often kept alive for years. Often they would be brought in front of ceremonial events to be bound and tortured at the feet of the victorious lord. Some captives were also disemboweled. The torture hollowed the captive from his sternum to his groin. After his disembowelment the captive was tied to kindling and set on fire (Schele & Miller 1986).

A noble captive was even used to help the Mayan lord in the ascending rite of power. This was accomplished by sewing the captive lord to a

scaffold. The victorious lord would take a sharp knife and cut into the chest of the captive lord, but first inflicting as much pain as possible. Eventually, the lord would remove the captive lord's heart. This was given to the gods as a sacrifice along with other prized pieces of flesh such the head, genitals, etc. After the sacrifice pieces were removed, the Mayan priests would place white linen over the stairs ascending to the top of pyramid or temple. There the victorious lord would climb the stairs leaving his bloody footprints behind him. The victorious lord was said to have ascended to the heavens to be with the gods. This scene was depicted on a ceramic vessel in the Fields Museum in Chicago.

Of all sacrifices, the sacrifice for the heart was the most important and the actual cause of death for the captive. On a painted wall scene at the site of Bonampak, Lord Chaan-Muan displays his captives. The captives are shown with sunken cheeks, maybe an indication that their teeth were removed. One captive in the left of the wall painting shows blood running down his arms. The noble is either removing the captive's fingernails or cutting off his fingers. In another scene Lord Chaan-Muan takes the heart of the captive lord and gives the heart to the gods. He then kicks the bloody body off the top of the temple. The body rolled to the bottom. The blood traces found by archaeologists on the steep steps of the temples and pyramids provide further evidence of the practice of

this Mayan ritual (Sabloff 1990).

With some study one can see how the Mayan noble use blood to perpetuate his rule and power. Fear was probably part of the weapon. The Mayan rituals might seem overwhelming like a constant blood bath. But to someone who was raised in such a culture, it would seem life just a part of everyday life. For the average Maya peasant the Mayan noble was keeping the world and the gods aright. Ultimately, the Mayan noble was controlling death or the Death Lords. The Mayan noble proved by the light of the stars and the birth of new stars that they were able to continue to beat death. In order to conquer death one must have power. Power to the ancient Maya is gained by continuing and controlling practice of the bloody sacrifice.

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Heisenberg Calendar

"If you know how many people
are coming, then you don't
know the date. If you know
the date, then you don't know
how many people are coming."

The Gnostic Mass is
scheduled the first Sunday of
the month at 6 p.m. All
O.T.O. members in good
standing are welcome, however
advance notice is necessary.
The new date for the Rite of
Mercury is October 10, 1993
e.v. at 2 p.m. The Research
Guild will have a tentative
meeting on October 17, 1993
e.v. at 6 p.m. Practice for
the Rite of Luna will be
November 24, 1993 e.v. at 2
p.m.

Love is the law,
love under will.

