Religions, Cults and Power

From Zoroaster and Mithra to the Singularity

A study compiled from the LSN library

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Contents

Preface 1

Introduction: The Long Arc 5

I. Foundations: Prehistory and the Indo-Iranian World 1

1. Method and Sources: How This Study Reads the Library 3
2. Before Scripture: Prehistoric, Shamanic and Archaic Religion 11
3. Mesopotamia: Gods, Temples and Kings 19
4. Egypt: Maat, Pharaoh and the Afterlife 27
5. Canaan, Ugarit and the Levant 35
6. The Indo-Iranian Inheritance: Steppe Religion Before Zarathushtra 43
7. The Vedic Gods: Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the Asura-Deva Split 51
8. Soma, Haoma, Entheogens and Sacred Kingship 57

II. Zoroastrianism 63

9. Zarathustra: The Prophet and the Problem of His Date 65
10. The Gathas and the Avesta: Scripture, Transmission and Canon 73
11. Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas and Angra Mainyu: Monotheism or Dualism? 81
12. Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds: Ethics, Law and Ritual Purity 87

13. Fire, Magi and Temple: The Priesthood and Its Rituals 95

14. The Achaemenid Kings and Ahuramazda: Religion and Empire, 550-330 BC 101

15. Throne and Altar: Parthian Tolerance and the Sasanian Church-State 109

16. Zurvan, Infinite Time: Heresy, Orthodoxy and the Sasanian Theological Dilemma 117

17. The End of Time: Pahlavi Literature, Judgment, Saviours and the Making-Wonderful 125

18. After the Conquest: Gabrs, Parsis, Iranis and the Afterlives of an Ancient Faith 133

III. MITHRA AND MITHRAISM 141

19. Mitra and Mithra: The Indo-Iranian God of the Contract (Vedic Mitra, the Mitanni Treaty and the Mihr Yasht) 143

20. Mithra Inside Zoroastrianism: Exclusion, Reintegration and Mihr the Judge 149

21. The God of Kings: Mithra in Achaemenid, Parthian, Armenian, Pontic and Commagene Royal Cult 157

22. The Roman Mysteries of Mithras I: Myth, Mithraeum and the Bull-Slaying 165

23. The Roman Mysteries of Mithras II: Seven Grades, Soldiers, Merchants and the Politics of a Brotherhood 171

24. Where Did the Mysteries Come From? Cumont and His Critics (Hinnells, Gordon, Beck, Ulansey, Widengren) 179

25. Sol Invictus, the Emperors and 25 December: Mithras in Imperial Politics and His Fall 187

26. Mithras and Christ: Parallels, Polemics and the Question of Borrowing 197

27. After Rome: Mani's Mithra, Mehregan and Yalda, Armenian Mher, and Modern Claims of a Mithraic Root of All Religions 205

IV. Israel, Judaism and the Second Temple 215

28. Out of Canaan: El, Baal, Asherah and the Emergence of Yahweh 217

29. Patriarchs, Exodus and Conquest: The Biblical Story and the Archaeological Record 225

30. Kings and Prophets: Monarchy, the Two Kingdoms and the Deuteronomic Revolution 233

31. By the Rivers of Babylon: Exile, Cyrus and the Persian Imprint on Judaism 241

32. Athens and Jerusalem: Hellenism, Antiochus IV and the Maccabean State 249

33. The Four Philosophies: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots and the Qumran Scrolls 257

34. Under Rome: Herod, the Great Revolt, the Fall of the Temple and Bar Kokhba 267

35. The Oral Law Written: Yavneh, the Mishnah and the Two Talmuds 275

36. Mystics, Messiahs and Moderns: Kabbalah, Sabbateanism, Hasidism, Reform and Orthodoxy 283

37. Who Is a Jew? The Khazar Debate, Jewish Identity and the Road to Zionism 291

V. The Greco-Roman World: Mysteries, Philosophy, Gnosis 299

38. Gods of the City: Olympian Religion, Civic Cult and the Politics of Piety 301

39. The Two Goddesses: The Eleusinian Mysteries 309

40. Dionysus and Orpheus: Ecstasy, Orphic Asceticism and the Bacchic Threat to Order 317

41. Number, Soul and the Good: Pythagoras and Plato on Immortality and God 325

42. Philosophy as Religion: Stoics, Epicureans and the Gods of the Philosophers 333

43. Gods from the East: Cybele and Attis, Isis and Serapis, and the Mystery Cults of Rome 341

44. The Divine Emperor: Ruler Cult, State Religion and the Politics of Worship in Rome 349

45. Thrice-Great Hermes: The Corpus Hermeticum and Hermetic Spirituality 357

46. Gnosis and the Demiurge: Nag Hammadi, Sethians and Valentinians 365

47. The Last Philosophers and the Last Pagan Emperor: Neoplatonism, Theurgy, Julian and the End of the Old Gods 373

VI. EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND THE EMPIRE 381

48. The Quest for the Historical Jesus: Sources, Methods and the Mythicist Challenge 383

49. James, Peter and the Jerusalem Community: Jewish Christians and the Ebionites 391

50. Paul and the Gentile Mission: The "Second Founder" of Christianity 399

51. Gospels, Gnostics and Marcion: The Making of the Canon 405

52. Persecution and Martyrdom: From Nero to Diocletian 413

53. Apologists and Church Fathers: Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen and the Pagan Critics 421

54. Constantine: Vision, Edict and the Imperial Church 429

55. Nicaea and the Arian Controversy: Defining God by Council 439

56. Theodosius and the Christian State: Edicts, Temples, Hypatia and the End of Paganism 447

57. Christological Councils and the Oriental Churches: Ephesus, Chalcedon and the Great Schisms of the East 455

VII. Christianity: Schisms, Reform and Divisions 463

58. Two Romes: Papal Primacy, Byzantine Caesaropapism and the Schism of 1054 465

59. The Papal Monarchy: From Canossa to Avignon, the Western Schism and the Borgias 473

60. Holy War: The Crusades from Clermont to the Sack of Constantinople 481

61. The Dualist Dissent: Paulicians, Bogomils and Cathars 489

62. Enforcing Orthodoxy: The Inquisitions and the Trial of the Templars 497

63. Morning Stars of Dissent: Wycliffe, the Lollards, Hus and the Council of Constance 505

64. Luther: Indulgences, the Ninety-Five Theses and the Princes' Reformation 513

65. Zurich, Geneva and the Radicals: Zwingli, Calvin, Servetus and the Anabaptists 521

66. Crown, Conscience and the Sword: the English Reformation, the Wars of Religion and the Puritan Revolution 529

67. From Trent to Vatican II: Counter-Reformation, the Jesuits and Modern Catholicism 537

68. The Third Rome and the Orthodox East: Russia, the Old Believers and the Romanian Case 545

69. Fire in the Heart: Pietists, Methodists, the Great Awakenings, Pentecostalism and the Prosperity Gospel 553

VIII. ISLAM: REVELATION, EMPIRE AND DIVISIONS 559

70. Before the Prophet: Arabia between Iran and Byzantium 561

71. Muhammad: Revelation in Mecca, State in Medina (570-632) 567

72. The Book and the Tradition: Quran, Hadith and the Problem of Sources 573

73. Succession and Civil War: the Rashidun, the Fitnas, Kharijites and Ibadis 581

74. Karbala and the Imamate: the Birth of Shi'ism 589

75. Caliphal Empire: Umayyads, Abbasids and the Persian Inheritance 597

76. Law and Theology: the Madhhabs, Mutazila, Ash'ari, Hanbali and the Philosophers 605

77. Esoteric Shi'ism: Ismailis, Fatimids, Nizari 'Assassins', Druze and Alawites 615

78. The Mystical Path: Sufism, the Orders and Their Western Afterlife 625

79. Gunpowder Empires: the Safavid Twelver State, the Ottomans, the Mughals and the End of the Caliphate 635

80. Revival, Reform and Revolt: Wahhabism, Salafism, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Republic 643

81. After the Seal: Babism, the Baha'i Faith, Ahmadiyya, Black American Islam, and Keshe's 'True Koran' 649

IX. INDIA: HINDUISM, JAINISM, BUDDHISM, SIKHISM 657

82. From the Indus Cities to the Vedic Hymns: Origins and the Aryan Question 659

83. Sacrifice and Its Masters: Vedic Ritual, the Brahmanas and the Priestly Order 665

84. The Upanishadic Turn: Atman, Brahman, Karma and the Renouncers 671

85. Varna, Caste and Dharma: The Social Order and Its Contestation 679

86. Jainism: Mahavira, the Tirthankaras and the Ethic of Absolute Non-Violence 687

87. The Buddha and the Early Sangha: Life, Teaching and the First Schism 695

88. Ashoka and the Dhamma State: Buddhism as Imperial Ideology 703

89. The Great Vehicle and the Diamond Vehicle: Mahayana, Vajrayana, Tibet and the Decline of Indian Buddhism 711

90. The Epics and the Bhagavad Gita: War, Duty and the Avatar 719

91. Shiva, Vishnu and the Goddess: Sectarian Hinduism and the Tantric Current 727

92. Systems of Liberation: The Six Darshanas and the Vedanta Schools 735

93. Bhakti, the Sants and the Sikh Panth: From Devotional Revolt to the Khalsa and Its Politics 743

X. East Asia 749

94. Heaven, Ancestors and Spirits: The Foundations of Chinese Religion 751

95. Confucius and the Making of a State Orthodoxy 757

96. The Way and Its Power: Laozi, Zhuangzi and the Birth of Religious Daoism 763

97. The Dharma Comes East: Chinese Buddhism, Chan and Pure Land 771

98. The Way of the Kami: Shinto, the Imperial Myth and State Shinto 777

99. Buddhism in Japan: From Nara Temples to Zen, Pure Land, Nichiren and the Shamans 785

100. The Roof of the World: Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama Institution 793

101. Korea: Shamans, Confucian Kings, Christians and the Kim Dynasty 801

102. Mandate and Revolt: Secret Societies and Millenarian Rebellions from the Yellow Turbans to the Boxers 807

103. New Religions and the Party-State: Falun Gong, Soka Gakkai, Aum, Cao Dai and Keshe's China 815

XI. THE WESTERN ESOTERIC TRADITION AND FREEMASONRY 823

104. Kabbalah: From the Bahir and the Zohar to Lurianic Safed 825

105. Hermes Trismegistus, Christian Kabbalah and Renaissance Magic: Ficino, Pico, Agrippa, Dee 833

106. The Royal Art: Alchemy and Astrology in the Western Esoteric Tradition 841

107. The Knights Templar: History, Trial and the Templar Legend 849

108. The Rosicrucian Manifestos and the "Rosicrucian Enlightenment" 857

109. The Origins of Freemasonry: Operative Lodges, the Scottish Evidence and the Grand Lodge of 1717 865

110. Degrees, Symbols and Rituals of the Craft 873

111. The Scottish Rite and Albert Pike: Morals and Dogma on Religions, Zoroaster and Mithra 881

112. Morals and Dogma II: Kabbalah, Lucifer, the Templars and the Secret of the High Degrees 891

113. Lodges in Conflict: Grand Orient, Continental versus Anglo-American Masonry, the Papacy and the Bavarian Illuminati 899

114. Freemasonry in Revolutions and Politics: America, France, Latin America and Romania 907

115. The Occult Revival: Martinism, Theosophy, the Golden Dawn and Anthroposophy 915

XII. Satanism, Luciferianism and Modern Occultism 923

116. The Adversary Takes Shape: From Angra Mainyu to Satan, Lucifer and Iblis 925

117. The Hammer of Witches: Demonology, the Malleus Maleficarum and the Great Witch Hunts (c. 1300-1750) 935

118. Selling the Soul: Faustian Pacts, the Black Mass and the Hellfire Clubs 943

119. Lucifer Rehabilitated: The Gnostic Serpent, Romantic Satan, Eliphas Levi and Baphomet 951

120. Do What Thou Wilt: Aleister Crowley, Thelema and the Ordo Templi Orientis 959

121. The Black Pope: Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan 967

122. Schisms of the Left-Hand Path: Temple of Set, Order of Nine Angles, Theistic Luciferianism and The Satanic Temple 975

123. The Old Gods Return: Wicca, Neopaganism, Ásatrú, Rodnovery and Chaos Magic 983

124. Satanic Panic: Ritual-Abuse Fears, Law Enforcement and the Politics of Fear (1980-Today) 991

XIII. New Religious Movements and Cults 999

125. What Is a Cult? Sect, Cult, New Religious Movement and the Brainwashing Debate 1001

126. The American Prophet: Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon and the Latter-day Saint Kingdom 1009

127. The Principle Lives On: Mormon Fundamentalism and the Polygamous Offshoots 1017

128. Counting the Days: Millerites, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science 1025

129. Voices from Beyond: The Spiritualist Movement and the Mediumistic Century 1035

130. From Dianetics to the Sea Org: L. Ron Hubbard and the Church of Scientology 1043

131. Messiahs of the Cold War and the Jesus Revolution: The Unification Church and the Children of God 1051

132. Jonestown: The Peoples Temple, Political Power and the White Night of 18 November 1978 1059

133. Waco: The Branch Davidians, the Federal Government and the Legacy of Rage 1067

134. Apocalypse Enacted: Aum Shinrikyo's War on Japan and the Transits of the Order of the Solar Temple 1075

135. Gods from the Sky and Masters of the Inner Planes: Heaven's Gate, UFO Religions, the New Age, Channeling and the Ascended Masters 1083

136. High Control in the Twenty-First Century and the Counter-Movement: NXIVM, Rajneeshpuram, the Anti-Cult Movement and Deprogramming 1091

XIV. RELIGION AND POLITICS 1099

137. From God-King to Divine Right: The Sacral Theology of Rule 1101

138. Pope and Emperor: Investiture, the Papal Monarchy and the Road to Westphalia 1107

139. Cross, Crown and Conquest: Religion, Colonialism and the Missions 1115

140. Reason Against the Altar: The Enlightenment, the French Revolution and Laïcité 1123

141. 'The Opium of the People': Marxism, State Atheism and the Persecuted Churches 1131

142. One Nation Under God: American Civil Religion, the Masonic Founders and the Christian Right 1139

143. Zion and Palestine: Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, Israel and the Palestinian Question 1147

144. The Guardianship of the Jurist: Iran from the 1953 Coup to the Islamic Republic 1153

145. Petro-Islam and Global Jihad: Wahhabi Export, Afghanistan, al-Qaeda and the Islamic State 1161

146. The Vatican as a Power: Concordats, Cold War Diplomacy, the Vatican Bank and Gladio 1169

147. Faith and Empire Today: Religion in the Geopolitics of Russia, China, Iran and the United States 1177

148. Hidden Hands? Secret Societies, Elite Forums and Power as Claimed in the Sources 1185

XV. The Keshe Knowledge Seekers Workshops 1193

149. Mehran Tavakoli Keshe and the Keshe Foundation: Origins, Self-Account and Corpus 1195

150. The Knowledge Seekers Workshops: Format, Phases and Community 1203

151. Plasma Science as Presented: Magravs, GANS, Reactors and the Spaceship 1211

152. Soul of the Man, Soul of Physicality, the Creator and the Universal Council 1219

153. Mitra as Root of All Religions: 21 December, the Ethos of Mitra and the Children of Mitra 1227

154. Keshe on Zoroaster, Persia and the Abrahamic Lineage: Judaism and the Torah 1235

155. Christianity Reread: Cross, Resurrection, Ascension and the Vatican 1243

156. Islam, Shia Iran and the Ayatollahs: Keshe's Islamic Critique and Iranian Politics 1253

157. One Nation, One Planet: World Peace Treaty, Governments, China, Finance and the Keshe Coin 1261

158. Prophecies, Timelines, Reception and Critique; Keshe Compared with the Mainstream Accounts 1269

XVI. SINGULARITY: MITCHELL HEISMAN AND THE END OF GOD 1279

159. The Last Testament of a Rationalist: Mitchell Heisman's Suicide Note as a Work, Its Architecture and Its 'Experiment in Nihilism' 1281

160. 'God is Technology': Monotheism as Proto-Singularity and the Genesis of God 1289

161. The Jewish Question as Heisman Presents It: Judaism as Sociobiological Technology, Chosenness and Survival 1297

162. 'The Seditious Genius of the Spiritual Penis of Jesus': Christianity, Kin Selection and the Christian Origins of Modern Liberalism 1305

163. 'Absolute Purity': Nazism, Auschwitz as Secularised Hell, and the Death of God after Nietzsche 1313

164. A Vendetta Called Revolution: Heisman's Sociobiology of Liberal Democracy, Secularisation and Political Order 1321

165. Creating God: The Singularity, Transhumanism and AI as God-Making from Heisman to Kurzweil 1331

166. Ends of the World Compared: Heisman, Keshe and the Traditional Eschatologies from Zoroaster to the Singularity 1339

XVII. Comparisons and Synthesis 1347

167. In the Beginning: Cosmologies, Creation Narratives and the Cycles of World-Time Compared 1349

168. One, Two, Three or None: Dualism, Monotheism, Trinities and Nondualism Across the Traditions 1361

169. The Awaited One: Saoshyant, Messiah, Christ, Mahdi, Maitreya, Kalki and Mitra Compared 1371

170. After Death: Bridge, Scales, Resurrection, Rebirth and Their Rivals 1383

171. Sacred Time and the Initiate: Ritual, Mysteries, Initiation and the Calendars of 21 December, 25 December and Nowruz 1395

172. Law, Clergy and Power: Ethics, Priesthoods and the Organisation of Belief Compared 1407

173. Five Thousand Years of Gods and Rulers: A Master Timeline (3000 BCE to Today) and the Co-Evolution of Religion and Politics 1419

174. The View from Outside: Keshe and Heisman Measured Against the Whole Study, and the Open Questions 1445

Bibliography 1457

Preface

This book is a study of religions, cults and the political orders that grew up with them. It begins with the Indo-Iranian world, the prophet Zarathustra and the god Mithra, and ends with two modern systems that claim to stand outside every tradition before them: the Knowledge Seekers Workshops of Mehran Tavakoli Keshe, and the sociobiological philosophy of religion in Mitchell Heisman's *Suicide Note*. In between it follows Judaism and the Second Temple sects, the Greco-Roman mysteries and Gnosis, Christianity from its first communities to its modern divisions, Islam and its branches, the religions of India and East Asia, the Western esoteric tradition and Freemasonry, Satanism and modern occultism, the new religious movements, and the long entanglement of belief with power. Its title, *Religions, Cults and Power: From Zoroaster and Mithra to the Singularity*, states the arc.

Purpose

The owner's brief asked for a study, not a judgement. The aim is to bring together, in one ordered and cross-referenced work, what the sources in the LSN library actually say about these subjects. Where the sources agree, the book says so. Where they disagree, it sets the positions side by side with the evidence each author offers. The study does not rank traditions, defend or attack any faith, or decide which reading of a contested question is correct. A reader who wants to know what Mary Boyce, Albert Pike, Karen Armstrong, Douglas Reed, Mehran Keshe or Mitchell Heisman claims on a given point should be able to find it here, stated in that author's terms and credited to that author.

Politics runs through the whole book because the sources themselves keep finding it there. The Sasanian maxim that religion and kingship are twins, which Shaked traces into Ibn al-Muqaffa's theory of government [Shaked, From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam, #60406, article VI], is one formula of a pattern that recurs from the Achaemenid inscriptions to the Vatican's concordats and the Islamic Republic. Part 14 is given entirely to that pattern, and the political side of each tradition is also treated in its own Part.

Scope and sources

The book has 174 chapters arranged in 17 Parts, all of them complete. Part 1 (ch. 1-8) lays the foundations the later Parts build on: the method of the study, prehistoric and archaic religion, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Canaan and Ugarit, the Indo-Iranian inheritance, the Vedic gods, and the sacred drinks and sacred kingship of the earliest temple-states. The comparative chapters of Part 17 draw on these foundations throughout.

All material comes from two bodies of evidence. The first is the LSN library, a private collection of roughly 120,000 works. For this subject it holds scholarly monographs (Boyce on the Zoroastrians, Vermaseren on Mithras, Dunn on Christian origins, Armstrong's histories of religion), primary texts in translation (the Avesta and Pahlavi books, the Nag Hammadi Scriptures, the Zohar, the Analects, Pike's *Morals and Dogma*), works by religious insiders and apologists, polemics from every side, esoteric and Traditionalist writers, conspiracy literature, and two large single-author corpora: several hundred Keshe Foundation workshop transcripts and summaries [Keshe Foundation, KSW Summaries 1-393, #378714] and Heisman's treatise of about 1,900 pages [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, catalogue record]. A substantial part of the collection is in Romanian, and Romanian sources are quoted in English translation.

The second is the library's offline reference shelf, a set of Kiwix books that includes the English and Romanian Wikipedia, Wikisource and Project Gutenberg. The shelf supplies dates, names and mainstream summaries, and it is the main check against which single-author claims can be read.

The mix is deliberate. A study that used only academic works would leave out much of what the library holds on Freemasonry, Satanism, the secret-society literature and the new religious movements, and it would have no way to present the Keshe and Heisman material on its own terms. A study that used only the alternative shelf would have no mainstream baseline to measure it against. The book uses both and labels both.

Method

Three rules govern every chapter.

Facts as the sources present them. Material is not softened, shortened or omitted because it is offensive, politically sensitive or contrary to current consensus.

The Vendidad's purity laws, the medieval accusations against Jews and heretics, the anti-Masonic and anti-Jesuit literature, LaVey's elitism, Keshe's statements on Israel and the Vatican, and Heisman's most provocative theses are all reported as their sources state them. Nor does the book add moral commentary or disclaimers to them.

Fidelity means attribution. No single author's claim is presented as established fact. Sentences take the form "According to Moulton…" or "Keshe claims…". When the library contains no independent check on a claim, the chapter says so. The most important such case is Keshe: the library holds no independent biography or journalistic study of him, so his biography and his account of his own influence are reported as self-account throughout Part 15 [ch. 149; ch. 158].

Neutral connective prose. The editorial voice links, summarises and compares, but it does not argue. Where a chapter sets out a debate, as with the date of Zarathustra (ch. 9), Cumont and his critics (ch. 24), the historical Jesus (ch. 48), the brainwashing controversy (ch. 125) or the Waco fire (ch. 133), each side is given its strongest evidence as its own authors give it.

How citations work

Citations are inline, in square brackets. A library work is cited as **[Author, Short Title, #work_id]**, where the number is the work's identifier in the LSN library catalogue and can be used to retrieve it. A section, chapter or passage heading is added when known, for example [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch. 6 "Alexander and Iran"]. After the first full citation in a passage, a shortened form such as [Boyce, #55117] or simply [#55117] refers to the same work. Keshe workshop transcripts are cited by workshop number and work id, as in [Keshe, KSW 360, #378072]. The reference shelf is cited as [Wikipedia: Article Title] or [Reference book: Title]. Page numbers are given only where the source supplies them; quotations are taken from the library text to which they are credited.

How to read the book

The Parts run roughly in historical order, but each one can be read on its own. Cross-references in the form "(ch. 26)" point to the chapter where a topic is treated in full. Every chapter ends with a short list of key points. The Introduction that follows maps the whole arc Part by Part and is the best place to

choose a route. Readers interested mainly in comparison can go straight to Part 17, whose eight chapters set the traditions side by side on cosmology, the nature of God, saviour figures, the afterlife, sacred time, priesthood and power, and close with a master timeline and with a final measure of Keshe and Heisman against the whole study (ch. 167-174). The bibliography lists every library work cited, by work id.

Introduction: The Long Arc

This study follows a line of descent and contact that runs for more than three thousand years. It starts with the gods the Indo-Iranians shared before they split into Vedic Indians and Avestan Iranians, and it ends with two twenty-first-century systems that claim to explain, and to supersede, everything that came before. Along the way the same questions recur. Is there one god or two principles? What happens at death? Who will come at the end of time? And who has the right to speak, and to rule, in God's name? This introduction maps the arc Part by Part, so that readers can see where each thread is picked up and where it is compared.

Part 1. Foundations: method, the ancient Near East and the Indo-Iranian world (ch. 1-8)

Part 1 lays the ground the rest of the study stands on. Chapter 1 sets out the method: the comparative tradition from Müller, Tylor and Frazer to Durkheim, Weber and Eliade, the criticisms made of it, and the rules this study follows for insider and outsider sources, for dating and for arguments about influence. Frazer already tied religion to power when he wrote that "magicians appear to have often developed into chiefs and kings" [ch. 1; Frazer, The Golden Bough, #65694]. Chapter 2 turns to religion before writing: burials, painted caves, the female figurines and the Mother Goddess debate, and Göbekli Tepe. There Eliade's warning that "beliefs and ideas are not fossilisable" is set against the readings of Wood, Harari and Graeber and Wengrow [ch. 2; Eliade, Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase, #44122, ch. I §2].

Chapters 3 to 5 treat the older civilisations that later traditions met. Chapter 3 covers Mesopotamia: its gods, the temple as the god's house, *Enūma Eliš*, the flood, divination and divinely appointed kingship [ch. 3; Black and Green, Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, #70458; Collins, The Sumerians, #64812]. Chapter 4 covers Egypt: the city cosmogonies, Maat and the god-king, the judgment of the dead, the power of Amun's priests, Akhenaten, and the debate over Moses the Egyptian [ch. 4; Bierbrier, Historical Dictionary of Ancient

Egypt, #366518]. Chapter 5 covers Canaan, Ugarit and Phoenicia: the pantheon of El, Asherah and Baal, the Baal Cycle, the high places, the *molk* dispute, and the Canaanite roots of Israelite religion that Part 4 takes up [ch. 5; Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, #86469; Smith, The Early History of God, #67245].

Chapters 6 to 8 return to the line this study follows most closely. Chapter 6 reconstructs the religion that left no scripture of its own, the shared faith of the peoples whose descendants composed both the Rigveda and the Avestan hymns. It covers the homeland debate and the "Aryan" name, the cosmic order (*rta*/*asha*), the Lords (*asura*/*ahura*) Mitra and Varuna, the fire and haoma/soma cult, the bridge of the dead, and the great inversion by which the *daevas* became demons in Iran while the *asuras* sank in India [ch. 6; Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, §1.2.3; Duchesne-Guillemin, Religion of Ancient Iran, #38271, §III.A]. Chapter 7 looks at the Indian branch: the Rigveda and its date, Mitra and Varuna as guardians of *ṛta*, Indra and Agni, the asura/deva reversal seen from India, and Dumézil's tripartite theory and its critics [ch. 7; Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, #54250; Ries, Il culto di Mithra, #38276]. Chapter 8 asks what soma/haoma was, setting Wasson's fly-agaric against ephedra, Syrian rue and cannabis, and then follows the drink into sacred kingship and the debate over the Sumerian "temple-state" [ch. 8; Wasson, Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality, #74742; Collins, #64812]. The Indo-Iranian material is picked up again in Chapters 19 and 82.

Part 2. Zoroastrianism (ch. 9-18)

Part 2 begins with the problem that frames all Zoroastrian studies: when Zarathustra lived. The dates offered run from the Greek "6,000 years before Xerxes" to the Parsi 660-583 BC and the modern philologists' Bronze Age steppe [ch. 9; West, Pahlavi Texts V, #60400, Introduction §71; Jackson, Zoroaster, #55100]. It then sets out the scriptures and their transmission (ch. 10) and the central theological controversy over whether the Gathas teach monotheism, dualism or Boyce's "dualistic monotheism" (ch. 11). Ethics, purity law and ritual follow (ch. 12-13), and the purity material is given in full. The political chapters are the core of the Part. Chapter 14 asks whether the Achaemenid kings were Zoroastrians and how Persian rule shaped post-exilic Judaism. Chapter 15 follows the Sasanian "church-state", in which, in Shaked's phrase traced through Ibn al-Muqaffa, "religion and sovereignty are twins" [Shaked, From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam, #60406, article VI]. Zurvanism (ch. 16), eschatology with the Chinvat Bridge, the Saoshyant and the "making wonderful" (ch. 17),

and the afterlife of the faith among Gabrs, Parsis and Iranis down to the Islamic Republic (ch. 18) complete it.

Part 3. Mithra and Mithraism (ch. 19-27)

Part 3 follows one god across nearly two millennia. Mitra appears in the Hittite-Mitanni treaty and the Rigveda as a god of the contract, and becomes the Mithra of the Mihr Yasht (ch. 19). His place inside Zoroastrianism is disputed (ch. 20). He then becomes a god of kings in Achaemenid, Parthian, Armenian, Pontic and Commagene royal cult (ch. 21). The Roman mysteries are treated through their monuments and their initiates (ch. 22-23). Chapter 24 sets out the central scholarly controversy over Cumont's "Romanized Mazdaism" and its critics; as Vermaseren puts it, "the great gap which exists between the records of the Persian and Roman Mithras makes interpretation all the more difficult" [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300, ch. 8]. Sol Invictus and 25 December (ch. 25), the Mithras-Christ parallels and polemics (ch. 26), and Mani, Mehregan, Yalda and modern claims of a Mithraic root of all religions (ch. 27) carry the god into the Christian era. That last claim is taken up at length in Chapter 153.

Part 4. Israel, Judaism and the Second Temple (ch. 28-37)

Part 4 starts inside the West Semitic world of El, Baal and Asherah, where John Day and Mark S. Smith place the emergence of Yahweh (ch. 28) [Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, #86469]. It sets the biblical founding stories beside the archaeological record (ch. 29) and follows the monarchy and the Deuteronomic revolution of Josiah (ch. 30). Chapter 31 is the main bridge back to Part 2: it presents the case, and the objections, for a Persian imprint on Jewish angelology, demonology, resurrection and judgement [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067]. Hellenism and the Maccabees (ch. 32), the Second Temple sects and Qumran (ch. 33), Rome and the fall of the Temple (ch. 34), the Mishnah and Talmuds and the polemics against them (ch. 35), and Kabbalah, Sabbateanism, Hasidism and modern Judaism (ch. 36) follow. Chapter 37 closes with the identity debates, among them the Khazar thesis and its rebuttals, and the road to political Zionism.

Part 5. The Greco-Roman world (ch. 38-47)

Part 5 describes Greek religion as a civic system that had, in Seltman's words, "no priestly caste … neither dogma nor missions … no Sacred Book" [Seltman, The Twelve Olympians, #87245] (ch. 38). It then turns to the initiation cults: Eleusis and the entheogen hypothesis (ch. 39), Dionysus and Orpheus (ch. 40), and the Pythagorean-Platonic theology of the soul (ch. 41). Stoics and Epicureans (ch. 42), the eastern cults of Cybele, Isis and Serapis (ch. 43) and the imperial cult (ch. 44) show religion as the binding force of empire. The Hermetica (ch. 45) and Gnosis (ch. 46) introduce the dualist and esoteric currents that resurface in Parts 7, 11 and 12. Neoplatonism, Julian and the end of the old gods close the Part (ch. 47).

Part 6. Early Christianity and the Empire (ch. 48-57)

Part 6 opens with the historical-Jesus debate, from Dunn's "Jesus remembered" to the mythicists, Atwill, Heisman and Keshe (ch. 48) [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, ch. 4]. It follows James and the Jerusalem community (ch. 49), Paul (ch. 50), the making of the canon (ch. 51) and the persecutions together with the dispute over their scale (ch. 52). The apologists and their pagan critics come next (ch. 53). The political turning point is Constantine (ch. 54), followed by Nicaea (ch. 55), the Theodosian Christian state and the end of paganism (ch. 56), and the Christological councils that split the Eastern churches (ch. 57).

Part 7. Christianity: schisms, reform and divisions (ch. 58-69)

Part 7 traces the divisions of Christendom: East against West and 1054 (ch. 58), the papal monarchy (ch. 59), the Crusades (ch. 60), and the dualist chain of Paulicians, Bogomils and Cathars (ch. 61), which links back to the Gnostic and Manichaean material of Chapters 27 and 46. The Inquisitions and the Templar trial (ch. 62), Wycliffe and Hus (ch. 63), Luther (ch. 64), Zwingli, Calvin and the radicals (ch. 65), and the wars of religion (ch. 66) show reform turning into state policy and armed conflict. The Counter-Reformation and the Jesuits (ch. 67), Orthodoxy from the Third Rome to modern Romania (ch. 68), and the revival, Pentecostal and prosperity currents (ch. 69) bring the story to the present.

Part 8. Islam (ch. 70-81)

Part 8 begins with Arabia between Byzantium and Sasanian Iran (ch. 70) and Muhammad's union of revelation and rule (ch. 71). The Quran, hadith and the problem of sources follow (ch. 72) [Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others Saw It, #55061]. The succession disputes, the Kharijites (ch. 73) and Karbala (ch. 74) produce the great divisions of the faith. Chapter 74 also reports the persistent claim of a Zoroastrian or Mithraic substrate in Shi'ism. The caliphate's Persian inheritance (ch. 75), law and theology (ch. 76), the esoteric Shi'ism of the Ismailis, the Nizari "Assassins", the Druze and the Alawites (ch. 77), and Sufism and its Western afterlife (ch. 78) follow. The gunpowder empires and the end of the caliphate (ch. 79), Wahhabism, the Brotherhood and the Islamic Republic (ch. 80), and the post-prophetic movements from the Bab to Keshe's "true Koran" (ch. 81) complete the Part.

Part 9. India (ch. 82-93)

Part 9 returns to the Indo-Iranian root from the Indian side. It opens with the Indus cities and the Aryan question, on which philologists, colonial administrators, Hindu nationalists and Dalit organisations have each built a narrative [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, "Into or Out of India"] (ch. 82). Vedic sacrifice (ch. 83), the Upanishads (ch. 84) and caste and dharma (ch. 85) lay out the Brahmanical order. Jainism (ch. 86), the Buddha (ch. 87) and Ashoka's Dhamma state (ch. 88) present the renouncer challenge to it and its political uses. Mahayana and Vajrayana (ch. 89), the epics and the Gita (ch. 90), sectarian and Tantric Hinduism (ch. 91), the darshanas (ch. 92), and bhakti and the Sikh Khalsa (ch. 93) follow.

Part 10. East Asia (ch. 94-103)

Part 10 starts from Shang divination and the Mandate of Heaven (ch. 94) [Analects, with selections from traditional commentaries, #40662]. It then covers Confucian state orthodoxy (ch. 95), Daoism from Laozi to the Celestial Masters (ch. 96), Chinese Buddhism (ch. 97), State Shinto (ch. 98), Japanese Buddhism (ch. 99), the Dalai Lama institution (ch. 100) [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190], and Korea from shamanism to Juche (ch. 101). Two chapters

address the region's particular pattern of religion and revolt: the millenarian rebellions from the Yellow Turbans to the Boxers (ch. 102), and the modern new religions and the party-state, including Falun Gong, Aum and Keshe's picture of China (ch. 103).

Part 11. The Western esoteric tradition and Freemasonry (ch. 104-115)

Part 11 follows the hidden-knowledge current from Kabbalah (ch. 104) through Renaissance Hermetism, read with Yates's thesis (ch. 105) [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768], alchemy and astrology (ch. 106), the Templar history and legend (ch. 107) and the Rosicrucian manifestos (ch. 108). Five chapters treat Freemasonry: its origins and the Grand Lodge of 1717 [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1] (ch. 109), its degrees and symbols (ch. 110), Albert Pike's comparative history of religions in *Morals and Dogma* (ch. 111) and his Lucifer and Kabbalah passages together with the Taxil hoax (ch. 112) [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717], and the lodge conflicts and the Illuminati (ch. 113). Chapter 111 ties the Part back to Zoroaster and Mithra. The Masonic role in the American, French, Latin American and Romanian revolutions (ch. 114) and the occult revival of Theosophy, the Golden Dawn and Anthroposophy (ch. 115) close it.

Part 12. Satanism, Luciferianism and modern occultism (ch. 116-124)

Part 12 traces the Adversary from Angra Mainyu to Satan, Lucifer and Iblis (ch. 116). It follows the witch hunts through the primary documents [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807] (ch. 117), and then the pacts, Black Masses and Hellfire Clubs, where alleged and documented Satanism diverge most widely (ch. 118). The rehabilitation of Lucifer from the Gnostic serpent to Eliphas Levi (ch. 119) leads to Crowley and Thelema (ch. 120) and to LaVey's Church of Satan, which Faxneld and Petersen treat as the first "enduring and public tradition of Satanism" [Faxneld & Petersen, The Devil's Party, #87532, Introduction] (ch. 121). The later Left-Hand Path schisms (ch. 122), neopaganism and chaos magic (ch. 123), and the Satanic panic with its revival in QAnon (ch. 124) complete the Part.

Part 13. New religious movements and cults (ch. 125-136)

Part 13 opens with the contested vocabulary of "cult" and "brainwashing". It quotes Willis's caution that "one person's cult is another person's religion" [Willis, American Cults, #63203, Introduction] and sets the Lifton-Singer-Hassan model against its academic critics (ch. 125). It then follows the American prophetic and healing movements: the Mormons and their fundamentalist offshoots (ch. 126-127), the Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science (ch. 128), and Spiritualism (ch. 129). Scientology (ch. 130), the Unification Church and the Children of God (ch. 131), Jonestown (ch. 132) and Waco (ch. 133) are the major case studies, each presented with its competing accounts. Aum and the Solar Temple (ch. 134), the UFO and Ascended Master religions (ch. 135), and NXIVM and the anti-cult movement (ch. 136) bring the Part to the present.

Part 14. Religion and politics (ch. 137-148)

Part 14 draws together the political thread of the whole book. It runs from sacral kingship and divine right (ch. 137) [Roberts & Westad, The Penguin History of the World, #69765, ch. 3] and the papacy against the emperor down to Westphalia (ch. 138) [Grzymała-Busse, #62062], to missions and colonialism (ch. 139), the Enlightenment and laïcité (ch. 140), and Marxist state atheism (ch. 141). American civil religion (ch. 142), Zionism and Palestine (ch. 143), the Iranian revolution (ch. 144), and petro-Islam and global jihad (ch. 145) follow. The Vatican as a financial and diplomatic power (ch. 146) and religion in present-day great-power politics, including Patriarch Kirill's Russia and Ukraine (ch. 147) [Matthews, Overreach, #66606, ch. 4], come next. Chapter 148 sets out, with strict attribution, the claims of the secret-society literature about elite forums and orders, beside the documented record of each.

Part 15. The Keshe Knowledge Seekers Workshops (ch. 149-158)

Part 15 presents Mehran Tavakoli Keshe's teaching almost entirely from the Foundation's own transcripts. Chapter 149 states the governing caveat: the library holds no independent biography or study of him. The workshops' format and phases (ch. 150), his plasma physics (ch. 151) and his metaphysics of the Soul and the Universal Council (ch. 152) lead to the religious-historical core, Chapter 153. There Keshe claims that the "true Christmas" was 21 December, "the birthday of Mitra, some 8,000 years ago" [Keshe, KSW 360, #378072]. His readings of Zoroaster and Judaism (ch. 154), Christianity and the Vatican (ch. 155), and Islam and Iran (ch. 156), his political programme and the Keshe Coin (ch. 157), and his dated prophecies and reception (ch. 158) follow, each set against the mainstream accounts of the earlier Parts.

Part 16. Singularity: Mitchell Heisman (ch. 159-166)

Part 16 treats Heisman's *Suicide Note*, catalogued as "a ~1900-page philosophical treatise interrogating reason, meaning, free will, God, and self-destruction" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, catalogue record] (ch. 159). It follows his thesis that "God is Technology" and that monotheism was a proto-Singularity (ch. 160). It then sets out his treatments of Judaism as a "meta-sociobiological technology" (ch. 161), of Christianity and liberalism (ch. 162), and of Nazism (ch. 163), each reported in his own terms. His Norman-Yoke sociology of liberal democracy (ch. 164) and his conclusion that "the Singularity would be the technological genesis of God" [#38252, Part I] are set beside Kurzweil, Vinge, Geraci and Harari (ch. 165). Chapter 166 compares his eschatology with Keshe's and with the traditional ends of the world from Zoroaster onward.

Part 17. Comparisons and synthesis (ch. 167-174)

The final Part compares the material directly. Its chapters set side by side cosmologies and world-ages (ch. 167) [ERE, "Ages of the World", #60381], the one, the two, the three and the none in conceptions of the divine (ch. 168), the saviour figures from Saoshyant to Kalki and Mitra (ch. 169), the afterlife (ch. 170), and sacred time, including 21 December, 25 December and Nowruz (ch. 171). They

also compare law and priesthood (ch. 172). A master timeline from 3000 BCE to the present traces the co-evolution of religion and politics (ch. 173). The book closes by measuring Keshe and Heisman against the whole study and listing the questions its sources leave open (ch. 174).

Threads to follow

Five threads cross the Parts and are worth tracking. The first is **dualism**: from its antecedents in Egypt's Maat set against *isfet* (ch. 4) and the mirror-image inversion by which the *daevas* became demons in Iran and the *asuras* in India (ch. 6-7), to the twin Spirits of Yasna 30 (ch. 11), and on through Mani (ch. 27), the Gnostics (ch. 46) and the Cathars (ch. 61) to the Adversary (ch. 116) and the comparison in Chapter 168. The second is **Mithra and the solstice**, running from the Vedic Mitra, god of the compact and partner of Varuna (ch. 6-7), and the Mitanni treaty (ch. 6, 19), with Cumont's view that Chaldaean theology assimilated Mithra to the sun god Shamash (ch. 6), through 25 December (ch. 25) and Yalda (ch. 27) to Keshe's 21 December (ch. 153) and Chapter 171. The third is **the end of time** and the judgment of the dead: the Mesopotamian underworld with no judgment (ch. 3), the Egyptian weighing of the heart (ch. 4), the Chinvat Crossing and resurrection from the dry bones that Boyce places before Zarathushtra (ch. 6), Frashokereti (ch. 17), Jewish and Christian apocalyptic (ch. 31, 48), the Mahdi (ch. 74), the Taiping and Aum (ch. 102, 134), and the Singularity (ch. 165-166, 169). The fourth is **the altar and the throne**: the theme of Part 14, but present in nearly every chapter. It begins with Frazer's magicians who "developed into chiefs and kings" (ch. 1), the Sumerian King List, Ashur's "steward" and Hammurabi (ch. 3), the pharaoh as "Son of Ra" and the power of Amun's priests (ch. 4), Boyce's chariot warriors and their Indra (ch. 6), the *purohita* beside the Vedic king (ch. 7), and *khvarenah* and the disputed "temple-state" (ch. 8). It runs on from the Achaemenid inscriptions (ch. 14) to the Universal Council (ch. 152). The fifth is **the sacred drink**: soma and haoma as the central Indo-Iranian rite and the dispute over the plant (ch. 6, 8), the entheogen hypothesis at Eleusis (ch. 39), the Mithraic sacred meal and the Eucharist (ch. 22, 26), and the place that Keshe's and Heisman's technologies take as the medium of contact with the divine (ch. 166, 174).

Part I.

Foundations: Prehistory and the Indo-Iranian World

Chapter 1.

Method and Sources: How This Study Reads the Library

Every chapter of this study rests on two decisions: which sources to read, and how to read them. The comparative history of religions has argued over both since the nineteenth century. Its founders compared religions across continents in search of origins and laws of development. Their successors attacked those comparisons as speculation, as theology in disguise, or as products of empire. This chapter sets out that inheritance through the figures the library's sources keep returning to: Max Müller, Edward Tylor and James Frazer, Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, Mircea Eliade, and their critics. It then explains how the study treats insider and outsider accounts, primary and secondary sources, and arguments about dating and influence, and which shelves of the library it draws on. The thread that runs through the whole book, the relation between religion and power, turns out to be present in the discipline's own history.

A discipline born comparative: Müller and the philologists

The reference shelf credits Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900) with having "founded the scientific study of religion". It says he "advocated a comparative method that developed into comparative religion" [Wikipedia: Theories about religion]. He edited the Rigveda and directed the *Sacred Books of the East*. His best-known thesis was that mythology is "a disease of language": the gods began as words for natural forces, such as *Dyaus*, "shining", and those words later hardened into persons such as Zeus and Jupiter [Wikipedia: Max Müller]. Durkheim later classed this "naturism" with Tylor's animism as one of the two rival theories of his day. In his account, Müller's version held that "men adore cosmic forces" [Durkheim, Formele elementare ale vieții religioase, #83739].

The same article shows that the founder's scholarship was tied to politics. In 1868 he told the Secretary of State for India that "India has been conquered once, but India must be conquered again, and that second conquest should be a conquest by education." He hoped his Veda translation would show Indians "what the root is", which he called "the only way of uprooting all that has sprung from it during the last 3,000 years" [Wikipedia: Max Müller, "Views on India"]. The article adds that his views became "more nuanced" later in life. Levi Leonard Paine, another early comparativist, called the field "the latest and most productive field of investigation and discovery that historical science has opened" [Paine, Ethnic Trinities and Their Relation to the Christian Trinity, #55130].

Evolution and survival: Tylor and Frazer

Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), as the reference shelf summarises him, "defined religion as belief in spiritual beings". He traced that belief to dreams in which the dead seemed to appear, and he treated practices in modern societies that resembled "primitive" ones as "survivals" [Wikipedia: Theories about religion]. James George Frazer built on Tylor but separated magic from religion. "By religion, then, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life." He also proposed a sequence: "If an Age of Religion has thus everywhere, as I venture to surmise, been preceded by an Age of Magic, it is natural that we should enquire what causes have led mankind… to abandon magic" [Frazer, The Golden Bough, #65694].

Frazer also made power a subject of the discipline from the start. "In point of fact magicians appear to have often developed into chiefs and kings," he wrote, and he catalogued priest-kings and "religious capitals… ruled by pontiffs who wielded at once temporal and spiritual authority, like the popes of mediaeval Rome" [Frazer, #65694]. Juliette Wood, a folklorist, describes the shared framework of Tylor and Frazer as "strict rationally-based cultural progression", fed by "ethnological data… a by-product of imperial expansion". [Wood, "The concept of the Goddess", in Billington and Green (eds), The Concept of the Goddess, #50933, ch. 1].

Society, meaning and charisma: Durkheim and Weber

Durkheim rejected both naturism and animism. He argued that both "pose the problem in identical terms", building the notion of the divine on sensations produced by natural phenomena: the dream for the animists, cosmic events for the naturists [Durkheim, #83739]. His own definition, in the library's Romanian translation, describes religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is, separate, forbidden" [Durkheim, #83739]. The reference shelf gives the English form of its second half: beliefs and practices "which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them". [Wikipedia: Sociology of religion]. Durkheim also set a methodological limit that later critics used against Frazer: "Only what we know well can be usefully compared. By embracing all types of societies and civilisations, we no longer acquire the competence necessary to know any one of them" [Durkheim, #83739].

Max Weber has no work of his own in the library, so the study relies on the reference shelf for him. It reports that he used *Verstehen*, interpretation of the intention and context of action, and "argues for making sense of religious action on its own terms" and treats religion as an answer to the needs of theodicy and salvation [Wikipedia: Sociology of religion]. Charisma, in Weber's definition, is "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers". The sociologist Paul Joosse, quoted there, comments that "the locus of power is in the led" [Wikipedia: Charisma].

Eliade and his critics

Mircea Eliade (1907–1986), whose works the library holds in Romanian, French and English, argued for the autonomy of the sacred. "The sacred always manifests itself as a reality of a wholly different order from 'natural' realities," he wrote. He held that "from the most elementary hierophany… to the supreme hierophany there is no solution of continuity" [Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane, #88579]. The reference shelf records three criticisms: vagueness in his key concepts, "out-of-context comparisons" of the kind made by Frazer and Tylor, and a "pro-religious bias". It also records his public support for the Iron Guard in the

late 1930s, which came "under frequent criticism after World War II" [Wikipedia: Theories about religion; Wikipedia: Mircea Eliade].

The broader reaction came from fieldwork. E. E. Evans-Pritchard called Müller, Tylor and Durkheim "armchair anthropologists" and their theories "untestable speculation". Clifford Geertz "questioned the validity of abstracting a general theory of all religions" and defined religion as "a system of symbols" [Wikipedia: Theories about religion]. Chapter 2 applies these criticisms to prehistory. The positions are summarised below.

Scholar	What religion is	Method	Main criticism recorded in the sources
Müller	Response to nature; myth as "disease of language"	Philology, Vedic comparison	Speculative; tied to missionary and imperial aims
Tylor	Belief in spiritual beings	Evolutionary comparison, "survivals"	Armchair speculation
Frazer	Propitiation of superior powers, after magic	Global comparison	Unverifiable stages; imperial data
Durkheim	Unified system relative to sacred things, forming a moral community	Australian totemism as elementary case	Overgeneralised from totemism
Weber	Answer to theodicy and salvation; source of authority	Interpretive (*Verstehen*), historical cases	Not addressed in the library
Eliade	Manifestation of the sacred (hierophany)	Phenomenology, cross-cultural patterns	Vague, decontextualised, pro-religious bias

Insiders, outsiders and the grades of sources

The reference shelf lists " 'insider' versus 'outsider' perspectives (roughly corresponding to emic versus etic descriptions)" as a basic division among theories

of religion. It notes that the early theorists relied on reports by "missionaries, discoverers, and colonial civil servants" who looked at religion "from the inside" [Wikipedia: Theories about religion]. Moulton's account of the clash between the Parsi tradition and the comparative school is a concrete case (see ch. 6).

This study sorts its material into three grades: primary texts in translation (the Avesta, the Rigveda, scripture, inscriptions), scholarly secondary works (Boyce, Eliade, Durkheim, Wood), and insider or advocacy works, which are read as evidence of what their authors believe. Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma* is an insider's account of Freemasonry [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717]. Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor write openly as advocates of a Goddess religion [Sjöö and Mor, The Great Cosmic Mother, #51023]. The Keshe workshops are a founder's account of his own teaching [Keshe Foundation, KSW Summaries 1-393, #378714].

Dating and influence: how the arguments work

Two kinds of argument recur throughout the book. The first concerns dating. Eliade warns against confusing "the appearance of a belief with the date when it is first clearly attested". Applied strictly, he says, that rule would date German folktales to 1812–1822, the years the Grimm brothers published them [Eliade, Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase, #44122, ch. I §2]. The same problem lies behind the long dispute over Zarathustra's date (ch. 9). In that dispute a late manuscript does not prove a late doctrine, and an archaic doctrine does not prove an early manuscript.

The second concerns influence. A resemblance between two traditions can be explained by borrowing in one direction, borrowing in the other, a common source, or independent parallel development. George William Carter, writing on Zoroastrianism and Judaism, asks of post-exilic Jewish ideas: "How shall we explain it? In part by foreign influence." He concludes that "to this foreign contact… we probably are indebted for some of the loftiest and most spiritual conceptions, which came into Judaism and passed from Judaism into Christianity" [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114]. A footnote in the same work records that scholars such as Spiegel and Darmesteter held "a late origin" for some of the Iranian material [#55114]. If that dating is accepted, the direction of the argument changes. Werner Sundermann approaches the question through single, precisely traceable motifs, such as the demon Asmodaios in the Book of Tobit, rather than

general resemblances [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067]. Part 4 returns to the question in full (ch. 28-37).

The shelves and the thread of power

The library's file paths show the shelves the study draws on. Most of the scholarship (Boyce, Moulton, Carter, Durkheim, Eliade) sits under *Religion & Spirituality. Esoteric & Mysticism* holds Pike, Frazer and the Goddess literature, while *Mythology & Folklore*, *History* and *Paranormal & Conspiracy* supply the rest. The Keshe workshop transcripts, several hundred in number, are filed under *Plasma Science* [Keshe, KSW 361, #378073]. The offline reference shelf, chiefly the English and Romanian Wikipedia, supplies dates, names and mainstream summaries.

Power runs through the discipline itself. Frazer's magicians became kings and his pontiffs held "temporal and spiritual authority" [#65694]. Müller expected comparative scholarship to help in a "second conquest" of India [Wikipedia: Max Müller]. Weber located charismatic power "in the led" [Wikipedia: Charisma]. Wood argues that modern Goddess-studies turn a felt marginalisation of women into a historical "Ur-culture" [#50933, ch. 1]. The chapters that follow test such claims on the evidence, starting with prehistory (ch. 2) and the Indo-Iranian inheritance (ch. 6).

Key points

- The reference shelf credits Max Müller with founding the comparative study of religion. He explained myth as "a disease of language" and wrote of a "second conquest" of India.
- Tylor defined religion as belief in spiritual beings. Frazer placed an "Age of Magic" before an "Age of Religion" and held that magicians "often developed into chiefs and kings".
- Durkheim defined religion through sacred things and the moral community they create. Weber's charismatic authority places "the locus of power" "in the led".
- Eliade argued for the autonomy of the sacred. Evans-Pritchard, Geertz and others criticised grand comparison as armchair speculation.

- The study separates primary texts, scholarly works and insider or advocacy works, and attributes every claim to the author who makes it.
- Dating arguments must separate a belief's first attestation from its origin. Influence arguments must weigh borrowing, common source and parallel development.
- Religion and power, the study's thread, already runs through the discipline's own history.

Chapter 2.

Before Scripture: Prehistoric, Shamanic and Archaic Religion

The religions studied in this book come with texts, but religion is far older than writing. For tens of thousands of years before the Rigveda or the Gathas, people buried their dead, painted caves, carved figurines and raised monuments of stone. This chapter sets out what the library's sources say that evidence shows, where they disagree, and which theories of the origin of religion they bring to it. Two of its themes reappear in the Indo-Iranian inheritance: sacrifice as an exchange between hunter and prey, and the power of the dead (see ch. 6).

The problem of mute evidence

Mircea Eliade, whose *History of Religious Ideas* the library holds in Romanian translation, argues that the burden of proof lies with those who deny religion to early humans. If palaeanthropes were "complete humans", he writes, they had beliefs and rites, because "the experience of the sacred constitutes an element in the structure of consciousness". He traces the opposite view to the age of evolutionism, "when the analogies with the primates were being discovered". He is just as clear about what the evidence cannot show: "beliefs and ideas are not fossilisable." The documents are "numerous, but 'opaque' and little varied": bones, skulls, stone tools, red ochre, grave goods. Before the Aurignacian (c. 30,000 BCE), the tools "reveal nothing beyond their utilitarian value" [Eliade, Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase, #44122, ch. I §2].

To illustrate the gap, Eliade cites C. Reichel-Dolmatoff's account of a Kogi burial in Colombia in 1966. The shaman called the grave "the village of Death", "the ceremonial house of Death" and "the uterus", raised the body nine times to return it to the foetal state, and laid it with its head to the east. An archaeologist of the future, Eliade notes, would find only a skeleton, some stones and shells, and the symbolism would be "just as inaccessible" as that of a Palaeolithic grave

[#44122, ch. I §3]. The anthropologist Adam Kuper, quoted by the folklorist Juliette Wood, makes the same point about social forms: "There are no fossils of social organization" [Wood, "The concept of the Goddess", in Billington and Green (eds), The Concept of the Goddess, #50933, ch. 1].

Burials, ochre and bones

Eliade dates certain burials from the Mousterian (c. 70,000–50,000 BCE). He reads the strewing of red ochre, "a ritual substitute for blood, hence a 'symbol' of life", as evidence of belief in survival after death. The practice, he says, is found from Zhoukoudian to Tierra del Fuego. He cites the child at Teshik-Tash framed by a pair of wild-goat horns, the flint tools and ochre at La Chapelle-aux-Saints, and graves oriented to the east, which he links to the hope of a "re-birth" [#44122, ch. I §3]. He also records doubts: André Leroi-Gourhan found the evidence for personal grave goods "very debatable", and the reading of a Neanderthal skull at Monte Circeo as ritual cannibalism "was not unanimously accepted" [#44122, ch. I §3].

The cave-bear skulls of Drachenloch and other Alpine caves were for decades read as offerings to a Supreme Being or a Master of Animals, notably by Wilhelm Schmidt and W. Koppers. F. Ed. Koby argued that many such "deposits" were produced by chance and by the bears themselves, and Leroi-Gourhan agreed. Eliade finds the critique "convincing" but notes that the same arrangement recurs in niches more than a metre above the floor. He reports Johannes Maringer's conclusion that sacrifice is not attested in the Lower Palaeolithic, is ambiguous in the Middle, and appears "with more or less certainty" only in the late Palaeolithic [#44122, ch. I §4]. Eliade himself holds that among hunters killing the animal "is equivalent to a sacrifice in which hunter and victim are interchangeable". He also points to the belief that an animal can be reborn from its bones, which survives as late as Thor's goats and Ezekiel's valley of dry bones [#44122, ch. I §1, §4].

Painted caves and the shaman

The parietal art is limited to Spain, France and southern Italy, apart from one painted cave in the Urals. Its content, Eliade quotes Leroi-Gourhan, shows an "extraordinary unity" from c. 30,000 to 9,000 BCE. Because the paintings lie far

from the entrances, often in uninhabitable depths such as the six-metre shaft at Lascaux, scholars agree in treating the caves as sanctuaries [#44122, ch. I §5]. Interpretations differ. The "Great Sorcerer" of Trois-Frères was made famous by the Abbé Breuil's drawing, but Eliade notes that recent photographs do not show all the elements Breuil drew. The Lascaux shaft scene of a man lying before a wounded bison was read by Horst Kirchner as a shamanic séance, with the bird on a pole as the shaman's helping spirit. Leroi-Gourhan, by contrast, saw only a bird "symbolically equivalent" to its neighbours on the panel [#44122, ch. I §5–6].

Eliade concedes that he cannot judge Kirchner's thesis, yet holds that "the existence of a certain type of 'shamanism' in the Palaeolithic seems certain". His reason is that ecstatic experience, "as an original phenomenon, is constitutive of the human condition" [#44122, ch. I §5]. His monograph defines the phenomenon in its "least hazardous" form: "shamanism = technique of ecstasy" [Eliade, Șamanismul și tehnicile arhaice ale extazului, #48975]. The reference shelf records the later reaction. Ronald Hutton argued that Eliade ignored "varieties of native practitioner", oversimplified Siberian cosmology and was "intent on generalizations". Wendy Doniger, defending him, still placed his work "within a body of assumptions that we no longer accept" [Wikipedia: Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy].

The female figurines and the Mother Goddess debate

The so-called "Venus" figurines, a name Eliade calls "rather improper", range from south-western France to Lake Baikal. He gives most weight to the excavated house contexts at Gagarino, Mezin and Mal'ta, where female figures came only from the half of the dwelling reserved for women. He concludes that "it is impossible to specify the religious function of these figurines", although they probably represented "feminine sacrality". [#44122, ch. I §6]. For the Neolithic he reports James Mellaart's findings at Çatal Hüyük. The principal deity there is a goddess "presented under three aspects: young woman, mother giving birth to a child (or a bull), and old woman", and one shrine of about 6200 BCE held "four human skulls placed under bull heads fixed in the wall" [#44122, ch. II].

Advocates of a prehistoric Goddess religion read the same material as the record of a lost order. Monica Sjöö and Barbara Mor state that "at least forty shrines have been found in Çatal Hüyük, all of the Goddess". In the catalogue's summary, their book describes a Goddess religion "systematically suppressed by the rise of

patriarchal culture" [Sjöö and Mor, The Great Cosmic Mother, #51023, "Women's Culture and Religion in Neolithic Times"]. Juliette Wood sets out the critical case. Marija Gimbutas's theories are "central" to the literal Goddess position, she writes, and that position reproduces the evolutionary models of Tylor and Frazer: "in her universality and persistence, the Goddess resembles Frazer's Dying God, resuscitated once again and cross-dressed." The difference, Wood argues, is that change becomes "de-evolutionary", with the past as "a lost paradise" and the future as "a possible utopia". She separates this literal claim from metaphorical uses of the Goddess, to which critics have "no objection" [Wood, #50933, ch. 1].

Göbekli Tepe and the first monuments

Göbekli Tepe in south-eastern Turkey has altered the debate over whether religion followed or preceded farming. Yuval Noah Harari writes that its structures "are dated to about 9500 BC, and all available evidence indicates that they were built by hunter-gatherers". He infers that "the temple may have been built first, and that a village later grew up around it" [Harari, Sapiens, #62741, ch. 5 "History's Biggest Fraud"]. David Graeber and David Wengrow call the enclosures "massive". They deny that the site is an anomaly, citing "a great deal of evidence for monumental construction" among earlier hunter-gatherers. They also report that archaeologists "remain sceptical" of astronomical readings, since the buildings "may once have been roofed" and were often altered [Graeber and Wengrow, The Dawn of Everything, #87533, ch. 3].

The reference shelf reflects more recent fieldwork. It reports domestic structures, "extensive cereal processing" and cisterns. This "contrasts with a previous interpretation of the site as a sanctuary used by nomads". It concludes that "no definitive purpose has been determined" for the megaliths, popularly called the "world's first temple[s]" [Wikipedia: Göbekli Tepe]. Alternative authors in the library go further. J. Douglas Kenyon presents the site as "challenging conventional history in an unprecedented way" [Kenyon, Ghosts of Atlantis, #63645]. Andrew Collins and Gregory Little place it in an account of Denisovan "hybrid humans" and compare it with "Mound Builder beliefs" [Collins and Little, Denisovan Origins, #70740].

Megaliths and the cult of the dead

Eliade's chapter on the megaliths of Atlantic Europe distinguishes menhir, cromlech and dolmen. He describes the dolmens as "funerary monuments", some containing up to a hundred dead "of several generations of the same *gens*". While the farmers' houses were "modest and ephemeral", the "dwellings of the dead were built in stone". He reads this through an Indonesian myth, taken from Frazer, in which the first humans chose the banana over the stone and so received short lives. In death, he argues, the ancestors were "mystically associated with the blocks of stone" and became "powerful and indestructible like the rocks". This cult differs from Mesopotamian, Hittite, Hebrew and Greek views, in which the dead were "poor unhappy and powerless shades" [#44122, ch. V §34]. He also records a Neolithic cult of skulls, for example at Tell Ramad in Syria, where skull caps were found with the forehead painted red and the face over-modelled [#44122, ch. II].

Theories of the origin of religion

The prehistoric record has been read through every theory reviewed in chapter 1. Tylor traced religion to dreams of the dead. Müller traced it to awe before nature. Frazer placed magic before religion. Durkheim found the source of religion in society itself, symbolised by the clan's totem [Wikipedia: Theories about religion; Wikipedia: Sociology of religion]. Schmidt and Koppers read the bear skulls as proof that Palaeolithic hunters believed in a Supreme Being [#44122, ch. I §4]. Durkheim objected that both animism and naturism build the divine from sensations of natural phenomena [Durkheim, Formele elementare ale vieții religioase, #83739]. Eliade's own position is that *Homo faber* was also "*ludens, sapiens* and *religiosus*". Silence about Palaeolithic belief, he warns, would encourage the error that early minds did nothing but conserve technology [#44122, ch. I §2]. Alan Barnard's survey of current anthropology adds newer proposals, among them Barbara King's "recent theory of the origin of religion" [Barnard, Social Anthropology and Human Origins, #32713, ch. 6].

Evidence	Religious reading	Sceptical reading	Sources
Ochre burials, grave goods	Belief in survival, re-birth	Grave goods "very debatable"	Eliade; Leroi-Gourhan via Eliade

Evidence	Religious reading	Sceptical reading	Sources
Cave-bear skulls	Offerings to a Master of Animals	Chance and bear activity	Schmidt, Koppers; Koby, Leroi-Gourhan
Painted caves	Sanctuaries, shamanic séance	Symbolic system without readable events	Breuil, Kirchner; Leroi-Gourhan
Female figurines	Goddess, feminine sacrality	Function "impossible to specify"; Goddess as modern myth	Sjöö and Mor; Eliade; Wood
Göbekli Tepe	First temple, before farming	Settlement, purpose undetermined	Harari; Graeber and Wengrow; reference shelf
Megaliths	Ancestors made imperishable in stone	(no sceptical reading given in the sources used)	Eliade

Key points

- Eliade argues that early humans were "religiosus" but that "beliefs and ideas are not fossilisable". His Kogi example shows how much ritual meaning a grave can lose.
- Ochre and oriented burials are read as belief in survival. Grave goods, cannibalism and bear-skull "altars" are disputed, and Maringer finds sacrifice clearly attested only in the late Palaeolithic.
- The painted caves are generally treated as sanctuaries. The shamanic reading (Kirchner, Eliade) stands against Leroi-Gourhan's structural reading and Hutton's later critique of Eliade.
- The female figurines and Çatal Hüyük underpin the Mother Goddess thesis (Gimbutas, Sjöö and Mor). Wood argues it revives Frazer's evolutionism as a story of loss.
- Göbekli Tepe (c. 9500 BCE) is presented by Harari as a temple built before farming. Graeber and Wengrow deny it is an anomaly, and the reference shelf reports evidence of settlement and an undetermined purpose.
- Eliade reads the megaliths as a cult of powerful ancestors embodied in imperishable stone, unlike the powerless shades of the Near East and Greece.

- Origin theories (animism, naturism, magic, totemism, a Supreme Being, the sacred as a structure of consciousness) all claim the prehistoric record, and none is settled by it.

Chapter 3.

Mesopotamia: Gods, Temples and Kings

Long before the Indo-Iranian tribes reached the plateau (see ch. 6), the plain between the Tigris and the Euphrates had a religion of cities, temples and written theology. Its first evidence comes with writing, around 3500 BC. It ended only with the Christianisation of Mesopotamia in the first centuries AD. The reference shelf calls it "a consistent and coherent tradition" [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Later parts of this study return to it often: Cyrus took Babylon in 539 BC (ch. 14), Judah's exiles lived there (ch. 28–29), and Greeks and Romans learned "Chaldean" astrology from it. This chapter reports what the library's sources say about its gods, temples, myths, divination and sacred kingship.

The pantheon: An, Enlil, Enki, Inanna and Marduk

The reference shelf describes the religion as polytheistic and also henotheistic. Each city exalted its own patron: Enki at Eridu, Enlil at Nippur, Ishtar at Arbela, Ashur at Assur, Marduk at Babylon. K. Tallqvist counted about 2,400 divine names. The gods ate, drank and got drunk, but they were immortal and surrounded by a terrifying radiance (*melammu*). Jean Bottéro is quoted as holding that they were "high-up masters who had to be obeyed and feared, as opposed to loved and adored" [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion].

The sky god An (Anu) and Enlil, "a king of the gods and a controller of the world", stood at the top [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Paul Collins notes that a ruler proved his hold on the south by dedicating objects in Enlil's Ekur temple at Nippur. He also notes a myth in which Enlil gives Enki the *me*, "the fundamental components of life and culture, such as kingship and war". In Collins's account Enki, god of sweet water at Eridu "as early as 2500 BC", came to be seen as "the source of divine knowledge that had, at the very

beginning of time, established civilization, which was understood as the rule of kings" [Collins, The Sumerians, #64812]. Jeremy Black and Anthony Green add that Enki "was thought to have occupied the abzu", the underground fresh water, "since before the creation of mankind" [Black and Green, Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, #70458]. Inanna/Ishtar, goddess of sex and war, was a deity for whom "nothing is prohibited". Her cult could include frenzied dancing and ritual crossing of gender boundaries [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion].

Sumerian	Akkadian	Domain	Chief city	Astral form
An	Anu	sky, supreme authority	Uruk	"Path of Anu" stars
Enlil	Enlil (Assyria later equates Ashur with him)	king of gods	Nippur	"Path of Enlil" stars
Enki	Ea	fresh water, wisdom, magic	Eridu	"Path of Ea" stars
Inanna	Ishtar	love, war	Uruk, Arbela	Venus
Nanna	Sin	moon	Ur	Moon
Utu	Shamash	sun, justice	—	Sun
—	Marduk	Babylon's god, later king of gods	Babylon	Jupiter

Sources: Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion; Wikipedia: Babylonian astrology; Black and Green, #70458; Constantin Daniel, Gândirea asiro-babiloniană în texte, #25445 (Eanna as "the temple in the city of Uruk of Anu and Ishtar").

Houses of the gods: temples, priests and economy

According to the reference shelf, the temple was literally the god's house. The god lived in a cult statue whose mouth was "opened" (*pet pî*) and "washed" (*mes pî*) so that it could see and eat. The statue was dressed and given two banquets a day behind a curtain. In theory the king led the cult. Below him served exorcists (*āšipu*, *mašmašu*), lamentation priests (*kalû*), singers and diviners (*bārû*) [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Walter Krauss describes the same roles. The *kalu* chanted laments, the *baru* "interpreted the will of the god",

the *shailu* ("the one who asks") had to discover the worshipper's sin, and the *ashipu* and *mashmashu* recited spells against demons [Krauss, Civilizaţia Asiro-Babiloniană, #23933].

How much of the economy the temples controlled is a debated question in its own right. Collins recounts that in the 1920s Anton Deimel studied about 1,700 tablets from the temple of the goddess Baba at Lagash. Deimel "concluded that all of the cultivable land in the state, as well as its workforce, had belonged to the temple." Collins presents this "temple-state" idea, along with the "hydraulic state", as one of the influential models of early Sumerian government [Collins, #64812, "Temple-states and hydraulic states"]. The building hymn of Gudea that he quotes states the ideology plainly: the ruler drives the temple's foundation pegs "so deep they could take counsel with Enki" [Collins, #64812].

Enuma Elish and the rise of Marduk

Enūma Eliš ("When on high") runs to about a thousand lines on seven tablets. The reference shelf calls it "the only complete surviving account of ancient near eastern cosmology". At first only Apsu and Tiamat exist, "their waters commingling as a single body". Ea kills Apsu, and Marduk is born inside him. When Tiamat makes war, the gods accept Marduk as their champion, and the price they pay is supremacy over them all. Marduk shoots Tiamat through the heart and splits her body into sky and earth. He sets the stars and the calendar and orders Babylon and Esagila built. Humanity is made from the blood of the rebel Kingu so that men "would serve the gods" [Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš]. Black and Green note the variants. In *Atra-hasis* clay is mixed with a slain god's blood, while in the Epic of Creation man is made "apparently… solely from the blood of a slain god, Qingu" [Black and Green, #70458].

The date of the epic matters politically, and it is disputed. Most scholars now place it under the Second Dynasty of Isin, after Nebuchadnezzar I brought Marduk's statue back from Elam. Stephanie Dalley "still proposes" an Old Babylonian date. Late Assyrian copies replace Marduk with Ashur [Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš]. Black and Green add that from about 1300 BC the Assyrians tried to identify Ashur with Enlil, "an effort to cast him as the chief of gods" [Black and Green, #70458, "Assur"]. In both cases the god of the ruling city takes over the cosmogony.

Gilgamesh, the flood and the land of no return

Black and Green summarise how the Epic of Gilgamesh ends. The flood hero Utnapishti cannot grant immortality, but he "is still able to offer restored youth" through a plant. Gilgamesh loses the plant and goes home to Uruk "despondent". A twelfth tablet adapts the Sumerian *Gilgamesh, Enkidu and the Nether World* [Black and Green, #70458, "Gilgameš"]. Irving Finkel writes that the flood story "surfaces in three distinct cuneiform incarnations, one in Sumerian, two in Akkadian" [Finkel, The Ark Before Noah, #87636]. Black and Green state that "from Mesopotamia the myth of the universal Flood spread to Ugarit, and to Palestine, where it was incorporated into the Hebrew Book of Genesis," and possibly into the Greek flood myths [Black and Green, #70458, "Flood"].

The afterlife was bleak. On the reference shelf's account all the dead went to the underworld (Arallû, Ganzer, Irkallu) "irrespective of social status or the actions performed during their lifetime". The *Descent of Ishtar* says of them that "dust is their food and clay their nourishment" [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Black and Green add that the ghost (*gidim*) needed regular funerary offerings. Unfed, it could "become restless and liable to haunt the living". Those who had died violently might "return and 'seize' living persons" [Black and Green, #70458]. These sources describe no judgment of the dead, unlike the Indo-Iranian bridge (ch. 6) and the Egyptian weighing of the heart (ch. 4).

Reading the gods' will: divination and astrology

The gods were thought to have fixed destinies in advance, and humans could read them. The methods were oil on water, the entrails of sacrificial animals (extispicy), birds, dreams and the sky [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Black and Green illustrate an Old Babylonian clay model of a sheep's liver inscribed with omens, "probably used as an aid in teaching divination" [Black and Green, #70458]. Markham Geller describes the liver literature as "highly specialized explanatory texts", built on the omen formula "if you perform an extispicy (liver examination) and…" [Geller, Ancient Babylonian Medicine, #69076].

Astrology used the same logic. The reference shelf dates scholarly celestial divination from about 1800 BC. It cites the series *Enūma Anu Enlil*, some 7,000 omens on 70 tablets, and says that early astrology was "solely mundane": its concern was the king and the land. The planets were gods: Jupiter was Marduk, Venus Ishtar, Saturn Ninurta, Mercury Nabu and Mars Nergal. A bad omen could

be diverted onto a substitute. One scholar writes to Esarhaddon about an eclipse: "As a substitute for the king, I will cut through a dike… No one will know about it." Ulla Koch-Westenholz is quoted as arguing that the system "shares some of the defining traits of modern science" [Wikipedia: Babylonian astrology]. Geller shows the court politics of the craft. The scholar Marduk-šāpik-zēri, applying for a royal post, shows off by reinterpreting a bad celestial omen in the king's favour [Geller, #69076, "The Politics of Medicine"].

Kingship by divine appointment: from the King List to Hammurabi

The Sumerian King List opens with *nam-lugal*, "kingship". It runs from antediluvian reigns of thousands of years, through the flood, to kingship passing from city to city. The reference shelf calls it a composition "likely created and redacted to legitimize the claims to power" of rival city-states [Wikipedia: Sumerian King List]. In early Assyria the title "king" belonged to the god Ashur, and the human ruler was "steward of Assur". In the Neo-Assyrian empire the king was "not a god" but "the chief servant of the chief god" [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion].

Hammurabi (c. 1792–1750 BC) put the doctrine on stone. His stele shows him before Shamash, god of justice. In its prologue he says the gods gave him rule "to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak". The same article records that he built his power by "military prowess, diplomacy, and treachery". The laws apply the *lex talionis* and grade penalties by class. Assyriologists disagree about what the stele is: legislation, a record of royal verdicts, or, following F. R. Kraus, a scholarly treatise of the "list science" type, like the omen series. Owen Jenkins remarked on "an astonishing absence… of all theological or even ceremonial law" in it [Wikipedia: Code of Hammurabi]. The reference shelf is also inconsistent about Marduk's rank in this period. One article says Hammurabi raised Marduk "to a position of supremacy alongside Anu and Enlil". Another says that Marduk was then only a mediator between the great gods and the king [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion; Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš].

The Babylonian legacy: Judaism and later esotericism

Comparison with the Bible began as soon as George Smith published the Nineveh flood tablets in the 1870s [Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš]. The *Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* records that Friedrich Delitzsch "argued that Old Testament religion was heavily dependent on the Babylonian culture". It also notes that "the first nine chapters of Genesis—from creation to the Flood—have Mesopotamian parallels" [Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies, #363277]. Finkel holds that "the story of the Flood in the Bible came into Hebrew from an older story in Babylonian cuneiform". He sees the infants Moses and Sargon in their coracles as "a similar borrowing", and he finds Talmudic word-play paralleling devices "long established in the native Babylonian academies" [Finkel, #87636]. Michael Heiser reads the relationship as polemic. In his account the biblical writers "saw Babylonian knowledge as having demonic origins", tied to the antediluvian sages (*apkallu*) [Heiser, The Unseen Realm, #61791].

The esoteric line ran through astrology and the sages. Berossus, a priest of Bel in the third century BC, passed the creation myth and the fish-sage Oannes to the Greeks [Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš]. Egyptian Hermetic literature "informs the oldest Hellenistic writings on Greco-Babylonian astrology" [Wikipedia: Hermes Trismegistus] (ch. 4, ch. 45). Manichaeism later absorbed "local Mesopotamian religion" [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Modern alternative authors in the library read the myths literally. Zecharia Sitchin treats the Anunnaki as a real dynasty in which "Marduk challenged the grant of Sumer and Akkad… to the offspring of Enlil and claimed the right to… Bab-Ili (Babylon)" [Sitchin, When Time Began, #75551]. He also argues that the Babylonians rewrote the Sumerian creation epic, replacing Ninurta's name with Marduk's [Sitchin, A douăsprezecea planetă, #25283]. The catalogue summary of Gerald Clark's book describes it as extending this into a claim that the Anunnaki engineered humans as slave labour [Clark, The Anunnaki of Nibiru, #71252]. None of the Assyriological works cited above takes this view.

Key points

- Mesopotamian religion was urban and henotheistic. An, Enlil and Enki led the early pantheon, and Marduk and Ashur rose with Babylonian and

Assyrian power [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion; Collins, #64812].

- The temple was the god's house and the statue its living presence. Exorcists, lamenters and diviners served it [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion; Krauss, #23933]. Deimel's "temple-state" is one influential model of temple economy [Collins, #64812].
- *Enūma Eliš* makes Marduk king by conquest and makes humanity from a rebel god's blood to serve the gods. Its date is disputed (Isin II for most scholars, Old Babylonian for Dalley) [Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš].
- Black and Green and Finkel trace the flood story from Sumerian and Akkadian versions into Genesis [#70458; #87636].
- All the dead shared one dim underworld, with no judgment described; unfed ghosts could haunt the living [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion; #70458].
- Extispicy and celestial omens were state sciences. The planet-gods and substitute rituals passed into later astrology [Wikipedia: Babylonian astrology; Geller, #69076].
- Kings ruled as servants chosen by the gods. Hammurabi's prologue says so, though his laws themselves contain almost no theology [Wikipedia: Code of Hammurabi].
- The legacy runs from Delitzsch's dependence thesis and Finkel's borrowing argument to Hermetic astrology and Sitchin's Anunnaki [#363277; #87636; #75551].

Chapter 4.

Egypt: Maat, Pharaoh and the Afterlife

Mesopotamia (ch. 3) gave the ancient world a pessimistic picture of the dead and kings who ruled as servants of the gods. Egypt gave it the reverse: a king who was himself divine, a cosmic order the king had to uphold, and an afterlife that, from the Middle Kingdom on, the sources describe as open to anyone who passed the judgment of Osiris. Several threads of this study start here. Atenism is often called the first monotheism and has been linked to Moses. Egyptian priests show how temple wealth turns into political power. Thoth and Isis came back as Hermes Trismegistus and the goddess of the Roman mysteries (ch. 43, ch. 45). This chapter reports what the library's sources say on each of these, and where they disagree.

Many creations: Heliopolis, Memphis and Hermopolis

Anthony Mercatante states the basic fact: "The Egyptians did not have one widely accepted creation myth but many explanations that were often in conflict with one another." These were "interpreted by the priests at the centers of worship, such as Hermopolis, Heliopolis, Memphis, and Busiris". In some versions, he notes, "life is generated from the god's masturbation" [Mercatante, Who's Who in Egyptian Mythology, #72968, "Creation Myths"]. The reference shelf identifies the shared elements: the lifeless waters of Nu, a primeval mound (*benben*) that rose from them, probably modelled on land emerging after the Nile flood, and the sun rising from the mound. It treats the city theologies as partly "competing theologies" and partly "different aspects of the process of creation" [Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian creation myths].

Centre	Creator	Mode of creation	Divine group
Heliopolis (Iunu)	Atum, linked with Ra	self-generation; masturbation, "sneezing" and "spitting" produce Shu and Tefnut	Ennead: Atum, Shu, Tefnut, Geb, Nut, Osiris, Isis, Set, Nephthys
Memphis	Ptah, the craftsman god	"intellectual creation by the Word and the Mind": the heart conceives, the tongue names	Ptah's thought produces Atum and the Ennead
Hermopolis (Khemenu)	the Ogdoad	four male-female pairs embody the primeval water; their union raises the mound	Nu/Naunet, Huh/Hauhet, Kek/Kauket, Amun/Amaunet
Thebes	Amun	hidden force behind all things; a goose's call breaks the silence	all gods "merely aspects of Amun"

Source: Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian creation myths.

The Memphite version is the one later readers single out, because it makes creation an act of speech. The Theban version made Amun supreme. Amun had been the "hidden" member of the Ogdoad, and his rise built the theological case for the Karnak priesthood that appears later in this chapter [Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian creation myths].

Ra, Osiris, Isis, Horus and Set

Heliopolis supplied the divine family. Stephan Weaver summarises it: "Nut gave birth to Set, Osiris, Isis and Nephthys—the prominent Egyptian gods," and Osiris was "the ruler of the afterlife, the dead and the Underworld" [Weaver, Egyptian Mythology, #66942]. Mercatante writes that Osiris was "originally the personification of the flooding of the Nile". Because he "conquered death… the Egyptians believed his followers would also conquer death". In "every funeral inscription from the Pyramid Texts to the Roman Period, what happened to Osiris was

also done for the deceased, since the deceased was identified with Osiris during the rites" [Mercatante, #72968, "Osiris"]. The reference shelf says the murder of Osiris by Set and the victory of Horus "provided a powerful narrative linking the ancient Egyptian ideology of kingship with the creation of the cosmos" [Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian creation myths].

The struggle over the throne is presented as a lawsuit. In Mercatante's retelling Set proposes to settle it by single combat. Thoth objects: "That is not the way to settle a legal matter. We must follow what is just. How can we make Set the king when he is only the brother of Osiris," while Horus is the son [Mercatante, #72968, "Horus"]. Graham Hancock notes that the most detailed account of the Osiris myth is Plutarch's. In it Osiris brings civilisation, ends cannibalism and human sacrifice, and gives the first code of laws before he is killed [Hancock, Amprentele Zeilor, #14120]. Albert Pike reads the same myth astronomically, as the sun's yearly journey and the struggle of light and darkness [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, "Egyptian Priesthood Influence and the Osiris Legend"].

Maat and the god-king

The reference shelf defines Maat as "truth, balance, law, morality, and justice", and as a goddess. Her opposite was *isfet*, chaos and violence. Ra rose from the mound only "after he set his daughter Maat in place of isfet", and kings "inherited the duty to ensure Maat remained in place". From the Fifth Dynasty the vizier in charge of justice was called "Priest of Maat". The Instruction of Ptahhotep says: "Maat is good and its worth is lasting… he who transgresses its ordinances is punished" [Wikipedia: Maat].

The Routledge introduction *The Egyptians* (catalogued without an author) describes how kingship was staged. The king took the titles "King of Upper and Lower Egypt" and "Son of Ra". His crook, flail and sceptres were "imbued with divine power (heqa) like the person of the king himself". He "acted as judge like the sun-god Ra-Harakhty". A royal text boasts that the king knows "that secret speech which the Eastern Souls speak". The book comments that what matters is "that the king knows who they are and what they speak, and others do not" [The Egyptians: An Introduction, #363364]. The same book shows that the ideology could be reinvented. After the First Intermediate Period, "Mentjuhotep II reinvented the cult of divine kingship". It also cautions that "despite the divine associations of the kingship, there was, of course, a potential for conflict within the palace" [#363364].

Texts for eternity and the judgment of the dead

The funerary literature grew from royal privilege into common use. *The Egyptians* traces the "Coffin Texts" of the Middle Kingdom to the "exclusively kingly 'Pyramid Texts' ", alongside newer material and royal patronage of Osiris's cult at Abydos. It reports that "some" call this the "democratization" of funerary beliefs, after which "everyone could look forward to the afterlife" [#363364]. Morris Bierbrier defines the Book of the Dead as "a type of papyrus often buried with the dead from the New Kingdom onward". He writes that its "most important spell concerned the ritual of the weighing of the heart against the feather of maat to determine the deceased's worthiness to enter the afterlife" [Bierbrier, Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, #366518, "Book of the Dead"]. Elsewhere he describes the deceased passing gates "guarded by demons" to reach the court of Osiris [#366518]. To enjoy the afterlife, Bierbrier adds, the dead "had to have led a virtuous life according to the precepts of maat" [#366518].

Mercatante describes the Negative Confession as "a confession of sins not committed", made in the Hall of Judgment before Osiris and forty-two assessors, before the heart was weighed [Mercatante, #72968, "Negative Confession"]. Weaver quotes the formula: "I have not stolen. I have not slain men and women… I have not uttered lies… I have not committed adultery. I have made none to weep" [Weaver, #66942, ch. IV]. Mesopotamia sent every soul to the same dust. In Egypt the outcome of death depended on conduct measured against Maat, an idea this study meets again in the Zoroastrian Chinvat bridge (ch. 17).

Amun's priests and the Amarna revolution

Temples were economic powers. The reference shelf states that major temples "became major landholders, their activities supported by vast estates worked by thousands of people". The estates remained "ultimately under royal control". Eighteenth Dynasty conquests in Nubia, Canaan and Syria poured wealth into Amun's temple at Karnak [Wikipedia: Atenism]. Bierbrier describes the high priest of Amun as holder of the chief religious office at Karnak. He writes that the temple's "great wealth led to an increase of political power for the high priest of Amun, under whom Thebes became virtually independent during the Third Intermediate Period" [Bierbrier, #366518, "High Priest of Amun"]. *The Egyptians* is more cautious. The usual picture of late Ramesside decline and priestly power

"is probably exaggerated", because the surviving evidence comes almost entirely from Thebes. The end of the Twentieth Dynasty "has been attributed to a military coup or to the power of the Amun priesthood" [#363364].

Amenhotep IV broke with all this around 1353 BC. The reference shelf describes the Aten, the sun disc, rising first to equality and then to exclusive worship. The king took the name Akhenaten, explained there as "effective spirit (akh) of the Aten" (Bob Brier renders it "beneficial to the Aten") [Wikipedia: Atenism; Brier, Tutankhamun and the Tomb That Changed the World, #70198]. He built a new capital, Akhet-aten (Amarna). For about twenty years Atenism was the state religion, and "the worship of other gods" was met "with persecution" [Wikipedia: Atenism]. Its classification is disputed: "monotheistic or monolatristic", or, for some Egyptologists, henotheistic [Wikipedia: Atenism]. The reference shelf also reports that Akhenaten stressed Maat so heavily that "the king's contemporaries viewed [it] as intolerance and fanaticism" [Wikipedia: Maat]. *The Egyptians* quotes the Great Hymn: "You (the sun god) made the earth as you wished… you set every man in his place" [#363364]. The reaction was severe. Mercatante writes that "there is some speculation that the king and his wife were murdered" and that "all known records of his reign were destroyed by the priests of Amen-Ra". Tutankhaten changed his name to Tutankhamun [Mercatante, #72968, "Aten"].

Moses the Egyptian: Freud, Assmann and their critics

Akhenaten's god soon became attached to Moses. Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) argued that Moses was an Egyptian noble and follower of Akhenaten, "the world's earliest recorded monotheist". On Freud's account Moses led his followers out of Egypt and was killed by them. His Aten was later fused with "a volcano god called Yahweh" of Midian, and the repressed guilt of the murder was passed down the generations [Wikipedia: Moses and Monotheism]. S. Heller traces the book to Freud's "internal conflict regarding his Jewish heritage", in which the people "murdered their Egyptian founder" [Heller, Freud A to Z, #27057]. The critics are blunt. W. F. Albright found it "totally devoid of serious historical method". Donald Redford concluded that "there is little or no evidence to support the notion that Akhenaten was a progenitor of the full-blown monotheism that we find in the Bible" [Wikipedia: Moses and Monotheism].

Jan Assmann's *Moses the Egyptian* (1997) takes a different approach, which he calls "mnemohistory": it studies how the past was remembered, not what

happened. Assmann distinguishes Akhenaten's monotheism, which "remained rooted within the cosmos", from the transcendent theology of Moses. He calls the latter an anti-Egyptian "counter-religion", and he names the "Mosaic distinction" by which a group treats every religion outside it as illegitimate. He answered his critics in *The Price of Monotheism* (2003) [Wikipedia: Moses the Egyptian]. On the Great Hymn's resemblance to Psalm 104, the reference shelf records the disagreement. James Breasted believed the psalm was inspired by the hymn. Miriam Lichtheim judged that "a specific literary interdependence is not probable". Assmann and Redford argue for some Egyptian influence [Wikipedia: Great Hymn to the Aten]. Alternative authors go further. Gary Greenberg argues that "Moses was the chief priest of the Aten cult" who fled at Akhenaten's death, and dates the Exodus to 1315 BC [Greenberg, The Moses Mystery, #81927]. Laurence Gardner writes of "Moses (Akhenaten)" as one person [Gardner, Lost Secrets of the Sacred Ark, #77979]. Ch. 29 examines these theories against the archaeology of the Exodus.

The legacy: Hermes, Isis and the mysteries

The reference shelf records that Greeks in Ptolemaic Egypt identified Thoth with Hermes and worshipped the two as one at Hermopolis, the old seat of the Ogdoad. The "Thrice-Great" Hermes became the supposed author of the Hermetica. Renaissance writers believed he was a contemporary of Moses until Isaac Casaubon showed in 1614 that the writings "must postdate the advent of Christianity" [Wikipedia: Hermes Trismegistus] (see ch. 45). Masonic esotericism made Egypt the origin of all initiation. Pike claims that the Egyptian priesthood "utilized the Mysteries to claim divine authority". He holds that the Osiris legend, "adopted by the Hebrews", underlies Freemasonry's Master's Degree, and that rites in Phrygia and Greece were "direct copies of the Egyptian mysteries" [Pike, #378717, "Egyptian Priesthood Influence and the Osiris Legend"; "Egyptian Mysteries as the Model for Global Initiation Rites"]. These are Pike's claims as the library's guide summarises them. The Isis and Serapis cults of the Roman world, the documented heirs of Egyptian religion abroad, are treated in ch. 43.

Key points

- Egypt had several city cosmogonies: Heliopolis (Atum and the Ennead), Memphis (Ptah creating by heart and tongue), Hermopolis (the Ogdoad)

and Thebes (hidden Amun). Mercatante calls them "often in conflict" [#72968; Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian creation myths].

- The Osiris–Isis–Horus–Set myth tied kingship to cosmic order. Each dead person was ritually identified with Osiris [Mercatante, #72968; Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian creation myths].
- Maat, the order set in place of *isfet*, was the king's duty to uphold. The pharaoh was "Son of Ra", judge like the sun god, and the sole knower of secret speech [Wikipedia: Maat; The Egyptians, #363364].
- Funerary texts moved from royal Pyramid Texts to Coffin Texts and the Book of the Dead. The weighing of the heart against Maat's feather made the afterlife depend on conduct [#363364; Bierbrier, #366518].
- Temple wealth gave the high priests of Amun political power, up to Theban near-independence. *The Egyptians* considers the usual picture of priestly power "probably exaggerated" [Bierbrier, #366518; #363364].
- Akhenaten's Atenism was a short-lived state cult with persecution of other gods. It is classed variously as monotheistic, monolatrous or henotheistic, and was erased after his death [Wikipedia: Atenism; Mercatante, #72968].
- Freud made Moses an Atenist Egyptian, and Assmann recast the question as cultural memory and the "Mosaic distinction". Albright and Redford reject the historical link, and Greenberg and Gardner push it further [Wikipedia: Moses and Monotheism; Wikipedia: Moses the Egyptian; #81927; #77979].
- Thoth became Hermes Trismegistus, and Pike claimed that Egyptian mysteries were the model for all initiation [Wikipedia: Hermes Trismegistus; Pike, #378717].

Chapter 5.

Canaan, Ugarit and the Levant

The narrow strip of land between the Mediterranean and the Syrian desert produced the gods with whom the Hebrew Bible argues most bitterly: Baal, Asherah, Molech and the "host of heaven". For most of the modern era these gods were known almost only through that polemic. The discovery of the clay tablets of Ugarit in the twentieth century changed this. Canaanite religion could now be read in its own words, and the Bible's relationship to it turned out to involve inheritance as much as rejection. This chapter sets out what the library's sources say about the Canaanite pantheon and its myths, about worship at the high places and the practice of sacrifice, about Phoenician and Punic religion (including the long dispute over child sacrifice), and about the Canaanite roots of Israelite religion, which Part 4 takes up again.

Sources: from biblical polemic to the Ugaritic tablets

The reference shelf stresses how fragmentary the evidence is. Before Levantine archaeology began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, knowledge of Canaanite religion "came mostly from the accounts of the Hebrew Bible," supplemented by late Greek writers such as Philo of Byblos. "By far the most substantial source" is the Ugaritic corpus from Ras Shamra in Syria, dated around 1275 BCE, whose more than three hundred texts include myths, prayers, deity lists, lists of sacrifices and ritual prescriptions. The tablets have been found "since 1928" in a city destroyed c. 1200 BCE [Wikipedia: Canaanite religion].

John Day describes what the tablets changed in biblical scholarship. Nineteenth-century scholars such as W. Robertson Smith took the biblical plural "the Baals" to mean many separate local gods. "The Ugaritic texts revealed, however, that Baal, 'the Lord', was the epithet (though becoming a personal name) of one great cosmic deity, Hadad." The local Baals were therefore "simply local manifestations of this particular deity". [Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, #86469, ch. 3 "Yahweh versus Baal"].

The pantheon: El, Asherah, Baal, Anat and Mot

Mark S. Smith reads the Ugaritic pantheon as a divine household of four tiers. "In the top two tiers of the pantheon are the divine parents and their children; the bottom two tiers of the pantheon consist of deities working in the divine household." In his words, "El and Athirat are the divine royal parents of the pantheon, and the dominant deities are generally regarded as their royal children" [Smith, The Origins of Biblical Monotheism, #64008]. Athirat is the Ugaritic form of the biblical Asherah. The reference survey uses the same scheme, listing Anat as "virgin goddess of war and strife" and Mot as god of death, "not worshiped or given offerings" [Wikipedia: Canaanite religion].

Day describes El as "wholly benevolent in nature" in the Ugaritic texts, a "supreme deity, creator god and one possessed of wisdom". Baal, by contrast, "was not only subordinate to the chief god El, but was also considered to be dead in the underworld for half the year" [Day, #86469, ch. 1 "Yahweh and El"]. The sources disagree about Anat. The *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* reports that "the predominant view among scholars is that the Ugaritic texts present Anat as a 'fertility goddess' who is the consort of the god Baal" [van der Toorn, Becking and van der Horst (eds.), Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, #66939]. A contributor to Carl Olson's anthology argues against that view. Anath is "a principal wife of Baal" and apparently bears him a bull, "despite this she is called virgin Anath", and the fertility reading is one "the texts we have do not lend much credence to" [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988]. Merlin Stone, writing from the goddess-religion perspective, treats Asherah as part of a religion of the Goddess "from the most ancient times" and suggests that El at Ugarit had ties to "the Indo-European storm god" [Stone, When God Was a Woman, #87745]. That second claim is hers and is not found in the specialist works cited here.

The Baal Cycle: sea, palace and death

The central myth is summarised on the reference shelf. Baal defeats Yam with two magic weapons, "Driver" and "Chaser", made by the craftsman Kothar-wa-Khasis. With the help of Athirat and Anat he persuades El to allow him a palace. From it he challenges Mot, who swallows him and takes him down to the underworld. Drought follows. Anat then "attacks Mot with a knife, grinds him up

into pieces, and scatters him far and wide", and Baal returns to bring rain again [Wikipedia: Canaanite religion].

Smith traces the long life of this imagery in Israelite texts. Mot, "Death", appears in the Ugaritic texts and in Isaiah 25:8, Hosea 13:14 and as late as Revelation 21:4. "Biblical Mot is personified as a demon, in the manner of Ugaritic Mot." Anat's battle, with its heaps of corpses and its "gleaning", has parallels in biblical scenes of divine war (Joel 3:13; Revelation 14:14-20) [Smith, The Early History of God, #67245, ch. 2]. The *Dictionary* adds that the later Byblian cult of Adonis "probably" continued "the worship of a Phoenician Baal, conceived as a dying and rising god" [DDD, #66939].

High places, sacrifice and cult personnel

The reference shelf describes the *bamah*, the "high place", as a "simple hilltop installation" with platforms, altars, standing stones (*matzevah*) and an Asherah pole. Such sites appear "in the early Bronze Age at the latest". In Israel, ordinary offerings were made at the town's bamah until Hezekiah and Josiah proscribed them [Wikipedia: High place].

Smith shows the depth of the shared sacrificial vocabulary. Biblical *zebaḥ*, "slaughtered offering", appears in the cults of both Yahweh and Baal and has Ugaritic and Phoenician cognates. The same holds for *šĕlāmîm*, *neder* (vow), *minḥāh* and *kālîl* (holocaust). The priest, *kōhēn*, and the "chief priest" have Ugaritic counterparts (*rb khnm*, KTU 1.6 VI 55-56), and the "tent of meeting" "derived from Canaanite prototypes". Smith concludes that "this incidence of highly specialized sacrificial terms suggests a common West Semitic heritage" [Smith, The Early History of God, #67245, ch. 1 "Israel's 'Canaanite' Heritage"].

Phoenicia and Carthage: Melqart, Tanit and the molk debate

In the first millennium the Phoenician cities carried this religion across the Mediterranean. Melqart, whose name Edward Lipiński derives from *mlk qrt*, "King of the City", was the tutelary god of Tyre. He was identified with Heracles "from at least the sixth century BCE". Josephus, following Menander, records

that King Hiram I was "the first to celebrate the awakening (egersis) of Heracles", which the article reads as possible evidence of a dying-and-rising god [Wikipedia: Melqart]. The sources disagree about which god Jezebel promoted in Samaria. The reference article proposes Melqart, while Day argues that the Phoenician Baal opposed by Elijah was Baal-Shamem, "Baal of the heavens", "rather than Melqart, contrary to what is often asserted" [Day, #86469, ch. 3]. At Carthage the leading divine pair were Baal Hammon and Tanit. From the fifth century BCE Tanit was titled "Face of Baal", and the reference shelf notes that her origin (Libyan, or linked to Anat, Astarte or Asherah) is debated [Wikipedia: Punic religion].

The hardest question concerns the *tophet* precincts. At Carthage, over 20,000 urns of cremated infants and animals were buried beneath stelae to Baal Hammon and Tanit [Wikipedia: Carthage tophet]. The scholarly positions divide as follows.

Position	Holder (as reported)	Argument
Hebrew *molek* is a sacrifice, not a god	Otto Eissfeldt (1935), followed by Dussaud, Albright, Stager and Wolff	Punic *molk* is a sacrificial term [Day, #86469, ch. 7]
Molech is a god; the sacrifice was real	John Day; G. C. Heider	Verbs used with *molek* (*'br*, *ntn*, *śrp*) take divine names; Lev. 20:5 speaks of "playing the harlot after" Molech; Punic, classical and Egyptian evidence [Day, #86469, ch. 7]
Biblical *mlk* was offered in Yahweh's name	Mark S. Smith	Jeremiah's denials (7:31; 19:5; 32:35) "may suggest that offering this sacrifice in Yahweh's name occurred" [Smith, #67245, ch. 5]
Child sacrifice was rare or a hostile slander	M. Fantar, G. Picard, H. Benichou-Safar	Irregular burial rates; "anti-Carthaginian propaganda" [Smith, #67245, ch. 5]
Tophet as infant cemetery	Some historians	Classical authors were not eyewitnesses and contradict one another [Wikipedia: Punic religion]

Position	Holder (as reported)	Argument
Sacrifice occurred, often as a last resort	Paolo Xella	Infant numbers are too low for natural mortality; vows; animal substitution [Wikipedia: Punic religion]

Day concludes that "there is overwhelming evidence that the Old Testament itself implies that children were offered up in fiery human sacrifice to Molech". He reads *he'ebir ba'esh* as "he offered up in the fire" rather than "passed through". He identifies Molech with a Canaanite underworld god *mlk*, attested in Ugaritic serpent charms and equated with Nergal in Mesopotamian god lists, whose name the biblical writers distorted with the vowels of *bōšet*, "shame" [Day, #86469, ch. 7 "Molech"]. Smith disagrees on this link. He finds that Ugaritic *mlk* "appears to be unrelated to either child sacrifice or the Phoenician sacrificial term *mlk*", and he calls Heider's connection of the two "conjectural" [Smith, #67245, ch. 5 "The mlk Sacrifice"]. Smith reports Stager's figures from Carthage, where human-only burials rose from 62.5 percent of urns in the seventh and sixth centuries to 88 percent in the fourth, and the objections to them. He concludes that "despite several issues raised and scholarly demurrals, some level of child sacrifice evidently took place at Carthage". For Israel he is more cautious: child sacrifice "may not have been a common religious practice", and he finds "no historical evidence outside biblical polemic" for it at the high places [Smith, #67245, ch. 5 "The mlk Sacrifice"].

Canaanite roots of Israelite religion

Both main sources hold that Israel grew out of Canaan rather than arriving from outside it. Smith writes that "early Israelite culture cannot be separated easily from the culture of 'Canaan' ". Script, pottery and burial show continuity, and "Canaanite and Hebrew so closely overlap that the ability to distinguish them is premised more on historical information than linguistic criteria". Some scholars therefore define Israelite culture "as a subset of Canaanite culture". Smith names only two features that appear non-Canaanite: Yahweh's southern sanctuary (Sinai, Paran, Teiman) and the Exodus tradition [Smith, The Early History of God, #67245, ch. 1].

Day takes a different view of the gods themselves. Against Cross and de Moor, he holds that "El and Yahweh were originally distinct deities that became amalgamated". On his reading Yahweh came from the south, in Midian or Edom, and the Bible "has no qualms in equating Yahweh with El", while it opposes Baal vehemently [Day, #86469, ch. 1]. In his conclusion he argues that "Yahweh was very much the chief god in ancient Israel, and the other gods and goddesses would have been worshipped as part of his pantheon". The inscriptions reading "Yahweh and his Asherah" at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom "imply a close relationship (doubtless that of god and consort)" with the goddess. Absolute monotheism "was first given explicit expression by the prophet Deutero-Isaiah". Day also follows a Canaanite "afterglow" into later texts: El's seventy sons became the guardian angels of the nations, *zbl b'l* ("Baal the Prince") became Beelzebul, and El and Baal stand behind the Ancient of Days and the "one like a son of man" in Daniel 7 [Day, #86469, ch. 8]. Part 4 (ch. 28-37) follows this transformation in detail.

Key points

- Canaanite religion was known mainly from biblical polemic until the Ugaritic tablets (found from 1928; texts c. 1275 BCE) supplied its own myths, lists and rituals [Wikipedia: Canaanite religion; Day, #86469].
- Smith describes the Ugaritic pantheon as a four-tier divine household headed by El and Athirat/Asherah. Day stresses El's benevolence and Baal's subordinate, half-yearly dying status [#64008; #86469].
- The Baal Cycle (Baal against Yam, Baal swallowed by Mot, Anat's revenge, the return of rain) supplied imagery that Smith traces through biblical texts down to Revelation [#67245].
- Sacrificial terms, priestly titles and the high-place cult were shared West Semitic inheritance, which Smith takes as evidence of a common heritage [#67245; Wikipedia: High place].
- Phoenician religion centred on city gods such as Melqart of Tyre and, at Carthage, Baal Hammon and Tanit. The sources disagree on whether Jezebel's Baal was Melqart or Baal-Shamem.
- The molk/child sacrifice question remains contested: Eissfeldt's "sacrifice-term" view, Day's "god Molech" view, Smith's "in Yahweh's name" reading, and the propaganda and cemetery hypotheses all appear in the sources.
- Smith and Day agree that Israelite religion emerged from a Canaanite matrix. Day holds that Yahweh absorbed El, rejected Baal, was paired

with Asherah in popular cult, and reached explicit monotheism only with Deutero-Isaiah.

Chapter 6.

The Indo-Iranian Inheritance: Steppe Religion Before Zarathushtra

The religions this study follows, from the Gathas and Roman Mithraism to the dualist currents that reached Judaism, Christianity, Islam and later esoteric movements, have one of their deepest roots in a religion that left no scripture of its own. This is the shared faith of the Indo-Iranians, the people whose descendants composed both the Sanskrit Rigveda and the Avestan hymns. It survives only through comparison: what the Vedic and Avestan traditions hold in common is taken to be older than either. This chapter sets out what the library's sources reconstruct of that religion, how they reconstruct it, and where they disagree. It covers the homeland and social order of the Indo-Iranians, their gods and cosmic law, their ritual and their beliefs about death, and the split by which the "gods" of one branch became the "demons" of the other.

Method: reconstructing a religion without a book

Mary Boyce, in her introduction to *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, argues that Zarathushtra was a "reformer" only in the sense that every founder is one: "he evidently accepted much of the faith into which he was born, but transformed it through a new teaching." In her account the Old Iranian faith "can be reconstructed partly from comparison with closely related Vedic texts, and the Brahmanic tradition of India, partly through what clearly seem to be pre-Zoroastrian elements surviving in Zarathushtra's own revelation, or revived subsequently by his followers" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, "1.2.1 The means of reconstructing the Old Iranian religion"].

James Hope Moulton, lecturing at Oxford in 1912, recalls that this comparative method once had to be fought for. One school "insisted on the infallibility of the native Iranian traditional interpretation of the Avesta," while the comparative school "retaliated with an equally thoroughgoing contempt." By his day the two had been reconciled, and "a knowledge of the religion of the Veda is acknowledged to be an essential tool of our science just as much as that of the expositions handed down to us by the Parsi guardians of the Avesta" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture I "The Sources"]. The reference shelf's survey of the field defines the result as "an archaic offshoot of Indo-European religion". It lists among its reconstructed concepts a universal force (*rta*/*asha*), a sacred plant and drink (*soma*/*haoma*), and gods of social order such as Mitra/Mithra and Bhaga/Baga [Wikipedia: Proto-Indo-Iranian religion].

Homeland, migration and the "Aryan" name

The sources agree that a single Indo-Iranian people existed. They differ on where it lived and when it divided. Boyce writes that "from perhaps 5000 to about 2000 B.C. they formed a single group, a branch of the Indo-European family," with a homeland apparently on "the south Russian steppes, east of the Volga," where they lived as pastoralists "herding their cattle on foot." The Avestan term for the community, *pasu-vira*, "cattle-(and)-men," reflects that life [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.2 The physical and social background"]. Modern reference articles tie the proto-Indo-Iranian period to the Sintashta culture (c. 2050–1900 BCE) and date the split into Indic and Iranian branches to the second millennium BCE [Wikipedia: Proto-Indo-Iranian religion; Wikipedia: Indo-Iranians].

Moulton uses "Aryan" in what he calls "its proper sense, as the name given to themselves by the easternmost branch of the Indo-European family". He reports Eduard Meyer's view that their original homeland lay "in the steppes north of the Black Sea and the Caspian," from which they moved through Turan to the Oxus and Jaxartes and divided in Eastern Iran. In a footnote added after the lectures he revises his own dating, suggesting that the migration "was considerably later" than he first thought, and cites Hirt, who places the first migrations "as late as 1600-1800 B.C." [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture I].

The earliest datable trace is not Indian or Iranian at all. It is a Hittite–Mitanni treaty from Boghazköy in Anatolia, which invokes Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the Nasatya twins. The reference shelf dates it c. 1380 BC, between Suppiluliuma I

and Shattiwaza, and reports a present scholarly consensus that the Mitanni vocabulary is specifically Indo-Aryan rather than Iranian [Wikipedia: Indo-Aryan superstrate in Mitanni]. Moulton was already cautious in 1912. He noted that "the names answer only to Indian phonology or that of the undivided Aryans," quoted A. V. W. Jackson's warning that the mention "may be merely a direct reference to Indian deities without having any immediate connexion with Iran," and judged that the Aryan character of the Mitanni names, if accepted, "probably means no more than that the chieftains were Aryan, the people whom they conquered being indigenous" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture I]. Chapter 19 treats the treaty and its Mitra in detail.

Cosmic order and the gods

At the centre of the reconstructed religion stands an abstract principle. In Boyce's account the open steppe "encouraged the Indo-Iranians to conceive their gods as cosmic, not local, divinities." They also "apprehended a universal principle of what ought to be, Av. 'asha', Skt. 'rta', variously translated as 'order, righteousness, truth'," which "should govern everything, from the workings of nature to human laws and all human conduct" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.3 The Old Iranian gods"].

Boyce describes a three-tier pantheon that mirrors tribal society. A "great triad of ethical divinities, the Lords, Av. 'Ahura', Skt. 'Asura' " guarded *asha*. The greatest was "Ahura Mazda, 'Lord of Wisdom'," whom Boyce sees as "the divine counterpart of the wise high priest" and who in the Rigveda is "reverenced, it appears, simply as 'the Asura'." Below him stood "the lesser Ahuras, Varuna and Mithra (Vedic Mitra), guardians respectively of the oath and covenant," counterparts of just tribal chieftains. Varuna's name "was not uttered in the known Iranian tradition, in which he is invoked only by cult epithets." Apart from these stood Indra, "the divine counterpart of the warrior, an amoral being, invoked for strength, courage, and success in battle." There were also "nature" and "cult" gods, and evil was attributed "mainly to earth-bound devils, sorcerers and the like" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.3"].

The reference survey frames the same relationships more cautiously. It says only that Varuna "does not directly correspond to Ahura Mazda but shares several traits in common with him," as king among the gods and as arbiter of law

upholding *rta* as Ahura Mazda upholds *asha* [Wikipedia: Proto-Indo-Iranian religion]. Boyce's identification of Ahura Mazda with the Rigveda's "Asura" is therefore one scholarly position, not a settled equation.

Moulton gives Mithra a split origin. He accepts the philological evidence collected by Antoine Meillet that the common noun *mitra-/mithra-* meant "friendship" or "friend" in Sanskrit and "compact" in Avestan. Both languages share a compound, Sanskrit *mitradruh* and Avestan *mithro-druj*, meaning "breaking a compact." He also notes Meillet's point that "there are ... no elemental traits in the one Vedic hymn (Rv. iii. 59) addressed to Mitra." He doubts, however, that the sky-and-light Mithra of the Yashts grew out of the ethical one. He suggests instead "a fusion of two originally independent conceptions," and floats a "venturesome suggestion" that the god of the firmament owes something to the Assyrian *metru*, "rain," which would explain Mithra's early pairing with the water-goddess Anahita [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II "Before Zarathushtra"]. He reports Franz Cumont's view that Chaldaean theology later assimilated "Mithra to Shamash the god of the Sun," which is why "in the Roman Mysteries Mithra was commonly called Sol invictus, though he was really distinct from the Sun" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II, quoting Cumont].

Ritual without temples: fire, haoma and sacrifice

Boyce writes that "as wandering pastoralists the Indo-Iranians had no temples, and worshipped mainly in the open, without altars or images." The central rite was the pressing of an intoxicant, "Av. haoma, Skt. soma," which, "when consecrated, was offered to the gods and drunk ritually by the worshippers." There were also daily offerings to "the hearth fire and sources of pure water" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.4 Worship in the Old Iranian religion"]. Moulton supports the absence of images with Greek testimony. Herodotus said the Persians used "neither images nor shrines nor altars," and Clement of Alexandria quotes Deinon that they "sacrificed in the open air, accounting fire and water the only images of gods." According to Moulton, only Artaxerxes II introduced an image of Anahita [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II].

In Moulton's reconstruction the sacrifice was not burnt. Flesh was laid "on a carpet of tender grass, to which the deity is invited to come down, the messenger being the sacred Fire". The Iranian fire *Atar* (compare Latin *atrium*) belongs with Hestia and Vesta as a hearth-god. He argues that the Indian branch changed

this inheritance: in a hot climate fire became Agni, "the consumer of the sacrifice," while in India the old word for welcome warmth, *tapas*, came to mean "penance" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II]. On the drink he writes that Vedic soma, once fermented, "produced a drink strongly alcoholic in character", whereas the Haoma of the later cult, as he describes it, is "a magical, mystical drink which to all appearance is harmless enough"; for the Gathic period he stresses that Zarathushtra "sternly ignores the name of the divine drink." He reads Yasna 48.10, "When wilt thou smite the pollution of this intoxicant?", and Yasna 32.14 as the prophet's condemnation of "orgiastic nocturnal sacrifices, held perhaps in honour of Mithra, Slayer of the Bull." In his view such rites were "among the grievances of quiet Mazdayasnian agriculturists against the Daevayasnian nomads." He suggests that a similar connection between Haoma and Mithra "might be recognised" in Ctesias's report that the Persian king got drunk on the one day of the year when sacrifice was made to Mithra [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II].

Boyce also reconstructs the cosmology that the ritual enacted. The gods made the world in seven stages: a stone sky, water, earth, a single plant, the Uniquely-created Bull, the first Man (*Gayo-maretan*, "Mortal Life"), and fire. Then the gods "made a triple sacrifice: they crushed the plant, and slew the bull and man," which set the cycle of life and death in motion. Each daily *yasna* re-sanctified all seven creations, from the earth of the precinct to "man in the officiating priest" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.6 Cosmogonical and cosmological ideas"].

Death, the bridge and paradise

Boyce reconstructs an inherited belief about the dead in some detail. Ancestor cult involved offerings of food and clothing for the souls (*urvan*) in "the underworld kingdom of the dead, thought to be ruled over by Yima (Skt. Yama), the first king to reign on earth and the first man to die." The way there led to the "Chinvat Crossing," possibly a ford "guarded by supernatural dogs." The mighty dead were venerated as *fravashis*. Before the Indo-Iranians separated, she argues, a hope arose that some souls could ascend to "Paradise, the 'House of Song'." Linked to it was "the concept of resurrection of the body," recreated "from the dry bones a year or so after death." As this hope spread, the Chinvat Crossing became a bridge between earth and heaven, where "a beautiful girl appeared to lead [the soul] upward to the gods" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.5 Ancestor worship and beliefs about the hereafter"]. If Boyce is right, the bridge,

the judgment and bodily resurrection, which later chapters trace into Judaism, Christianity and Islam, existed in seed before Zarathushtra.

Daevas and Asuras: the great inversion

The most striking divergence is a mirror-image reversal of divine terms. In the Avesta the *daevas*, cognate with Sanskrit *deva*, "god," are demons. Indra, "the greatest of the devas from Vedic literature, is often listed in Zoroastrian texts as one of the greatest of the evil forces, sometimes second only to Angra Mainyu himself." The Zoroastrian confession makes rejection of the daevas a defining mark of the faithful. Conversely, the Vedic *asuras* became malevolent while the Avestan *ahuras* remained benevolent [Wikipedia: Proto-Indo-Iranian religion].

Boyce links this to social and political change. Around 1700 BC the steppe peoples adopted bronze and the horse-drawn war chariot. A new class of *rathaeshtars*, "chariot-standers," abandoned herding and "sought wealth and fame for themselves by fighting and raiding in the service of warrior chiefs." This "Iranian Heroic Age" brought "bloodshed and lawlessness," and "the warrior heroes are likely to have directed their worship to the amoral Indra, rather than to the ethical Ahuras." The priest-poets eventually "made all the great gods chariot riders, and even gave Mithra a mace of bronze" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.7 Social and religious developments before the time of the prophet"]. On Boyce's reading, religion and power are bound together from the earliest reconstructable stage: the god a group favours follows its place in the social order.

Moulton offers a further explanation for part of the inversion. He judges that some late Avestan lists naming Indra among the demons may represent reimported "anti-Hindu polemic" rather than primitive inheritance [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II, note on Indra and Saurva].

Element	Vedic India	Old Iran / Avesta	Source
Cosmic order	*rta*	*asha*	Boyce, #55116
Ethical "Lords"	*Asura* (Varuna, Mitra) — later demonised	*Ahura* (Ahura Mazda, Mithra) — exalted	Boyce, #55116; Wikipedia

Element	Vedic India	Old Iran / Avesta	Source
"Gods"	*deva* (Indra chief) — exalted	*daeva* (Indra) — demonised	Wikipedia: Proto-Indo-Iranian religion
Sacred drink	*soma*	*haoma* (attacked in Gathas, restored in Yashts)	Moulton, #55011
Fire	Agni, consumer of sacrifice	Atar, hearth-fire and messenger	Moulton, #55011
King of the dead	Yama	Yima	Boyce, #55116
Contract-god	Mitra ("friend")	Mithra ("compact")	Moulton, #55011

Key points

- In the library's sources, the pre-Zoroastrian religion is known only by comparing the Rigveda with the Avesta. Moulton (1912) and Boyce (1984) both treat this method as indispensable [#55011; #55116].
- Boyce places the undivided Indo-Iranians on the south Russian steppes c. 5000–2000 BC as cattle-herders. Moulton and Hirt favour a later migration. Modern reference articles link the period to the Sintashta culture.
- The central principle was cosmic order (*asha*/*rta*), guarded according to Boyce by three ethical "Lords": Ahura Mazda, Mithra and Varuna. The reference survey treats the Ahura Mazda–Varuna equation as partial.
- Mithra began as a god of the compact. Moulton suggests his sky-and-light features may come from a separate strand, possibly with Semitic input, and Cumont links his solar identity to Chaldaean assimilation with Shamash.
- Worship had no temples or images. It centred on the hearth fire, water offerings and the intoxicating *haoma*/*soma*, which Moulton reads Zarathushtra as condemning.
- Boyce places the Chinvat bridge, the hope of paradise and bodily resurrection in the period before Zarathushtra.
- The daeva/asura inversion made the "gods" of one branch the "demons" of the other. Boyce ties this to the rise of a chariot-warrior class devoted to Indra, an early case of religion following political and social power.
- The Mitanni treaty (c. 1380 BC) is the earliest dated attestation of Mitra and Varuna. Current consensus, as the reference shelf reports it, reads

it as Indo-Aryan rather than Iranian, and Moulton was already cautious about it in 1912.

Chapter 7.

The Vedic Gods: Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the Asura-Deva Split

Chapter 6 reconstructed the shared Indo-Iranian religion from what the Rigveda and the Avesta hold in common. This chapter looks at the Indian branch. The Rigveda is the oldest surviving witness to the gods whom Zarathushtra's tradition would partly exalt and partly demonise, and its Mitra is the direct ancestor of the Iranian Mithra followed in Part 3. The chapter covers the text and its dating, the sovereign pair Mitra and Varuna and their guardianship of *ṛta*, Indra and the Vritra myth, Agni and the sacrifice, the Mitanni gods, the Indian side of the asura/deva reversal, Georges Dumézil's tripartite theory and its critics, and the priestly specialists who carried the cult.

The Rigveda: text and date

The reference shelf describes the Rigveda Samhita as "a collection of 10 books (maṇḍalas) with 1,028 hymns (sūktas) in about 10,600 verses". Books 2 to 9 are the oldest, while Books 1 and 10 add speculative and philosophical material. The bulk was composed "in the northwestern region of the Indian subcontinent … most likely between c. 1500 and 1000 BCE", although a wider range of c. 1900–1200 BCE has also been proposed. Jamison and Brereton call the dating "a matter of contention". The Mitanni documents (c. 1450–1350 BCE) offer a reasonable reference point, since they name Varuna, Mitra and Indra [Wikipedia: Rigveda].

A. A. Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology* (1897) ranks the gods by how many hymns are addressed to them and how often they are named. His five classes run from "1) Indra, Agni, Soma; 2) Asvins, Maruts, Varuna" down to "5) Yama, Parjanya". He cautions that this statistical standard is only a partial guide [Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, #54250].

Mitra, Varuna and the cosmic order (*ṛta*)

Julien Ries, summarising Dumézil's *Mitra-Varuna* (1940) and *Les dieux souverains*, presents the pair as two faces of one sovereignty. Dumézil, as Ries quotes him in Italian translation (rendered here in English), concludes that "from one end to the other of the course followed by Mitra and Varuna as great sovereign gods, from pre-Vedic times to the end of Vedic times, their union has kept the same principle: a typology of contrast". He adds at once that this contrast is "neither hostility nor rivalry", and certainly not a dualism of a good and an evil god: "contrast but not opposition". Their shared task is "to maintain and preserve the *ṛta*, that is, the Order of the cosmos": they administer the division of heaven and earth and the alternation of day and night and of the seasons, and keep watch "through acts of espionage" over human societies. Mitra is "benevolent, friendly, reassuring", near to humans and linked with day, fire and the priestly function. Varuna is "the lord of bonds", "a binder god" who catches the guilty in his nooses and holds the *māyā*, the power to shape forms. He is linked with night, water and kingship [Ries, Il culto di Mithra, #38276, "Mitra e Varuṇa, dei sovrani"]. Ries also reports Abel Bergaigne's gloss of *ṛta* as "what is fitted" [Ries, #38276].

Curtis Heckaman's study of *ṛta* adds verse evidence. Mitra and Varuna are "ṛta-jāta" (born of *ṛta*) at RV 7.66.13, and "they govern all the world with the *ṛta* and set the sun firmly in its place" (RV 5.63.7). Heckaman argues, however, that "a precise definition cannot, and need not, be found for *ṛta*". He links the term with images of wide, safe space, of pathways free from harm, of light, and of the sound that dispels evil [Heckaman, Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of Ṛta in the Rig Veda, #51915]. Mircea Eliade, in the Romanian edition of his *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, distinguishes Varuna's kingship from Indra's: Varuna is king "not by his own force (*svarāj*, like Indra) but is king *samrāj*, universal" (RV 7.82.8). For Eliade, "the Avestan Mithra-Ahura thus answers to the Vedic binomial Mitra-Varuna" [Eliade, Morfologia religiilor, #46394; translated from Romanian].

Indra, Vritra and Agni

Macdonell calls Indra "the favourite national god of the Vedic Indians", a deity "conceived by the militant Vedic Indian as a sovereign of the warrior type". Because the Vritra myth is so central, "the chief and specific epithet of Indra is

Vṛtrahan, Vṛtra-slayer", applied "about 70 times to him in the RV". In the hymns Indra, strengthened by soma, "cleaves the mountain, making the streams flow or taking the cows", lets loose the torrents and "slew the Dānava" [Macdonell, #54250, §22 "Indra"]. In early Vedic usage, the reference shelf adds, the good asuras (Adityas) were "led by Varuna" and the malevolent Danavas "led by Vritra" [Wikipedia: Asura].

Agni, the sacrificial fire, ranks with Indra and Soma among "the three most" prominent gods by Macdonell's count. He is the household god "whom the forefathers kindled", whose "ancestral friendship … with his worshipper" is "more typical of him than of any other deity". Above all he is the divine priest: "a Hotṛ appointed by men and by gods", "the most eminent of Hotṛs", also an *adhvaryu* and a *brahman*, combining "the functions … of the various" priests [Macdonell, #54250, §35 "Agni"]. Chapter 6 gives Moulton's contrast between the Indian Agni, "the consumer of the sacrifice", and the Iranian hearth-fire Atar.

The Mitanni gods and the asura/deva reversal

The Hittite–Mitanni treaty of c. 1380 BCE, which invokes Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the Nasatyas, is treated in chapter 6 and again in chapter 19. Here it matters as evidence that the Vedic sovereign pair and the warrior god were already invoked together, as treaty witnesses, in Syria in the fourteenth century BCE.

On the Indian side of the reversal, the reference shelf reports a "wide consensus" that Sanskrit *asura* and Avestan *ahura* both derive from Proto-Indo-Iranian *háSura*, "lord". In the oldest layer of the Rigveda, "Agni, Indra and other gods are also called Asura", whereas in later Vedic texts the asuras became "enemy of the gods". Bhargava's count gives 88 occurrences in the Rigveda: Indra is called asura in nine hymns, Agni has twelve such descriptions, Varuna ten and Mitra eight [Wikipedia: Asura]. Macdonell notes that the epithet is linked with Varuna, "alone or accompanied by Mitra, oftener than with Indra and Agni". He observes that "in both religions the term asura = ahura is applied to the highest gods, who in both are conceived as mighty kings", and he relates this to "the supreme position, as a moral ruler, of Ahura Mazda in the Avesta and of Varuna in the Veda" [Macdonell, #54250].

Nanditha Krishna's *Book of Demons* surveys the explanations. She attributes the first "religious split" theory to Haug: as asuras "became disliked demons in India and Devas the gods, the reverse was happening in Iran, where the Daevas

… had become demons and Ahura the supreme god". She reports Hale's conclusion that an asura was "chosen to be a lord or Asura by his people", and his observation that the word does not appear in the plural in the early books. She also presents a historical hypothesis that the term fell from favour when "the cruel and violent Assurs" drove out the Mitanni, so that "the term Asura alone became impolitic" while Varuna and the other gods kept their standing [Krishna, The Book of Demons, #50894]. These are reported explanations, not settled results.

Term or figure	Early Rigveda	Late Vedic India	Avesta (see ch. 6, 9-18)
asura / *ahura*	"lord": Varuna, Mitra, Indra, Agni	demon, "enemy of the gods"	Ahura Mazda, the supreme god
deva / *daēva*	god	god	demon
Indra	warrior king, Vritra-slayer	king of the devas	listed among demons
Mitra / Mithra	friendly sovereign of contract	(not treated here)	god of the Mihr Yasht (Yasht 10)
ṛta / *aša*	cosmic order kept by Mitra-Varuna	(not treated here)	Asha, one of the entities around Ahura Mazda

Dumézil's tripartite ideology and its critics

The reference shelf summarises the trifunctional hypothesis. Proto-Indo-European ideology was organised around "the sacral, or sovereign, the martial, and the productive". Sovereignty itself was split into a "juridical and priestly" half and a "powerful, unpredictable" half, which is the Mitra/Varuna pair. In India the pattern is matched with the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. Dumézil "later described them chiefly as an ideological pattern" rather than a reconstruction of three original classes [Wikipedia: Trifunctional hypothesis]. Ries reports Dumézil's most consequential application, to Iran. On this account Zarathushtra turned the functional gods into abstract entities around Ahura Mazda: Vohu Manah replaced Mitra, Asha replaced Varuna, Khshathra replaced Indra, and Haurvatat and Ameretat replaced the Nasatyas [Ries, #38276, "Il dio Mithra nella riforma di Zarathustra, secondo Dumézil"]. Part 2 examines this claim.

The critics, as the reference article lists them, are numerous. Jan Gonda raised "methodological objections" to Dumézil's use of Indo-Iranian evidence. John Brough argued that similar three-way divisions occur outside Indo-European societies. Cristiano Grottanelli held that projecting trifunctionalism onto early cultures "is mistaken". Arnaldo Momigliano faulted the method's isolation of "survivals" from the rest of Roman religion. Carlo Ginzburg, Momigliano and Bruce Lincoln connected the work with Dumézil's "sympathies for the political right" or with a projection of "modern hierarchical ideology" onto ancient material. Supporters include Benveniste, Sergent and Lebedynsky [Wikipedia: Trifunctional hypothesis].

Sacrifice and the priestly classes

The *yajña* demanded specialists. In the reference shelf's account, the "older references uniformly indicate *hotṛ* as the presiding priest, with perhaps only the *adhvaryu* as his assistant in the earliest times". The developed Śrauta rite used four chief priests, each tied to a Veda: the *hotṛ* (Rigvedic recitation), the *adhvaryu* (the physical rite and Yajurvedic formulas), the *udgātṛ* (Samavedic chant, especially for soma) and the *brahman* (the overseer, later linked to the Atharvaveda). The patron, the *yajamāna*, became "only a sponsor", and this gave rise to the growing power of the *purohita*, the household priest of a king. The article notes that Vedic *hotar* corresponds to Avestan *zaotar* and *atharvan* to *āθrauuan*, which shows that the priestly titles are older than the split [Wikipedia: Vedic priesthood]. The class order itself is first stated in the Purusha Sukta (RV 10.90), where the four *varṇas* come from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the sacrificed cosmic Man. The reference article calls this "a relatively late addition", probably made "to accord theological sanction to an increasingly unequal Kuru polity" [Wikipedia: Purusha Sukta].

Key points

- The Rigveda (10 books, 1,028 hymns) was composed mostly c. 1500–1000 BCE in the north-west of the subcontinent. Its date is still debated, and the Mitanni texts offer an external anchor [Wikipedia: Rigveda].
- Mitra and Varuna form a contrasting but complementary sovereign pair who uphold *ṛta*: Mitra the friendly, contractual and priestly side, Varuna the binding, magical and royal side. This is Dumézil's reading as reported

by Ries [#38276]. Heckaman holds that *ṛta* resists any single definition [#51915].

- Macdonell calls Indra the Vedic "national god" and warrior-sovereign, whose defining deed is slaying Vritra. Agni is the divine priest and messenger of the sacrifice [#54250].
- *Asura* first meant "lord" and was applied to Varuna, Mitra, Indra and Agni. Later Indian usage made the asuras demons, the mirror image of Iran's exalted *ahura* and demonised *daēva*. Krishna reports competing explanations from Haug, Hale and a Mitanni-Assyrian hypothesis [#50894; Wikipedia: Asura].
- Dumézil's trifunctional ideology (sovereignty, force, fertility) shaped the study of these gods and of Zarathushtra's Amesha Spentas. It has been criticised on method by Gonda, Brough, Grottanelli and Momigliano, and on politics by Ginzburg and Lincoln.
- Vedic sacrifice was run by specialists (hotṛ, adhvaryu, udgātṛ, brahman). The patron became a sponsor and the purohita a power beside the king. The reference shelf reads the four-varṇa hierarchy of RV 10.90 as a late addition giving "theological sanction" to an unequal Kuru polity [Wikipedia: Purusha Sukta].

Chapter 8.

Soma, Haoma, Entheogens and Sacred Kingship

Chapter 6 described the pressing of *haoma*/*soma* as the central Indo-Iranian rite and noted that Zarathushtra seems to have condemned it (see ch. 6). This chapter takes up two questions left open there. The first is what the drink was. The library's sources propose fly-agaric, ephedra, Syrian rue (*Peganum harmala*), cannabis or a mixture, and they disagree on whether it produced visions at all. The second is political. In India and Iran the drink belonged to a ritual order that came to serve warriors and kings, while in Mesopotamia and Egypt the ruler stood between gods and people as chief sacrificer and keeper of cosmic order. Together they show control of ritual as an early foundation of religious power.

The problem of the plant

Both names derive from a Proto-Indo-Iranian **sauma*. The reference shelf describes the drink as "a concoction of multiple ingredients instead of one plant", but notes that "the primary botanical plant and active ingredient is debated." Current theories favour "either Ephedra, fly-agaric mushrooms, or Syrian rue". Ephedra is "the leading scholarly consensus", partly because it is "called som/hom/hum in South and Central Asian languages." Most identifications, the article warns, rest on "either linguistic evidence, comparative pharmacology, or reflected ritual use, but not all three." The Rigveda calls soma "a God for Gods" and ties it to Indra, who "appears to have [drunk it] before battle". For that reason both stimulants and visionary plants appear among the candidates [Wikipedia: Botanical identity of soma–haoma]. Living ritual does not settle the matter. South Indian Srauta Brahmins use *Cynanchum acidum*, and Zoroastrians use ephedra, which Luke A. Myers regards as a later

stand-in that replaced "the more controversial and psychoactive plant Peganum Harmala" [Myers, Gnostic Visions, #70923, Part II].

Wasson's fly-agaric

The modern debate begins with R. Gordon Wasson: "My candidate for the identity of Soma is *Amanita muscaria* … This is the first time that a mushroom has been proposed in the Soma quest. The fly-agaric is an inebriant but not alcoholic" [Wasson, Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality, #74742, ch. II "The Fly-Agaric of Eurasia"]. His chapter titles lay out the argument: "Soma Was Not Alcoholic", "The Roots, Leaves, Blossoms, Seed of Soma; Where Are They?", "Soma Grew in the Mountains", "The Two Forms of Soma" [Wasson, #74742, contents]. This contradicts Moulton, who described fermented soma as "strongly alcoholic in character" (see ch. 6).

The most distinctive part of Wasson's case concerns urine. He reads the verse "With those two Forms … O Soma, thou reignest over all things, O Pavamāna" as describing the pressed juice and a "Second Form: Taken in the urine of the person who has ingested the fly-agaric in the First Form", as Siberian users were reported to do. He argues that the Vedic commentators, "knowing nothing of the fly-agaric", misread it. He also cites Louis Renou's rendering of a line in which "lords with full bladders piss [Soma]" [Wasson, #74742, "The Two Forms of Soma"]. He sets out his conclusion as a conditional: *if* "Soma was the fly-agaric", then the *amrta* of the Aryans was "until only yesterday the divine inebriant still currently consumed by the shamans over vast reaches of Siberia" [Wasson, #74742].

The reference shelf records the objections. In 1971 John Brough preferred ephedrine as "a more plausible preparation for warriors about to go into battle than the fly-agaric, which is a depressant". Ilya Gershevitch replied in 1974 that small doses of fly-agaric are stimulating. J. P. Mallory treated Wasson's mountains and the missing plant parts as metaphor, and Terence McKenna proposed *Psilocybe cubensis* instead [Wikipedia: Botanical identity of soma–haoma]. Schultes, Hofmann and Rätsch leave the question open: it "is possible that Fly Agaric is identical to the Vedic wonder-drug Soma", yet "Today Ephedra (Ephedra gerardiana) is called somalata, 'soma plant' " [Schultes, Hofmann & Rätsch, Plants of the Gods, #84459, "The Chemistry of Fly Agaric"].

Ephedra versus the visionary hypotheses

The ephedra case rests on Parsi practice and on what the texts emphasise. Harry Falk (1989) argued that both soma and haoma "were said to enhance alertness and awareness". He found "nothing shamanistic or visionary either in early Vedic or in Old Iranian texts" and saw "no need to look for a plant other than Ephedra, the one plant used to this day by the Parsis." Jan Houben, summing up a Leiden workshop in 1999, held that ephedra's "status as a serious candidate … still stands." Viktor Sarianidi reported ephedra, poppy and cannabis residues at sites of the Bactria–Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC), but independent analyses could not confirm them [Wikipedia: Botanical identity of soma–haoma].

Myers takes the opposite view and follows David Flattery and Martin Schwartz. In his account ephedra "is a stimulant with no psychoactive properties". It replaced *Peganum harmala* "during or before the early Islamic era", and harmal was "the only plant known to grow in the region that contains psychoactive properties." Myers reports that, according to Pahlavi accounts, the original haoma "brought about a condition outwardly resembling sleep in which visions … were seen" and was "the primary source of revelation in the ancient Iranian religion". He compares Islamic-era lore about *isfand* (harmal) with Avestan haoma. Both were instituted by founding figures, endorsed by God, drove demons from the house and gave courage. He also reads the Hom Yasht line "May thy intoxications … not move me about as a cow's trembling" as describing harmal's effect on cattle [Myers, #70923, Part II, "Identification of Zoroastrian Haoma"]. The reference shelf adds that harmal, an MAO-inhibitor, makes an "ayahuasca" analogue impossible to exclude "a priori" [Wikipedia: Botanical identity of soma–haoma].

Mark S. Ferrara puts cannabis at the centre. He reports that Christian Rätsch, S. Mahdihassan, and Robert Clarke with Mark Merlin "argue that soma contained a mixture of Cannabis indica and Ephedra gerardiana". Whether fly-agaric was added or was itself soma, "we may never know." He is nonetheless certain that its ritual ingestion "was a means of inducing peak-experiences" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 1]. For Iran, he writes that "the exact constitution of the haoma formula remains murky". He says the spread of the Iranian word *bangha* shows that early Iranians knew "intoxication by hemp", and he states that Zoroaster "undertook visionary journeys, aided by cannabis" [Ferrara, #66945, ch. 2]. Falk, reading the same Iranian corpus, finds nothing visionary in it.

Candidate	Proponents in the library	Claimed effect	Main objection reported
Fly-agaric	Wasson #74742; Schultes et al. #84459 (as possible)	Inebriant; "two forms" incl. urine	Brough: depressant; Mallory: metaphor
Ephedra	Falk, Houben (Wikipedia); Parsi use	Stimulant, wakefulness	Myers #70923: later substitute
Peganum harmala	Flattery & Schwartz via Myers #70923	Visionary trance, revelation	Falk: texts not visionary
Cannabis + ephedra	Rätsch, Mahdihassan, Clarke & Merlin via Ferrara #66945	Peak-experience	BMAC residues unconfirmed

The drink, the warrior and the king

Whatever the plant was, the sources place the drink inside a hierarchy. In the Rigveda "Indra, Agni, Soma, Yama, and Varuṇa are all addressed as 'King' ". Earthly kings are "established" by Indra and "made victorious" by Soma, but they are "not viewed as divine". Only later, in the Mānava Dharmaśāstra, does the king become "in reality a god on earth" [Wikipedia: Monarchy in ancient India]. Ferrara describes a parallel social process. The Rigveda's rites "became the exclusive dispensation of powerful aristocrats (who used them to secure wealth, social prestige …)". He traces the caste order to this shift and reads the Atharva Veda as "a backlash against the aristocratic elitism of the Rig Veda cult" [Ferrara, #66945, ch. 1].

The Iranian counterpart is *khvarenah* (*farr*), "a mystical radiant force emanating from men chosen by God that confers upon them both divine right of kings and the cosmic capacity to do so justly". A king keeps it while he rules by *asha* and loses it when *druj* enters his heart. Yasht 19 names the "fortune of the kavis", and the tradition identifies *khvarenah* with Haoma in the legend of Zoroaster's birth. The reference shelf adds that Khomeini's supporters "drew upon the concept of Farr" [Wikipedia: Khvarenah]. At Behistun, Darius I credits his nineteen battles against rivals who "falsely proclaimed [themselves] king" to "the grace of Ahura

Mazda" [Wikipedia: Behistun inscription]. Part 2 (ch. 9–18) treats Achaemenid royal religion in detail.

The king as sacrificer in the river civilizations

According to the reference shelf, in many societies "kingship carried a sacral meaning and was identical with that of a high priest and judge". Its examples are Sargon of Akkad, "deputy of Ishtar", and Sumerian princes styled as shepherds. The same article notes that Frazer's "myth and ritual" theory "is disputed". It also cites the view that in India and Iran "it is royalty that is divine, not the king as an individual" [Wikipedia: Sacred king]. Paul Collins gives Mesopotamian cases. Gudea "built the house … high as a great mountain" for his god. Naram-Sin was so successful that "the people of Agade built a temple for him and he was named god of the city", and warfare "lay at the heart of the authority of the kings of Agade" [Collins, The Sumerians, #64812].

In Egypt, formal religion "centered on the pharaohs". They were "obligated to sustain the gods through rituals and offerings so that they could maintain Ma'at, the order of the cosmos, and repel Isfet". After unification "the cult of the divine pharaoh became the central focus of religious activity" [Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian religion]. Maat parallels *asha*/*rta*. Kings "inherited the duty to ensure Maat remained in place", and "an impious king could bring about famine" [Wikipedia: Maat].

The temple-state and the origins of religious power

Collins traces the "temple-state" idea. In the 1920s Anton Deimel studied about 1,700 tablets from the Baba temple at Tello and "concluded that all of the cultivable land in the state, as well as its workforce, had belonged to the temple". On this reading the king ran Ningirsu's temple and the queen ran Baba's, so that "all the people of Lagash were effectively slaves of the god". Collins calls this "a rather extreme interpretation." In the late 1950s Igor Diakonoff showed Deimel's calculations to be "erroneous". Temples owned estates "rather like medieval monasteries", but the palace and private households also held land. The related "hydraulic state" thesis of Karl Wittfogel's *Oriental Despotism* (1957) has fared no better: large irrigation works came "long after autocratic forms of government". Collins also reports Thorkild Jacobsen's "Primitive Democracy", in

which leaders chosen by assemblies "refused to relinquish power". He considers it probably wrong to discount the theory entirely, since royal claims "may have been as much an aspiration as a reality" [Collins, The Sumerians, #64812, "Temple-states and hydraulic states"].

Key points

- *Soma* and *haoma* derive from **sauma*. The reference shelf names ephedra as the leading identification, with fly-agaric and Syrian rue as rivals [Wikipedia].
- Wasson (#74742) argued for *Amanita muscaria*, denied that soma was alcoholic, and read the "two Forms" as juice and urine. Brough, Mallory and McKenna dissented.
- Falk and Houben defend ephedra and a non-visionary reading. Myers (#70923), following Flattery and Schwartz, argues for *Peganum harmala* and treats ephedra as a substitute.
- Ferrara (#66945) reports a cannabis–ephedra soma and places hemp at the centre of Iranian ecstatic practice.
- Soma is a "King" in the Rigveda. Ferrara describes the soma cult becoming an aristocratic preserve, and later Indian law made the king "a god on earth".
- Iranian legitimacy rested on *khvarenah*, which is bound to *asha* and linked with Haoma. Darius credited his victories to Ahura Mazda.
- Pharaohs sustained Maat through offerings, and Mesopotamian rulers built temples and could be deified, as Naram-Sin was.
- Collins reports that Diakonoff and later surveys overturned the "temple-state" and "hydraulic state" models of how religious power began.

Part II.

Zoroastrianism

Chapter 9.

Zarathustra: The Prophet and the Problem of His Date

Part 2 starts with a figure whose existence most of the library's scholars accept but whose date they cannot fix. Zarathushtra, called Zoroaster by the Greeks, is known first from seventeen hymns ascribed to him and then from a tradition that grew over two thousand years. The datings span more than six millennia, from "six thousand years before Xerxes" to the sixth century BC. Each follows from a particular reading of the evidence: Greek reports, Pahlavi chronology, comparative philology or the history of the steppes. This chapter sets out each dating with the people who hold it, then follows the biography as it grew into legend.

The name, the lineage and the priest

Jackson notes that the Avesta consistently gives the name as *Zarathushtra*, or more fully *Spitama Zarathushtra*. The familiar "Zoroaster" comes from the Latin *Zoroastres*, which is modelled on the Greek *Zoroastres*. He explains *Spitama* as a clan name derived from an eponymous ancestor, probably meaning "descendant of White". Scholars agree that the second element of *Zarathushtra* is *ushtra*, "camel", but the first element is still disputed. Proposed meanings include "one whose camels are old" and "one whose camel is fierce" [Jackson, Zoroaster, #55100, ch. II "The Name Zoroaster"]. Drawing on the Avesta and the Pahlavi books, Jackson gives the father as Pourushaspa and the mother as Dughdhova. A cousin, Maidhyoimanha, became the first disciple. Through the third wife, Hvovi, the future saviours, including the Saoshyant, are said to descend miraculously [Jackson, #55100, ch. II "Ancestry and Family"].

Boyce stresses his priestly office. In the Gathas he calls himself a *zaotar*, a fully qualified priest, and in her view he is "the only founder of a world religion who was both priest and prophet". He also calls himself a *manthran*, a composer of

inspired utterances. Tradition says revelation came to him at thirty, when he met Vohu Manah on a river bank at dawn [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch. 2 "Zoroaster and his mission"].

The classical testimonies: "six thousand years"

The oldest Greek writers give the most extreme dates. West collects them. Pliny quotes Eudoxus as placing Zarathushtra 6,000 years before the death of Plato, which works out to 6347 BC, and says Aristotle agreed. Hermippus put him 5,000 years before the Trojan war (6184 BC). Xanthus of Lydia, as quoted by Diogenes Laertius, put him 6,000 years before Xerxes, which "is, B.C. 6485" [West, Pahlavi Texts V, #60400, Introduction §71]. Haug's version of Xanthus differs: he reports "about 600 years before the Trojan war (about B.C. 1800)". He also cites Berosus, who made Zoroaster a Babylonian king between 2200 and 2000 BC [Haug, Essays, #55015, Essay IV "The Age when Spitama Zarathushtra Lived"]. Windischmann and Geiger allow both readings, noting that Xanthus "may have written 'six thousand' or 'six hundred' ". In their view he drew on good sources but perhaps misunderstood them [Windischmann & Geiger, Zarathushtra in the Gathas, #55095, p. 79].

Jackson explains the large figures as the Greeks "not having quite rightly understood" Persian teaching. That teaching set Zoroaster's millennium inside a world-period of 12,000 years, during which his *fravashi* had already existed alongside the archangels for thousands of years [Jackson, #55100, ch. II "The Date"]. Carter gives the same explanation [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114, p. 24]. West adds that in the Pahlavi system the prophet's spiritual body was formed at the start of the fourth millennium, 6630 BC, which is close to all three Greek figures [West, #60400, §§72–77]. Other sources linked Zoroaster with Ninus and Semiramis, or with Nimrod and Abraham [Carter, #55114, p. 24]. If Semiramis lived about 1273 BC, Windischmann and Geiger note, Zoroaster belongs to the mid-thirteenth century BC [#55095, p. 131]. West replies that the "Magian king of Bactria" of that legend "can hardly refer to the traditional Zaratusht who is never represented as a king" [West, #60400, §74]. Moulton points out that apart from Xanthus no native Greek names Zoroaster before the mid-fourth century [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II].

The tradition of "258 years before Alexander"

The native tradition is precise in a different way. Jackson cites Bundahishn 34, the Arda Viraf book and Zadspram, together with "abundant Arabic allusions (Albiruni, Masudi, and others)". All of these place the opening of the ministry "at 258 years before the era of Alexander". The prophet was thirty when his ministry began and seventy-seven when he died, and West corrects for a thirty-five-year gap in the Bundahishn list. On that basis Jackson concludes that tradition yields 660–583 BC. Tradition also says Zarathushtra converted King Vishtaspa at forty-two. Jackson denies that this Vishtaspa was Hystaspes, the father of Darius, an identification Ammianus Marcellinus had made [Jackson, #55100, ch. II and App. II]. West reaches the same date, and adds that the Avestan ancestors of Kavi Vishtaspa share no names with the Achaemenid pedigree on the Behistun inscription [West, #60400, §70]. Moulton reports that Justi, Casartelli and West endorsed Jackson's case [Moulton, #55011, Lecture I, n.].

Haug rejected the Hystaspes identification for the same reason, but went much further than the tradition. In his view the Gathas stand at the head of a literature already complete by about 400 BC, and Yasna 9.14 calls Zarathushtra "famous in Airyana vaejo", the ancestral Aryan home. On this basis Haug wrote: "Under no circumstances can we assign him a later date than B.C. 1000", and he allowed that the prophet might have been a contemporary of Moses [Haug, #55015, Essay IV §4].

Philology against tradition

In his 1912 lectures Moulton treated the traditional date as "a minimum" and put the case for "a few more generations". Gathic, "in many respects the more primitive", had to be brought closer in time to the Rigveda. Time was also needed for the gap before the prose Yasna Haptanghaiti, and more still for the development to the Yashts, where the old Aryan religion has returned. He concluded that the matter is "Not Proven" [Moulton, #55011, Lecture I "The Sources", pp. 19–22]. He quotes Geldner placing Zoroaster "as early as the fourteenth century B.C.", and Bartholomae, who called a precise date "hopeless" but believed "we shall have to begin decidedly further back" [ibid., p. 18]. Mills argued from language that the Gathas came "long after the oldest Riks", possibly around 1500 BC, or as late as 900–1200 BC [Mills (tr.), SBE XXXI, #60422, Introduction]. West, who

defended the tradition, attributed scholars' resistance to the classical figures and to the closeness of Gathic to the oldest Sanskrit [West, #60400, §78].

Boyce: a Bronze Age prophet on the steppes

Mary Boyce bases her chronology on the social world of the Gathas. From about 1700 BC, on her reading, bronze and the war chariot produced a class of *rathaeshtars*, "chariot-standers", who raided for wealth. Zarathushtra does not use the word, and his hymns "reflect the ancient twofold social divisions of priest and warrior herdsman". Yet "he speaks often of raiding, ruthlessness and bloodshed". She concludes that he belonged to a pastoral tribe suffering from Bronze Age change, and places him "between 1400 and 1200 B.C., perhaps in some northerly region of the steppes" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, §§1.2.7, 1.3.1]. Her table dates Kavi Vishtaspa's rule "on the steppes" and the Gathas to c. 1200 BC [#55116, §1.9]. Her survey volume gives a different "reasoned conjecture" of 1700–1500 BC [Boyce, #55117, ch. 2].

Duchesne-Guillemin accepts that the dialect points to eastern Iran "some time before the rise of the Achaemenid power", but notes that "no archaeological evidence has yet been found". In his summary of Marijan Molé's position, which held that the Gathas cannot be used historically, the prophet "might as well not have existed" [Duchesne-Guillemin, Religion of Ancient Iran, #38271, §II]. The reference shelf agrees that "there is no consensus on the dating of Zoroaster" [Wikipedia: Zoroaster].

Dating	Basis	Proponents in the library
c. 6485 / 6347 / 6184 BC	Greek reports (Xanthus, Eudoxus, Hermippus)	Recorded by West (#60400); explained as the 12,000-year scheme by Jackson (#55100), Carter (#55114), West
c. 1800 BC ("600 years before Troy")	Alternative reading of Xanthus	Haug (#55015); possibility allowed by Windischmann & Geiger (#55095)
Mid-13th c. BC	Semiramis synchronism	Windischmann & Geiger (#55095)
c. 1700–1500 BC	Gathic close to the Rigveda; Stone Age setting	Boyce, Zoroastrians (#55117)

Dating	Basis	Proponents in the library
c. 1400–1200 BC	Bronze Age social setting	Boyce, Textual Sources (#55116)
1500 or 900–1200 BC	Linguistic distance from the Rigveda	Mills (#60422)
Not later than 1000 BC	Literature complete by 400 BC; Airyana Vaejah	Haug (#55015)
"Some generations" before 660 BC	Gathic–Vedic closeness; Gatha-to-Yasht development	Moulton (#55011)
660–583 BC	"258 years before Alexander"	Jackson (#55100), West (#60400); Justi, Casartelli per Moulton

Homeland: west or east?

Jackson considered that the "consensus of scholarly opinion" of his time placed Zarathushtra's birth in western Iran, in Atropatene (Adarbaijan) near Lake Urumiah. He gives the mother as coming from Median Ragha, and notes a tradition that the prophet preached for a time in Seistan and Turan [Jackson, #55100, ch. II "His Native Place"]. Haug explained the Ragha tradition by Yasna 19, where the city seems to be governed by "the Zarathushtras" themselves [Haug, #55015, Essay IV]. Boyce, by contrast, notes that the Avesta "remained … Eastern Iranian in substance as well as language" and never mentions the Medes or Persians [Boyce, #55116, §1.1.2.1; #55117, ch. 4].

From man to legend

Moulton, quoting Geldner, contrasts the Zarathushtra of the Gathas, "a mere man, standing always on the solid ground of reality", with the later figure who "rarely suggests the possibility of anything but myth" [Moulton, #55011, Lecture III]. The Younger Avesta calls him "the first priest, the first warrior, the first herdsman", at whose birth Angra Mainyu fled [Boyce, #55117, ch. 4].

West gives the full legend from Denkard VII and the Selections of Zadspram, which he dates to about AD 900 and traces to the lost Spend Nask. Demons try

to destroy the child before and at his birth, but Vohu Manah "made him laugh with delight and utter one form of the Ahunavair formula". *Karap* priests try to kill him in infancy, and one "drops dead from his horse" after a quarrel. At thirty he meets Vohu Manah by the river Daitih and holds conferences with the archangels for ten years. At Vishtaspa's court he is imprisoned and "saved from starvation by a miracle" before the king is converted. He dies "at the age of seventy-seven", and other Pahlavi texts name Bradro-resh the Tur as his killer [West, #60400, Introduction §§6–7, 15–19, 29]. Lincoln studies one episode, in which a "golden-bodied" fiend claiming to be Spendarmad is banished with the Yatha ahu vairyo [Lincoln, Cēšmag, #60392, §I].

Esoteric writers give the prophet another kind of status. Annie Besant presents him as an initiate sent "at the beginning of this Iranian subrace", who held the same place for the Iranians "that Manu held to the whole original Aryan" race [Besant, Four Great Religions, #55017, "Zoroastrianism"]. Haug offered a different explanation for the ancient confusion: "Zarathushtra" became a title of the high priests, whose sayings were later credited to one man [Haug, #55015, Essay III §III]. The library's pamphlet volume #60431 shows modern disputes between orthodox and reformist Parsis. The text it actually preserves is Shiavax Vakil's 1970 survey of the Jashan Committee controversy [Zoroastrian Pamphlets vol. 56, #60431].

Key points

- The Avestan name is Zarathushtra Spitama. In the Gathas he calls himself a *zaotar* (priest) and *manthran* [Jackson #55100; Boyce #55117].
- Jackson, Carter and West explain the Greek figures of about 6000 BC as misreadings of the Persian 12,000-year scheme.
- The Pahlavi and Arabic "258 years before Alexander" tradition yields 660–583 BC, defended by Jackson and West.
- Haug, Moulton, Mills and Geldner argue from language for an earlier date, from "not later than 1000 BC" back to the fourteenth century.
- Boyce places the prophet on the Bronze Age steppes: c. 1400–1200 BC in one book, 1700–1500 BC in the other.
- Jackson placed his birth in western Iran. Boyce and Duchesne-Guillemin favour the east, though no archaeology confirms it.
- Denkard VII and Zadspram turn the man of the Gathas into a miracle-worker who dies at seventy-seven.

- Besant treats him as the initiate-founder of a sub-race. Haug suggested that "Zarathushtra" became a priestly title.

Chapter 10.

The Gathas and the Avesta: Scripture, Transmission and Canon

The Avesta that survives is the remnant of a much larger scripture. Priests passed it down by memory for centuries before it was written, its custodians read it through layers of commentary, and Europe first met it in a translation later judged "utterly incorrect". This chapter describes the canon and the place of the Gathas within it. It then follows the tradition of loss and recovery, the chain of translations, and Europe's discovery of the texts, and ends by comparing renderings of one Gathic stanza.

The parts of the Avesta

Boyce explains *Avesta* as probably meaning "the Injunction (of Zarathushtra)", written in two stages, Gathic and Younger, of an "otherwise unrecorded Eastern Iranian language" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, §1.1.1.1]. Haug links the Yasna's seventy-two chapters (6 × 12) to the six seasons of creation, noting that the number was reached deliberately by duplicating chapters [Haug, Essays, #55015, Essay III §IV].

Component	Language	Character and use (as the sources describe it)
Gathas (Y. 28–34, 43–46, 47–50, 51, 53)	Gathic	Seventeen hymns of the prophet, grouped by metre into five Gathas

Component	Language	Character and use (as the sources describe it)
Yasna Haptanghaiti (Y. 35–41)	Gathic prose	"Worship of the Seven Sections"; the first use of *Amesha Spenta* (Y. 39.3) [Boyce #55117]
Younger Yasna	Younger Avestan	Liturgical additions that grew the Yasna to 72 *has*
Yashts	Younger Avestan	Hymns to individual divinities. Some verses go back "to at least 2000 B.C." in substance [Boyce #55116 §1.1.1.5]
Vendidad (*Vidaevadata*, "Against the Daevas")	Late Younger Avestan	Purity laws, probably compiled in the Parthian period. Read at night and "the only liturgical text which is not recited entirely from memory" [#55116 §1.1.1.6]
Visperad	Younger Avestan	Extended Yasna for the seven holy days
Nyayesh, Gah, Afrinagan, Sirozah	Mixed	Daily prayers to the Sun, Mithra, Moon, Waters and Fire; litanies of the watches
Khorda Avesta	Mixed	A lay prayer-book, used by the laity "only since the nineteenth century" [#55116 §1.1.1.9]

According to Boyce, the extant texts make up "about a quarter" of the Sasanian canon of twenty-one *nasks*. This estimate rests on the Denkard's summaries [#55116, §1.1.1.10].

The five Gathas: metre and authorship

Haug lists the five Gathas: *Ahunavaiti* (Y. 28–34), *Ushtavaiti* (Y. 43–46), *Spenta-mainyu* (Y. 47–50), *Vohu-khshathra* (Y. 51) and *Vahishtoishti* (Y. 53). He shows

that each has its own metre, of the Vedic kind in which syllables are counted without regard to quantity. Ahunavaiti stanzas have three lines of sixteen syllables. Ushtavaiti stanzas have five lines of eleven syllables. Spenta-mainyu stanzas reproduce the Vedic *trishtubh* (4 × 11) exactly. Yasna 57.8 already speaks of "the five Gathas of Spitama Zarathushtra". From such internal quotations Haug concluded that the Gathic portion was "the most ancient of the whole Zend-Avesta, being known as scripture already to the later Yasna, the Visparad, and Vendidad" [Haug, #55015, Essay III §§IV–V]. He held that the rest of the scripture is "the joint work of the high-priests … compiled in the course of centuries", and that only "the scanty texts" of the Gathas go back to the founder [ibid., §III]. Boyce credits Haug with first identifying the Gathas as the prophet's own words [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, index s.v. "Gathas"]. The Pahlavi scholar Zadspram counted 278 stanzas, 1,016 lines and 6,666 words in them [West (tr.), Pahlavi Texts IV, #55048, "Selections of Zadspram", pp. 401–405].

Mills stressed how far language and ideas had moved since the Veda: "We can therefore place the Gathas long after the oldest Riks" [Mills (tr.), SBE XXXI, #60422, Introduction]. Boyce explains how the liturgy protected the hymns. As the Gathic dialect faded, priests arranged them by metre around the Yasna Haptanghaiti, "like protective walls on either side of the rituals", so that they had to be learned exactly [Boyce, #55117, ch. 3].

The oldest prayers and the creed

Four short prayers frame the Gathas: the Ahuna Vairya, the Ashem vohu, the Yenhe hatam and the Airyema ishyo (Y. 54). Boyce shows that the Yenhe hatam is a remodelling of Y. 51.22, "altered rather awkwardly to create a prayer of general application". She translates the Ashem vohu: "Asha (is) good, it is best. According to wish it is, according to wish it shall be for us. Asha belongs to Asha Vahishta" [Boyce, #55117, ch. 3]. The creed (*Fravarane*, Y. 12.1) begins: "I profess myself a worshipper of Mazda, a follower of Zoroaster, rejecting the Daevas, accepting the Ahuric doctrine" [Boyce, #55117, ch. 3].

The unrecorded centuries, loss and recovery

According to Boyce, the Iranians of Zarathushtra's time did not know writing and for centuries regarded it as "fit only for secular purposes". The holy texts

were committed to writing "probably [in] the fifth century A.C.", and the oldest surviving manuscript is dated 1323 [Boyce, #55116, §1.1.1.1]. In her history, an "unknown genius" among the priests invented the Avestan alphabet. It was based on mid-Sasanian Pahlavi but had forty-six letters instead of fewer than twenty, and Boyce says it "has been compared for accuracy with the modern 'international phonetic alphabet' ". A ninth-century book reports that at the council of Khosrow Anoshirvan the high priest Veh-Shabuhr "published the twenty-one divisions". The nasks were grouped in three sevens: Gathic texts, scholastic works, and law and instruction. The fire-temples that held copies were destroyed "through successive conquests by Arabs, Turks and Mongols" [Boyce, #55117, ch. 9 "The written Avesta"; #55116, §1.1.1.10].

The Zoroastrian account of how the scripture was lost survives in Denkard III, translated by West. Kai-Vishtasp ordered the original deposited "to the treasury of Shapigan" and a copy "to the fortress of documents". Then, "owing to the evil-destined villain Alexander, that which was in the fortress of documents came to be burnt", and the other copy fell to the Greeks and "was translated … into the Greek language". Ardashir son of Papak brought the scattered scripture together, and "the righteous Tosar … appeared with an exposition recovered from the Avesta, and was ordered to complete the scripture". After the Arab conquest, Atur-farnbag and Aturpad son of Hemed gathered the copies again [West, #55048, Introduction, Dk III]. Denkard IV adds that the Arsacid Valkhash "ordered the careful preservation" of the Avesta and Zand [West, #55048]. It also says, in Boyce's translation, that Shabuhr I collected texts on medicine, astronomy and other sciences that had been "dispersed … throughout India, the Byzantine Empire, and other lands" [Boyce, #55117, ch. 7]. Duchesne-Guillemin calls this information "difficult to interpret" [Duchesne-Guillemin, #38271, §II].

James Darmesteter, the SBE translator of the Vendidad, concluded late in life that the Gathas owed their central ideas to Philo of Alexandria. Moulton rejected this on the evidence of metre: Gathic forms such as *Armaitis* "refuse to scan" unless restored to older forms, which no first-century priest could have counterfeited [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture I].

Zand and the chain of translations

Zand means interpretation: glosses, translations and commentary. The phrase *Zand-Avesta* misled early Western scholars into taking *Zand* as the name of the

language. Parsis who settled in Gujarat began translating "from the Middle Persian Zand into Sanskrit and Old Gujarati" in the late eleventh or twelfth century. Neryosang's Sanskrit version is the best known of these. Pahlavi transcribed into Avestan script became *Pazand* [Boyce, #55116, §§1.1.1.12–18]. Dhalla's 1908 edition of the five Nyayesh prints the Avestan text alongside the Pahlavi, Sanskrit, Persian and Gujarati versions [Dhalla (ed.), The Nyaishes, #55137]. Mills's *Study of the Five Zarathushtrian Gathas* likewise prints the Pahlavi and Sanskrit beside the Avestan. In Neryosang's gloss on Y. 30.3 the twin spirits are glossed as *Hormijdah* and *Aharman*, Ohrmazd and Ahriman [Mills, Study of the Five Gathas, #60441, Y. 30.3].

Europe discovers the Avesta

Haug tells the story of discovery. Anquetil-Duperron sailed for India in 1754 as a sailor of the French India Company. At Surat, finding the priests "full of distrust", he "bribed one of the most learned Dasturs, Dastur Darab", and checked what he learned against other priests. He left in 1761 with about 180 manuscripts and published his *Zend-Avesta* in 1771 [Haug, #55015, Essay I §II]. Anquetil's own narrative records: "I applied myself at once to the translation of the Zend books with Darab" [Anquetil-Duperron, Narrative, #55016].

Kant found "not the slightest trace of philosophical ideas" in the work, and Sir William Jones called the books "the fictions of priestcraft". Rask showed in 1826 that Avestan is a sister of Sanskrit, and Burnouf founded Avestan philology. Haug judged Anquetil's version "utterly incorrect", compounding errors of "the Pahlavi translations, … the Dasturs, and … his own misunderstandings". In Vendidad 19.9, for example, Anquetil read the locative "in boundless time" as a nominative, so that "boundless Time" created Ahriman [Haug, #55015, Essay I §II].

One stanza, many readings: Yasna 30.3

Translator	Rendering of Y. 30.3 (opening)	Interpretive stance
Mills, SBE XXXI (#60422)	"the-two the-two-spirits the-two-first-things which-two two-twins … in-thought in-word-and in-deed … a-better an-evil"	Word-for-word philological rendering
Mills, *Study* (#60441)	"Thus are the spirits primeval who, as Twain, by their acts are faméd … a better they two, and an evil; Of these, let the wise choose aright"	Verse rendering; the Sanskrit gloss names Ormazd and Ahriman
Boyce (#55117)	"Truly there are two primal Spirits, twins, renowned to be in conflict. In thought and word and act they are two, the good and the bad"	Reading within the living tradition: cosmic dualism
Guthrie (#55082)	"At the beginning both-these Mentalities became conscious of each other, The one being a Mentality better in thought, and word, and deed"	Psychological rendering in a "personal" document he separates from a "priestly" one

Guthrie claims to separate the Gathas into "priestly" and "personal" documents, "a new discovery in higher criticism", and renders divine names as qualities, "Asha (justice)", "Vohu Manah (good disposition)" [Guthrie, Life of Zoroaster, #55082]. Orthodox Parsis rejected the reformers' practice of treating the Gathas as the only standard. In the introduction to Masani's 1917 book, J. J. Vimadalal calls the doctrine that anything not in the Gathas "may thus be challenged" a reformist "pet theory". He objects that hymns "cannot … be expected to embody either a complete philosophy, or an exhaustive ritual" [Masani, Zoroastrianism Ancient and Modern, #55152, Introduction].

The hymn to Mithra

Yasht 10, the Mihr Yasht, is the main Younger Avestan hymn to Mithra, the god treated in Part 3. Gershevitch renders its refrain as "Grass-land magnate Mithra we worship". The hymn describes an abode that Ahura Mazda fashioned for him above Hara, "where is no night or darkness" [Gershevitch, Avestan Hymn to Mithra, #60160, §§12, 25]. Gershevitch notes the hymn's "initial statement" that "Mazdah created Mithra and made him as great as himself". Even so, he suggests that the old pairing *mithra ahura*, with Mithra named first, "may have been the reasons why in some respects Mithra came to surpass Ahura Mazdah" [#60160, Introduction]. The Farvardin Yasht contains a different kind of historical clue: a victor "from discussions with Gaotema, the heretic". Darmesteter took this as "an allusion to controversies with the Buddhists" in eastern Iran [Darmesteter (tr.), SBE XXIII, #60421, Yt. 13.16 n.].

Key points

- The Avesta has Gathic texts (the Gathas, Yasna Haptanghaiti) and Younger Avestan ones (Yasna, Yashts, Vendidad, Visperad, prayers). According to Boyce they are about a quarter of the Sasanian canon.
- The five Gathas are grouped by Vedic-type metres. Haug held that they alone go back to the founder.
- The four great prayers and the *Fravarane* creed frame the Gathas in the Yasna.
- Boyce holds that the Avesta stayed oral until a 46-letter Sasanian alphabet was invented. The oldest manuscript dates from 1323.
- Denkard III tells that Alexander burned the scripture and that Ardashir, Tosar and, after the Arabs, Atur-farnbag restored it.
- Anquetil-Duperron's 1771 translation opened the field. Haug judged it unreliable, and Rask and Burnouf founded Avestan philology.
- Renderings of Y. 30.3 range from literal (Mills) through traditional (Boyce, Neryosang) to psychological (Guthrie). Orthodox Parsis rejected reading the Gathas alone.
- In Gershevitch's Yasht 10, Mithra is created by Ahura Mazda yet ranks almost as his equal.

Chapter 11.

Ahura Mazda, the Amesha Spentas and Angra Mainyu: Monotheism or Dualism?

Western scholars and modern Parsis have argued for two centuries over what Zarathustra taught about God and evil. One side reads the Gathas as the first clear monotheism, with dualism a later development. The other finds a radical dualism of two uncreated Spirits there from the start. Between them stands Duchesne-Guillemin's monotheism "tempered by polytheism" and "by dualism". This chapter sets out the Indo-Iranian inheritance, the Heptad of Ahura Mazda, the twin Spirits of Yasna 30 and the problem of the Holy Spirit. It then compares the main positions and closes with the esoteric readings.

The Indo-Iranian inheritance

Boyce reconstructs an Indo-Iranian belief in a universal principle of order, Avestan *asha* and Sanskrit *rta*. In her account it was guarded by "a great triad of ethical divinities, the Lords" (*ahura*, Sanskrit *asura*): Ahura Mazda, Varuna and Mithra. Beside them stood Indra, "an amoral being, invoked for strength, courage, and success in battle" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, §1.2.3]. In Rigveda 4.42, which she quotes, Varuna declares "through rta I uphold the sky", while Indra boasts that "when songs have made me drunk, then both the unbounded regions grow afraid". She adds that Zarathustra "restricted the use of the ancient title Daeva to Indra and other martial gods" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch. 1].

Duchesne-Guillemin notes that the asuras sank to demons in India, while in Iran the ahuras were exalted and the daevas devalued. He identifies Asha with Vedic Rta, "the 'true order' ", of which "Varuna is, par excellence, its guardian". His

argument is that in the Gathas "Asa has taken the place of Varuna" and Vohu Manah has replaced Mithra "as lord of cattle" [Duchesne-Guillemin, Religion of Ancient Iran, #38271, §III.A]. Writing earlier, F. C. Cook drew the parallel between "Varuna, in fact, the Asura, as chief of the Adityas, and Ahuramazda, as he stands before us in the old Persian inscriptions, in the Gathas" [Cook, Origins of Religion and Language, #55083, Essay II].

The Wise Lord and the Heptad

Boyce holds that Zarathustra, "in a startling departure from accepted beliefs", proclaimed Ahura Mazda "the one uncreated God, existing eternally, and Creator of all else that is good". In her account Ahura Mazda brought six lesser divinities into being through his Holy Spirit, Spenta Mainyu. With him they form a Heptad, and each guards one of the seven creations, so that "the abstract [is] the inner reality of the concrete" [Boyce, #55117, ch. 2; #55116, §1.3.2]. She quotes Yasht 19.16–18, which says the six are "of one mind, one voice, one act".

Amesha Spenta (Avestan / Pahlavi)	Rendering	Creation guarded (Boyce)
Khshathra Vairya / Shahrevar	Desirable Dominion	Sky of stone, later metals
Haurvatat / Hordad	Wholeness, Health	Water
Spenta Armaiti / Spendarmad	Holy Devotion	Earth
Ameretat / Amurdad	Long Life, Immortality	Plants
Vohu Manah / Vahman	Good Purpose	Cattle
Asha Vahishta / Ardvahisht	Best Righteousness / Truth	Fire
Spenta Mainyu with Ahura Mazda / Ohrmazd	Holy Spirit; God	The just man

Dhalla, a reformist Parsi high priest, notes that Vohu Manah, Asha and Khshathra are "conceived of as masculine beings, though neuter in grammatical gender", while Haurvatat and Ameretat are treated as masculine though grammatically feminine. In his view the six "are purely the personifications of abstract virtues", "all of one thought, one word, and one deed" [Dhalla, Zoroastrian Theology, #55113, ch. "Amesha Spentas"]. Haug went further: "in the eyes of the prophet they were no personages", only "abstract nouns and ideas", and

the notion of a heavenly council was imported by his successors [Haug, Essays, #55015, Essay IV §III.3]. Moulton finds that in the Gathas "Asha seems to lead", and that "Asha and Vohu Manah are obviously far more important than the others" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011]. For Duchesne-Guillemin each Entity is at once divine and human, and "after Zarathustra, this supple, delicate system was lost": the Entities "were reduced to mere deities, … separated into male and female" [#38271, §III.A–B].

Yasna 30: the twins and the choice

The central passage is Yasna 30.3–6, which Boyce translates: "Truly there are two primal Spirits, twins, renowned to be in conflict. In thought and word and act they are two, the good and the bad … And when these two Spirits first encountered, they created life and not-life." The daevas then "chose not rightly, because the Deceiver came upon them as they consulted" [Boyce, #55117, ch. 2]. For Boyce each Spirit's choice "prefigures the identical choice which every man must make for himself". Duchesne-Guillemin also reads it as a choice between Asha and the Druj, the Lie, but for him "Ahura Mazda was the father of two twin-spirits" [#38271, §I, §III.A.f]. Lincoln argues that "the demonological components of any religion are no less intelligent, complex, or profound than those of its other constituent parts" [Lincoln, Cēšmag, #60392, §I].

Spenta Mainyu: God's spirit or a separate being?

Boyce's *Textual Sources* calls the Holy Spirit God's "active agent and yet one with him, indivisible and yet distinct". She notes that Zarathustra addresses Mazda now as "Thou", now as "You" (plural) [#55116, §1.3.2]. Dhalla finds that "in a couple of instances Ahura Mazda is depicted as speaking of the Holy Spirit as apart from himself". Yet he concludes that in the later texts Spenta Mainyu "has no independent existence apart from Ahura Mazda", much as "the royal title 'His Majesty' " stands for a king. He cites Jackson's remark that the relation is "as difficult to define as that between the Holy Ghost and the Father" [Dhalla, #55113].

Duchesne-Guillemin traces how the two Spirits drifted apart. In Yasht 19.46 the two Spirits still contend. In the Vendidad, by contrast, "Ahura Mazda and Anra Mainyu fight each other by creating, respectively, the good and the bad

things". Since Aristotle's lost *Peri Philosophias* reports that the Magi taught two principles, Oromasdes and Areimanios, the change dates "at least to the fourth century B.C.". In a third system Zurvan took the place of Ahura Mazda as father of both [#38271, §I, §III.B]. Haug attributed the Zurvan doctrine to a misreading of Vendidad 19.9 and the full dualism to a sect, the "Zendiks", while "the Magi seem still to have clung to the prophet's doctrine of the unity" [Haug, #55015, Essay IV §III.3].

The positions compared

Haug: monotheism in theology, dualism in philosophy. Haug wrote that Zarathustra's "conception of Ahuramazda as the Supreme Being is perfectly identical with the notion of Elohim ... or Jehovah". He held that the two primeval causes, "the good mind" and "the evil mind", are "united" and "present everywhere; in Ahuramazda as well as in men". In his view a separate evil spirit of equal power "is entirely foreign to Zarathushtra's theology". [Haug, #55015, Essay IV §III.1–2]. R. Brown agreed: "the twins are the two sides of the divine action, like light and darkness", and, as Haug says, they are "in Ahuramazda" [Brown, Religion of Zoroaster and Archaic Monotheism, #60417, Part I].

The Parsi explanation reported by Monier-Williams. Monier-Williams passed on the view of the "learned Parsis of Bombay (especially ... Mr. K. R. Cama)". On this view the Twins were "two opposite—but not opposing—principles" inherent in Ahura Mazda, one constructive and one destructive, "merely antagonistic in name". The only real antagonism came from man's free choice. In his account Zoroastrianism "ultimately ... crystallized into a hard and uncompromising dualism" [Monier-Williams, Remarks on Monism, Pantheism and Dualism, #60440, pp. 9–10].

Boyce: radical dualism. Boyce holds that the prophet "beheld, co-existing with Ahura Mazda, an Adversary, ... Angra Mainyu, equally uncreated, but ignorant and wholly malign". She regards this radical dualism, together with the Heptad, as the basis of Zoroastrian ethics. In her reading it offered "a reasoned explanation" of suffering "not imputing to the will of an all-powerful Creator the sufferings of his creatures" [Boyce, #55117, ch. 2; #55116, §1.3.2.4].

Duchesne-Guillemin: a tempered monotheism. "The Iranian religion has never been as aggressively monotheistic as are, for instance, Judaism and Islam." It represents, he writes, "an attempt at monotheism", and is "tempered by polytheism" and "in a more characteristic way, tempered by dualism". He adds that "a pure,

rigorous Dualism, with a God and a Demon equal to each other … has never been known to Iran" [#38271, §I].

Moulton and the inscriptions. Moulton asked why Darius fails "to mention Zarathushtra himself, Angra Mainyu, and the Amesha Spenta". He concluded that the king need not have held "the whole creed of the Gathas", and that Herodotus is likewise "silent as to the crucial names". When the Greek forms appear in the fourth century they derive from Old Persian. By the reign of Artaxerxes II, who invoked "Auramazda, Anahita, and Mithra", he judged the religion to be "practically the unreformed Iranian polytheism, with the Reformer's name retained to atone for the absence of his spirit" [Moulton, #55011, Lecture II].

The Parsi dispute over Dhalla. Dhalla's history traces Zoroastrian doctrine period by period, from the Gathas to the present. It drew an orthodox reply from Ervad P. S. Masani in 1917. Masani records that the Parsi Panchayat trustees, led by Sir Dinsha Davar, refused to sponsor Dhalla's book because it contained "crude and obnoxious ideas", including "the advocacy of proselytism". He argued from the esoteric *Ilm-i-Khshnoom* [Masani, Zoroastrianism Ancient and Modern, #55152, Preface and Introduction].

Position	Ahura Mazda	Angra Mainyu	Source of dualism
Haug; Brown	Sole God, equal to Jehovah	One of two principles within God; not a rival being	Later sectarian corruption (the "Zendiks")
Cama, via Monier-Williams	One God	Destructive force, "not opposing"	Later crystallisation
Dhalla	Creator in Gathas and Vendidad	Antithesis "most strongly marked" in younger texts	Historical evolution
Boyce	Uncreated Creator with Heptad	"Equally uncreated", wholly malign	Original to Zarathustra
Duchesne-Guillemin	Father of the twins, later identified with Spenta Mainyu	One twin, later anti-God	Shift by the 4th c. BC; Zurvanism
Moulton	Reformer's God	Name taken by the Magi from the Gathas	Magian syncretism

Esoteric readings

Rudolf Steiner, lecturing in Berlin on 1 January 1909, gave Ahriman a cosmic history of his own. On his account, Zarathustra's mission was "to spread ... a culture directed towards the world of the senses". The tempter of the Atlantean initiates was Ahriman, "or Angra Mainyu who, as Zarathustra taught his people, opposes the bright sun god known as the Great Aura, or Ahura Mazda". Without Zarathustra's teaching, he claimed, "the descendants of the Atlanteans could still have practised black magic in ancient Persia". After Golgotha, he said, Christ "laid Ahriman in chains", and he identified Goethe's Mephistopheles as "none other than the figure of Ahriman" [Steiner, Disease, Karma and Healing, #69269, Lecture 12]. The Theosophical collection edited by N. F. Bilimoria (1898) internalises the Wise Lord: "Who was 'Ormazd' if not the chief Spenta-Mainyus, the monad, our own god-principle in us?" [Bilimoria (ed.), Zoroastrianism in the Light of Theosophy, #55115, "In the Light of Occult Philosophy"].

Key points

- Zarathustra inherited the Indo-Iranian contrast between ethical *ahuras* guarding *asha* and the amoral warrior gods. According to Duchesne-Guillemin, Asha replaced Varuna.
- Boyce describes a Heptad: Ahura Mazda, through Spenta Mainyu, with six Amesha Spentas bound to the seven creations.
- Dhalla and Haug read the six as personified virtues. Moulton ranks Asha and Vohu Manah highest.
- Yasna 30's choice of the twin Spirits is the model for every human choice between Asha and the Druj.
- The sources disagree whether Spenta Mainyu is Ahura Mazda himself. Duchesne-Guillemin dates Ahriman's rise as an anti-God to the fourth century BC at the latest.
- Haug, Brown and the Bombay Parsis read the Gathas as monotheism, and Boyce as radical dualism. For Duchesne-Guillemin they are a monotheism tempered by polytheism and dualism.
- Moulton notes that the Achaemenid inscriptions and Herodotus are silent about Zarathustra and Ahriman. Masani's orthodox circle attacked Dhalla's method.
- Steiner made Ahriman the power behind Atlantean black magic, and the Theosophists read Ormazd as the inner monad.

Chapter 12.

Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds: Ethics, Law and Ritual Purity

Zoroastrian ethics has two faces in the library's sources. One is the moral triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, set inside a cosmic war between Truth (*asha*) and the Lie (*druj*). The other is a detailed law of purity, carried in the Vendidad and in Pahlavi and Parsi casuistry, which governs corpses, menstruation, noxious animals, marriage and punishment. Parsi apologists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries read that law as hygiene or as later priestly growth. Western scholars set it in the history of the Magi and the Sasanian church. A modern teacher, Mehran Keshe, claims Zoroastrian ethics as part of his own code. This chapter gives each source's account as the source presents it.

The triad and the creed

A. V. Williams Jackson, writing in the *International Journal of Ethics* (the library lists the item under J. H. Muirhead, whose article precedes it in the same issue), calls the triad "the pith and kernel of the ancient Prophet's teaching" and quotes the confession: "I practise good thoughts, good words, good deeds; I abjure all evil thoughts, evil words, evil deeds." The three, he adds, are "the three mansions or stages" by which the righteous soul ascends into "the infinite light (*anaghra raocao*)" [Jackson, "The Moral and Ethical Teachings of the Ancient Zoroastrian Religion", #371117]. Kapadia's Parsi handbook also says that Zoroaster "summed up the whole of his moral philosophy in three expressive words, *Humata… Hukhta…* and *Hvarshta*" [Kapadia, The Teachings of Zoroaster, #55090]. Modi's reader for teachers in schools gives the triad in the words of the Mazdayasnian confession: "I praise (*humata*) good thoughts. I praise (*hukhta*)

good words. I praise (*hvarshta*) good deeds." [Modi, Moral Extracts from Zoroastrian Books, #55136].

Boyce ties the triad to the daily ritual. The sacred cord (*kusti*), tied over the white shirt (*sudra*) at initiation at fifteen, is passed three times round the waist; "it is likely that from the beginning the three coils were intended to symbolize the threefold ethic," and the little purse sewn into the throat of the *sudra* reminds the wearer to fill it "with the merit of good thoughts, words and deeds." At the five daily prayers the believer unties the cord, prays to Ahura Mazda, "execrates Angra Mainyu (flicking the ends of the cord contemptuously)," and ties it again [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch.3 "The Zoroastrian badge", "The times and manner of praying"].

Truth against the Lie; industry and benevolence

Buch's 1919 Baroda study, the library's main systematic account, builds the moral system from the Avesta, the Arda Viraf, the Dinkard, the Sad Dar and the Epistles of Manushchihr [Buch, Zoroastrian Ethics, #55150]. On truth he starts with Herodotus: the Persians held lying "a most disgraceful act, next to that comes the incurring of debt," because the debtor must lie. He then quotes the Mihr Yasht: "Break not the contract, Spitama... For Mithra stands for both the faithful and the unfaithful" [Buch, #55150, ch.VI, citing Yt. X.2]. The Dinkard rejects any casuistry of expedience: "If at any place holy men find it very injurious... (to speak the truth), still it must be spoken. And, if... untruth very convenient and beneficial, still, it must never, at any time, be spoken" (Dk. I.27). In the Arda Viraf, liars have their tongues gnawed by worms and false judges have their eyes scooped out. In the Sad Dar a thief loses double and a robber fourfold; "a thief may have his ear cut off and may be beaten; while a robber may be killed" [Buch, #55150, ch.VI].

Buch reads Zoroastrian ethics as "essentially positive." Life is good and death "an abomination" owed to Ahriman. Marriage, children and wealth are commanded: "he who has a wife, is far superior to him who has no wife" (Vd. IV.47). The well-fed man "receives in him Vohu Mano much better" than the faster, and work, above all agriculture, is a form of worship. The first to rise at cockcrow "shall enter paradise" [Buch, #55150, ch.V]. On benevolence he calls the religion "a gospel for the poor as well as the rich" [Buch, #55150, ch.VIII].

The Vendidad's purity code: Nasu, barashnum and the elements

Buch calls purity "the virtue most praised." The Dinkard defines its moral side. The Epistles of Manushchihr bind it to the body: the wise seek "purification of the soul by the purification of the body" [Buch, #55150, ch.VI "Purity and Impurity"]. Corpses must be neither buried nor burnt but exposed "where they know there are always corpse-eating dogs, and corpse-eating birds." The Sad Dar orders that a man who has eaten dead matter have his house demolished, his heart fetched out and his eyes scooped out [Buch, #55150, ch.VI].

Dubash's *Zoroastrian Sanitary Code* (Bombay, 1906) won a 500-rupee prize from the reformist Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha. His stated aim was to show "how well the laws of the Vendidad enacted for the preservation of health… are in harmony with the laws of hygiene and the principles of the science of medicine" [Dubash, The Zoroastrian Sanitary Code, #55080, Preface]. He worked from Kanga's Gujarati version and Darmesteter's SBE translation [Darmesteter (tr.), The Zend-Avesta Part I: The Vendidad, #55096]. He sets out, chapter by chapter, when the Druj-Nasu "rushes upon (the dead)" (Vendidad VII.5). When the corpse-eating dog or bird approaches, the demon flees north "in the shape of a raging fly, with knees and tail sticking out, droning without end" (Vendidad VII). He also treats pollution of water, the ban on burning the *nasu*, and the punishment for carrying a corpse alone [Dubash, #55080, chs. IV, VII-X]. The bath of purification (*barashnum*) is given in the nine-pit form of Vd. VIII, with bull's urine and water, followed by nine nights of seclusion "in the course of which he shall not touch others." Dubash explains the ban on burning corpses as a precaution against "poisonous gases" and against defiling the fire [Dubash, #55080, ch.VIII, sect. "The bath of purification (Barashnum)"].

Noxious creatures, sorcery and folk belief

Moazami (History of Religions, 2005) explains that the animal world is split between creatures of the Beneficent Spirit and *xrafstars*, "vectors of pollution, impurity, and calamity." Killing them "is therefore a duty." In the Bundahishn, Ohrmazd made his creatures "in the form of fire," and the Evil Spirit made his "in the form of a frog: black, ashen… like the most sinful-natured xrafstar." The term covers frogs, scorpions, lizards, snakes, ants, beetles and locusts; a Persian Rivayat she quotes says [Moazami, Evil Animals in the Zoroastrian Religion,

#55040]: "Killing noxious creatures is said to be a great merit in the religion" [Moazami, #55040, n.30]. Herodotus, as Boyce cites him, saw the magi kill "every creature, save only dogs and men... ants and snakes, creeping and flying things, and take much pride therein" [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Practices of the faith"].

Frachtenberg's 1911 survey covers sorcery (*yathwa*), wizards and witches (*yatu*, *pairika*), the Kavis and Karapans, the evil eye, nail-paring and noxious creatures. The Vendidad (I.14) says Angra Mainyu "counter-created the evil work of witchcraft." The Dinkard compares sorcery to unnatural intercourse, "for which there is no atonement" [Frachtenberg, Allusions to Witchcraft, #54991, §§1-2]. Among the sacred animals, the Vendidad (14.5-6) says that he "who commits the sin of slaying a water dog" must atone by killing ten thousand snakes and ten thousand each of other noxious kinds, frogs and ants among them. The heaviest sanction falls on killing the *vanghapara* (hedgehog?): he "slays his own soul for nine generations, and cannot find a way over the Chinvat bridge" (Vd. 13.3) [Frachtenberg, #54991, §5 "Noxious Creatures"].

Sex ethics, women and next-of-kin marriage

Buch's chapter on sex relations makes marriage "a sacred duty." Keeping a maiden from marriage is "the worst deed which hostile men commit," and girls married at about fifteen. In the Arda Viraf an adulteress is suspended by her breasts, and seducers are stung by serpents [Buch, #55150, ch.VII]. The Sad Dar commands that a woman who consorts with two strange men be killed "sooner than a biting serpent." Intercourse with a menstruating woman is "no better deed than if he should burn the corpse of his own son" (Vd. XVI.17). For "unnatural sin" there is "nothing that can atone... for ever and ever" (Vd. VIII.27), and the Sad Dar orders that one "should cut off the heads or rip up the bellies of both parties in the act" [Buch, #55150, ch.VII]. The Pahlavi *Shayast la-Shayast* ("Proper and Improper") rules on how menstrual pollution passes through carpet, cushion and bed-chamber. A menstruating woman's look makes ritually washed hands "quite unclean." Food within three steps of her is polluted, and her retreat (the *dashtanistan*) should be fifteen steps from fire, water and sacred twigs and three from righteous men [West (tr.), Pahlavi Texts I, #55045, Shayast la-Shayast III.1-14]. West's Bundahishn also genders the creations: "the sky, metal, wind, and fire are male... the water, earth, plants, and fish are female" [West, #55045, Bundahishn].

The sources answer the question of women's standing in different ways. Sanjana's 1892 Bombay lecture argues that "in primitive Iranian society the wife held a position, in social as well as spiritual matters, not inferior to that of her spouse." He adds that "equality of education does not mean identity of education" [Sanjana, Position of Zoroastrian Women in Remote Antiquity, #60416; #55092]. Buch notes the titles *nmano-pathni* and *nmano-paiti* ("mistress" and "master of the house") and women performing priestly functions. He also quotes the ideal wife who asks her husband, "What are thy thoughts, so that I may think them" [Buch, #55150, ch.VII].

On next-of-kin marriage (*xwaetvadatha*) Boyce is plain. In the Pahlavi books it was "highly meritorious, and never more so than when it took place within the close family circle: father with daughter, brother with sister, even mother with son." Cambyses is "the first person known to have practised" it, marrying two full sisters. The word appears in the creed (Y 12.9), perhaps by interpolation [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Cambyses"]. Under the Parthians, Greek dating formulas from Avroman name a king's "compaternal sister and wife," and Bardesanes records such marriages among the Persians of Asia Minor [Boyce, #55117, ch.6 "Next-of-kin marriages"]. Buch adds that Arda Viraf "had married his seven sisters," that the Dinkard's third book defends the custom, and that dissolving such a marriage ranks fourth among thirty sins. He then gives the modern Parsi view that the term always meant first-cousin marriage. Gray's summary, which Buch cites, holds that "pure Zoroastrianism never advocated it… it was advocated… by a Magianized priesthood" [Buch, #55150, ch.VII]. Jackson calls the practice incestuous "in our eyes" but holds that it "occurred among the Iranians from the earliest ages" [Jackson, #371117].

Topic	Avesta (Vendidad)	Pahlavi / Persian texts	Parsi modern reading
Corpses	Nasu, exposure, barashnum	Sad Dar penalties	Dubash: sanitation
Noxious animals	*Xrafstra*-killing as atonement	Rivayat: "great merit"	Moazami: dualist duty
Next-of-kin marriage	*xwaetvadatha* (Y 12.9)	Praised; Dinkard III defence	First cousins only (Buch)
Women	*nmano-pathni*; menstrual seclusion	Shayast III casuistry	Sanjana: equal status

Original teaching or priestly accretion?

Dhalla's *Zoroastrian Theology* (1914) counts "the stringent laws for bodily cleanliness, the active crusade against noxious creatures" among the practices of the Magi reported by Greek authors. He notes that "the Gathas are silent" on rites such as the Haoma cult [Dhalla, Zoroastrian Theology, #55113, ch. "The Avestan People"]. Masani's orthodox reply rejects any "split between the Gathas and the other Avesta." To treat the Later Avesta as not taught by Zoroaster himself "is to say the least, downright heresy," and a "Neo-Zoroastrian Theology" invented by the reformer [Masani, Zoroastrianism Ancient and Modern, #55152].

The "Ethos of Zoroaster" in Keshe's teaching

Keshe uses Zoroastrian ethics to describe himself. In KSW 554 (9 September 2024) he says: "My early teenager years were touched by the beauty of Zoroaster. I felt the love, and the sincerity of the love in going to a high school that taught the Ethos of Mitra." [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 554, #378266, "Personal History and Workshop Logistics"]. In KSW 648 the summary reads "Parents taught: all equal, Ethos of Zoroaster, internally; Never harm others," and he says: "The Ethos of Zoroaster was with me, and it stays with me. Unless you do wrong to me, I don't do any wrong, I just change my line" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 648, #378360, "Keshe's Personal Ethics and Plasma Color Theory"]. These are Keshe's own statements about how he was formed. They do not interpret the texts discussed above.

Key points

- The triad *humata, hukhta, hvarshta* is the core of the creed; Boyce links it to the three coils of the *kusti* [#371117, #55117].
- Buch's ethics stresses truth without exception, contract, industry, marriage and charity, backed by the Arda Viraf's punishments [#55150].
- The Vendidad's purity law (Nasu, exposure, barashnum, protecting fire, water and earth) was read by Dubash in 1906 as a sanitary code [#55080].
- Killing *xrafstars* is a religious duty and a means of atonement; killing a water dog or a *vanghapara* carries heavy penalties, the second up to nine generations of the soul [#55040, #54991].

- The Pahlavi and Persian codes prescribe death or "no atonement" for sodomy, sorcery and some sexual offences, and detailed rules for menstrual seclusion [#55150, #55045].
- Boyce documents next-of-kin marriage from Cambyses to the tenth century AD. The Parsi view (Buch) is that it meant cousins; Gray calls it a Magian ideal [#55117, #55150].
- Dhalla links the purity laws to the Magi, and Masani defends them as Zoroaster's own teaching [#55113, #55152].
- Keshe credits the "Ethos of Zoroaster" and "Ethos of Mitra" with forming his non-violent code; these are claims about himself [#378360, #378266].

Chapter 13.

Fire, Magi and Temple: The Priesthood and Its Rituals

To outsiders, Zoroastrians became the "fire-worshippers" (*Guebres*, *Gabrs*), and the fire temple became their best-known institution. The library's scholarly sources, led by Mary Boyce, argue that the temple was not original. In their account, prayer before the hearth fire, under the open sky and on mountain tops, came first. The consecrated temple fire came late, under the Achaemenids, possibly as a counter to an image cult. Under the Sasanians it became the weapon of a deliberate iconoclasm. This chapter follows that history: the fire, the grades of fire, the Magi and the hereditary priesthood, the *yasna* liturgy, funerary exposure and the calendar of feasts.

Fire in the Gathas and the house-fire

Duchesne-Guillemin starts from the Gathas: "The role of fire in them is fundamental. Twice Zoroaster calls upon 'the fire of Ahura Mazda'." Offerings are made "to the fire of the Lord" in order to venerate *asha*, and when each element is placed under one of the Entities around Ahura Mazda, "Asa is the patron of Fire." He goes on to the later doctrine of five fires, cosmic and vital, noting a confusion between the first and the fifth (*spenishta*, "the most sacred") [Duchesne-Guillemin, Studies, #60380, "Le Zervanisme et les manuscrits de la Mer Morte"]. Boyce describes the daily ritual: the believer washes, unties the *kusti*, and prays "upright in the presence of his Maker, his eyes on the symbol of righteousness, fire" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch.3]. Moulton notes that the Parsi house-fire is itself sacred. A family moving within a town carries its fire with it, and "No Parsi may blow out a light" [Moulton, The Treasure of the Magi, #55091, Book II ch.3].

From fire-holder to temple: Boyce's thesis

Boyce finds no Achaemenid temple at Pasargadae. She finds only two plinths for worship in the open and three stone "fire-holders," which "cannot be called altars in the strict sense," since a Zoroastrian fire-stand simply "hold[s] the fire in whose presence believers pray." She thinks these bore the king's elevated hearth fire inside the palace. The Greeks said the Persians "despised temples," and Herodotus wrote that they built "no statues or temples or altars" [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Fires and fire altars"]. The change came with Artaxerxes II (404-359 BC). He was the first king to invoke "Ahuramazda, Anahita and Mithra," and, according to Berossus, he set up statues of "Aphrodite Anaitis" in the chief cities. Boyce holds that the temple fire was "a counter-measure to this image cult": the orthodox "yielded to the new fashion of erecting consecrated buildings," but "in place of a statue… they set a fire in the sanctuary" [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "The divine beings", "Icons and temples"]. She adds that the Vendidad's phrase *daitya gatu*, fire "in an appointed place," is "the only mention in the whole Avesta of temple fires" [Boyce, #55117, ch.6].

Boyce sets the label "fire-worshipper" in this history. Herodotus speaks of Persian reverence for fire but "does not single this out," and "it is only after the founding of temple fires that those of other faiths came to label Zoroastrians as 'fire-worshippers' " [Boyce, #55117, ch.5]. Parsi and Theosophical writers answer the label differently. Kapadia calls it "the old fallacy of confusing the symbol with the idea" [Kapadia, The Teachings of Zoroaster, #55090, "Fire, the Symbol of Purity"]. Moulton reports that "educated Parsis always protest vehemently that for them there is one God" [Moulton, #55091, Book II ch.3]. Fluegel compares Parsi fire-lore with Hebrew and Brahmanical rites [Fluegel, The Zend-Avesta and Eastern Religions, #55079]. Olcott links the ritual purification of fires to "this ancient art of drawing fire from heaven… taught in the Samothracian and Kabiric Mysteries" [Olcott, The Spirit of Zoroastrianism, #55087]. Annie Besant gives an occult account, which she offers as Theosophical teaching: as Zarathushtra spoke, "there was at first no fire at the altar at his side; there was sandalwood in fragrant heaps… As the prophet stood there He held a Rod of which every occultist knows, a Rod, a copy of which was used in the Mysteries filled with the living fire of the upper spheres" [Besant, Four Great Religions, #55017, "Zoroastrianism"].

The grades of fire and Sasanian iconoclasm

Boyce dates the later grades of fire, at least in embryo, to the end of the Achaemenid period. The great "cathedral" fires were dedicated to Verethraghna, yazata of Victory (*Atakhsh i Varahram*, Atash Bahram), and formed "from the embers of many kinds of ordinary fires." The lesser "Fire of Fires" (*Atash Aduran*) was formed from hearth fires of each social class, "roughly equivalent to the parish churches of Christendom" [Boyce, #55117, ch.5]. The Sasanians made the system an instrument of policy: "they forbade the use of images in worship… statues were removed from consecrated buildings, and, whenever possible, sacred fires were installed in their place." Ardashir I smashed statues of the dead in Armenia. The high priest Kirder boasted that "images were destroyed and the lurking places of devs demolished," since iconoclasts held that statues were inhabited by demons [Boyce, #55117, ch.7 "Iconoclasm and sacred fires"]. When an image was removed from a humble shrine, it might be replaced by a "Little Fire," *Adurog i pad dadgah*, "abbreviated in modern times to Dadgah," which a layman in a state of purity could tend [Boyce, #55117, ch.7]. The same campaign also served central power: Ardashir "razed the temples and confiscated the endowments" of the vassal kings' dynastic fires, so that "only one regnal fire might burn in Iran" [Boyce, #55117, ch.7].

Moulton describes the three Parsi grades as they existed about 1916. An Atash Behram "has to be compounded of sixteen different fires." One of them is fire from a burning corpse, purified by kindling sandalwood through a perforated spoon "ninety-one times"; lightning-fire needs ninety purifications, and fire from flint 144. An Atash Adaran combines four hearth fires, each purified thrice, and a Dadgah uses an ordinary house-fire. The first Indian Atash Behram was at Sanjan and has been at Udwada "since 1743" [Moulton, #55091, Book II ch.3].

Grade (modern name)	Sasanian / older name	Composition (as the sources give it)	Rough analogy
Atash Bahram	Atakhsh i Varahram	16 fires incl. corpse- and lightning-fire, long purification	"cathedral" (Boyce)
Atash Adaran	Atakhsh i Aduran	hearths of the four classes, each purified thrice	"parish church" (Boyce)
Dadgah	Adurog i pad dadgah	an ordinary hearth fire; layman may tend	replacement for images (Boyce)

The three great fires and the movement of fires

The three greatest fires, Adur Burzen-Mihr, Adur Farnbag and Adur Gushnasp, were "if not already enthroned under the Achaemenians… installed early in the Parthian period." By Sasanian times their origins "had become wrapped in mystery." Legend held that Ahuramazda created them to protect the world and that they once rode the mythical bull Srisok to light a night crossing of the sea. Adur Burzen-Mihr, on Mount Revand in Parthia, was the Parthians' own fire, said to have been installed by Vishtaspa himself [Boyce, #55117, ch.6 "Fire temples and image shrines"]. Fires could also be carried. In her later articles Boyce records that "the chief Fire of Tehran was brought by two priests from Yazd… across the Central Persian desert, by the old caravan-route past Jangak-i Biyabanak." She adds that "the foundation of the Atash Bahrams of Yazd and Kirman is lost in antiquity," although a repair of the Kerman fire is on record [Boyce, Selected Writings 1955-2005, #54999].

The Magi: a Median tribe and the Babylonian parallel

Boyce follows Herodotus (I.101): the *magoi* were one of the six Median tribes, "a learned, sacerdotal one, which provided priests not only for the other Medes but also for the Persians," and "may well have formed a stiff obstacle to the western spread of Zoroastrianism" [Boyce, #55117, ch.5]. Herodotus reported that "no sacrifice can be offered without a magus." He also saw the magi kill every creature "save only dogs and men" [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Practices of the faith"]. Geller, writing as an Assyriologist, says that "essentially all we know from Greek eyewitness accounts is that magi worshipped at fire altars." The "most distinctive feature of Persian ritual was the sacrifice of horses to gods, which is unprecedented in Mesopotamia." The Akkadian loanword *magušu* died out "possibly because the role of the magus was so closely identified with that of the mašmaššu (exorcist) that the loanword became redundant." In his view, the magi's prestige at the Persian court helped raise the Babylonian exorcist clans to dominance [Geller, Ancient Babylonian Medicine, #69076, "Medicine and Philosophy"]. Jackson notes that the classical writers present all the Achaemenid kings as "followers of the Magi, despite the Magophonia of Darius," the feast that commemorated a massacre of Magi. The Pahlavi Denkard says that "on account of the Magianship of Kai-Vishtasp he was suitable for the sovereignty" [Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, #55164, ch.X §§90-91].

Priesthood, liturgy and the dead

Boyce traces the clerical titles. *Herbad* (from Avestan *aethrapati*) seems to have been a Parthian dignity. *Mobad* comes from Old Persian *magupati*, "lord of priests," and ordinary Sasanian priests were simply *mog* [Boyce, #55117, chs.6-7]. Moulton found the Parsi priesthood "strictly hereditary." No one could be recruited from outside, and a family lost eligibility after three generations in lay dress. Grades ran from *Ervad/Herbad* to *Mobed* to *Dastur*, and a Mobed serving the inner rites must repeat the nine-day *barashnum* "for a journey by rail or by sea, or even the falling off of his turban." He also records, critically, that many priests recited the Yasna "without understanding a word of it" [Moulton, #55091, Book II ch.2 "The Priesthood"]. The *Textual Sources* volume explains the daily *yasna* as sanctifying "the seven creations, each of which was represented there: earth in the ritual precinct; water and fire in vessels; the stone of the sky in the pestle and mortar for the 'haoma' pressing; plants in the haoma," together with the animal offering and the priest as man [Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, §11.6].

For the dead, Boyce notes a contradiction. Exposure was the orthodox rite, yet the kings embalmed their dead and laid them in rock tombs. "There is no sanction for such a practice in the Avesta," so the kings apparently "regard[ed] themselves as above this particular religious law." Herodotus says that ordinary Persians covered the corpse "with wax and bury it in the earth," while the magi let it be "torn by bird or dog." The oldest archaeological evidence for exposure is the ossuary (*astodana*) of Artimas in Lycia, about 400 BC [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Achaemenian palaces and tombs"]. Pompeius Trogus says of the Parthians that "their general mode of sepulture is rending to pieces by birds or dogs" [Boyce, #55117, ch.6 "Funerary practices"]. Moulton describes the Parsi Tower of Silence and the rite around it: the "four-eyed" dog of the *sagdid*, corpse-bearers (*nasasalars*) working in linked pairs, the furrow (*kasha*) drawn three times round the corpse, and the deathbed *Patet* confession [Moulton, #55091, Book II ch.3].

The seven feasts and the calendar schism

Boyce writes that Zoroaster's second "strict obligation" was the seven feasts: six *gahambars* (Maidhyoi-zaremaya, Maidhyoi-shema, Paitishahya, Ayathrima, Maidhyairya, Hamaspathmaedaya) and No Ruz, the feast of fire, which "foreshadows Frasho-kereti" [Boyce, #55117, ch.3]. The later Achaemenids created

a 360-day Zoroastrian calendar with a yazata for every day. Ardashir's reform added five "Gatha" days, which people called "stolen," and observances were duplicated. The quarrel over which No Ruz was true, 1 or 6 Farvardin, outlasted the Sasanian era [Boyce, #55117, chs.5, 7 "Calendar changes"]. Among the Parsis, Moulton dates the Kadmi-Shahenshahi schism to 6 June 1745. In 1916 the Shahenshahis kept Naoroz on 11 September and the Kadmis on 12 August, since "the necessary intercalation has been dropped for nearly nine hundred years by the September party and for a thousand years by the August" [Moulton, #55091, Book II ch.2]. Pithavala's pamphlet argues for a fixed, equinoctial "true" year [Pithavala, The True Zoroastrian Year, #60427].

Key points

- Duchesne-Guillemin notes that the Gathas twice invoke "the fire of Ahura Mazda"; prayer before the hearth fire is the basic rite [#60380, #55117].
- Boyce holds that temple fires began under the later Achaemenids, probably as an orthodox answer to Artaxerxes II's Anahita images [#55117].
- The Sasanians enforced iconoclasm and replaced statues with Bahram, Aduran and Dadgah fires; Kirder held that images housed demons [#55117].
- The three great fires (Burzen-Mihr, Farnbag, Gushnasp) are legendary in origin; fires could be carried, as from Yazd to Tehran [#55117, #54999].
- The Magi were a Median priestly tribe. Geller sets them beside the Babylonian *mašmaššu* and notes horse sacrifice as a distinctively Persian rite [#69076].
- Moulton describes a hereditary priesthood (Ervad, Mobed, Dastur) and the 16-fire Atash Behram [#55091].
- Royal embalming conflicted with exposure; the Towers of Silence carry on the Vendidad rite [#55117, #55091].
- Parsi and Theosophical writers (Kapadia, Olcott, Besant) answer the "fire-worshipper" label in different ways; Besant's "Rod" story is an occult claim [#55090, #55087, #55017].

Chapter 14.

The Achaemenid Kings and Ahuramazda: Religion and Empire, 550-330 BC

The Achaemenid empire of Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes was the first world state whose rulers proclaimed that they ruled "by the favour of Ahuramazda." Whether these kings were Zoroastrians in the full sense is one of the oldest disputes in Iranian studies. Their inscriptions praise Ahuramazda and condemn the Lie, but they never name Zarathushtra. Their policy toward subject peoples, the Judeans above all, also carries what the nineteenth-century scholar L. H. Mills called "the Persian question" into the study of the Bible. This chapter sets out the evidence and the rival readings as the library's sources give them, and ends with Mehran Keshe's use of the period as a model for his own politics.

Medes, Persians and the coming of the faith

Boyce's narrative begins with the Medes and Persians. They entered western Iran separately from the eastern Iranians among whom Zarathushtra preached, and they lived for centuries beside Assyria, Urartu, Elam and Babylon. They "may therefore have looked down on their fellow-Iranians in the east." The Median priestly tribe of the *magi* "may well have formed a stiff obstacle to the western spread of Zoroastrianism" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch.5 "The Medes, the Persians and Zoroaster"]. In her account the faith probably reached the west in the last decades of the Median empire, after the Medes and Babylon destroyed Assyria in 614-612 BC. It came through missionary priests and through eastern hostages and princesses at the Median court. Cyrus, who rebelled in 549, found it "a long-established faith," and the Greeks learned of Zoroaster as a figure of immense antiquity: Xanthos put him 6000 years before Xerxes, Eudoxus and

Aristotle 6000 years before Plato's death [Boyce, #55117, ch.5]. Ragozin's popular history of 1888 likewise takes the sixth Median tribe on Herodotus' list, the Magi, to be "the priests, forming a separate body" [Ragozin, Media, Babylon and Persia, #360912].

Cyrus and Cambyses

Cyrus left only brief inscriptions at Pasargadae and "no declaration of his religious beliefs." His sacred precinct, with two plinths and three stone fire-holders, and his naming of a daughter Atossa (Hutaosa, the name of Vishtaspa's queen) are what Boyce reads as signs of the faith. She calls his rule "that of a loyal Mazda-worshipper." He "made no attempt... to impose the Iranian religion on his alien subjects" [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Cyrus"]. His body was embalmed and laid in a stone tomb, not exposed. Boyce explains this as a royal exemption, kings regarding "themselves as above this particular religious law." She ties it to belief in the royal *khvarenah* abiding at the tomb. Cambyses endowed a daily sheep and a monthly horse sacrifice there, kept up for two hundred years until Alexander [Boyce, #55117, ch.5]. Jackson adds the evidence of non-Iranian texts. In the Babylonian Cyrus Cylinder, Cyrus calls himself "the chosen one of the god Marduk" who returned exiled gods to their homes. Cambyses ordered the desecrated temple of Neit at Sais repaired. Jackson concludes that their dealings with foreign religions show "the attitude of the statesman rather than the religious devotee" [Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, #55164, ch.X §89].

Darius, Behistun and the Lie

The Behistun relief and trilingual text (Old Persian, Elamite, Babylonian), carved on a cliff above the Babylon-Ecbatana road, tell how Darius fought nineteen battles in a year against "impostors" after Cambyses' death, the Magian Gaumata first among them. Henry Rawlinson copied the Old Persian text from 1835 [Wikipedia: Behistun inscription]. Boyce reads Darius as "a devout believer, convinced... that he had a divine mandate to rule the world," and quotes him: "A great God is Ahuramazda, who created this earth, who created yonder sky, who created man, who created happiness for man, who made Darius king" (Naqsh-i Rustam A). Each rebellion was the work of *Drauga*, the Lie, the Old Persian form of the Gathic *druj*: "Thou who shalt be king hereafter, protect thyself vigorously from Drauga" (Behistun IV.37-8). In his own words, he received Ahuramazda's

aid "because I was not hostile, I was not deceitful… Neither to the weak nor to the powerful did I do wrong." Elsewhere he says: "Those Elamites were faithless and by them Ahuramazda was not worshipped." Yet the Persepolis Elamite tablets show him funding Elamite gods from his treasury [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Darius the Great"]. Mills, translating the "sculptured texts," asks under the heading "Dualism in the Inscription?" whether the Lie stands as a counter-power. He observes that Auramazda "is signally the creator of what is 'good' " and "did not make evil," as Yahweh is said to do in Isaiah 45. He renders the rebel as "a (political) intriguer… (a revolutioniser, lit., 'a liar')" [Mills, Our Own Religion in Ancient Persia, #55044, "The sculptured texts of Behistun, Persepolis"]. Jackson finds truth inculcated "as the very foundation of the code of ethics." He adds that the standard "seems to us to be slightly lowered by the extreme cruelty of the punishments which Darius inflicted, as we know from his own words" [Jackson, #55164, ch.X §88].

Boyce links Darius' self-image to doctrine. On his tomb at Naqsh-i Rustam the king prays before a fire on a three-stepped stand. He is borne by thirty peoples and flanked by the six nobles who helped him to the throne, "as the six Amesha Spentas stand… on either side of Ahuramazda." Above hovers the winged-circle symbol, read either as *khvarenah* or as Ahuramazda himself [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Achaemenian palaces and tombs"]. Roux, writing on sacral kingship, warns against overreading: "The imposing stature of the Achaemenid king on the reliefs attests not his divinity but only his supremacy." The Persian king is "a chosen one of the supreme God. The God sought him; he found him; he made him king" [Roux, Regele, #15817, "Regele iranian"; translated from the Romanian].

The silence about Zarathushtra

Moulton (1912) states the problem plainly: "what of his failure to mention Zarathushtra himself, Angra Mainyu, and the Amesha Spenta?" Against L. H. Gray, who saw Darius' restoration of the *ayadana* (places of worship) and his letter to the satrap Gadatas protecting Apollo's shrine as "polytheistic" policy alien to Zoroastrian teaching, Moulton argues that "Darius was no fanatic" and that his position "was remarkably like that of King David." He finds the Amesha Spenta ideas "not far away." *Vashna Auramazdaha*, "by grace or will of Auramazda" (forty-one times in the inscriptions), echoes Vohu Manah, and *arstam*, "uprightness," answers to the yazata Arshtat. The Lie supplies what Angra Mainyu would. "After much hesitation… and not a few pendulum swings," he gives "my vote Aye" that Zarathushtra "comes into Darius's

spiritual ancestry" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II "Before Zarathushtra"]. Jackson notes that the classical writers never name Zoroaster with any king, apart from Plato's *Alcibiades*, which has royal children taught "the Magism of Zoroaster the Ormazdean." His conclusion is that for Artaxerxes I-III and Darius III "everybody is agreed" that they were adherents, while for Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius I and Xerxes "the special question… has been left open" [Jackson, #55164, ch.X §§90, 92a]. Boyce sees the silence as a convention, since "the same curious omission is found in the royal inscriptions of the later Sasanians, and even in those of their great high priest, Kirder" [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Xerxes"].

Question	Moulton (1912)	Jackson (1928)	Boyce (1979)
Was Darius Zoroastrian?	"Aye," with hesitation	Open for early kings	Yes, devout
Silence on Zarathushtra	Explained by royal and Persian idiom	Notes only *Alcibiades*	Same as Sasanian convention
Tolerance of foreign cults	Real belief plus policy	Statesmanship	Orthodox "broad tolerance"
Royal tombs	(not decisive)	Pahlavi tradition	Royal exemption from exposure

Xerxes, the daivas and the later kings

Xerxes' inscription from Persepolis says that where "previously the Daivas were worshipped… I destroyed that sanctuary of the Daivas, and I proclaimed: 'The Daivas shall not be worshipped!'… there I worshipped Ahuramazda with proper rites, in accordance with asha." Boyce reads this as "the religious struggle initiated by the prophet… being carried on centuries later by his followers in the west." She takes it as action against fellow Iranians rather than subject peoples [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Xerxes"]. Moulton, writing before that text was found, judged that "religion meant much less to him than to his great father." He accepts as "entirely credible" Herodotus' report that at Nine Ways the Magi buried nine boys and girls alive, and that Amestris, Xerxes' wife, buried fourteen children of noble Persians to propitiate "the god who is said to dwell beneath the earth" [Moulton, #55011, Lecture II]. Boyce places the invocation of "Ahuramazda, Anahita and Mithra" under Artaxerxes II, along with the founding of the Anahita image cult (see ch.13). She dates the Zurvanite heresy and the creation of the Zoroastrian calendar to the late Achaemenid period, and with them the

"three world Saviours" scheme of millennia [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "The Zurvanite heresy", "The three world Saviours"]. In the Pahlavi tradition, Jackson notes, the Bahman Yasht credits "Artakhshir the Kaianian" with making "the religion current in the whole world." The Denkard says that "Darai, son of Darai" ordered two written copies of the Avesta to be kept [Jackson, #55164, ch.X §91].

The Persepolis ritual evidence

Archaeology complicates both the textbook "fire temple" and the purely Zoroastrian reading. The Oriental Institute's *Ritual Landscape at Persepolis* (SAOC 72) catalogues the seals on the Persepolis Fortification tablets. It concludes that scenes of fires on stepped structures show "multiple types of ritual activities for multiple deities," and that their variety "is not… conducive to a reading of the scenes as the worship of sacred fire per se" [SAOC 72, The Ritual Landscape at Persepolis, #60404, §3.4]. Geller, from the Babylonian side, notes that Cyrus had medicinal plants gathered for his troops. Following Briant, he holds that the specialists concerned "were none other than the magi" [Geller, Ancient Babylonian Medicine, #69076].

Cyrus, the Judeans and the "Persian question"

Boyce writes that Cyrus "permitted [the Jews] to return from exile in Babylon and to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem." Second Isaiah hails him as messiah and for the first time celebrates Yahweh as Creator, "as Ahura Mazda had been celebrated by Zoroaster." She takes these verses as "the first imprint of that influence which Zoroastrianism was to exert so powerfully on post-Exilic Judaism." The doctrines that "came to be adopted by various Jewish schools" include one Creator God, an evil power not under his control, a cosmic Saviour, heaven and hell, individual judgment, resurrection and a Last Judgment [Boyce, #55117, ch.5 "Cyrus", "The spread of Zoroaster's teaching"]. Mills makes the strongest claim. Pre-exilic Israel was "without a pointed hope of any such an Immortality… without a definitive Judgment, without a Resurrection." The captives then found that "their own fresh ideas upon futurity were an ancient creed with their new-found friends." He argues for "a very strong and completely surrounding and enveloping later and supervening influence of the North Persian One-Godism, Angelology, Immortality, Soteriology, Judgment, Resurrection, Millennium, Heaven, and Recompense." He rejects only the view that the

Persians "originally and first of all taught the Jews these things in their full… shape" [Mills, #55044, Second Lecture]. Carter's study is more cautious. He notes that in the period of contact "not only a complete system of angels was developed," but he stresses that the Jews "conceived of Satan as a fallen creature," far from equal to Yahweh, unlike Ahriman [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114]. Ragozin records the opposite position, held by scholars "much inclined to attribute the similarity to direct Hebrew influences." She dates possible contact to the eighth century BC, when Sargon of Assyria settled Israelite deportees in the cities of the Medes [Ragozin, #360912]. Jackson adds that the Elephantine papyri show Cambyses' and Darius II's tolerance toward the Jews, "bearing out the literary tradition of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah" [Jackson, #55164, ch.X §89].

Keshe's reading of the Persian peace

In KSW 590 (15 May 2025), discussing a Keshe Foundation peace agreement and a "World Universal Currency," Keshe says: "Go back to the history of Iran. Kourosh and Darius, kings came and they gave their crown to become part of the Persian Empire, because it was peace time… Whenever has been peace… Man's technological knowledge has grown so rapidly, because Man doesn't need to fight." He presents this as a precedent for plasma technology replacing war and for the "Keshe Coin." In the same session he predicts that the dollar "is going to collapse" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 590, #378302, "Global Peace, Currency Shift, and the Keshe Foundation Agreement"]. This is Keshe's own historical reading and political programme.

Key points

- Boyce holds that the Medes and Persians received Zoroastrianism as an ancient eastern faith; the Magi were a Median priestly tribe [#55117].
- Darius rules "by the grace of Ahuramazda" and treats rebellion as the Lie (*drauga*); Behistun is the key text [#55117, #55044].
- None of the inscriptions names Zarathushtra or Angra Mainyu. Moulton votes "Aye" to Darius' Zoroastrianism, Jackson leaves the early kings open, and Boyce reads the silence as a royal convention [#55011, #55164, #55117].

- Xerxes' daiva inscription records the destruction of a daiva sanctuary; Moulton's earlier picture of Xerxes rests on Herodotus' reports of live burials [#55117, #55011].
- Roux holds that the reliefs show the king's supremacy, not divinity; the Persepolis seals point to many cults, not fire-worship alone [#15817, #60404].
- The Cyrus Cylinder (Marduk) and the restoration of Judah show policy-driven tolerance [#55164, #55117].
- On Persian influence on post-exilic Judaism, Mills and Boyce argue for strong influence, Carter for more limited influence, and Ragozin reports the counter-view of Hebrew influence [#55044, #55117, #55114, #360912].
- Keshe uses Kourosh and Darius as a model of peace and technological growth for his currency and peace agenda [#378302].

Chapter 15.

Throne and Altar: Parthian Tolerance and the Sasanian Church-State

Between Alexander's conquest (331 BC) and the Arab conquest (651), Zoroastrianism went through two very different political settings. Under the Seleucids and the Arsacid (Parthian) kings it was the faith of a loosely held empire made up of regional priesthoods. Under the Sasanians (224-651) it became an imperial orthodoxy, with a single canon, a hierarchy headed by a "high priest of high priests", and a policy of persecution. The library's sources disagree about how unified this "church" really was. Mary Boyce describes one created "under the direct and authoritarian control of Persia" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, "Tansar, a religious propagandist"]. Philip Wood holds that the royal mandate "does not seem to have been monopolized by any 'Zoroastrian church' " [Wood, text catalogued as Drama of the Divine Economy, #55093]. This chapter sets out both views and the evidence each relies on.

The "accursed" Alexander and the Seleucid interval

Boyce stresses that Alexander's invasion "had no religious impulse". Even so, it is Alexander, not his Seleucid successors, "who is execrated in Zoroastrian tradition, in which he is remembered as the 'accursed' (guzastag), an epithet which he shares with Ahriman alone". The charges against him, as she collects them, are these. A Sogdian fragment says he "killed magi". The Arda Viraz Namag (I.9) says he slew "many teachers, lawyers, herbads and mobads". The Greater Bundahishn (XXXIII.14) says he "quenched many fires" [Boyce, #55117, ch.6 "Alexander and Iran"]. West's Denkard gives the fullest legend. There had been "two written copies of the whole Avesta and Zand". Through "the evil-destined villain Alexander" the copy in "the fortress of documents" "came to be

burnt". The other copy fell to the Greeks, who translated it [West, Pahlavi Texts Part IV, #55048, Denkard]. Boyce herself puts the real loss in the oral tradition: the priests "were the living books of the faith". The Gathas survived because every working priest knew them by heart [#55117, ch.6].

Under the Seleucids, Boyce argues, the Macedonians took over Persia's political authority but "could not do so in the religious one". The priests of each province therefore "pursued, it seems, independent courses, maintaining only fraternal links with one another". The rise of separate regional scripts derived from Aramaic reflects this [#55117, ch.6 "The Seleucids and Iran"].

Boyce's account also takes in the borderlands. The Kushans of Bactria struck coins showing fourteen or fifteen yazatas, among them Miiro (Mithra), Orlango (Verethraghna) and Pharro (Khvarenah), before they turned to Mahayana Buddhism. She adds that the Buddhist Maitreya "must owe something to Zoroastrian teaching about the Saoshyant". Armenia was ruled after AD 62 by the Arsacid Tiridates, whom Roman sources call a magus, and was "a predominantly Zoroastrian land" until it converted to Christianity, "partly, it seems, in defiance of the Sasanians" [#55117, ch.6 "Eastern Iranian borders", "Western Iranian borders: Armenia"]. Boyce and Grenet's third volume covers these Macedonian, Roman, Anatolian and Armenian settings in detail [Boyce & Grenet, A History of Zoroastrianism vol. 3, #54984].

The Arsacids: a federation of fires and image shrines

According to Boyce, the Arsacids "ruled as high kings over vassal kings and great nobles". In the same way the Parthian priests "exercised leadership… but did not seek to impose conformity in all matters" [#55117, ch.6 "The rise of the Parthians"]. Strabo is cited for a royal council of "the lords spiritual and temporal". Boyce suggests that Parthian prelates bore the title *herbad*, that a *magbad* headed a fire temple, and that a *bagnapat* served a *bagin*, or image shrine. Vassal kings kept dynastic fires of their own. Statues served both the yazatas and the cult of the dead, and coins showed Ahuramazda, Mithra and Verethraghna in the guise of Zeus, Apollo and Herakles [#55117, ch.6 "Ecclesiastical organization", "Fire temples and image shrines"]. The tradition that the Avesta was collected begins here:

> "Valakhsh the Arsacid commanded that a memorandum be sent to the provinces (instructing them) to preserve… whatever had survived in purity of the Avesta

> and (its) Zand… scattered by the havoc and disruption of Alexander." [Denkard, in Boyce, #55117, ch.6 "The Avesta"; cf. West, #55048]

Boyce tentatively dates the compilation of the Vendidad to this effort. Her picture of the period is one of tolerance. The Arsacids "showed forbearance… to unbelievers" and had good relations with the Jews, and "it was out of a Judaism enriched by five centuries of contact with Zoroastrianism that Christianity arose in the Parthian period" [#55117, ch.6 "Unbelievers"].

Ardashir, Tansar and the twin pillars of state and faith

Ardashir I came from the family that guarded the Anahid temple at Istakhr. Boyce says he chose "religious propaganda" as one of his tools [#55117, ch.7]. Duchesne-Guillemin records the Pahlavi view that "Artaxsër, was also the founder of Mazdean orthodoxy". He also records the maxim attributed to Ardashir: "religion and kingship are brothers, neither of which can do without the other". He then quotes Zaehner: "the Sassanian kings saw in Zoroastrianism the only answer to the rising dogmatisms of both Christianity and Manichaeanism" [Duchesne-Guillemin, The Religion of Ancient Iran, #38271].

Ardashir's chief priest was Tansar (Tosar). Geiger and Windischmann call him "the Airpatan Airpat, i.e., the head of the priests" and note that the Denkard authorised him "to collect the sacred texts". Their summary of his Letter lists among its themes the "superiority of the Persian race" and war against "the Romans, the successors of Alexander" [Windischmann & Geiger, Zarathushtra in the Gathas and in the Greek and Roman Classics, #55095]. For Boyce, the Letter is propaganda addressed to Gushnasp of Tabaristan. Tansar's case is that the faith had decayed so badly after Alexander that it "must needs be restored by a man of true and upright judgment" [Boyce, #55117, ch.7 "Tansar, a religious propagandist"]. He defends the bloodshed in these words:

> "Bloodshed among people of this kind, even if of a prodigality that seems to have no bound, is recognized by us as life and health, like the rain which quickens the earth." [Tansar Name 40, in Boyce, #55117, ch.7]

Boyce lists the measures Ardashir's regime carried through:

- a single church and a single canon, for which Tansar "selected one (?) tradition and left the rest out";

- a calendar reform whose five added days were resented as "stolen";
- iconoclasm, with cult statues replaced by fires;
- the quenching of the vassal kings' dynastic fires. Gushnasp protested that "no one has ever before presumed so far against religion".

[#55117, ch.7 "Calendar changes", "Iconoclasm and sacred fires"]

On the Naqsh-i Rustam relief, Ardashir's horse tramples the Arsacid Ardaban V while Ohrmazd's horse tramples Ahriman, so that Ardaban is "equated thus in his defeat with the powers of evil" [#55117, ch.7].

The dynasty's founding legend is the Karnamag of Ardashir. The library holds it in Sanjana's edition [Sanjana (ed.), The Karname-i Artakhshir i Papakan, #54960], but no text has been extracted from that file. The outline therefore comes from Boyce's account of the Khwaday Namag. Papak, "enlightened by dreams", gives his daughter to a shepherd, the last of a hidden line of Sasans descended from the last Achaemenid king, and Ardashir is born of the union. Boyce calls this a "faked" genealogy. In her view it blotted out "a whole glorious epoch, lasting half a millennium" of Parthian Zoroastrianism [#55117, ch.8 "Religious literature and royal propaganda"].

The counter-view: a mandate without a monopoly

Wood's text is catalogued as *Drama of the Divine Economy*, but the extracted file is his study of the Chronicle of Seert, with a chapter titled "Collaborators and Dissidents". He accepts that the early Sasanians "underscored their connection to the fire shrine dedicated to Anahita at Istakhr". He also accepts that Ardashir's and Shapur I's rock inscriptions "commemorate their divine mandate, which flowed from their deeds of martial prowess, especially their defeat of the Romans". But he goes on: "this divine mandate does not seem to have been monopolized by any 'Zoroastrian church': the institutional sponsorship of the magi by the shah seems only to have…" The rest of the sentence narrows how far that sponsorship went [Wood, #55093, ch.1].

Dhalla also sees no monolith. He says Zoroastrianism "split up into a number of sects" and that the church "had lost all control over its adherents" [Dhalla, Zoroastrian Theology, #55166, ch.XXIV "Sects"]. Boyce herself concedes that Iran "was too vast a country… for the state religion ever to obliterate all other creeds" [#55117, ch.7].

Question	Boyce (#55117)	Wood (#55093) / Dhalla (#55166)
One church?	Yes: one church, one canon, one hierarchy under Persian control	Magi sponsored by the shah, not monopolising; many sects
Basis of royal legitimacy	Anahid's fire, investiture by Ohrmazd, Kayanian genealogy	Martial prowess against Rome, proclaimed in inscriptions
Image of the Parthians	Tolerant and orthodox, later blackened by Sasanian propaganda	Not addressed

Kirder, Mani and the smiting of unbelievers

Kirder was the only commoner granted royal-style inscriptions. He rose from *herbad* under Shapur I to "mobad of Ohrmazd" under Hormizd I, and then to "mobad and judge of the whole empire" under Vahram II [#55117, ch.7 "The rise of Kirder", "The summit of Kirder's power"]. His inscriptions boast that "images were destroyed and the lurking places of devs demolished", and that

> "Jews and Buddhists and Brahmans and Mandaeans and Christians… and Manichaeans are being smitten in the land." [Kirder, SM 29-30, in Boyce, #55117, ch.7]

He also promoted next-of-kin marriage (*khvedodah*), which the royal house practised. Boyce describes Mani as a Parthian noble who presented his religion "in a Zoroastrian guise" and was protected by Shapur I. Kirder, she writes, then "compassed the death of Mani, prevailing on Vahram to have him tried and executed" [#55117, ch.7 "The prophet Mani"].

Rome, Armenia and the Christians

Boyce writes that once Constantine made Christianity the faith of Rome, "political considerations began to intensify religious animus". Shapur II taxed Christians at double rates for sharing "the sentiments of Caesar our enemy". In the Syriac martyr acts the magi complain: "we cannot serve the sun, nor purify

the air… because of the Nazarenes" [#55117, ch.8 "Upholding a Zurvanite orthodoxy"].

Dhalla calls Christianity "the most aggressive" of the alien faiths. He cites a bishop who told his congregation that the king's soul would burn "in hell-fire with Satan". He also records that "apostasy was made a capital crime by the Zoroastrian Church". Citing the *Shahrestaniha-i Eran*, he adds: "Yazdagard I, who favoured the Christian cause, was hailed by the Christians as the blessed king, but was branded by his own co-religionists as the wicked sinner" [Dhalla, #55166, "The active propaganda of the faith"].

Boyce records provocations from the Christian side too, such as a priest who "extinguished a sacred fire and celebrated mass in its place". She also notes Vahram V's exhumation of the Christian dead, and Peroz's relaxation of persecution once Byzantium had rejected the Nestorians [#55117, ch.8].

The Parsi writer Jhabvala explains the policy as rivalry with Constantine's model. As he puts it, "if Zoroastrianism were to be regenerated in its original purity it must get state aid, just as Constantine had adopted Christianity as State religion". Yet he concludes that "tolerance was the key-note of Sassanian Zoroastrianism" [Jhabvala, Zoroastrianism in Sassanian Times, #55105].

Mazdak and Khosrow "the Just"

Boyce places Mazdak against a church that had become "a landowner on a large scale, with slaves as well as peasants". His gentle, Manichaean-coloured creed forbade killing and meat-eating. It sought "to have property held in common, and in this, his detractors say, he included women". Boyce suggests that this demand may have begun as a wish to free daughters and sisters from the harems of the nobles. Kavad I backed Mazdak, was deposed in 494, and then regained the throne. In 528 Khosrow arranged "what purported to be a banquet in honour of Mazdak, which ended in the slaughter of that prophet and many of his followers" [#55117, ch.8 "The Mazdakite movement"].

Casartelli dates the "Heresy of Mazdak" to 488. He calls Khosrow I's reign (531-579) "the golden age of the Pehlevi literature", the age of the Avestan alphabet and of flourishing Greek and Syriac learning [Casartelli, The Philosophy of the Mazdayasnian Religion under the Sassanids, #60415]. Khosrow's declaration in the Denkard reads: "We have no dispute with those who have other convictions".

The Great Avesta of twenty-one nasks was published in his council [#55117, ch.9 "Khosrow 'the Just' ", "The written Avesta"].

Van Bladel challenges the "established fact" of "ancient Iranian orality". He cites Ibn al-Muqaffa' and the wide range of Middle Persian words for books (*madayan*, *namag*, *nibeg*) as evidence of a culture with written literature [van Bladel, Written Middle Persian Literature under the Sasanids, #55144].

A modern comparison: Keshe on prophets and divisions

In KSW 176, "Blueprint for Peace in the Islamic World" (2017), Mehran Keshe claims that "the name of God has become a passage for killing". In his view the Sunni-Shia conflict is "a war between the religion within the religion" in which "in fact they are both wrong", because "who followed doesn't count, what is written and the message of the prophet counts". He also speaks of "72 divisions in Christianity" and calls for "100% taxes on religious organizations" [Keshe, KSW 176, #377819]. His thesis is that divisions are made by men and that rulers and priests take over the prophet's message. Set beside Tansar's openly stated licence for the king to remake the faith, it offers a modern outside comparison.

Key points

- Tradition calls Alexander *guzastag*, "accursed", a title he shares only with Ahriman, for killing priests, quenching fires and burning the Avesta [#55117; #55048].
- Boyce portrays the Arsacids as tolerant overlords of regional priesthoods, image shrines and dynastic fires. The decree of Valakhsh begins the collection of the Avesta [#55117].
- Pahlavi sources name Ardashir founder of orthodoxy and attribute to him the maxim that religion and kingship are brothers, "neither of which can do without the other" [#38271].
- Tansar's Letter justifies innovation and boundless bloodshed as the restoration of a faith ruined by Alexander [#55095; #55117].
- Kirder boasts of smiting Jews, Buddhists, Brahmans, Mandaeans, Christians and Manichaeans, and he secured Mani's execution [#55117].

- Wood and Dhalla dispute the idea of a monopolising "Zoroastrian church". Wood points to a mandate won in battle, Dhalla to a proliferation of sects [#55093; #55166].
- Mazdak's common ownership of property, and "his detractors say" of women, ended in the massacre of 528. Khosrow I's reign became the golden age of Pahlavi literature [#55117; #60415].
- Persecution of Christians followed the Roman frontier. Yazdegird I, a friend to Christians, became "the wicked sinner" in Zoroastrian memory [#55166].

Chapter 16.

Zurvan, Infinite Time: Heresy, Orthodoxy and the Sasanian Theological Dilemma

Zurvanism taught that Ohrmazd and Ahriman were twin sons of Infinite Time, *Zurvan akarana*. Few questions in Zoroastrian studies have divided scholars as sharply. There are two reasons. The evidence is contradictory: as Boyce puts it, "foreign sources for the late Achaemenian and Sasanian periods represent Persian Zoroastrianism as Zurvanite, whereas the native texts (almost all composed after the Muslim conquest) embody a predominately Mazdean orthodoxy" [Boyce, Selected Writings, #54999, "Some Reflections on Zurvanism"]. And the stakes are high, because the twin myth makes good and evil brothers. This chapter sets out the myth, the competing scholarly verdicts on it, its traces in Pahlavi texts, the dispute over the Mithraic lion-headed god, and the sects that Dhalla catalogues.

The myth of the doubting father

The fullest versions of the myth come from hostile Christian writers. Dhalla summarises the Armenian accounts of Eznik and Elishe. According to them, Zurvan "existed when the earth was not, and the heaven was not". He offered sacrifice for a thousand years to beget a son who would create the universe. A doubt then crossed his mind "lest his sacrifice should turn out fruitless", and he conceived two offspring, "one as the result of his sacrifice, the other as the outcome of the doubt". He vowed to give sovereignty to whichever was born first. Ohrmazd read his father's thought and told his twin, and "Ahriman thereupon perforated the womb and came into existence before Ormazd". Zurvan rejected "this ugly, dark creature". To keep his vow he decreed that "the empire of the

universe should be conjointly ceded to both Ormazd and Ahriman for nine thousand years", after which Ohrmazd would be free to deal with his brother as he wished [Dhalla, Zoroastrian Theology, #55166, ch.XXIV "Sects"]. Dhalla adds that Moses of Chorene had the Persians regard Time "as the source and father of existence". He also cites Theodore of Mopsuestia (via Photius) for a Zurvan who "offered sacrifice in order to beget Hormizdas, but gave birth to Hormizdas and Satan". In the Armenian historians, Mihr-Narseh, minister of Yazdegird II, speaks of Zurvan as "the prime originator of Ormazd and Ahriman" [#55166, ch.XXIV].

Boyce links the myth to its context. Mihr-Narseh's proclamation to the Armenians declared that Zurvan "existed before heaven and earth" and then went on "on orthodox lines" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch.8 "Upholding a Zurvanite orthodoxy"]. The Christian martyr Pusai mocked Shapur II on this point: "According to what the magi say, Ohrmazd is the brother of Satan" [#55117, ch.8]. A late Zoroastrian source that Boyce quotes, the Second Ulema-i Islam, gives the reasoning behind the myth: Zurvan alone "has always been and shall be for evermore... Yet for all the grandeur that surrounded him, there was none to call him Creator, for he had not brought forth creation" [#55117, ch.5 "The Zurvanite heresy"].

Duchesne-Guillemin: three Zurvanisms and a borrowed quaternity

Duchesne-Guillemin follows Zaehner in distinguishing three varieties. "First the Zandiqs derived all creation from infinite Space-Time, denied heaven and hell, did not believe in rewards and punishments, and did not admit the existence of the spiritual world. Secondly the astrological fatalists believed that not only man's earthly lot, but also his character were determined by Fate." Lastly "the Zurvanites proper regarded Infinite Time, in its personification as the god Zurvan, as being the father of the twin spirits of good and evil, Ohrmazd and Ahriman" [Duchesne-Guillemin, The Religion of Ancient Iran, #38271].

He finds traces of Zurvanism even in orthodox Pahlavi cosmology:

> "Zurvan had three associates, Light, Power, and Wisdom: the Mazdean simply substituted Ohrmazd for Power, called Light Space and Wisdom Religion, and kept Zurvan as Time." [#38271]

He also warns that recovering the history from undated Pahlavi writings "is a hazardous undertaking". Zaehner, who tried to trace "the oscillation between Zurvanism and Mazdeism in the course of the Sassanian period, has only partly succeeded" [#38271].

Boyce's verdicts: heresy, orthodoxy, or both?

Boyce's own position has three parts. On origins, she holds that the doctrine arose when western magi weighed Zoroaster's linear "Three Times" against "Babylonian speculations about history being divided into great recurrent cycles". The result "was the Zurvanite heresy, a development, it seems, of the late Achaemenian period". Its scriptural basis was Yasna 30.3 ("Truly there are two primal spirits, twins"). The Zurvanites "postulated, with scholastic ingenuity, that for twins there must be a father". She judges it "a deep and grievous heresy" that "betrayed Zoroaster's fundamental doctrine that good and evil are utterly separate". Yet because Zurvan was a remote first cause with "few, if any, observances", his followers could still call themselves "Mazda-worshippers" and "live in general harmony with the orthodox" [#55117, ch.5 "The Zurvanite heresy"].

On the early Sasanians, Boyce takes the Manichaean texts as decisive. Mani's Middle Persian scriptures rendered his supreme god as Zurvan and the First Man as Ohrmazd: "the first of many pieces of contemporary evidence which show that the Sasanians were Zurvanites". The Parthian missionaries, by contrast, avoided the name, and she suggests that this "was very probably the main point of difference between Parthian and Persian theology" [#55117, ch.7 "Zurvanism in the early Sasanian period"]. On the mid-Sasanian period she speaks of an established "Zurvanite orthodoxy". Shapur II named a daughter Zurvandukht. Mihr-Narseh named a son Zurvandad. She thinks it safe to assume that Adurbad i Mahraspandan, who survived molten metal poured on his breast, "was a Zurvanite" [#55117, ch.8]. Her conclusion is ironic: the dynasty presented as "the first creators and defenders of Zoroastrian orthodoxy" in fact "weakened the faith through giving prominence to their own Zurvanite beliefs" [#55117, ch.7 "Conclusion"].

Boyce's review of Zaehner's *Zurvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma* (1955) shows the scholarly dispute at close range. She detects two stages in Zaehner's book: "in chapters I-II Zurvanism is treated as a Zoroastrian heresy, influenced by Babylonian speculation, and coming into its own only with the Sasanian empire". Later

chapters move beyond this. Zaehner is said to find "a fusion of the personalities of Zurvan and Ohrmazd", carried so far that Zurvan is at times "formally identified… with Ohrmazd, the Creator". He also identifies three primal creators, "Time, Space, and Wisdom", deducing their roles from a Pahlavi version of the Siroza [#54999]. Zaehner credits a Sasanian figure with attempting to fuse "the rival schools of Mazdeanism and Zervanism", and adds: "The attempted fusion… was not complete; and it is thanks to his failure" that Zurvanite elements survive in the Pahlavi books [Zaehner, quoted in Boyce, #54999]. Boyce finds this argument "hard to follow" for "those who regard Zurvanism as a Zoroastrian heresy". She grants, however, that his analysis makes it "very likely… that there were different schools of Zurvanite thought" [#54999].

The two also disagree over Firdausi. Zaehner reads the fatalism of the *Shahnameh* as Zurvanite survival. Boyce answers: "Were it merely a question of a pervasively fatalistic outlook, one might be inclined to attribute this… to Firdausi's own time, or even to regard it as expressive of the heroic attitude in general (see H. Ringgren, Fatalism in Persian Epics, Uppsala, 1952)". Zaehner's case, she notes, rests on "one particular passage" [#54999].

Scholar	Origin	Sasanian status	Key evidence
Boyce (#55117)	Late Achaemenid magi, Babylonian stimulus	Royal "Zurvanite orthodoxy"	Manichaean "Zurvan"; theophoric names; Armenian reports
Zaehner (via #54999, #38271)	Heresy coming into its own under the Sasanians (early chapters)	Oscillation; failed fusion with Mazdeism	Siroza, *andarz*, *Shahnameh* fatalism
Duchesne-Guillemin (#38271)	Three types: Zandiq, fatalist, Zurvanite proper	Traces in orthodox cosmology	Light/Power/Wisdom quaternity
Dhalla (#55166)	A sect resolving dualism "into monotheism by the apotheosis of Time"	Formidable sect, absent from Pahlavi texts	Eznik, Elishe, Theodore, Shahrastani

Pahlavi traces: boundless time, long dominion and fate

The orthodox books keep Time as a creation or attribute of Ohrmazd. Dhalla notes that in the Pahlavi works Zurvan is "as cold and lifeless… as it was in the Avestan texts". Ohrmazd creates it, or "Boundless Time is eternally in Ormazd". The Zurvan myth itself "has left no traces whatever in the extant Pahlavi works" [#55166, ch.XXIV]. The Bundahishn nevertheless builds its cosmology on two kinds of time. Ohrmazd dwells in "endless light". When he foresees Ahriman's assault, he proposes a fixed contest: "so that the intermingling of the conflict may be for nine thousand years. For he knew that by appointing this period the evil spirit would be undone" [West (tr.), Pahlavi Texts Part I, Bundahishn ch.1, #55045]. Lincoln explains the scheme. Ahriman's Assault "replac[ed] an unchanging eternity ('infinite time,' zrwan akarana) with a period of turbulence and struggle ('long time,' zrwan dar(e)ga)", and "in that moment when demonic aggression made the celestial bodies start rotating, history proper began" [Lincoln, Anomaly, Science, and Religion, #55034].

The Menog-i Khrad, a work addressed to laymen, comes closest to a Zurvanite tone: "the affairs of the world of every kind proceed through destiny and time and the supreme decree of the self-existent eternity (zorvan), the king and long-continuing lord" [West (tr.), Pahlavi Texts Part III, Dina-i Mainog-i Khirad, #55047]. Dhalla gathers its fatalism under the heading "Fatalists". In this scheme the twelve constellations stand with Ohrmazd and the seven planets with Ahriman. The planets, "like brigands and highwaymen… rob the righteous of their good lot and bestow it upon the wicked". "Fate… is written on man's forehead". Dhalla also reports a balancing view. Vazurgmitra, Khosrow I's minister, taught that fate and exertion are "as closely linked together as are man's body and life". Tansar compared fate and free will to "two loads on the back of an animal". Dhalla concludes that "fatalism never came to be employed among the Zoroastrians as an excuse for cloaking man's indolence" [#55166, ch.XXIV "Fatalists"]. Lincoln's study of the planets shows how this astral demonology took shape. When Greek and Indian astronomy reached the late Sasanian court, the irregular, retrograde motion of the planets was explained by making them demons. The Greater Bundahishn calls them "the lying planets" and says "they are demons" [#55034].

The lion-headed god: Zurvan or Ahriman?

The Mithraic dispute turns on the lion-headed figure, entwined by a snake and marked with the zodiac. Zaehner states the issue: "The great Belgian scholar, Franz Cumont, had identified this sinister figure with the Iranian god of time and fate, Zurvan... and such was this scholar's immense prestige that lesser men followed all too tamely in his footsteps". Duchesne-Guillemin (*Ohrmazd et Ahriman*, p.128) and Zaehner himself (BSOAS 1955) replied that it "can scarcely have been other than the Zoroastrian devil, Ahriman". Their argument rests on the dedications: "there are none to Zurvan or to any corresponding Roman God of time or fate, but quite a number deo Arimanio". Zaehner links this to Plutarch's account of Persians who offered "offerings for averting evil" to Areimanios. Such worship was "absolutely anathema to any orthodox Zoroastrian". He sees survivals of such "devil-worship" (*divasnih*) in the Yezidis, the Mandaeans and the Ahl-i Haqq, and in a Luri folk epic, *Irradiant*, recorded by 'Ali Mirdrakvandi [Zaehner, Zoroastrian Survivals in Iranian Folklore, #55094].

Widengren holds the opposite view. He reconstructs a Mithraic pantheon with, "on the top of it... the god of eternity who is given various names, Aion, Saeculum, or Kronos, Saturnus. Behind these designations stands the Iranian god of Time and destiny, Zurvan". He finds Zaehner's identification of the lion-headed figure with Ahriman "rather difficult to understand" [Widengren, The Mithraic Mysteries in the Greco-Roman World, #38302]. Dhalla follows Cumont: Zurvan "accompanied Mithra in his migration to the far West and was placed at the pinnacle of the divine hierarchy in the Mithraic cult" [#55166, ch.XXIV]. Ries's Italian survey traces the classical witnesses to an early Zurvanism. Following Bousset, he concludes that "la religione zervanita era ben nota all'epoca di Alessandro" ("the Zurvanite religion was well known in Alexander's time"). He cites Berossus (c. 300 BC) for Zervan "come a uno dei principi della terra" ("as one of the principles of the earth") [Ries, Il Culto di Mithra, #38276, "Mithra, i Magi e lo zervanismo"].

Other sects and the long afterlife of Zurvan

Dhalla stresses how meagre the native record is: several sects known from Greek, Syriac and Armenian writers "are not even mentioned by name in the Iranian works". Eznik and Elishe say the Zoroastrians of their day were "split into two rival sects". Damascius, citing Eudemus, reports sects that

"held Space as the primordial being that created the rival spirits of goodness and evil" [#55166, ch.XXIV]. The Zurvanites were "the most formidable of the sects". They "evidently aimed at resolving the Zoroastrian dualism into monotheism by the apotheosis of Time", and they survived long after the empire fell: Shahrastani, in the twelfth century, "met the followers of this sect in his day" [#55166, ch.XXIV]. Boyce reports that rejection of the heresy finds expression in Denkard IX.30.4, and that it "finally disappeared some centuries after the coming of Islam". She also credits it with "enormous influence… on many Gnostic faiths", for which "the Three Times, the remote First Cause, and the lesser Creator of this world, were fundamental doctrines" [#55117, ch.5].

Key points

- In the myth Zurvan, doubting his sacrifice, conceives both Ohrmazd and Ahriman. Ahriman tears his way out first and receives a joint rule of 9,000 years. The full story comes mainly from Armenian and Syriac Christian writers [#55166; #55117].
- Duchesne-Guillemin, following Zaehner, distinguishes materialist Zandiqs, astral fatalists and "Zurvanites proper". He sees the triad of Light, Power and Wisdom recast in orthodox cosmology [#38271].
- Boyce places the heresy's origin in the late Achaemenid period and calls it the orthodoxy of the Sasanian court, a "deep and grievous heresy" that weakened the faith [#55117].
- Boyce's review of Zaehner records his shift from "heresy" to fusion theories, and her doubts about reading Firdausi's fatalism as Zurvanite (citing Ringgren) [#54999].
- The Pahlavi books keep Zurvan subordinate to Ohrmazd. They distinguish "infinite time" from the "long time" of conflict and contain strong astral fatalism [#55045; #55047; #55034; #55166].
- On the lion-headed Mithraic god, Cumont, Widengren and Dhalla read it as Zurvan/Aion. Duchesne-Guillemin and Zaehner read it as Ahriman, citing the *deo Arimanio* dedications [#55094; #38302].
- The Zurvanites outlived the empire. Shahrastani still met them in the twelfth century [#55166].

Chapter 17.

The End of Time: Pahlavi Literature, Judgment, Saviours and the Making-Wonderful

Zoroastrian eschatology has two levels. The first is individual: the soul is judged at the Chinvat Bridge on the fourth dawn after death. The second is universal: at the end of a fixed world history, a saviour born of the prophet's preserved seed raises the dead, a river of molten metal purges every soul, and creation is made new. The Gathas sketch this scheme, the Younger Avesta develops it, and the Pahlavi books of the Sasanian and early Islamic periods fill it out in detail (the Bundahishn, Denkard, Dadestan-i Denig, Bahman Yasht, Arda Viraz Namag and Menog-i Khrad). Its likeness to Jewish, Christian and Islamic apocalyptic has led some authors in the library to treat Iran as their source. Others are more cautious. This chapter sets out the doctrine as the sources present it, and then the debate over its influence.

Three nights and the fourth dawn

Pavry's systematic study follows the soul step by step. It stays near the body for three nights. "The souls, we are told, go to the account at the light of dawn in the period of Oshahin". As for the place of reckoning, "we are informed that it is on Mount Harburz (Alburz)", and "the Bundahishn expressly mentions that the Judges take account of the soul at the 'Peak of Judgment' (cikat i daitik)" [Pavry, The Zoroastrian Doctrine of a Future Life, #55149]. The struggle over the soul "goes on for three days and three nights, till the judges intervene on the dawn of the fourth day" [#55149].

The Pahlavi passages translated in *Textual Sources* give the scene in full:

> "And for three days and nights your soul will sit at the body's head. And on the fourth day at dawn, accompanied by the just Srosh and the good Vay and mighty Vahram, and opposed by Astvihad and the worse Vay and the demon Vizarsh... it will reach the high and terrible Chinvat Bridge, to which everyone comes." [Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, §§114-115]

The wicked soul spends those three nights weeping, "saying: 'Whither shall I go and whom shall I now take as refuge?' ". It sees "all the sins and wickednesses which it has done in the world". Then, "on the fourth day the demon Vizarsh comes and binds the wicked man's soul in the harshest way, and, in spite of opposition by just Srosh, leads it to the Chinvat Bridge" [#55116, §§159-162]. Boyce sees here an old belief that survived Zoroaster's reforms: the soul lingered three days and at daybreak on the fourth "went up, drawn by the rays of the rising sun, to face Mithra at the Chinvat Bridge" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, "The extension of purity laws"].

The judges, the balance and the Daena

According to Pavry, the tribunal is made up of Mithra, Sraosha and Rashnu. The texts speak of "the mediation of Mihr and Srosh and Rashnu, and the weighing of Rashnu the just, on the balance of the Spirits". Then "Rashnu the just exposes the soul of the wicked for (its) wickedness". A soul that has wronged another is held "at the Chinvat Bridge until its adversary arrives and exacts justice from it" [#55149]. Jackson notes that the idea of souls being weighed in the balance "is very old in Zoroastrian ethics", going back to Gathic passages such as Yasna 31.14 and 46.10 [Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, #55164].

At the bridge the soul meets its own *daena*. In the Avestan text translated in *Textual Sources*, the righteous soul hears: "Truly, youth of good thoughts, good words, good acts, good inner self (daena), I am your very own Daena" [#55116]. Mills renders the Avestan question as: "Who art thou, O Maiden, who art the most beautiful whom my eyes have seen?". He presents the figure as "an image representing its conscience" [Mills, Avesta Eschatology, #60373]. Elsewhere he notes that in Vendidad XIX.30 the soul is met "by a female form accompanied with dogs" [Mills, Our Own Religion in Ancient Persia, #55044]. For the sinner, Dhalla explains, the Avestan text is lost. But "from the similar account of the wicked soul's journey preserved in the Pahlavi scriptures" we learn that "the soul of the sinner is confronted by the personification of its own conscience in

the shape of an ugly old woman who mercilessly taunts it for the wicked life it has led" [Dhalla, Zoroastrian Theology, #55113].

The bridge itself changes with the traveller. Kenton, comparing it with the Norse Bifrost, quotes a Pahlavi description of it "like a beam of many sides, of whose edges there are some which are broad, and there are some which are thin and sharp; its broad sides are so large that its width is of twenty-seven…" [Kenton, The Book of Earths, #62090].

Three destinations wait beyond it. Jackson calls hell " 'the house of Falsehood' ", a "scene of frightful torment which rivals Dante's Inferno". Then, "with perfect logic Zoroastrianism taught also the existence of an intermediate or third place which was suited to the special cases in which the good and evil deeds, done in life, exactly balanced". This is Hamestagan. Jackson cites the Arda Viraz Namag, the Menog-i Khrad and the Dadestan-i Denig, and notes that according to the last it "is divided into two" [Jackson, #55164]. The Arda Viraz Namag is presented as an eyewitness tour: "The soul of Viraz went from his body to the Peak of the Law and the Chinvat Bridge; and after seven days and nights it returned and entered his body again" [#55116].

Twelve thousand years and the metal ages

The individual drama sits inside a cosmic timetable. In the Bundahishn, Ohrmazd foresees the Assault and offers Ahriman a fixed contest "so that the intermingling of the conflict may be for nine thousand years. For he knew that by appointing this period the evil spirit would be undone". Ahriman, "unobservant and through ignorance", accepts, "just like two men quarrelling together, who propose a time thus: Let us appoint such-and-such a day for a fight" [West (tr.), Pahlavi Texts Part I, Bundahishn ch.1, #55045]. West's introduction refers to the religion's "computation of twelve thousand years" [#55045]. In this scheme the 9,000 years of conflict follow a first age of purely spiritual creation, and the coming of Zarathustra marks the last age, which the millennial saviours divide among themselves.

The Bahman Yasht gives the political side of this scheme. In West's summary, Zarathustra is shown "a tree with four branches of different metals". These are explained as four periods, "the times of Vishtasp, of Ardakhshir the Kayanian, of Khusro Noshirvan" and a final evil age. In a second vision he sees "a tree with seven branches of different metals… denoting the seven ages" [West, #55045,

introduction to the Bahman Yast]. The imagery of metals, together with the naming of Sasanian kings, ties the apocalypse directly to dynastic history.

The three saviours

Boyce traces the saviour figure back to the Gathas. Zoroaster "seems to have taught that after him there would come 'the man who is better than a good man' (Y 43.3), the Saoshyant", whose name means "one who will bring benefit". His followers came to believe that the Saoshyant "will be born of the prophet's own seed, miraculously preserved in the depths of a lake (identified as Lake Kasaoya)". A virgin will bathe there and conceive a son, "Astvat-ereta, 'He who embodies righteousness' ". Boyce stresses: "Despite his miraculous conception, the coming World Saviour will thus be a man, born of human parents" [#55117, "Belief in a world Saviour"]. Dhalla's formulation is sharper: "Astvatereta, or the Saoshyant proper, will be immaculately conceived through a virgin called Vispataurvi, or 'the all-triumphant' " [#55113].

The Pahlavi books add two millennial forerunners. West's chronology of Denkard VII has Aushedar born and "at the beginning of the eleventh millennium, when the sun stands still for ten days", conferring with the sacred beings at the age of thirty. Aushedar-mah follows, and his millennium opens when "the sun stands still for twenty days and nights" [West (tr.), Pahlavi Texts Part V, #60400]. Boyce adds that northern Buddhism's Maitreya "must owe something to Zoroastrian teaching about the Saoshyant", and that longing for him intensified "in the dark period after Alexander's conquest", producing "a rich apocalyptic and prophetic literature" that made the names of "Zoroastres" and "Hystaspes" familiar to the Greco-Roman world [#55117, ch.6]. Her Selected Writings include the article "On the Antiquity of Zoroastrian Apocalyptic" (BSOAS 1984) [#54999].

Resurrection, molten metal and frashokereti

Dhalla's chapter on the Renovation lists the sequence: "millennium of Soshyos — The collaborators of Sosyos — Resurrection of the dead — Universal judgment — Bodily punishment — Ordeal of molten metal — The righteous and the wicked shall no longer" be separated [#55113]. Buch writes that "the evil souls will be tried at the time of the final collective judgment and required to go through

blazing fire". This is a purgation that ends hell, not eternal damnation [Buch, Zoroastrian Ethics, #55150]. Mills finds the ordeal already in the Gathas. He renders Yasna 51 as asking Mazda to give satisfaction "through Thy red flame… through the melted bronze [through the lake of fire]… for the wounding of the faithless and the prospering of the" righteous [Mills, #60373].

The sources disagree on what *frashokereti* means. Cook follows De Harlez. The word "is regarded by many Eranian scholars as equivalent to 'resurrection.' This rendering, as De Harlez proves, is inadmissible", since it means a renovation of the material universe [Cook, The Origins of Religion and Language, #55083]. Lincoln translates it as "Renovation" or, "more literally, 'Wonder-making' " [Lincoln, #55034]. Jackson holds that "this dogma of 'a new heaven and a new earth' is found both in the Gathas and in the Younger Avesta". He calls it "decidedly a millennial doctrine which is closely associated with the belief in the coming of a Savior (Saoshyant) and the resurrection of the dead" [#55164].

Source or parallel? The influence debate

Some authors in the library argue for Iranian priority.

Mills. Mills is the most forceful of them. His Oxford lectures present "the Zend Avesta as collated with the pre-Christian exilic pharisaism". He reminds readers how uncertain belief in a future life was among Jews, since the Sadducees believed in "neither angel, nor spirit, nor resurrection". He then asks: "If Persia produced any effect at all — and who but a fatuate can doubt this — after restoring the Jewish" nation, how could that influence not have been "great — perhaps crucial — till 'life and immortality were brought to light'?" [#55044]. His companion study sets Avesta eschatology beside Daniel and Revelation. In it "the dragon of seven heads is, of course, the Azhi Dahaka of Avesta", with six heads "changed to seven in Revelation on account of the dominant influence of that number" [#60373].

Autran. Autran (1935) makes the Iranian expectation the frame of Christian hope (his French is quoted here in translation). "The announcement of the coming of a Saviour, of the general Resurrection of bodies, of the Last Judgment, of the Coming of the Kingdom" pervades the Iranian faith. He argues that IV Ezra shows that "the Judaic conception was decidedly modelled on the Iranian one", while the Sadducees, the strict keepers of old Israelite tradition, rejected resurrection [Autran, Mithra, Zoroastre et la préhistoire aryenne du christianisme, #60164, "Résurrection et Jugement dernier"].

Boyce. Boyce states that Christianity arose "out of a Judaism enriched by five centuries of contact with Zoroastrianism". She adds that the Iranian teachings "lost some of their logic and coherence" when they were adopted into a creed of one omnipotent God [#55117, ch.6].

Other authors are more cautious.

Carter. Carter says only that "to this foreign contact… we probably are indebted for some of the loftiest and most spiritual conceptions, which came into Judaism and passed from Judaism into Christianity" [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114].

Cook. Cook, citing De Harlez, insists that the Pentateuch is "ages older than the earliest time of Hebrew contact with Persia" [#55083].

Sundermann. Sundermann shows how the argument has to be made case by case. For the demon Asmodaios of Tobit, Isidor Scheftelowitz denied an Iranian origin on phonological grounds, and "Scheftelowitz was not the only one to doubt or reject" it. Sundermann himself concludes, from the names and from the shared role as "enemies of marital union", that "the assumption of an Iranian origin of the Jewish demon Asmodaios is correct" [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067].

Motif	Zoroastrian form	Claimed parallel	Source arguing the link
Resurrection and Last Judgment	Saoshyant, raising of the dead	Pharisaic and Christian eschatology	Mills #55044; Autran #60164
Dragon	Azhi Dahaka (six heads)	Seven-headed dragon of Revelation	Mills #60373
Fiery ordeal	River of molten metal	"Lake of fire"	Mills #60373
Demon of wedlock	Aeshma daeva	Asmodaios (Tobit)	Sundermann #55067 (Scheftelowitz contra)
Future saviour	Saoshyant	Maitreya	Boyce #55117

Keshe's reinterpretation: resurrection as transmutation

Mehran Keshe reads these doctrines as garbled technology. In KSW 453 (2022) he claims that "transmutation and transportation has been part of the life of the man". He says that "at the time of Christ the knowledge was to be transferred as transmutation of the Soul and physicality, but then it became, that the body of the Christ disappeared for some days", and was turned into "what you call, mysticism". "Christ or Buddha, and the others understood the work of the transfer and transmutation, but they hid it under the name of religion". Of his own teaching he says: "We're talking about pure resurrection, and nothing more" [Keshe, KSW 453, #378165]. In KSW 337 he states: "We close the door on the STM [Soul of the Man], and we open the door to the Soul of the UC [Universal Council] where the physical existence is not an option" [Keshe, KSW 337, #378049]. In the traditional doctrine, the body is raised and the world is renewed in matter. Keshe's claim reverses this: physical existence is left behind for a realm of souls.

Key points

- The soul sits three nights at the body's head. At the fourth dawn, escorted by Srosh, Vay and Vahram and opposed by Astvihad and Vizarsh, it reaches the Chinvat Bridge at the "Peak of Judgment" on Alburz [#55149; #55116].
- Mithra, Sraosha and Rashnu judge, and Rashnu weighs deeds on "the balance of the Spirits". Hamestagan receives souls whose deeds exactly balance [#55149; #55164].
- The Daena appears as a beautiful maiden to the righteous and, in the Pahlavi books, as an ugly old woman to the sinner. The bridge is broad or razor-thin according to the soul [#55116; #55113; #62090].
- The Bundahishn's 9,000-year contest, the metal ages of the Bahman Yasht and the millennial forerunners Aushedar and Aushedar-mah frame a world history that ends with Astvat-ereta, born of a virgin and the prophet's seed [#55045; #60400; #55117; #55113].
- At the end, molten metal purges the wicked and frashokereti, which Cook says means "renovation" rather than resurrection, renews creation [#55150; #55083; #55164].

- Mills and Autran present the Avesta as the source of Pharisaic and Christian eschatology. Carter, Cook and the Scheftelowitz side of the Asmodaios debate are more cautious [#55044; #60164; #55114; #55067].
- Keshe claims that resurrection and ascension were a "transmutation of the soul" that religion turned into mysticism, and that humanity is moving to a state where "physical existence is not an option" [#378165; #378049].

Chapter 18.

After the Conquest: Gabrs, Parsis, Iranis and the Afterlives of an Ancient Faith

The Arab conquest ended Zoroastrianism's long run as the religion of Iranian empires, but the faith survived it. It survived as two communities. The Iranis held out in the oases of Yazd and Kerman while their numbers kept falling. The Parsis migrated to Gujarat and later grew prosperous under the British in Bombay. Politics runs through both stories: the poll-tax, the law on apostasy, nationalist use of the Faravahar and of Cyrus, and the suspicion of the Islamic Republic. Where the sources disagree, above all on the Parsi founding legend, both sides are given.

Conquest and subjection

Boyce's outline is as follows. After taking Byzantine Syria in 636, the Arabs defeated the Sasanian army at Qadisiya in a battle lasting "several days" and seized Ctesiphon. "Two more hard-fought battles" opened the Iranian plateau to them, and Yazdegird III "met his death in Merv… in 652" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch.10 "The Arab conquest of Iran"]. Hoyland's reading of the Bundahishn dates Yazdgird's attempted comeback to 651 [Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others Saw It, #55061, "Bundahishn"]. Boyce says the conquest was waged "in the spirit of Surah 9.29", to subject unbelievers rather than convert them. Strictly, Zoroastrians were entitled only to the choice of death or Islam, but "because of sheer numbers" they "had to be treated as dhimmis (despite doubts that persisted down the centuries)". Cities bought their terms. Ray paid 500,000 dirhams on condition that the Arabs would not "raze any of their fire temples". A manual for civil servants quoted by Boyce describes how the jizya (poll-tax) was collected: "The dhimmi has to be made to feel that he is an inferior person… the emir gives

him a blow on the neck... The public is admitted to see this show" [ibid., citing Baladhuri and Tritton].

Other sources give a more tolerant picture. Jackson reports a covenant "reported to have been granted to the Zoroastrians by the Fourth Caliph, 'Ali... the tenor of which would show tolerance on the part of the Arabs", though "their authenticity may not be wholly beyond question" [Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, #55164]. A Parsi pamphlet reprints a ruling of 1910 by a mujtahid of Karbala, which makes it "obligatory on all Muslims" to guard Zoroastrian "lives, honour and possessions" [Vakil, Jashan Committee and the Parsi Community, #60426, "Parsis & Persia"]. Nineteenth-century Parsi authors take the darker view. Framjee writes of "the alternative of death or the Koran", and claims that "a hundred thousand persons are said to have daily abjured the faith" [Framjee, The Parsees, #55076]. Menant opens his account by stating that "two hundred years after the Mahomedan conquest the condition of Persia had entirely changed" [Menant, Les Parsis, #60391, "The Zoroastrians in Persia"].

Inducements and barriers

Boyce presents conversion as a balance of pressures [Boyce, #55117, ch.10, "Inducements and barriers to conversion"]. On the side of conversion were freedom for slaves who converted, escape from the poll-tax, and death as the penalty for apostasy. A ninth-century case illustrates the last point: a man "who has put off the kusti... cannot tie the kusti again for fear of his life." Familiar doctrine also eased the change. Heaven and Hell, the Last Judgement and the five daily prayers all derived "ultimately from Zoroastrianism". Against conversion stood loyalty to the faith of the ancestors, a scripture in a foreign tongue, and a different God. Boyce contrasts the two forms of prayer: "the Zoroastrian standing erect in the presence of his beneficent Lord... the Muslim kneeling before the Omnipotent, his forehead in the dust."

Iran stayed mostly Zoroastrian under the orthodox caliphs and the Umayyads. Several later developments wore that down. Arabic replaced Pahlavi in government. The Khwaday Namag was translated, which separated the national epic from the religion. The legend of the princess Shahrbanu, said to have married Husayn and whom Boyce calls a "wholly fictitious figure", gave Iranian patriotism a Shi'ite form. Finally the 'Abbasids, in Boyce's words, "proved deadly foes

of Zoroastrianism". In her account Islam meanwhile grew "more Zoroastrianized", and the Hidden Imam took over the role of the Saoshyant [Boyce, #55117, ch.10 "Islam takes root in Iran"].

Zoroastrians recorded their own reaction in apocalyptic texts. Hoyland shows that the Bahman yasht was reworked so that "a myriad kinds of demons with dishevelled hair, of the race of Wrath" overrun Iran. In his reading, a text that "probably began as a lamentation over the predations of the Macedonian conquerors… became in the final redaction directed against the invading Arabs". Bundahishn XXXIII declares: "From the beginning of creation till this day no evil more grievous than this has come… there shall come an end of their accursed rule" [Hoyland, #55061, ch.8 "Persian Texts"]. Shaked's essays trace which Sasanian ideas, such as esotericism, the menog–getig doctrine and Ahreman, carried through the transition to Islam [Shaked, From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam, #60406].

Retreat to Yazd and Kerman

In the ninth century the priests still produced the *Dadestan i dinig*, the Denkard and the *Shkand-gumanig Vizar*. Boyce calls it "the last century… when the Zoroastrians still had the means and energy to engage in creative work on any scale" [Boyce, #55117, ch.10]. The harassment never stopped. In 861 the caliph Mutawakkil felled the cypress said to have been planted by Zoroaster. "Gabr-baiting" was "a popular sport… indulged in by Caliphs and high officials", and a law gave a family's entire property to any member who converted. The Mongol invasions probably destroyed "every copy of the Sasanian Avesta". The survivors regrouped around Yazd and Kerman, where their sacred fires were hidden in "small mud-brick houses indistinguishable from ordinary village homes" [ibid., ch.10–11].

According to Fozi, "Gabr is the Persian form of the Arabic Kāfar or infidel… the addition of the humiliating suffix -ak" in *Gabrak* and *Gabraki* "increased the disdain of the term". The Zoroastrian Dari of Yazd is "unintelligible to Muslim Yazdis", and Boyce describes it as "a linguistic barrier… raised in self-protection" [Fozi, Reclaiming the Faravahar, #54976, ch.1]. Framjee compares the treatment of the "Gabres" to that of "the low caste Mahar in India" [Framjee, #55076]. Menant quotes an 1843 letter in which the Zoroastrians of Kerman lament "the destruction of most of their sacred books, and… the massacre of the faithful" [Menant, #60391].

The Parsis and the Qissa-i Sanjan

Boyce follows Hodivala on the migration. Emigrants from Sanjan in Khorasan spent nineteen years on Div and landed in Gujarat in 936. The traditional date of 716 comes from a misread numeral [Boyce, #55117, ch.11]. The main source is the *Qissa-i Sanjan*, which Boyce describes as "a narrative poem composed largely from oral traditions by a Parsi priest, Bahman, in 1600". Hodivala (1920) translates the poem and builds his chronology on it, with "a Hindu chief named Jadi Rana" as host [Hodivala, Studies in Parsi History, #60407]. Karaka sets the Qissa's date of 775 beside "the generally accepted date" defended by a dastur of Broach in 1826 [Karaka, History of the Parsis, #55022, ch.1].

B. N. Bhathena rejected the tradition outright in a paper to the 1943 All India Oriental Conference. He called the poem propaganda "made by the priestly class", and claimed that "authentic proofs… prove the falsity of the Kisse-Sanjan from the beginning to the end". On his account, independent Zoroastrian settlements had long existed in Gujarat and Sindh, so the story of Jadi Rana's court "falls to the ground". He also argued that Neryosang never consecrated the Sanjan fire [Bhathena, Kisse-Sanjan: A Palpable Falsehood, #54990].

Question	Qissa / Hodivala / Karaka	Bhathena (1943)	Boyce (1979)
Landing date	716 or 775; Hodivala 936	Dates contradictory	936
Jadi Rana	Hindu host	A myth	Unnamed Silhara rajah
Earlier settlers	Marginal	Long-standing colonies	Some individuals
The text	History	Priestly propaganda	Oral tradition, 1600

Mughals, British, missionaries, occultism

Under Akbar the Parsis began "their rise to prosperity", while the Irani community sank further under the Safavids. By 1875 the Bombay Parsi Panchayat administered 44,000,000 rupees and served as a communal "Social Security system" [Boyce, #55117, ch.11–13]. John Wilson's missionary campaign, launched after

1829, won "few converts" but discredited the priests. Two of the priests who answered him took refuge in the Desatir, which Boyce calls "a literary forgery", and so "the gates were opened to occultism" [ibid., ch.13]. Haug's thesis that only the Gathas were Zoroaster's own words delighted the reformists, and Dhalla later blended orthodoxy with Western scholarship. Moulton, writing on "The Parsis and Christian Propaganda", called Theosophy a system "nursed in fraud" [Moulton, The Treasure of the Magi, #55091, ch.5]. Olcott, in contrast, told the Parsis that their faith rests on "the living rock of occult science" [Olcott, The Spirit of Zoroastrianism, #55087], and Bilimoria's anthology repeats his line that "Occult Science is the vindicator of Zoroastrianism" [Bilimoria, Zoroastrianism in the Light of Theosophy, #55115]. Ilm-i Khshnoom grew from Behramshah Shroff's claimed initiation by "Masters" on Mount Demavand. Boyce characterises it as "a thorough-going adaptation of theosophy" combined with strict purity laws [Boyce, #55117, ch.13].

Shahs, ayatollahs, diaspora

When Manekji Limji Hataria arrived from Bombay in 1854, he counted 6,658 Zoroastrians in Yazd and 450 in Kerman. In 1882 he secured the abolition of the jizya [Boyce, #55117, ch.13]. Boyce links the Zoroastrian month names of Reza Shah's calendar to his accord with the Zoroastrian deputy Kay Khosrow Shahrokh. She also notes that the Parsis had earlier adopted the winged disc of Persepolis "as the Zoroastrian symbol" [ibid., ch.14]. Fozi argues that the Pahlavi project made the community "a secular pre-Islamic national resource", alongside "a nascent movement to purge Arabic words". He reports that Khomeini "was worried about the revival of pre-Islamic values". After 1979 Zoroastrians came to present their religion "as culture", and one community leader told Fozi that "most of the Zoroastrian villages of Yazd are uninhabited now" [Fozi, #54976, ch.1, ch.4]. Since the revolution, Zoroastrians have moved to Tehran "for greater religious freedom" [Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, chronology], or abroad. The latter point comes from a library file catalogued as Amanat's *Iran Facing Others* (#60437), which is in fact a printout of the Wikipedia article "Zoroastrian Dari language". Boyce's figures for 1976 give a world total of 129,000, of whom 82,000 lived in India and 25,000 in Iran. She lists marriage outside the community, a falling birthrate and a shortage of priests as the main threats [Boyce, #55117, ch.14, "International dispersion"].

Survivals, and Keshe's bridge

Zaehner (1965) studied the Luri epic *Irradiant*. Its "Lionish God" claims omniscience but "always has to ask what is going on", and he is slain "with his own sword". Zaehner calls him "the lineal descendant of the Zoroastrian Ahriman" [Zaehner, Zoroastrian Survivals in Iranian Folklore, #55094]. Boyce traces the line from the Khwaday Namag of 957 to Firdausi's Shahname [Boyce, #55117, ch.10]. Sundermann follows the Avestan Kauui Usan to the Shahname's foolish Kay Kaus and his "abortive ascension to heaven on a throne" [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067].

Mehran Keshe has his own line on these matters. In KSW 608 (2025) he says that the Jews "literally rewrote the whole history of Islam, moved it to Mecca, away from Palestine. They paid the Muslim leaders to move" [Keshe, KSW 608, #378320]. In KSW 176 (2017), titled "Blueprint for Peace in the Islamic World", he tells Sunni and Shi'a that "who followed doesn't count, what is written and the message of the prophet counts" [Keshe, KSW 176, #377819]. In KSW 648 he says: "The Ethos of Zoroaster was with me, and it stays with me" [Keshe, KSW 648, #378360]. These claims lead into Part 3.

Key points

- Boyce dates Yazdegird III's death to 652, and Hoyland's Bundahishn reading gives 651 for his attempted comeback. Zoroastrians were reluctantly treated as dhimmis and humbled through the jizya.
- Boyce balances the pressures towards conversion (tax, the apostasy law, familiar doctrine) against the barriers to it (ancestral loyalty, theology). She puts the decisive phase under the 'Abbasids.
- Pahlavi apocalypses were reworked into laments over Arab rule (Hoyland).
- "Gabr" comes from *kafir*. The survivors kept their own Dari and their hidden fires in Yazd and Kerman.
- Hodivala and Karaka treat the Qissa-i Sanjan as history. Bhathena calls it "a palpable falsehood".
- Missionaries, Haug, Theosophy and Ilm-i Khshnoom divided Parsi belief.
- The Pahlavi shahs made Zoroastrianism a national symbol, while the Islamic Republic distrusted pre-Islamic revival. Both developments drove migration.

- Keshe ascribes the move of Islam's centre to Mecca to Jewish leaders and claims the "Ethos of Zoroaster" for himself.

Part III.

Mithra and Mithraism

Chapter 19.

Mitra and Mithra: The Indo-Iranian God of the Contract (Vedic Mitra, the Mitanni Treaty and the Mihr Yasht)

The god whom Roman soldiers would later worship in caves first appears in history as a name on a diplomatic document. Before he slew a bull or was hailed as the invincible Sun, Mitra was the power that held two kings to their sworn word. This chapter follows the oldest layer of the figure through three bodies of evidence: the cuneiform treaty from the Hittite capital, the Vedic hymns in which Mitra stands beside Varuna, and the Avestan hymn to Mithra (Yasht 10, the Mihr Yasht). Vermaseren states the difficulty of the whole field: for the Eastern Mithra "practically nothing except documentary evidence exists, whereas the Mithras of the Roman world is known to us almost exclusively from non-literary sources" [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300, ch. 1 "Mithras in India and Iran"].

The Boghazköy treaty: a god sworn by kings

"In 1907 a large number of clay tablets was found in the palace archives of Boghazkoy", Vermaseren writes. They "contain the first recorded mention of the name 'Mitra' ", invoked "as the protector of a treaty between the Hatti (the Hittites) and their neighbours, the Mitanni". The treaty belongs to the fourteenth century BC, and the last known reference to the Western Mithras falls in the

fifth century AD, so "the god was revered for nearly two thousand years" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 1]. Gershevitch gives the parties: the treaty "with the Hittite king Suppiluliumas was sworn in the early fourteenth century B.C. by Mattiwaza, an Indo-Iranian ruler of the Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni". The five gods, "Mitra, Varuna, Indra, and the two Nasatyas", all "figure prominently in the Rig Veda", and the cult "had very likely been in existence for a long period before" [Gershevitch, The Avestan Hymn to Mithra, #60160, Introduction I "The earliest period"].

Ries quotes the cuneiform line *mi-it-ra-as-si-il / a-ru-na-as-si-il / in-dar / na-sa-at-ti-ia-an-na*. He reads the Hurrian ending *-il* as meaning "as a pair", which places the couple Mitra-Varuna at the head of the list [Ries, Il Culto di Mithra, #38276, ch. 2 "Gli dei indiani di Mitanni"]. Campos Méndez reads the list through Dumézil's three functions. On the first level are the sovereigns, "the all-powerful magician Varuna, and Mitra, the personified contract"; on the second, Indra "the strong god"; on the third, the Nasatya twins. He attributes the Vedic names to an Aryan chariot nobility that had entered the Hurrian monarchy, and sees in the royal oath "the relationship that from its origins was established between Mithra and kingship" [Campos Méndez, El Culto del Dios Mithra, #60243, ch. I.1; the catalogue wrongly lists Vaknin as author].

Source	Date of treaty	Parties	Reading
Vermaseren (#38300)	14th c. BC	Hatti and Mitanni	first recorded mention of Mitra
Gershevitch (#60160)	early 14th c. BC	Suppiluliumas, Mattiwaza	five Rigvedic gods; cult already old
Ries (#38276)	c. 1370 BC	Suppiluliuma I, king of Mitanni	Hurrian dual marks Mitra-Varuna
Campos Méndez (#60243)	1380 BC	Subbiluliuma, Mativaza	three Dumézilian levels
Teeter (#63199)	c. 1450 BC	Hittites and Mitanni	Mitra as a name of Soma
Chulev (#38297)	c. 1380 BC	Hittite and "client Mitani kings"	a "Hittite/Phrygian deity"

What the name means: treaty, contract, friend

Vermaseren renders Vedic *Mitra* "literally 'treaty' " [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 1]. The modern debate starts with Meillet's "Le dieu indo-iranien Mitra" (1907), which Campos Méndez credits with first making Mithra "the divinization of the contract". He traces the word to an Indo-European root *mei-*, "union" but also "exchange", from which the sense "friendship" could also come [Campos Méndez, #60243, ch. I.1]. Ries reviews the later positions. Renou derived "Mitra = friend" from "Mitra = alliance". Gonda warned against linking the god too closely to "alliance". Varenne made Mitra "the personification of the contract and of the alliance". Dumézil held that juridical contract and friendship were two late narrowings of an older idea of exchange. Merkelbach "holds that this notion of *Bund, Vertrag*... is very ancient", and Ries also cites Thieme's *Mitra and Aryaman* [Ries, #38276, chs. 1-2].

Moulton was "more than half convinced" by Meillet. He noted Sanskrit *mitradruh* "treacherous" beside Avestan *miθro-druj* "breaking a compact", but suggested "a fusion of two originally independent conceptions", one ethical and one elemental [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II "Before Zarathushtra"]. Gershevitch called Vedic *mitra* "friend" "a case of accidental homonymity". To make Mithra "the Friend" would, he wrote, replace "a vivid and unmistakably characteristic identification of a god by a colourless description" [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction V "Mithra's functions"]. Two other readings stand outside this philology. Debroy glosses that "Mitra is an aspect of the sun that presided over the day. Correspondingly, Varuna presided over the night" [Debroy, The Rig Veda, #82390]. Teeter, on his entheogen thesis, asserts that "Mitra is one of the hundred plus names of Soma in the Rig Veda and means 'the friend of all men' " [Teeter, Amanita Muscaria, #63199].

Mitra in the Rig Veda: the junior sovereign

Mitra is mentioned more than two hundred times in the Rig Veda, yet Gershevitch calls the information "exasperatingly meagre". Poets prefer the paired form *mitrāvaruṇā*, and hymns to Varuna alone number "hardly a dozen" (Macdonell). Only III.59 belongs to Mitra alone; in Geldner's version: "He who calls himself Mitra [Friend] unites men; Mitra upholds earth and heaven; Mitra watches the peoples without closing his eyes." Following Lüders, Gershevitch notes one difference: Varuna, god of the oath, dwells in the waters by which oaths were

sworn, while Mitra seems to dwell in fire, "since pacts were presumably concluded in front of blazing fire" [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction I]. Griffith's version keeps the paired address: "Our Sages, Mitra-Varuna, wide dominion, strong by birth, / Vouchsafe us strength that worketh well" (RV I.2.9) [Griffith (tr.), Four Vedas / Rig Veda, #42756].

Ries, following Dumézil, describes the pair as "contrast but not opposition". In RV 1.115.5 the sun takes "this double form, one of Mitra, one of Varuna", the bright and the dark. Mitra is "benevolent, friendly, reassuring", and Varuna is the fearsome binder. Mitra's epithet *yātayajjana*, "who brings people to agree", places him "in the juridical domain". In the ritual of the sacred furrow, the mythical cow is asked to yield "to Mitra and to Varuna, to Indra, to the Asvin gods", which Ries takes as the Mitanni group surviving in Vedic cult [Ries, #38276, ch. 2]. Vermaseren adds that the sun is "the eye of Mitra and Varuna", and that Mitra's attendants Aryaman and Bhaga survive in Iran as Sraosha and Ashi [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 1].

The Mihr Yasht: the grass-land magnate

Gershevitch dates the Avestan hymn to "approximately... the second half of the fifth century B.C." and calls it "the one extensive ancient literary record" of the god. He renders the standing epithet *vouru.gaoyaoiti-* "grass-land magnate". Ahura Mazdah opens the hymn: "When I created grass-land magnate Mithra, O Spitamid, I made him such in worthiness to be worshipped and prayed to as myself". Stanza 2 states the law of the contract: "Never break a contract... whether you conclude it with an owner of Falsehood, or a Truth-owning follower of the good Religion; for the contract applies to both". Mithra "has a thousand ears... ten thousand eyes... is strong, sleepless, (ever-)waking", and "the heads of countries worship [him] as they go to the battlefield against the blood-thirsty enemy armies" (sts. 7-8). "Eight servants sit as watchers of the contract" (st. 45). He "grants favours at will" and grants grass-land (st. 60). He "dispenses fats and herds... gives power and sons... bestows life" (st. 65). He flies over the earth's southern border with "good Sraosa" on his right and Rashnu on his left (sts. 99-100) [Gershevitch, #60160, Text and translation, sections 1-2, 9, 14, 16, 25].

Darmesteter, translating the same text for the Sacred Books of the East, judged: "This Yast, one of the longest of the Avesta and one of the most interesting in a literary point of view, is not very instructive for mythology. It consists of long descriptive pieces... and of fervent prayers and invocations for mercy or

protection." He held that "originally Mithra was the god of the heavenly light" [Darmesteter (tr.), The Zend-Avesta Part II, SBE 23, #60421, introduction to the Mihir Yast]. Gershevitch, by contrast, rejected Christensen's division of the hymn into "original" and "Zoroastrian" layers. He argued that its 145 stanzas are grammatically uniform, "the work of one author, or small group of authors" [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction IV].

Contract, war, light: one god or several?

Gershevitch's answer is that the noun *miθra-* "means 'contract' " and that "Mithra's original function is to watch over the contract, and nothing else." The other functions grew from it. The sleepless watcher rises before the sun and so came to be seen as "the light of daybreak". The guardian of a stable society gives sons, rain and pastures. The "punisher of wrong" against "defiant" countries "could hardly help resorting to war", so the war-god is "not an original trait", and Gershevitch denies that he inherited the warlike character of Indra. He calls the idea of an Avestan sky-god Mithra "a nineteenth-century myth" and places the full identification with the sun later, in Eastern Iran and Parthia [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction V].

Darmesteter's "god of the heavenly light" stands on the other side, as does Johannes Hertel's 1927 *Die Sonne und Mithra im Awesta*, which Gershevitch lists among the translations of Yasht 10 he argued against [Hertel, Die Sonne und Mithra im Awesta, #38270; Gershevitch, #60160, Abbreviations]. Moulton insisted Mithra "belongs to the night as well as the day". He warned that "too many scholars have been in a hurry to antedate the ultimate identification of Mithra with the Sun", while quoting Cumont that Chaldaean theology assimilated "Mithra to Shamash the god of the Sun" [Moulton, #55011, Lecture II]. Campos Méndez also derives the solar traits from Shamash, and records that Gnoli opposed Gershevitch's position [Campos Méndez, #60243, ch. I.1, n. 26]. Vermaseren states simply that Mithra was "a god of light, who in India was already regarded as the sun" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 1].

The covenant as political order

The political point is in the sources themselves. For Gershevitch the "thousandfold contract between two countries" (st. 116) shows that Mithra "is the guaran-

tor of orderly international relations, the god of the international treaty". Rulers who keep or break treaties appease or incense other rulers through him (sts. 109, 111). He "smashes" faithless authorities (st. 18), and in Yasht 13.94 he will "further all supreme authorities... and pacify (the countries) that are in turmoil". This concern with government made him "a maker, as well as undoer, of kings". Gershevitch's examples are Antiochus I's monument at Nemrud Dagh and the Carnuntum dedication to Mithras as *fautor imperii sui* [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction V, VII]. Campos Méndez locates the root in tribal warrior society. The deified oath "found a direct beneficiary in the figure of the chief", who gained "a divine ally in guaranteeing the fidelity of his warriors". He notes that the Yasht calls Mithra lord of house, clan, tribe and country (Yt 10.17, 99) [Campos Méndez, #60243, ch. I.1]. The chapters that follow trace this god of royal oaths through Achaemenid, Commagenian and Roman power.

Key points

- Vermaseren, Gershevitch, Ries and Campos Méndez agree that Mitra is first recorded in a 14th-century BC Hittite-Mitanni treaty from Boghazköy, found in 1907, as a divine guarantor beside Varuna, Indra and the Nasatyas. Their exact dates vary; Teeter gives c. 1450 BC.
- Ries reads a Hurrian dual linking Mitra-Varuna. Campos Méndez, following Dumézil, sees sovereignty, force and fertility in three levels.
- Meillet's "contract" thesis is accepted in different forms by Gershevitch, Dumézil, Varenne and Merkelbach. Moulton suspected a fusion of two concepts. Debroy calls Mitra the sun's daytime aspect, and Teeter calls him a name of Soma.
- In the Rig Veda, Mitra appears mostly as Mitra-Varuna, has a single hymn of his own (III.59), and is the gentler partner of the binding Varuna.
- The Mihr Yasht, which Gershevitch dates to the late fifth century BC, shows a sleepless, thousand-eared, ten-thousand-eyed watcher of contracts. Heads of countries worship him before battle, and he gives herds, pastures and sons.
- Darmesteter thought the hymn "not very instructive for mythology". Gershevitch used it to argue that contract is the only original function and that light, war and the sun came later. Darmesteter, Hertel and Cumont favoured a god of light.
- Gershevitch and Campos Méndez agree that the oath-god was from the outset a god of chiefs, kings and international treaties.

Chapter 20.

Mithra Inside Zoroastrianism: Exclusion, Reintegration and Mihr the Judge

Zarathustra's Gathas never name Mithra, yet in the Younger Avesta Ahura Mazda declares that he made Mithra as worthy of worship as himself. The library's scholars disagree sharply about how this happened. Some see a prophet hostile to the cult of Mithra, with its bull sacrifice and haoma. Others see a prophet who simply left him out, and a later clergy that took him back without deception. The chapter then follows Mithra into Sasanian and Pahlavi literature, where Mihr becomes the judge of souls, and into the Zurvanite setting Western writers associated with him.

The silence of the Gathas

Vermaseren gives the classic account. Zarathustra, "who lived some time between 1000 and 600 B.C.", tried "to transform the established polytheism into a monotheist pattern with Ahura-Mazda as the sole and supreme god, and so found himself obliged to relegate Mithra to the background". He forbade "blood sacrifices such as the bull-offering" and denied his followers "the ecstatic enjoyment of the spirituous Haoma". According to Vermaseren this "dealt a heavy blow to the Mithra cult, for Mithra was… closely associated with the bull, whose blood, mixed with the Haoma, bestowed immortality" [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300, ch. 1].

Campos Méndez goes further. He describes a secret warrior cult of Mithra centred on "the sacrifice of the bull and the consumption of haoma", which Zoroaster "persecuted with special virulence". He also reports Ries's view that the Amesha

Spenta Vohu Manah ("Good Thought") took Mithra's place in the reform, a replacement Campos Méndez calls "transitory" [Campos Méndez, El Culto del Dios Mithra, #60243, ch. I.2 "Mithra dentro del Zoroastrismo"; the catalogue wrongly lists Vaknin as author].

Moulton divides the evidence into two strands. "The Tenth Yasht is addressed to a Mithra whom Zarathushtra might not have disdained to acknowledge." But the prophet also "seems to have been in contact with a Mithra cult that he could not countenance in any way", an elemental worship "essentially akin to that which by further syncretism issued at last in the great system of Mithraism". "Orgiastic nocturnal sacrifices, held perhaps in honour of Mithra, Slayer of the Bull, and under the inspiration of Haoma" were, he says, a grievance of Mazdayasnian farmers, and he reads Yasna 32.14 as a veiled allusion to haoma. Hence Vohu Manah "significantly supplants Mithra as lord of cattle" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II "Before Zarathushtra"]. Duchesne-Guillemin accepts this, adding that Mithra's associates Airyaman and Baga were replaced by Sraosha and Ashi [Duchesne-Guillemin, The Religion of Ancient Iran, #38271, "The Entities"].

Gershevitch rejects the whole idea of hostility. Zarathustra, he argues, had to "close the door" to Mithra only because Mazdah had no paired partner to absorb him, but it "does not follow that he considered him a daeva". As guardian of the contract, "an aspect of Truth on which Zarathustra laid great store", Mithra "had every claim to Zarathustra's affection". In an early post-Gathic text the disciples "timidly and almost clandestinely" brought him back under the harmless title *pāyu-* "protector", paired with the creative Spenta Mainyu. The prophet "undoubtedly disapproves of animal sacrifices, but… nowhere in any way implies that Mithra… is their recipient"; the alleged "hostilité à l'égard de Mithra, le dieu des offrandes cruelles et des extases d'ivresse" (Duchesne-Guillemin's phrase) "is a modern invention in all three respects". He also calls "unrealistic" Dumézil's theory that Vohu Manah deliberately replaced Mithra [Gershevitch, The Avestan Hymn to Mithra, #60160, Introduction VI "Ahura" and VIII "The Western Mithras"].

Reinstatement in the Younger Avesta

Gershevitch calls Younger Avestan Zoroastrianism "a mixed religion" of the prophet's teaching, inherited gods such as Mithra and Haoma, and Gathic notions recast as divinities, and he explains the mixture politically. The Magi

were "a clergy of all denominations" who served whatever god a worshipper paid them to hymn. Darius brought Mazdah-worship into Persis. Under Artaxerxes I (calendar reform c. 441 BC), or at the latest Artaxerxes II, the court "officially came down on the side of the Magi". The Zarathustrian priests of eastern Iran then turned this coexistence of cults into a scripture "purporting to be Zarathustra's". The Magi replied by declaring Zarathustra to have been a Magus [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction II-III]. Moulton agrees that the Magi "adapted his system long after his day and claimed his name" [Moulton, #55011, "The Prophet and the Reform"].

Duchesne-Guillemin stresses that this amalgamation "does not seem… to have been a simple process": "instead of their paying homage to him, it is on the contrary Ahura Mazda who offers sacrifice to Anāhitā, to Tištrya, to Vayu" [Duchesne-Guillemin, #38271, section on the later Avestan gods and demons]. Gershevitch counts Mithra in the same class. Statements that Mazdah created Mithra and "made him as great as himself", or even worshipped him (Yt 10.123: "whom (even) Ahurah Mazdah worshipped in Paradise") are "so flagrantly and needlessly un-Zarathustrian" that they must come from non-Zarathustrian worshippers of Mithra, faithfully transmitted [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction VI; Text, section 31]. Vermaseren gives the theological formula: Mithra is "an extension of the idea of the supreme god from whom he takes his actual being", just as the Amesha Spentas "constitute his being" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 1]. Campos Méndez makes Mithra a subordinate *yazata*, "clearly subject to Ahura-Mazda", yet "the champion of Mazdaism". He notes that the seventh month and the sixteenth day bore his name, and that the Mithrakana mobilised everyone "from the king himself down to the lowest strata of the people" [Campos Méndez, #60243, ch. I.2].

The Magi and the bull: the "camouflage" dispute

Vermaseren presents the Magi as the carriers. A fifth-century BC relief from Dascylium shows them "with a cloth… in front of the mouth, so as not to contaminate the fire with their breath, and a bundle of rods (baresman)", before an altar hung with the heads of a ram and a bull. "These Hellenised Magi in Asia Minor must have been the priests who founded the worship of Mithras." At the Mithrakana, after Ctesias, "the king… drank himself into a stupour in honour of the god" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 2 "Zarathustra and the Magi"]. Geden's collection gives the Greek definition: "Among the Persians those who are learned

in the doctrines of the gods and minister in their service bear the name of magi" [Geden, Select Passages Illustrating Mithraism, #38272].

Lommel, followed by Duchesne-Guillemin, held that Mithra's killing of the bull was an ancient myth, linked by Vermaseren to the Vedic killing of King Soma, in which Mitra protests "Not I, for I am friend to all" before taking part [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 1]. On this view, Zoroastrian authors moved the deed onto Ahriman to clean up the god. Campos Méndez reports that some authors read the primordial bull's death at Angra Mainyu's hands as Zoroaster's "attempt to eliminate Mithra's role in the sacrifice of the bull" [Campos Méndez, #60243, ch. I.2, n. 49]. Gershevitch calls this "the clever camouflage of Mithra perpetrated by the authors of the Avesta". It belongs to a "modern trend... always to suspect that the Avesta either conceals the truth or tells the untruth". He argues the reverse: the Avesta's silence shows that the attribution of the slaughter to Mithras "is an innovation, and not an ancient inheritance". He cites Zaehner's thesis that the Mithraists descended from daeva-worshippers who fled to Babylonia after Xerxes banned their cult, and who transferred Ahriman's life-producing killing of the bull to Mithra [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction VIII].

Mihr the judge: Sasanian and Pahlavi literature

In the later literature Mithra becomes, above all, a judge. Campos Méndez places him among the three judges of souls at the Chinvat bridge with Sraosha and Rashnu, and notes Lincoln's reading of Videvdat 19.28-29 as evidence of a saving, soul-guiding Mithra [Campos Méndez, #60243, ch. I.2]. Dhalla calls Mithra "the angel of truth" who "is accompanied by Dami Upamana at the ordeal court", a coadjutor who "impersonates the magic power of the curse". He adds that "because of his overlordship of all space... Mithra receives the permanent title, lord of all countries" [Dhalla, Zoroastrian Civilization, #60424].

Shaked's essay "Mihr the Judge" is the most detailed treatment. Middle Persian *miyāncīg*, later understood as "mediator, arbiter", meant in Sasanian usage "a judge, as well as a position of administrative responsibility". He argues there is "no need to assume... the semantic development 'mediator' → 'arbiter' → 'judge' ". In the *Mēnōg ī Xrad* the eschatological "miyāncīgīh of Mihr and Srōš and Rašn" is a judgement, not a mediation. A propitiation prayer addresses "the virtuous Mihr, of wide pastures, who are a just judge of the defaulter(s), that is, you perform (the functions of) miyāncīg and judge in truth among both mēnōg and gētīg beings". The Bundahishn explains: "His being of wide pastures is this:

when it is possible to walk about in the desert without fear, it is due to Mihr". In the Zand ī Wahman Yasn, Mihr helps Pēšōtan and rebukes the Evil Spirit over the "nine thousand years of contract" [Shaked, From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam, #60406, essay IV "Mihr the Judge"]. Duchesne-Guillemin adds the royal side: Ohrmazd I and II and Ardashir II "owe their investiture" to Mithra on Sasanian monuments [Duchesne-Guillemin, #38271, "Under the Sassanids and after"].

Mesites: Plutarch, Zurvan and the bridge to the West

For Western readers the key text is Plutarch, *De Iside* 46-47, in Geden's translation. Some say there are two rival gods; "others confine the name of god to the good power, the other they term demon, as was done by Zoroaster the Magian", and "to Mithra therefore the Persians give the name of the mediator". Geden glosses Mithra as "mediator or intermediary… between the gods who inhabited the upper world and the lower world of men" [Geden, #38272]. The interpretations divide. Ries, following Widengren, takes Plutarch to show that Zurvanism and Mithraism "coexisted in Parthian-period Iran, that the Magi practised both cults and that in Zurvanism Mithra was considered the mediator between Good and Evil" [Ries, Il Culto di Mithra, #38276, Introduction]. Gershevitch lists Mithra's "role of Mesites in Zervanism" as a later derivative of his judgeship, "not yet apparent in the Avesta" [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction V]. Shaked reports that Benveniste insisted on a literal, Zurvanite "mediation". His own view is that Plutarch's *mesitēs* is "a direct rendering of the Iranian predecessor of the Pahlavi *miyāncīg*", meaning a judge who is "firmly and unequivocally on the side of… Ohrmazd", not a neutral figure in the middle [Shaked, #60406, essay IV].

This Zurvanite background bears on the Roman lion-headed figure (treated later). Vermaseren says the Magi "placed Mithras in his role as sun-god in the foreground of their theology" and held that "Zervan was at the head of the two conflicting powers" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 2]. Boyce, reviewing Zaehner, writes that "the Manichaean evidence suggests that in the third century Zurvanism was dominant in the south-west of the Empire, Mazdeism among the Parthians" [Boyce, Selected Writings, #54999]. Duchesne-Guillemin concludes that "it is likely… that Zurvanism was dominant throughout the Sassanian period" [Duchesne-Guillemin, #38271]. Jackson adds that the sun "as an independent Yazata… is less prominent than other solar spirits, such as Mithra" [Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, #55164, Part I].

Stage	Mithra's position	Main witnesses
Gathas (Zarathustra)	unnamed; possibly replaced by Vohu Manah	Moulton, Campos Méndez, Duchesne-Guillemin; Gershevitch denies hostility
Early post-Gathic	reintroduced as *pāyu* "protector" beside Spenta Mainyu	Gershevitch
Younger Avesta (5th-4th c. BC)	*yazata* equal in worship to Mazdah; worshipped by Mazdah	Gershevitch, Duchesne-Guillemin
Achaemenid-Magian practice	Mithrakana; royal festival	Vermaseren, Campos Méndez
Plutarch (1st-2nd c. AD)	*mesitēs* between Oromazes and Areimanios	Geden; Ries/Widengren; Shaked
Sasanian/Pahlavi	Mihr the judge (*miyāncīg*), Chinvat triad, investiture of kings	Shaked, Dhalla, Duchesne-Guillemin

Key points

- Vermaseren, Campos Méndez and Moulton describe Zarathustra as relegating or attacking a Mithra cult tied to bull sacrifice and haoma. Moulton and Duchesne-Guillemin hold that Vohu Manah replaced Mithra as lord of cattle.
- Gershevitch counters that the Gathas never connect Mithra with blood sacrifice, that "Mithraphobia" is a modern invention, and that early disciples quietly brought Mithra back as the "protector".
- The Younger Avesta is a "mixed religion", in Gershevitch's account the result of Achaemenid court policy and Magian eclecticism. In it Ahura Mazda himself worships Mithra, Anahita and other gods (Duchesne-Guillemin).
- Vermaseren makes Hellenised Magi of Asia Minor the founders of the Mithras cult. The Dascylium relief and Ctesias's account of the drunken king at the Mithrakana are his evidence.
- Gershevitch rejects the theory that Avestan authors moved the bull-slaying from Mithra to Ahriman, and treats the tauroctony as a later innovation.

- Shaked shows that Pahlavi *miyāncīg* means "judge", that Mihr is the just judge of souls and of the world, and that Plutarch's "mediator" renders this judicial title rather than a neutral middle position.
- Ries (after Widengren), Boyce and Duchesne-Guillemin place Mithra in a Zurvanite milieu that was strong in western Iran, which is the background to the Western mysteries.

Chapter 21.

The God of Kings: Mithra in Achaemenid, Parthian, Armenian, Pontic and Commagene Royal Cult

In the god Mithra the library's sources most clearly show religion merging with state power. From the fourth century BC to the first century AD he appears in royal inscriptions and in the throne-names of Pontus, Parthia, Armenia and Commagene, and on a mountain-top in Commagene he is carved investing a king. The classical authors place his entry into the Roman world in two political episodes: the defeat of the Cilician pirates by Pompey and the crowning of the Armenian king Tiridates by Nero. This chapter sets out what each source says and where the sources disagree.

Artaxerxes II: the gods return to the inscriptions

Darius I and Xerxes name only Ahuramazda in their inscriptions. The change came with Artaxerxes II. Duchesne-Guillemin writes: "From the reign of Artaxerxes II onwards, not only is Ahuramazda mentioned in the inscriptions, but Anāhitā and Mithra as well." The triad may, he allows, reflect the Mesopotamian pantheon. Through Berossus, he notes, Artaxerxes II "was the first to set up an image of Aphrodite Anaitis… in Babylon and Susa and Ecbatana" and other cities [Duchesne-Guillemin, The Religion of Ancient Iran, #38271, "The later Achaemenids"]. Moulton cites the same tradition from Clement of Alexandria: the Persians sacrificed in the open air until "after many courses of years… Artaxerxes II. taught them to worship the image of Anahita". He calls this king "emphatically the patron of the Magian movement… the first Achaemenian of

whom we can say that the Later Avesta fairly represents his religion" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II and "The Prophet and the Reform"]. Darmesteter records that "the first record of the worship of Ardvi Sura is in a cuneiform inscription by Artaxerxes Mnemon (404-361), in which her name is corrupted into Anahata" [Darmesteter (tr.), The Zend-Avesta Part II, SBE 23, #60421, introduction to the Aban Yast].

Gershevitch gives the theological reading. Artaxerxes II (dated by him 405-359) "had fallen in with the Magian outlook to such an extent as to mention in his inscriptions Mithra and Anahita on a par with Ahura Mazdah". About the cult that the Avesta calls daeva-worship he adds: "What is true of Anahita has a good chance of applying also to Mithra" [Gershevitch, The Avestan Hymn to Mithra, #60160, Introduction III, VIII]. Petrosyan sums it up: "The cult of Mithra and other gods was legalized by Artaxerxes II (reigned 404-359 BC)" [Petrosyan, Haldi and Mithra/Mher, #38285, "Haldi and Mitra/Mithra"]. The sources give slightly different reign dates (405-359, 404-359, 404-361).

The Mithridatids: a god in the throne-name

Theophoric royal names spread Mithra's name across Anatolia and Iran. Cumont's collection of oriental sources lists the theophoric names and notes: "Six princes Arsacides ont porté le nom de Mithridate ou Méherdate", beginning with "Mithridate I, qui régna de 171 à 138 av. J.-C." [Cumont, Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra, vol. II, #38304; catalogue wrongly lists Vaknin as author]. Duchesne-Guillemin calls this Mithradates I "the real founder (171-138) of the Arsacid empire". He judges that Ahuramazda "seems to have been second, in popularity and importance, to Mithra" in this period, and notes that Mithra is "the god most frequently named on Kusana coins" [Duchesne-Guillemin, #38271, "Under the Seleucids and Arsacids"]. Gershevitch credits Parthia, Iran's "political and cultural leader" from the second century BC, with spreading the solar Mithra [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction V]. In Pontus the name belonged to Mithridates VI Eupator, Rome's enemy. Ries states that the Cilician pirates served his army until his final defeat in 66 BC [Ries, Il Culto di Mithra, #38276, Introduction], and Vermaseren reports Appian's claim that the pirates learned the mysteries "from the troops who were left behind by the defeated army of Mithridates Eupator" [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300, ch. 3].

Commagene: the king's handshake with the god

The richest monument is in Commagene, which Ries calls a link between the Iranian and Anatolian worlds. Ries reports that in 162 BC the governor Ptolemy made the province independent. The royal cult of Mithra was "instituted and organised by King Mithridates I Callinicus and by his son Antiochus I (69-38 BC)". At Nemrud Dagh and Arsameia on the Nymphaios the king appears "closely associated with the god", above all in the *dexiosis* scene, "in which the king and the god clasp right hands in sign of alliance, fidelity and equality". For Ries, Commagene lets us "observe in more detail the passage from the royal cult to the mystery cult of the imperial age", a "new phase of Hellenisation" [Ries, #38276, Introduction, "Il culto di Mithra nel mondo ellenistico"].

Vermaseren dates Antiochus I to 69-34 BC. He reports that both the king and his father Mithridates (at Arsameia on the Orontes, in his account) "were represented in reliefs clasping hands with Mithras". In the Nemrud inscription Mithras is named "together with Zeus-Ahura-Mazda, Hermes, Apollo-Helios and Herakles-Verethragna. Thus Persian gods were invoked as protectors of the royal house." He stresses that "the inscriptions do not say anything about a secret cult of Mithras; the god simply takes his place beside the acknowledged state gods" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 3]. Rigon's plates show the "monumental head of Apollo-Mithra on the eastern terrace of Nemrud Dag" (fig. 34) and "Mithra conferring royal investiture on King Antiochus I Epiphanes of Commagene" (fig. 47) [Rigon, Il Culto di Mithra tra mito e storia, #38275].

Moulton quotes the inscription itself. Antiochus hoped his soul would go "to the heavenly thrones of Zeus Oromasdes" and set up "god-befitting images of Zeus Oromasdes and Apollo Mithras (who is) the Sun (and) Hermes, and Artagnes (who is) Herakles (and) Ares, and of my all-nurturing country Commagene". The king claimed descent from both Darius and Alexander. Moulton's conclusion: "The Fravashis, then, Mithra, Verethraghna, probably Zervan Akarana, and the 'heroes' (who for Antiochus would be the 'gods of the royal house')… There is no real Zoroastrianism here, but a religion not far from Mithraism as we know it a little later" [Moulton, #55011, "The Prophet and the Reform"]. Duchesne-Guillemin dates the monument "about the middle of the first century B.C." He sees in its list "a reflection of Dumézil's 'tripartite ideology' ", strikingly like the Mitanni treaty, since Ahuramazda and Mithra continue the old Mitra-Varuna pair and Verethragna replaced Indra. He also notes that it modifies an older list set up at Arsameia by Mithradates, in which "the only goddess is Hera" [Duchesne-Guillemin, #38271, "Under the Seleucids and Arsacids"]. For Ger-

shevitch, Nemrud Dagh proves Mithra "a maker, as well as undoer, of kings" [Gershevitch, #60160, Introduction VII].

Ruler / dynasty	Date (as given)	Mithraic element	Source
Artaxerxes II (Achaemenid)	405/404-359/361 BC	Mithra and Anahita named with Ahuramazda	Gershevitch, Duchesne-Guillemin, Darmesteter, Moulton
Mithradates I (Arsacid)	171-138 BC	theophoric throne-name; empire founder	Cumont, Duchesne-Guillemin
Mithridates VI Eupator (Pontus)	defeated 66 BC	his army linked to the pirates' mysteries	Ries, Vermaseren (Appian)
Mithridates I Callinicus (Commagene)	1st c. BC	handshake relief at Arsameia	Ries, Vermaseren
Antiochus I (Commagene)	69-34 or 69-38 BC	Nemrud Dagh; investiture by Mithra	Vermaseren, Ries, Rigon, Moulton
Tiridates I (Armenia)	AD 66	worships Nero "as it were Mithras"	Vermaseren
Ohrmazd I-II, Ardashir II (Sasanian)	3rd-4th c. AD	investiture by Mithra	Duchesne-Guillemin

Armenia: Mihr, Mher and the Door of Haldi

Petrosyan traces the Armenian line. The epic hero Mher of the *David of Sasun* cycle takes his name from "the pre-Christian Armenian theonym Mihr borrowed from Iranian", yet "deep pre-Iranian roots can be traced in his character". Mher the Younger enters the rock of Van through the "Door of Mher", and will come out "when justice and fertility reign in the world". That door is an Urartian portal inscribed for "the god Haldi, the Lord". Petrosyan quotes Diakonoff: under Achaemenid rule or later "Haldi was identified with Mithra". Diakonoff also held that the Roman Mithras "had nothing to do with the concept of Mithra existing in Zoroastrian Iran except for the name". Petrosyan lists parallels between Mher and the Western Mithras: the rock, a treaty with an equal rival, the killing of a

Black Bull, the raven, the lion-epithet. From the bull episode he argues that "it is impossible to imagine a reverse process, namely that the Armenians borrowed it from the western Mithraism". In Armenia, he notes, Mihr "was identified with Hephaestus… and certainly was not the sun god". The form "Mithras" appears in the Greek inscriptions of Armawir (2nd century BC). Petrosyan regards it as theoretically possible that the syncretism with "the Mitannian Aryan Mitra" began as early as the second millennium BC [Petrosyan, #38285]. Cumont's collection adds the Armenian literary sources. Moses of Khoren (II, 14) reports that Tigranes II, "contemporain de Pompée", erected statues of Hellenic divinities in Armenian cities. An Armenian text on the Sasanian demand for sun-worship explains that the Sun "fut nommé Dieu Mihr, parce qu'il n'y a en lui ni astuce, ni ignorance" [Cumont, Textes et monuments, vol. II, #38304, "Moïse de Khorène", "Élisée Vartabed"].

Into Roman hands: the pirates and Tiridates

Plutarch's *Life of Pompey* (24) is the classical starting point. In Vermaseren's rendering, the pirates "brought to Olympus in Lycia strange offerings and performed some secret mysteries, which exist still in the cult of Mithras, first made known by them". Pompey's defeat of the pirates and their resettlement in Italy give "a terminus post quem" for the mysteries. Vermaseren notes, however, that "no Mithraic monument can be dated earlier than the end of the first century A.D." [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 3]. Collins quotes the same passage ("secret mysteries" to Mithra on Mount Olympus, "originally instituted by them") [Collins, From the Ashes of Angels, #71550, ch. 25]. Ries adds that Plutarch drew on Posidonius of Apamea. He reads the pirates' cult as "a pact of brotherhood with a defensive function" under Mithra's protection, placing the birth of the mysteries in eastern Cilicia near Commagene. He sets this against Wikander and Beskow's Danubian hypothesis [Ries, #38276, Introduction].

The second episode is political theatre. Vermaseren writes that in AD 66 Tiridates I of Armenia, travelling overland because "as Magus he would not pollute the sacred element of water", came to Rome with three thousand Parthian horsemen and Magi. He told Nero: "I came to you, my Lord, to worship you, as it were Mithras." "Cumont associated this investiture with the Mithras cult into which Tiridates wanted to initiate Nero", citing Pliny's *magicisque cenis initiaverat.* On this reading, Vermaseren says, "Nero was the first Roman Emperor to come into contact with the cult of Mithras" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 2].

Otto Kurz frames the exchange differently. For him "Mithraism is a western mystery cult which sprang into existence in the last century B.C.", and the Parthian influence on Rome was military and material, from mounted Parthian archers under Gaius Crassus to units of *Parthusagittarii* [Kurz, Cultural Relations between Parthia and Rome, #60250].

Alternative readings: Chulev and Keshe

Two authors outside academic Iranian studies give their own accounts. Basil Chulev subtitles his essay "Zoroastrian-macedonic-Phrygian Mithraism". He calls Mitra originally a "Hittite/Phrygian deity" and claims the Phrygians came from "Ohrid-Pelagonia region in Upper Macedonia". He treats the Phrygian cap as proof of Mithras's "undeniable homeland and Macedonic origin", and identifies Mithras with the sun god "Ilios". He also asserts that Freemasons, the Priory of Sion, Opus Dei and the "Illuminati" still keep statuettes of Mitra [Chulev, The Continuity Paradigm within the Mysteries of Mitra, #38297]. In Knowledge Seekers Workshop 374 (1 April 2021), Mehran Keshe shows a video of a temple near "Hamadan" dedicated to "Goddess of Anahita, of fertility, water and abundance", described as "about 2,500 years" old. Its ritual is summarised as "Ahura Mazda, Mitra, Protect against disasters". The video derives the halo and the wedding ring from Mithraism. Keshe himself states that "all the religions come from Mithraism, the essence of Ahura Mazda, it has changed name as it changed time in place". He wonders "how much we know of Mitra comes from the travelers of the U[niverse], as they came here and taught man" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 374, #378086, 0:46, 1:44-2:24].

Key points

- Duchesne-Guillemin, Gershevitch, Moulton and Darmesteter agree that Artaxerxes II was the first Achaemenid to name Mithra and Anahita beside Ahuramazda. Berossus (via Duchesne-Guillemin) and Clement (via Moulton) credit him with the first cult images of Anahita.
- The theophoric name Mithridates marks Arsacid (from Mithradates I, 171-138 BC), Pontic and Commagenian kings. Duchesne-Guillemin judges Mithra more popular than Ahuramazda in the Parthian era.

- Commagene is the clearest royal Mithra cult. Antiochus I (69-34 BC in Vermaseren, 69-38 in Ries) and his father clasp hands with Mithras, and Rigon's figures show Mithra investing the king.
- Moulton finds "no real Zoroastrianism" at Nemrud Dagh. Duchesne-Guillemin sees a tripartite list echoing Mitanni. Ries treats Commagene as the bridge from royal cult to the Roman mysteries.
- Petrosyan, after Diakonoff, links Armenian Mihr/Mher to the Urartian god Haldi and finds Western Mithraic motifs, the rock-birth and the bull-slaying, in Armenian epic.
- Plutarch places the first known mysteries among the Cilician pirates defeated by Pompey (Vermaseren, Collins, Ries). Tiridates's homage to Nero "as it were Mithras" in AD 66 is, after Cumont, the first imperial contact with the cult.
- Kurz sees Mithraism as a western creation of the last century BC. Chulev claims Macedonian-Phrygian roots, and Keshe declares Mithraism the source of all religions.

Chapter 22.

The Roman Mysteries of Mithras I: Myth, Mithraeum and the Bull-Slaying

The Roman Mithras has to be studied mainly from stones, paintings and graffiti rather than from books. Vermaseren states the problem directly: "Ancient literature gives hardly any information about the meaning of this symbolic act, and what little we know must be deduced almost entirely from the monuments themselves. The great gap which exists between the records of the Persian and Roman Mithras makes interpretation all the more difficult" [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300, ch. 8 "The God's Most Famous Feat"]. This chapter follows the cult as its monuments show it: the cave, the bull-slaying, its attendant figures, the side-panel "legend", the borrowed pantheon and the lion-headed god. Disagreements over interpretation are noted here and argued in chapter 24.

The cave as cosmos: the mithraeum

According to Porphyry (*De antro nympharum* 5-6), quoting Euboulus, Mithras had to be worshipped in a natural cave near running water. Where no cave existed, the Mithraists built one (*spelaeum*, *spelunca*, *crypta*), often in rooms or cellars given by rich members, as at Santa Prisca and San Clemente in Rome. The vault, "a symbol of the celestial vault", was often painted with stars. The standard plan had a central aisle between two benches on which the initiates reclined during the meal, and a cult niche at the far end, sometimes faced with pumice, with two fire-altars "in keeping with the Persian tradition" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 6 "The Mithraic Temple"]. Widengren reconstructs the same rooms (portico, *pronaos*, *apparatorium*, a stair down to the vaulted *crypta*) and adds that the shrines were probably lit only by candles, "which must have exercised a suggestive effect on the participants" [Widengren, The Mithraic Mysteries in

the Greco-Roman World, #38302, §3]. Tertullian mocked the shrine as "truly a camp of darkness" (*vere castra tenebrarum*) [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 6].

Porphyry's cave was also a model of the cosmos. Widengren translates the key passage: Zoroaster dedicated to Mithras "a natural cave among the mountains near to Persis… suggesting to him an image of the cave of the world, that Mithras created", and "the Persians initiate the mysta by conducting him in mysteries down the road by which souls descend and back again up the road out" [Widengren, #38302, n. 28, quoting *De antro* 6]. Manly P. Hall, quoting Lundy's *Monumental Christianity*, gives the esoteric form of the same idea: the cave "was adorned with the signs of the zodiac, Cancer and Capricorn… the gates of souls descending into this life, or passing out of it in their ascent to the Gods; Cancer being the gate of descent, and Capricorn of ascent" [Hall, The Secret Teachings of All Ages, #45649, chapter on the ancient mysteries]. Ruck, Hoffman and González Celdrán note that the orientation was symbolic and "did not always correspond to its real geographical orientation": the tauroctony stood in the "western" niche and the entrance faced the rising sun in the "east" [Ruck et al., Ciupercile, mitul și Mithras, #38283, n. 19].

Six sanctuaries

Vermaseren's survey of sites shows how much the cult varied from place to place [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 7 "Important Mithraic Sanctuaries"]:

Site	What the monuments show
Santa Prisca, Aventine (Rome)	In a house of Trajan's era; niche dated by graffito to 20 November AD 202; repainted c. 220 with Lions, the seven grades and the meal of Sol and Mithras; a *suovetaurilia* that Vermaseren reads as proof of an "official state Mithraeum"; wrecked by Christians late in the 4th century
Walbrook (London)	Founded c. AD 150 beside the Walbrook stream; zodiac tauroctony given by Ulpius Silvanus, veteran of Legio II; heads of Mithras and Sarapis; a Dionysus group

Site	What the monuments show
Merida (Spain)	Pater Gaius Accius Hedychrus in AD 155; statues of Mercury, Oceanus and Mithras with dolphin by Demetrius; two Time-god statues
Carnuntum / Deutsch-Altenburg	Altar restored in AD 308 by Diocletian, Galerius and Licinius to Mithras "benefactor of their rule"; holes in Mithras' cap for metal sun-rays
Sarmizegetusa (Dacia)	The largest recorded Mithraeum (26 x 12 m); dozens of reliefs given by imperial freedmen, a slave and the town augur
Dura-Europos (Euphrates)	Built by Palmyrene archers; cult niche reached by seven steps; hunting scenes in Palmyrene style

Vermaseren also counts sixteen Mithraea at Ostia, a town of perhaps 50,000-60,000 inhabitants, and uses the Sofia Mithraeum to illustrate a typical interior [#38300, ch. 7, fig. 4].

The tauroctony and its attendants

Vermaseren writes: "On the rear wall of every Mithraeum there was a representation of the bull-slaying", following a set convention: "the god… forces down the heavy animal with his knee and, holding up its head by one horn or the nostrils, thrusts his dagger deep into the bull's heart". Ears of corn "charged with magic power" spring from the blood and the tail. A dog and a snake rise towards the wound to drink, and a scorpion grips the genitals. Vermaseren links the scorpion to the Bundahishn, where Ahriman attacks the primordial bull, and concludes that Ahriman's evil act "became in Mithras's hands man's salvation"; the dog and snake, he argues, seek the blood's life-giving power [#38300, ch. 8]. Mithras looks away with "an expression of anguish"; a raven brings Sol's order to kill; Sol and Luna watch from the upper corners [#38300, ch. 9 "The Figures round the Bull-Slayer"].

Two figures in Persian dress flank the scene: Cautes with his torch raised and Cautopates with his torch lowered, the rising and the setting sun. Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite speaks of a "triple Mithras" (*triplasios Mithras*), and

Vermaseren reads the group as morning, noon and evening sun [#38300, ch. 9]. Gershevitch argues against reading the "three Mithrases" (Mithras, Cautes, Cautopates) back into Old Iran. The *triplasios* is attested only in the fourth century AD, and Cumont had already suggested that the torch-bearers copy "a conventional type of figurative religious art". [Gershevitch, The Avestan Hymn to Mithra, #60160, Introduction VIII "The Western Mithras"].

Widengren adds an Iranian background: the scorpion and snake appear on cult reliefs at Hatra, and the white bull of the Capua and Barberini paintings recalls the white bull of the Parthian hero Farīdūn. The scene of Mithras carrying the bull, the *bouklopos theos* ("cattle-stealing god"), goes back in his view to an Indo-Iranian myth of a young god, a bull and cows. In a note he suggests: "Possibly he first pulled out the bull from his refuge, and then carried it to the cave" [Widengren, #38302, §4, nn. 96-97].

Other authors read the slaying differently. Ries reports that Turcan connected the tauroctony "with the spring rebirth of the world and with its renewal at the end of time". In this reading the god's role is to bring souls into the cycle of life and "to save creation thanks to the blood of the bull" [Ries, Il Culto di Mithra, #38276, ch. 9]. Hall gives a solar-esoteric reading: the sword stands for the sun's rays, which "release at the vernal equinox the vital essences of the earth—the blood of the bull" [Hall, #45649]. The astral school, which treats the whole scene as a star map, is presented in chapter 24.

The legend on the side-panels

Danubian and Rhenish reliefs frame the tauroctony with episodes, "an open picture-book" in Vermaseren's phrase [#38300, ch. 10 "The Legend of Mithras"]:

- **Rock-birth**. Mithras emerges naked except for the Phrygian cap, holding a dagger and a torch: *deus genitor rupe natus*, born from the *petra genetrix*. December 25 was his feast. In a 1951 article on this scene, Vermaseren argues that the rock stands both for the vault of heaven and for the earth. "The amphora and the serpents are found on other Mithraic reliefs as symbols of the elements of water and of earth". [Vermaseren, The Miraculous Birth of Mithras, #60178, Mnemosyne 1951].
- **Adventures with the bull**. Mithras catches, rides and finally carries the bull to the cave, *qui portavit umeris iuvencum* (Santa Prisca), the *transitus*

dei of the inscriptions. Commodianus mocked him as a cattle-thief like Cacus [#38300, ch. 10].

- **Water miracle**. Mithras shoots an arrow at a rock and water gushes out for kneeling figures: "A spring, within the rocks, which feeds both brothers with nectar" (Santa Prisca).
- **Hunt**. On horseback, with lion and snake, Mithras shoots at boar and deer; at Dura he wears the dress of a Palmyrene officer of archers.
- **Sol and Mithras**. Sol kneels before Mithras in what Vermaseren calls the "accolade"; the two then clasp right hands across an altar in a blood pact.
- **Banquet and ascent**. The gods feast on the bull's flesh on its hide and ride the sun's chariot towards Oceanus or heaven, a scheme later reused for Elijah on Christian sarcophagi.

Pantheon and the god of infinite time

According to Vermaseren, Mithraic reliefs absorbed the Olympian pantheon "as a whole". Kronos-Saturn hands thunderbolts and sceptre to Jupiter over an altar; at Dura, Jupiter hurls the Titans into Tartarus; Oceanus lies as a witness under the bull-slayer at Santa Prisca and Walbrook. Atlas under the heavens wears a Phrygian cap, and Vermaseren takes him to be "none other than Mithras himself supporting the vault of heaven". Sarapis appears at Santa Prisca, Walbrook and the Baths of Caracalla ("Zeus Helios, the great Sarapis… the invincible Mithras"), and the Walbrook Dionysus group shows Bacchic ties [#38300, chs. 7, 11 "The Mithraic Pantheon"].

The lion-headed figure is the most disputed image: a human body, often four wings, a snake coiled round it with the zodiac between the coils, sometimes keys or a fire-shovel. Examples come from Modena (a Phanes-Mithras rising from an egg), Merida (a youthful version with a lion's head on the chest) and Castel Gandolfo (four arms, an eye on the chest). Vermaseren notes that Zaehner and, "with reservations", Duchesne-Guillemin identified the figure with Ahriman. He himself agrees with Cumont: "The lion-headed figure is the Time-god called Aion by the Greeks and Zervan in Persian literature" [#38300, ch. 12 "The God of Infinite Time"]. Gershevitch calls the Ahriman identification "the seemingly correct step" [#60160, VIII]. Widengren rebuts the arguments for Ahriman and concludes that "the old explanation that the lion-headed deity is the Aion-Saeculum can certainly be upheld". He asks how the higher initiates could be called *leones* "if 'lion' could signify this evil power" [Widengren, #38302, §4].

Blood, drugs and salvation: further readings

The Santa Prisca wall-texts give the soteriological line *Et nos servasti eternali sanguine fuso*, which Vermaseren translates "Us too you have saved by shedding blood which grants eternity" [#38300, ch. 19 "New Texts from Santa Prisca"]. Ries quotes the same verse [Ries, #38276, ch. 9]. Ruck, Hoffman and González Celdrán go further; their subtitle calls Mithraism "the drug cult that civilized Europe". They argue that the rock-birth and water miracle encode an entheogenic sacrament: the moist, water-born rock is "another clear metaphor for the Amanita mushroom" [Ruck et al., #38283, title page and ch. 3 "The Miracle of Water"]. Ferrara, following them, writes that "during the Eucharist of Mithraism, those present participated in a sacramental feast that contained entheogens". He adds that the liturgy also used "breathing techniques, medicinal recipes, magical rites, charming amulets, and reciting magical words" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 2]. Vermaseren's account of the meal, by contrast, lists bread, wine, meat and water.

Key points

- The Roman cult is known mainly from monuments. Vermaseren says the meaning of the bull-slaying "must be deduced almost entirely from the monuments themselves" (#38300).
- The mithraeum was a natural or built cave modelled on the cosmos. Porphyry calls it the road of souls' descent and ascent, and Hall/Lundy name Cancer and Capricorn as its gates.
- Every Mithraeum had a tauroctony with a standard cast: dog, snake, scorpion, raven, corn-ears, Sol and Luna, and the torch-bearers Cautes and Cautopates. Gershevitch argues that the "triple Mithras" is late and not Iranian.
- The side-panel "legend" runs from rock-birth to the bull adventures, the water miracle, the hunt, the pact with Sol, the banquet on the bull's hide and the ascent in the chariot.
- The lion-headed god is identified as Aion/Zervan by Cumont, Vermaseren and Widengren, and as Ahriman by Zaehner, Duchesne-Guillemin and Gershevitch.
- The Santa Prisca verse *et nos servasti… sanguine fuso* and Turcan's reading (renewal of the world through the bull's blood) express the cult's promise of salvation. Ruck et al. and Ferrara argue for an entheogenic sacrament.

Chapter 23.

The Roman Mysteries of Mithras II: Seven Grades, Soldiers, Merchants and the Politics of a Brotherhood

This chapter turns from images to people: initiation, the seven ranks, the meal, the exclusion of women, the charges of bloodshed, and who joined. The library's sources agree that Mithraism was a small, secret, male, hierarchical brotherhood that was especially strong in the army and the imperial service. They disagree over why. Widengren sees the inheritance of Iranian warrior societies. Nock describes private religion flourishing alongside a conservative official calendar. Gordon's 1972 article signals a sociological approach, and more speculative writers see the cult as a tool of loyalty or of male libido.

Entering the cave: oath, ordeal and brand

A Florence papyrus preserves an initiate's oath sworn "in the name of the god, who has divided the earth from the heavens, light from darkness… life from death". The candidate swears secrecy to "the most God-fearing Father Serapion" and his "most beloved Brethren", and the same text requires branding on both hands. The Capua paintings show a naked, blindfolded novice pushed forward by a *mystagogus*, kneeling before a priest with a sword, and lying on the ground "as if dead" [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300, ch. 13 "Initiation into the Mysteries"]. A fourth-century polemical text quoted by Vermaseren describes initiates "thrown across pits full of water" with their hands tied by chicken guts, until a man with a sword cuts the bonds and calls himself *liberator*. Later accounts (Nonnus, Cosmas of Jerusalem with "eighty tests") grow

more extreme, and Vermaseren judges that their authors "had no very profound knowledge of the true nature of these proceedings" [#38300, ch. 13]. Tertullian's summary, in Geden's translation, says that Mithras sets "the sign of Mithra on their foreheads, commemorates an offering of bread, introduces a mock resurrection, and with the sword opens the way to the crown" [Geden, Select Passages Illustrating Mithraism, #38272, Tertullian, *De praescr.* 40].

At the soldier's initiation, Tertullian says, a wreath offered on the point of a sword had to be pushed off the head "with the words that Mithras alone is his wreath. And after that he is never garlanded again", and by this sign he "is recognised as a soldier of Mithras" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 14, quoting *De corona* 15]. Widengren notes that the oath, like a Roman recruit's, was a *sacramentum* and the worship a *sancta militia* [Widengren, The Mithraic Mysteries in the Greco-Roman World, #38302, §5].

The seven grades

Jerome lists seven grades, and the Ostia mosaics and Santa Prisca paintings confirm them, each "under the protection" (*tutela*) of a planet. Vermaseren stresses that the ladder was steep: "The average follower of Mithras almost certainly did not advance to a higher grade", whether for lack of dedication, education or funds [#38300, ch. 14 "The Seven Grades of Initiation"].

Grade	Planet	Emblems / notes (Vermaseren unless stated)
Corax (Raven)	Mercury	Caduceus and cup; wears a raven mask; herald and server at the meal; "Nama Coracibus tutela Mercurii" (Santa Prisca)
Nymphus (Bride)	Venus	Torch, diadem, lamp; bridal veil; "mystical marriage" with Mithras; sixteen Nymphi at one Dura shrine
Miles (Soldier)	Mars	Kitbag, lance, helmet; branding on the forehead and refusal of the crown

Grade	Planet	Emblems / notes (Vermaseren unless stated)
Leo (Lion)	Jupiter	Fire-shovel, sistrum, thunderbolt; scarlet cloak; hands washed with honey, not water, because water is "hostile to fire" (Porphyry)
Perses (Persian)	Moon	Sickle and scythe; honey given to him "as keeper of the fruits"
Heliodromus (Sun-runner)	Sun	Whip, radiate crown, torch, globe; plays Sol at the meal
Pater (Father)	Saturn	Sickle, Phrygian cap, staff and ring; "Hail all Fathers from East to West, under the protection of Saturn"

Porphyry divides the grades into "attendants" (the three lowest) and "participants"; Widengren reads this as "an original dual organization of high antiquity" [#38302, n. 122]. In Rome the *pater patrum* Nonius Victor Olympius was still initiating men in 357-362 [#38300, chs. 14-15].

The grades also had a cosmic meaning. Celsus, as quoted by Origen, describes "a ladder with seven gates and at its top an eighth gate", of lead, tin, bronze, iron, alloy, silver and gold, assigned to Kronos, Aphrodite, Zeus, Hermes, Ares, the Moon and the Sun. Barry quotes the passage and connects it with the "Seven Deathless Lords of the Universe" of the Mithras Liturgy in Dieterich's Paris papyrus [Barry, The Greek Qabalah, #64708, ch. on vowels and planets; Widengren, #38302, n. 124]. Vermaseren shows the same scheme in floors: the Ostia "mosaic of seven gates", the Seven Spheres Mithraeum, Danube reliefs "with seven cypresses (sun-trees) alternating with seven daggers", and the seven steps up to the Dura niche. Through these gates "the soul descended at birth and through which it returned after death" [#38300, ch. 15 "Constellations and the Elements"].

The sacred meal

After the ordeals came the banquet, modelled on the meal of Sol and Mithras. On the Konjic relief "the Raven and Lion, both wearing the masks of their grade,

serve food and drink". At Santa Prisca (c. AD 220) Sol and Mithras recline while a Raven offers a plate and eight Lions bring "bread and a mixing-bowl, a cock and a bundle of tapers". At Dura "the charges for meat and wine" head the community's accounts scratched on the walls. Justin says the elements were bread and a cup of water accompanied by formulas. Vermaseren notes that the Santa Prisca meal painting "suffered most at the hands of the Christian iconoclasts at the end of the fourth century", because Tertullian had called it a "devilish imitation of the Eucharist" [#38300, ch. 10 §vi, pp. 99-103].

Women excluded; "hyenas"; human sacrifice

The cult was male only. Porphyry, in "an obscure passage" of *De abstinentia*, says initiates were called lions "and the women hyenas", but Vermaseren warns that the text "is apparently corrupt" and that no hyena grade appears anywhere else. A tomb at Oea (near Tripoli) of Aelius Magnus *leo* and Aelia Arisuth *lea* may be the "unique example" of a woman of grade. Vermaseren links the exclusion to an old male "clan" ideal. [#38300, ch. 16 "Women and the Mithraic Cult"]. Campos Méndez traces the exclusion to Iranian warrior societies "limited exclusively to men" [Campos Méndez, El Culto del Dios Mithra, #60243, ch. III "Mithra y el estamento guerrero"]. Nock observes that the absence of women deprived the cult of "the sex more interested in religious practices of any and every kind" [Nock, The Development of Paganism in the Roman Empire, #60218, CAH XII ch. 12 §IV].

The charge of human sacrifice rests on Lampridius' life of Commodus. Widengren quotes it in full: *Sacra Mithriaca homicidio vero polluit, cum illic aliquid ad speciem timoris vel dici vel fingi soleat* ("he polluted the Mithraic rites with real murder, whereas there something is customarily said or feigned to produce an appearance of terror") [Widengren, #38302, n. 101]. Socrates the church historian, translated by Geden, says that at Alexandria "the Greeks of old used to celebrate Mithraic rites and perform human sacrifice". Geden adds that "it is not implied of course that human sacrifice was countenanced by the Mithraic ritual" [Geden, #38272]. Vermaseren reports that Massalsky accused Julian of human sacrifice on the evidence of a bone-filled sarcophagus at the Fertőrákos Mithraeum, and describes a Saarburg skeleton with chained wrists lying on a smashed tauroctony; he explains these as later burials and a revenge killing meant to pollute the shrine. He concludes that a simulated killing "may be a relic of ritual human sacrifice, which may have taken place in the East", and

that such charges were the standard weapon against rival cults [#38300, ch. 17 "Human Sacrifice"].

Who were the initiates?

Vermaseren's answer is the army first: "wherever the Romans planted the standards, Mithras and his cult followed". M. Valerius Maximianus of Poetovio dedicated altars as legionary commander at Apulum and Lambaesis. "Soldiers and traders carried Mithraism to the furthest borders". Customs officers at Poetovio, provincial governors, imperial freedmen and slaves appear on the dedications, and at Sarmizegetusa a treasury deputy, two imperial freedmen and the town augur dedicated side by side [#38300, chs. 4-5, 7]. *Mitra. Il Signore delle Grotte* says the followers were mostly "imperial functionaries of modest background and soldiers of the frontier zones, such as the Rhine, the Danube or Hadrian's Wall". Because the communities were made up largely "of imperial freedmen or soldiers", it argues, "surveillance over what happened inside the caves was superfluous, since they exercised self-control themselves". Two imperial freedmen dedicated a shrine around AD 200-202 "for the prosperity of the emperor and the loyal praetorian cohorts" [Mitra. Il Signore delle Grotte, #60165, ch. on the Roman mysteries]. Widengren adds merchants and slaves "of oriental origin", notes the "remarkable exception of Greece", and estimates no more than 5,000-10,000 Mithraists in Rome. A single congregation had at most "100 members… which would correspond exactly with the ancient Iranian principle of military organization" [#38302, §§6-7].

The politics of the brotherhood

The sources describe the cult's political side in several ways. Vermaseren follows the imperial patronage: a *sacerdos invicti Mithrae domus Augustanae* at court, Commodus' initiation, a Mithraeum in the Baths of Caracalla, and the Carnuntum altar of AD 308 to Mithras *fautor imperii sui.* Emperor and god shared titles: *invictus*, *comes*, *conservator* [#38300, ch. 5 "The Means of Propaganda"]. Widengren quotes Cumont: the *militia* of the mysteries is "nothing but this civic morality considered from the religious point of view. Loyalism then merged with piety". Widengren adds that the communities reproduced "the warlike societies or feudal followings in Iran… among the Parthians" [#38302, conclusion].

Nock warns against overstatement. The official army calendar, the *Feriale Duranum*, lists only old Roman festivals and imperial anniversaries, and "Mithras had none". He finds no evidence that this reflected "any official desire to see the soldiers worshipping the gods listed in it rather than other gods". Although Mithras was "never officially received", he enjoyed "exalted patronage and full approval". On the evidence of soldiers' private dedications, "if there was any wish to condition the soldiers... its success was decidedly limited". In the fourth century troops showed "relative indifference" to religious change, and Constantine could say "My Rome is Sardica" [Nock, The Roman Army and the Roman Religious Year, #60166, §§iii-v]. In his Cambridge Ancient History chapter Nock calls the cult "always private", "without hierarchy or quindecimviral control", and says: "Mithras was the god who, beyond all others, mattered most to the believer" [Nock, #60218, §IV].

Writers outside the academic mainstream give sharper readings. *The Book of Yew* (Samhain 2016) traces the cult from the Danube to the Rhine "at Bonn and Treves". It says that "MITHRAS was the main religion of the Roman Empire hierarchy & military". It compares the institution to "modern Freemasonry" and proposes a "start point" for a hypothetical "Pictish-Mithraism" at a Severan-period Roman army site in Pictland [The Book of Yew, #50893]. Basil Chulev calls the tauroctony "the Mitraic most potent hidden symbolism, and the actual 'aphrodisiac' buildup for the male libido of every army, Roman comprised". He ties the cult to "loyalty to the Roman empire" and derives it from the Macedonian Peninsula [Chulev, The Continuity Paradigm within the Mysteries of Mitra, #38297, nn. 23-26].

For the academic sociology, Ries' bibliography lists R. L. Gordon, "Mithraism and Roman Society" (*Religion* 2, 1972), V. J. Walters, *The Cult of Mithras in the Roman Provinces of Gaul* (1974), and G. Ristow, *Mithras im römischen Köln* (1974) [Ries, Il Culto di Mithra, #38276, bibliography]. These works study the cult through the social position of its members rather than through Iranian doctrine.

Key points

- Initiation meant a secret oath (*sacramentum*), ordeals (Capua), branding and, for the Miles, refusing the crown, declaring "that Mithras alone is his wreath" (Tertullian, *De corona* 15).

- Seven grades stood under seven planets, from Corax to Pater; most followers never rose far (Vermaseren). Celsus' seven-gate ladder links the grades to the soul's ascent (Barry, Widengren).
- The meal, served by masked Ravens and Lions, imitated the banquet of Sol and Mithras; Christians defaced the Santa Prisca meal as a "devilish imitation" of the Eucharist.
- Women were excluded; the "hyenas" text is corrupt and the Oea tomb a possible exception. Campos Méndez traces the exclusion to male Iranian warrior bands.
- The Historia Augusta's murder charge against Commodus and Massalsky's against Julian are reported; Geden and Vermaseren treat ritual killing as simulated or polemical.
- Members were soldiers, imperial freedmen and slaves, officials and merchants on the Danube, Rhine and Hadrian's Wall, in congregations of at most about 100 (Widengren).
- Political readings range from imperial loyalism (Vermaseren; Cumont via Widengren) and private cult beside a conservative army calendar (Nock) to sociology (Gordon) and speculation (Book of Yew, Chulev).

Chapter 24.

Where Did the Mysteries Come From? Cumont and His Critics (Hinnells, Gordon, Beck, Ulansey, Widengren)

No question in Mithraic studies has been argued over more than this one: was the Roman cult of Mithras a western survival of an Iranian religion, or a new creation of the Roman world that used a Persian name and costume? This chapter sets out the positions in the library's sources in rough chronological order, with the evidence each side relies on. The literary sources are scarce. Fideler writes that they "only fill a small booklet", so every theory is in the end a reading of the same images [Fideler, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, #69295, ch. 7 "New Light on the Mithraic Mysteries"]. Vermaseren states the basic difficulty: "The great gap which exists between the records of the Persian and Roman Mithras makes interpretation all the more difficult" [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300, ch. 8].

Before Cumont, and Cumont's synthesis

Campos Méndez outlines the earlier history: Lafréri (1564) read the tauroctony as agricultural allegory, F. della Torre (1700) linked Mithras with Sol, and J. G. Eichhorn (1814) saw in the bull-slaying "a creative and saving act for all nature" [Campos Méndez, El Culto del Dios Mithra, #60243, Introducción]. The decisive work was Franz Cumont's *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra* (vol. I, Brussels 1896; vol. II, 1899). Campos Méndez calls it "the principal reference for anyone who wishes to approach the history of this god". It was followed by *Les mystères de Mithra* (1913), in which Cumont presented Mithraism

as "a form of romanized Mazdaism", with firm links between Iran and Rome and a central role for the "hellenized" Magi [#60243, Introducción, nn. 4-5]. The library holds scans of the corpus [Cumont, Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra, #38268; Tome II also as #38304].

Cumont matched Mithraic figures with Iranian ones (Jupiter with Ahura Mazda, the lion-headed god with Zurvan, the bull-slaying with Ahriman's killing of the primordial bull), and even his defenders find the matches stretched. Widengren writes that "Cumont is rather optimistic about the possibilities to identify the Mithraic deities with more or less corresponding Iranian deities. He constantly, however, refers to Zoroastrian deities in spite of his insight into the true nature of Mithraic religion" [Widengren, The Mithraic Mysteries in the Greco-Roman World, #38302, n. 69]. Vermaseren, Cumont's pupil, regarded Cumont's explanation of the tauroctony as "by far the most satisfactory... every subsequent attempt to depart from his theories has led only to fresh complications". Yet he doubted that the Mithraists "always appreciated the connection" with Iranian gods [#38300, chs. 8, 11]. Campos Méndez notes that Vermaseren updated Cumont's corpus in the *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* (CIMRM, The Hague 1956-60) and founded the EPRO series, in which most of the major later studies appeared [#60243, Introducción, n. 14].

The early challenges: Wikander and Gershevitch

According to Campos Méndez, the first attack was philological. Stig Wikander (1951) argued from spelling differences that the god worshipped in Iran and the god of the mysteries were "completely different" [#60243, Introducción, n. 6]. Gershevitch reports that Wikander proposed a Balkan origin. He calls Zaehner's phrase "severe shock treatment" apt and says the Balkan idea "was disproved with conclusive archaeological arguments by A. Alföldi" [Gershevitch, The Avestan Hymn to Mithra, #60160, Introduction VIII]. Widengren grants that Wikander was right to separate the Iranian high god Mithra from the Hellenistic and Roman mystery god Mithras, but calls the claim that the two had nothing to do with each other "unacceptable" [#38302, n. 22].

Gershevitch (1959) takes a middle position: "aspects of the Roman Mithras... are clearly derived from the Iranian Mithra as attested in the Avesta", such as the light-bringer preceding the sun, the epithet *genitor luminis*, and the presence of Oceanus (Apam Napat). He rejects Lommel's theory that the Zoroastrians "camouflaged" an original bull-killing Mithra by blaming Ahriman, and

argues instead that Ahriman's deed was later transferred to Mithras among Iranian daeva-worshippers in Babylonia [#60160, VIII].

1971: the Manchester congress and the revisionists

The turning point came at the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies, held in Manchester in 1971. Its proceedings were published by J. Hinnells as *Mithraic Studies*; Tehran (1975, "under the patronage of the Shah of Persia") and Rome (1978) followed [Campos Méndez, #60243, Introducción]. Fideler reports the outcome: Hinnells concluded "that the portrayal of Mithras given by Cumont is not merely unsupported by Iranian texts but is actually in serious conflict with known Iranian theology". He adds that R. L. Gordon "showed that Cumont severely distorted the available evidence by forcing the material to conform to his predetermined model of Zoroastrian origins" and concluded that the western mysteries were "an entirely new creation" [Fideler, #69295, ch. 7]. Campos Méndez cites the two papers as Gordon, "Franz Cumont and the doctrines of Mithraism", and Hinnells, "Reflections on the bull-slaying scene" (*Mithraic Studies* II, 1975). He characterises their criticism as an attack on Cumont's "epistemological apriorism". He also notes that Hinnells "is not opposed" to looking for Iranian influences [#60243, Introducción n. 7; ch. III n. 55]. Fideler adds a basic objection: "in the Persian worship of Mithra there are no grades of initiation, no cave temples, and no version of the bull-slaying myth" [#69295, ch. 7]. Otto Kurz (1983) puts the revisionist view briefly: "Mithraism is a western mystery cult which sprang into existence in the last century B.C. and flourished during the first centuries of the Roman empire". He adds that if a Persian had ever been initiated, "it is doubtful if he would have recognized anything familiar to him apart from the name of the god" [Kurz, Cultural Relations between Parthia and Rome, #60250, "Religion"].

The astral turn: Stark, Beck, Insler, Speidel, Ulansey

After Cumont's model was shaken, attention moved to the stars. Fideler reports that scholars returned to K. B. Stark (1869), who had read the tauroctony as a star map: the bull is Taurus, the dog Canis Minor, the snake Hydra, the raven Corvus and the scorpion Scorpius. Roger Beck revived this in 1973, noting that all these constellations lie between Aldebaran in Taurus and Antares in Scorpio, "along with the bright star ʻSpica, the wheat ear, whose counterpart in the tauroctony is

the metamorphosed tail of the dying bull' ". Stanley Insler reached a similar view independently in 1977 [Fideler, #69295, ch. 7]. Campos Méndez lists Beck's 1979 study of the Ostia "Sette Sfere" Mithraeum and the spring equinoxes of AD 172 and 173, and his survey "Mithraism since Franz Cumont" (*ANRW* II.17.4, 1984/85, pp. 2002-2117), which he calls the essential reference work. He describes M. Speidel's *Mithras-Orion, Greek hero and Roman army god* (EPRO 81, 1980) as "much more radical", since it sees the cult as adapting an existing cult of Orion [#60243, Introducción, nn. 8-10, 17].

David Ulansey's *The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries* (1989) went further. As Fideler summarises it, the figure of Mithras is the constellation Perseus, which stands above Taurus in a Phrygian cap and faces backwards. The tauroctony shows the equinoctial band "as they stood during the astrological Age of Taurus" (c. 4000-2000 BC), with Cautes (bull, rising torch) and Cautopates (scorpion, lowered torch) marking the spring and autumn equinoxes of that age. The slaying encodes the precession of the equinoxes discovered by Hipparchus around 128 BC: a power "capable of moving the structure of the entire cosmos". Ulansey places the synthesis among Stoic intellectuals at Tarsus, where Perseus was the founder-hero and Mithradates VI and the Cilician pirates were active. In Ulansey's words, Mithraic iconography "was a cosmological code created by a circle of religious-minded philosophers and scientists to symbolize their possession of secret knowledge" [Fideler, #69295, ch. 7, quoting Ulansey]. Campos Méndez reports that Beck and Ulansey "break openly with the continuist theories" and treat the cult as entirely Roman in origin. In his account, by the 1990s works seeking Iranian connections were "clearly abandoned" [#60243, Introducción].

The Iranian defence: Widengren and Campos Méndez

Widengren (Lincei symposium, 1965; published 1966) argues the opposite case. He holds that Roman sacred architecture, art, myth, initiation and organisation "in all essentials demonstrate the original Iranian character" of the mysteries. His evidence includes: the cave as an Iranian birthplace of the saviour; the bull-slaying type modelled on the stag-killing "Persian" Artemis/Anahita of Asia Minor coins; Mithras' birth on the Araxes, which has Ossetic and Hurrian parallels; Iranian cult words (*nama*, *Nabarzes*); the communal meal; and above all the organisation, with *fratres*, *comes*, *adiutor* and *socius*, Magi-dressed Fathers at Dura,

and congregations of about 100. His conclusion: "It has been our chief task to demonstrate here both the Iranian origin of the Mithraic mysteries and their original setting-in-life as being the special cult of the Iranian warrior societies" [Widengren, #38302, summary, §§3-7 and conclusion]. He also warns that the mysteries' importance in Roman society "has most probably been considerably exaggerated" [#38302, §7].

Campos Méndez builds his whole thesis on "the clear connection" between the Iranian and the Roman Mithra. He identifies four "elements of continuity": Mithra and the Sun, Mithra and the warrior class, the bull sacrifice, and Iranian words and images (*nama*, *Nabarzes*, Cautes/Cautopates, the grade *Perses*). He is careful. He finds Cumont's bull-slaying argument weak and Zaehner's Mashyē parallel thin. He prefers the eschatological sacrifice of the bull Hadhayans by the Saoshyant in the Bundahishn and the Mithrakana feast as possible models, and he concedes that the tauroctony's meaning "was not founded on a single religious tradition" [#60243, ch. III "Mithra y el sacrificio del toro"]. His conclusion is that the Romans' awareness of the god's Persian origin "was not limited only to the name of the god itself" [#60243, Introducción].

Comparison of positions

Author (date)	Origin of the Roman mysteries	Main evidence cited
Cumont (1896-1913)	Romanized Mazdaism carried west by hellenized Magi	Point-by-point Iranian identifications; Bundahishn bull
Wikander (1951)	Different god; Balkan origin	Name forms (rejected by Alföldi, Gershevitch, Widengren)
Gershevitch (1959)	Developed from the Avestan Mithra via daeva-worshippers	Yasht 10 epithets; Ahriman's deed transferred
Widengren (1965/66)	Iranian (Parthian) warrior societies	Organisation, terms, art types, birth myth
Hinnells, Gordon (1971/75)	Cumont unsupported; a new western creation (Gordon)	Contradictions with Iranian theology
Beck, Insler, Speidel (1973-80)	Astral or star-map; Orion (Speidel)	Constellations from Aldebaran to Antares

Author (date)	Origin of the Roman mysteries	Main evidence cited
Ulansey (1989)	Tarsus Stoics; precession; Mithras = Perseus	Age of Taurus equinoxes; Hipparchus
Kurz (1983)	Western cult of the 1st century BC	Little a Persian would recognise
Campos Méndez	Partial continuity	Sun, warriors, bull, Iranian vocabulary

Afterlives of the star-map theory

The precession reading has moved well beyond academic debate. Fideler uses it to support a wider solar-Logos reading of Christianity. He reports that Mithras "was born on December 25 in a cave and his birth was witnessed by shepherds" and cites a description of Mithraism as "the Freemasonry of the Roman world" [Fideler, #69295, ch. 7]. Joscelyn Godwin reports how Wilhelm Landig's post-war "Thulean" mythology presented a solar "Son of God" linked to the precession of the equinoxes: "thus he is shown slaying the Bull, to mark the end of the Age of Taurus, in the central icon of the Thuleans' underground temple" [Godwin, Arktos: The Polar Myth, #71379, Part II]. In this way the astronomical decoding offered by Beck and Ulansey reappears in esoteric milieus, where the bull-slaying marks the turning of cosmic ages.

Key points

- Cumont (1896-1913) framed Mithraism as "Romanized Mazdaism"; Widengren calls his Iranian identifications "rather optimistic", and Vermaseren extended his corpus as the CIMRM.
- Wikander (1951) denied continuity; Gershevitch (1959) traced specific Roman traits to the Avestan Mithra and rejected Lommel's "camouflage" theory.
- At Manchester (1971) Hinnells judged Cumont's picture "in serious conflict with known Iranian theology" and Gordon called the mysteries "an entirely new creation" (via Fideler).

- The astral school (Stark, Beck, Insler, Speidel, Ulansey) reads the tauroctony as a star map; Ulansey adds precession and Mithras = Perseus at Tarsus.
- Kurz: "a western mystery cult which sprang into existence in the last century B.C."
- Widengren and Campos Méndez defend Iranian origin or partial continuity, citing organisation, vocabulary, warrior ethos and art types.
- The precession reading lives on in esoteric and Thulean milieus (Godwin on Landig) and solar-Christian comparison (Fideler).

Chapter 25.

Sol Invictus, the Emperors and 25 December: Mithras in Imperial Politics and His Fall

In the third and fourth centuries the worship of the sun moved from the private cave-sanctuaries of Mithras to the centre of the Roman state. Emperors gave the sun a temple, a priesthood, coins and a birthday. The Tetrarchs dedicated an altar to Mithras as protector of their rule, and the last pagan emperor, Julian, was himself an initiate. The Christian emperors then broke this solar state religion by law, by confiscation and in the end by battle. Vermaseren, quoting Bayet, puts it this way: Roman religion "always developed within the framework of their politics" [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300, ch. 21 "The Fall of Mithras", p. 187]. This chapter follows that political arc. It then sets out the competing accounts of how 25 December, the "birthday of the Unconquered", became the date of Christmas, and closes with Mehran Keshe's teaching on the same date.

From the Emesene stone to the Illyrian emperors

Before Aurelian, a foreign solar cult imposed from the throne had already been tried and had failed. Nock says that Elagabalus "glorified the fetich of Emesa and sought to mate it to Vesta and to make it the chief deity of the Roman world", and that he "seems to have provoked even the champions of other non-Roman cults" [Nock, The Development of Paganism in the Roman Empire (CAH XII ch. 12), #60218, "New cults at Rome", p. 413]. Vermaseren uses the same episode to measure how strong sun-worship already was. In his account the Romans resisted the attempt to bring the god of Emesa to Rome because they were "still too much attracted to the traditional conception of the sun to be able to accept

Baal in the shape of a black stone" (his text dates the attempt "a.d. 210") [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 186]. Vermaseren places this inside a wider philosophical trend: "The search for a monotheistic cult stimulated by the philosophical doctrines of the time led inevitably to the all-embracing cult of the unvanquished Sun-god" [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 186].

The reaction came from the soldier-emperors of the Danube. "The Illyrian emperors stood for Rome," Nock writes. Their Roman dedications show "a peculiar devotion to Vesta" [Nock, #60218, p. 413]. Nock adds that solar theology "did very possibly make a contribution to the complex of ideas and emotions tending to exalt the princeps". He also stresses that it "had its roots in philosophy" and did not depend only on the Oriental cults [Nock, #60218, p. 435].

Aurelian: the Sun as lord of the Empire

Nock treats Aurelian's reform as "one innovation of the greatest importance". Rome had once had a Republican cult of Sol, "but it had faded, and the importance of Sol in the City is due to Aurelian, who on his return from Syria built the great temple of Sol Invictus, introduced the celebration of his birthday (natalis Invicti) on December 25" and gave the cult its own establishment [Nock, #60218, p. 413]. Vermaseren gives more detail. The temple stood in the Campus Martius, "part of which is now the Piazza San Silvestro". There Aurelian "worshipped the Sun-god as the only heavenly, almighty and divine power". Games were decreed every four years and the cult received "a priestly college of its own". Vermaseren also records that "the anniversary of the Sun-god's birth was on December 25th" [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 187]. The Greek historian Zosimus, in Geden's translation, says that after destroying Palmyra Aurelian "built the temple of the Sun also on a magnificent scale, adorning it with the votive offerings from Palmyra, and set up statues of the Sun and Bel". Geden notes that any reference to Mithra here "is doubtful" [Geden, Select Passages Illustrating Mithraism, #38272, "Zosimus"].

Chulev gives the most precise and most political version of the decree: "On the Dies Natalis Invicti, AD 25 December 274, Roman Emperor Aurelian decreed Sol Invictus as the Sol Dominus Imperii Romani (the 'Lord of Roman Empire'), and ordered imperial coins honoring Mitras-Sol Invictus to be minted and the Templum Solis Aureliani ... to be built in Rome" [Chulev, The Continuity Paradigm within the Mysteries of Mitra, #38297]. Chulev gives the exact day. Nock and Vermaseren give only the festival date. Chulev also identifies the imperial Sol

with "Mitras" outright. Vermaseren instead separates "the more general sun-cult of Aurelian" from the cult of Mithras proper [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 188]. Vermaseren also records a political legend: the Sun-god "appeared to Aurelian to pledge his support for the Emperor against Zenobia". He concludes that "it was due to Aurelian that the sun-cult was proclaimed the official state religion of Rome" [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 188].

The Tetrarchs, Carnuntum and the road to the Milvian Bridge

Under Diocletian the state's gods narrowed further. Nock observes that "the coinage of Diocletian and his associates is primarily interested in Juppiter, Hercules, Mars and Sol", and that their medallions show "a notable narrowing of the range of gods represented" [Nock, #60218, coin evidence, p. 417]. The sharpest expression of the alliance between the Tetrarchy and Mithras came on the Danube. Carnuntum (modern Deutsch-Altenburg, east of Vienna) had three Mithraic temples. The largest was excavated in 1894. Of the other two, "one was situated next to a temple of the Syrian Jupiter Dolichenus, the other on the north bank of the Danube" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 7, Carnuntum section]. There, "when in a.d. 308 the aged Diocletian met Galerius and Licinius at Carnuntum … and made a general agreement, they dedicated a great altar to Mithras, on which the god is described in fine monumental lettering as the benefactor of imperial might (fautori imperii sui)". For Vermaseren, "the dedication shows how the worship of Sol invictus in connection with the emperor-cult had become the focal point of the state religion in the years following the rule of Aurelian" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 5 "The Means of Propaganda"]. He adds that "the fact that Mithras is mentioned by name distinguishes this dedication from the more general sun-cult of Aurelian" [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 188].

Galerius, the persecutor, is named as a Mithraist through an indirect argument. The Byzantine chronicler Theophanes writes that Galerius "was persuaded by a sorcerer Theoteknos to sacrifice to the demons", and that Theoteknos "entered a cave and delivered to him an oracle against the Christians in order to arouse persecution". Geden reports that "Cumont argues that inasmuch as Galerius was an adherent of Mithraism the priest referred to must have been a priest of that religion" [Geden, #38272, "Theophanes"]. On the other side of the civil wars, Nock notes that "the litany of Licinius' army before the defeat of Maximin

shows how near solar henotheism could come to Christian monotheism" [Nock, #60218, p. 446].

According to Vermaseren, the battle of the Milvian Bridge (312) "was decisive not only for Constantine but also for the Mithraic cult". The vision of Christ's symbol played the part that the Sun-god's apparition had played for Aurelian: "now, similarly convinced, Constantine firmly planted the Cross on Roman soil". He cites Constantine's biographer H. Doerries: "politics were for him determined by religion, and religion was the consequence of politics" [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 188].

Julian the Apostate: the last Mithraist on the throne

Geden's introduction marks the turning point: "Until with the accession of the Emperor Julian (360 A.D.) there came a brief era of reaction, and for a time Mithra was triumphant" [Geden, #38272, Introduction, p. 3]. Vermaseren stresses the word "convinced". Julian, "strongly under the influence of the neo-platonic school", "declared himself a convinced Mithraist", whereas "the fourth century produced many sympathisers, but few true followers of Mithras". Julian was initiated in a Mithraeum at Constantinople, entered the highest grade, and in his *Hymn to the Sun* made Mithras one with Apollo, Phaethon, Hyperion and Prometheus. He "saw himself in the role of a good shepherd, whose moral code was laid down by Mithras" [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 189]. Julian's own words, in Geden's translation, have Hermes say to him: "to thee ... have I granted the knowledge of Mithra the father. Do thou therefore observe his commands, providing for thyself in this life a sure cable and anchorage" [Geden, #38272, "Julian", Caesares 336 C]. In another passage Julian describes "the renowned festival in honour of the Sun, celebrating the feast to the invincible Sun", which immediately follows "the last month of Kronos". Geden judges that its relation "to the Mithraic ritual is uncertain" [Geden, #38272, "Julian" (d)]. The rhetor Himerius, summoned by Julian, was "initiated into the Mithraic mysteries" before speaking "before the city and the Emperor who had established the rite" [Geden, #38272, "Himerius"].

Nock limits how far Julian's program was Mithraic. Julian was "himself devoted to Mithras, to solar worship in general, to Cybele, and to theurgy", but "his religious policy was directed to the restoration of Greek traditional practice". For Julian, "neo-paganism was ... hellenismos" [Nock, #60218, "The last phase", p. 446].

The reign also produced the most violent episode linked to a mithraeum. Socrates Scholasticus reports that in Alexandria, on a waste site Constantine had granted to the Church, bishop Georgius ordered clearing for an oratory. A shrine "of Mithra" was found containing "many human skulls, both ancient and new". The Christians "formed a procession and exhibited the naked skulls to the populace". The pagans attacked, "and others again they crucified, employing this manner of death in mockery of the cross". Georgius was dragged from the church, bound to a camel and torn apart. Julian then "wrote a letter and upbraided the people of Alexandria". Sozomen's parallel account says that "the Greeks with the connivance of the queen of Julian killed Georgius" [Geden, #38272, "Socrates", "Sozomen"].

The fall: from Gratian to the Frigidus

After Julian's death in 363 against the Persians, "a period of comparative tolerance set in". It ended with Gratian's edict of 382, which removed the altar of Victory from the Senate and withdrew state support. Gratian was also "the first emperor to refuse the high dignity and title of pontifex maximus" [Vermaseren, #38300, pp. 189-190]. In 377 the city prefect Gracchus had already "overturned, broken and destroyed" a Mithraic cave. Jerome reports it as a deed by which Gracchus "gained Christian baptism" [Geden, #38272, "Jerome" (a)], and Vermaseren sees "the traces of such an iconoclastic act" at Santa Prisca [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 190]. The pagan resistance was aristocratic. Vettius Agorius Praetextatus was "Father of Fathers in the cult of Mithras". He was joined by Symmachus, Nicomachus Flavianus and the circle of Macrobius. Their opponent was Ambrose of Milan, who threatened Gratian with excommunication and made Theodosius, in Herbert Bloch's phrase, the "spiritual subject of Ambrose" [Vermaseren, #38300, pp. 190-191].

Theodosius' edict of 24 February 391 forbade all pagan worship in Rome. The edict of 8 November 392 punished "all practice of pagan religions, private devotions included" (Cod. Theod. xvi, 10, 10 and 12). Flavianus then declared for the usurper Eugenius, and the contest became "a question of 'to be or not to be' for the old religion". In Vermaseren's account of the battle of the Frigidus (394): "At first it looked as though the battle by the Frigidus would bring victory to Jupiter. Then the next morning Theodosius knelt down and prayed. A storm swept up from the Adriatic and the arrows of the pagan enemy were turned back upon them. Yet again a miracle determined the outcome. Eugenius was

murdered and Flavianus committed suicide." The struggle continued in literature, "causing Augustine to write his City of God in order to refute the imputation that the scorn shown to the Roman gods was to blame for the sack of Rome by the Goths" [Vermaseren, #38300, pp. 191-192]. Nock notes that the aristocratic group "showed enthusiasm for Mithraism and the taurobolium, reviving them not only under Julian but also under Eugenius". Yet the Christian edicts themselves name divination, nocturnal sacrifice, magic and "finally all temple cultus", not Mithraism specifically [Nock, #60218, p. 446]. Chulev sums up the outcome as "centuries of incessant and merciless Christian persecution toward all the pagan religions and mystery cults", with the last Mithraic communities disappearing "in the first half of the 5th century" [Chulev, #38297, "The fading of Mitra's cult and its legacy"].

How 25 December became Christmas: the competing accounts

Foley, writing from a Catholic perspective, sets out "three main theories". The first, the "history of religion" theory, holds that "Christians in Rome chose December 25 to supplant a Roman pagan festival called the Birth of the Unconquered Sun and that Christians in Egypt chose January 6 to supplant an Egyptian festival of the god Aion, who was born of a virgin". He grants that "this theory has enjoyed the most scholarly support over the years". He then objects that Christians were "talking about December 25 as the date of Jesus' birthday as early as 240", while the feast of the Unconquered Sun "was not instituted until 274". He adds that Aurelian "was more concerned about the winter solstice (which at the time fell on December 25) than about stealing thunder from a small religious minority". The second, the "calculation" theory, derives 25 December from a 25 March conception date. Foley notes that "there is no evidence that the early Church knew about the rabbinical belief in an integral age". The third theory, a real birth near 25 December computed from the priestly course of Abijah, "has yet to gain widespread acceptance" [Foley, Why We Kiss Under the Mistletoe, #72208, Introduction]. Foley records the earliest Roman evidence for a 25 December Christmas as AD 336.

Jung collects early Christian sun-language for Christ: the Ambrosian "O sol salutis", Melito's title for Christ as "sun of the East", and a Pseudo-Cyprian text marvelling that "on the day on which the sun was made ... Christ should be born" (the Latin gives "v. Kal. Apr.", a late-March date). Jung adds that "the heathen,

as Tertullian avows, considered the sun as the Christian God" [Jung, Psychology of the Unconscious, #44615, Part I].

Polemical and popular authors state the solar origin as settled. Koster, writing from a Hebrew-roots position, says: "The fact of the pagan origin of the festival of Christmas on the 25th December, namely, as birthday of the Sun-deity, is admitted by all scholars". He also claims that "the Sun-worshipping Mithraists, the Sun-worshipping Manicheans and the Christians were all syncretized and reconciled when Constantine led the takeover by Christianity" [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909, "Christmas - 25th December", nn. 80-83]. Murdock and Barker point to other solstice births. They place the Egyptian "baby sun god Sokar" on 26 Khoiak, "corresponding at the turn of the common era to December 22nd", and compare his procession in an "ark" with a passage of Epiphanius [Murdock & Barker, The Astrotheology Calendar Guide, #71969, "December"]. Weishaupt suggests that Sol Invictus, celebrated at the Dies Natalis Solis Invicti, "could be yet another retelling of Nimrod and Semiramis" and claims that the depictions of Sol Invictus "appear to mirror that of the Statue of Liberty" [Weishaupt, A Grand Unified Conspiracy Theory, #79747]. Vaknin states that Mitra was born on 25 December and that "Pope Liberius" placed the birth of Jesus on the same date [Vaknin, Zeul Mitra si virusul, #60323, "2. Nașterea"].

Account	Source	Claim about 25 December	Main evidence or objection cited
History of religions	Foley's summary, #72208	Rome supplanted the Birth of the Unconquered Sun	Most scholarly support; objection: Christian date attested c. 240, feast instituted 274
Calculation	Foley, #72208	25 March conception + 9 months	No evidence the Church knew the "integral age" idea
Solstice policy	Nock, #60218; Vermaseren, #38300; Foley	Aurelian fixed the natalis Invicti on 25 Dec	Solstice then fell on 25 Dec (Foley)
Decree of 274	Chulev, #38297	Aurelian made Sol "Dominus Imperii Romani" on 25 Dec 274	Coins, Templum Solis
Sun-worship polemic	Koster, #86909	Pagan origin "admitted by all scholars"	Constantine's syncretism

Account	Source	Claim about 25 December	Main evidence or objection cited
Keshe	KSW 360, 517	Mitra's birthday on 21/22 Dec, shifted to the 25th	Persian night of Yalda; "25" symbolism

Keshe: the birthday of Mitra and the date of Christmas

Mehran Tavakoli Keshe gave his own account on Christmas Eve 2020. The transcript reads: "the true birthday of Christ until some 200 and odd years ago was celebrated on 21st, and about 200 years ago Vatican decided to shift it to 24th due to one reason, and that was to make more separation, that Christianity is not replication of Mithraism". The 21st of December, "the longest night", is "considered to be the birthday of Mitra, some 8,000 years ago". The transcript continues: "As Christianity we know today was adaptation of the old Mithraism, so the birth of Christ was put on the same day as the birth of Mitra, as his son, or I should say as her son". Keshe extends the thesis to Judaism, which he calls "a 2,000 years copy of what Mitra brought", with Hanukkah as the same light festival under another name [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072, "Origins of Christmas and the Soul of Man"]. In the same session he identifies 21 December as "the birth of Mitra (Eve)" [Keshe, KSW 360, #378072, "Cosmic Paths ... 21st March Cycle"].

Three years later, on the night he called Yalda, Keshe gave the arithmetic of the shift: "The birth of Mitra is on the 22nd, and you add the 3 attributes of the Creation - Think, Speak, and Act Good. And that makes it 25." Another passage of the transcript gives the formula as "Do good, act good and live good, which makes it 25". He explains that "in Persia they celebrate the eve of the 21st for the day of the 22nd" as Christians keep the 24th for the 25th, and calls Christmas the "maturity of the Christians to the enlightenment of Mitra" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 517, #378229, "Symbolic Enlightenment and Historical Revision of Religious Dates"]. In late 2025 the workshops also announced a separate celebration, "December 6th at 2 PM Central European Time. Mitra's daughter's birthday celebration" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 619, #378331].

Key points

- Nock and Vermaseren credit Aurelian with making Sol Invictus a state god, with a temple, a priestly college and a birthday (natalis Invicti) on 25 December. Chulev dates the decree to 25 December 274 and names the god "Sol Dominus Imperii Romani".
- Elagabalus's attempt to impose the Emesene stone, "mated" to Vesta, failed. The Illyrian emperors "stood for Rome", and Diocletian's coins centre on Jupiter, Hercules, Mars and Sol (Nock).
- At Carnuntum in 308 the Tetrarchs dedicated an altar to Mithras "fautori imperii sui". Vermaseren reads it as proof that the sun cult, joined to the emperor-cult, had become the focus of state religion.
- Cumont, via Geden, counts Galerius a Mithraist. Nock sees in Licinius' army litany how close solar henotheism came to Christian monotheism.
- Julian was, in Vermaseren's words, a "convinced Mithraist" initiated at Constantinople. Under him "for a time Mithra was triumphant" (Geden), and the Alexandrian mithraeum riot ended in bishop Georgius's death.
- The fall was legal and military: Gratian's edict of 382, the Theodosian edicts of 391-392, and the Frigidus (394), decided in Vermaseren's account by a storm "miracle". Augustine's *City of God* answered the pagan charge that followed.
- On the origin of 25 December, Foley reports that the "history of religion" theory has had most scholarly support but faces chronological objections. Koster, Murdock, Weishaupt and Vaknin treat the solar origin as given.
- Keshe teaches that Christmas is the birth of Mitra (21/22 December, the night of Yalda), moved by the Vatican to the 25th, with the extra days explained by the triad "think, speak, act good".

Chapter 26.

Mithras and Christ: Parallels, Polemics and the Question of Borrowing

The relation of Mithraism to early Christianity is the most argued question in the study of the Roman cult. The ancient Christian writers did not deny the likeness of the rites. They explained it as demonic forgery, and in the fourth century their communities defaced and buried the sanctuaries where those rites had been performed. Modern authors have drawn up long lists of parallels: a sacred meal, a baptism-like washing, a "confirmation", a birth in a rock or cave, shepherds, 25 December, salvation through blood, and the day of the Sun. Their conclusions run from cautious analogy to the claim that Christianity is a renamed Mithraism. This chapter presents the ancient polemic in the Fathers' own words, then the modern claims, then the scholarly cautions, and finally the account of Mehran Keshe, who holds that the rulers of Rome reshaped the story of Jesus to fit Mithraism.

The Fathers' charge: demonic imitation

The earliest testimony comes from Justin Martyr, about AD 150: "Accordingly in the mysteries of Mithra also we have heard that evil spirits practise mimicry. For at the initiatory rites bread and a cup of water are set out accompanied by certain formulae, as you know or may ascertain" (1 Apology 66). In the *Dialogue with Trypho* (70, 78) Justin applies the same reasoning to the myth. When the Mithraists "relate that Mithra was born of a rock, and name the place where his followers receive initiation a cave", they are "perverting the saying of Daniel that 'a stone was hewn without hands from a great mountain' " (Daniel 2:34) and the words of Isaiah (33:16). The cave itself is "a device of the evil one". Geden's

summary is that "Justin argues that the Mithraic rites are a parody of the Christian" [Geden, Select Passages Illustrating Mithraism, #38272, "Justin Martyr" (a)-(c)].

Tertullian, a generation later at Carthage, adds the fullest list. "In certain rites also of an Isis or Mithra initiation is by means of baptismal water" (De baptismo 5). The devil, "who with idolatrous mysteries endeavours to imitate the realities of the divine sacraments ... promises forgiveness of sins through baptism; and if my memory does not fail me marks his own soldiers with the sign of Mithra on their foreheads, commemorates an offering of bread, introduces a mock resurrection, and with the sword opens the way to the crown". He even "forbade a second marriage to the supreme priest" and "maintains also his virgins and his celibates" (De praescriptione haereticorum 40). In *De corona* 15 Tertullian holds up the Mithraic soldier as a reproach to lax Christians. At initiation in "a cavern, a veritable home of darkness, a crown is offered on a naked sword, as if in parody of martyrdom". The initiate moves it to his shoulder, "declaring that Mithra is his crown. Thereafter he is never crowned". Tertullian concludes: "We may recognise the craft of the devil, who counterfeits divine things" [Geden, #38272, "Tertullian" (a)-(e)]. Vermaseren cites this signing of the soldiers as evidence for the grade of *Miles* [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300, p. 144].

The later Fathers keep the same frame. Firmicus Maternus, urging Constantius and Constans to destroy paganism, protests that the Mithraic password "god from the rock" transfers to "unclean superstitions" the title of the Stone that is Christ [Geden, #38272, "Firmicus Maternus" (b)]. Augustine (or Ambrosiaster) says that the counterfeiting spirit "would fain redeem by blood his own image, since he knew that by precious blood the human race was redeemed". He reports that "the priest of that mitred god was accustomed to say, 'the mitred god himself also was a Christian' " (Cumont, Geden notes, thought Attis rather than Mithras was meant). The same source describes initiates who "flap their wings imitating the raven's cry; others roar like lions", bound with entrails and freed by a "Liberator" with a sword [Geden, #38272, "Augustine" (a)-(b)]. Paulinus of Nola asks what the god hidden in "a gloomy cavern" who is nevertheless called the sun can be, "but the author of evil?" [Geden, #38272, "Paul of Nola"]. Nock places all this in context: "It is small wonder if Justin Martyr and Tertullian regarded it as a diabolic copy of Christianity" [Nock, The Development of Paganism in the Roman Empire (CAH XII ch. 12), #60218, p. 430]. He also notes more generally that Justin Martyr and others, struck by "baptismal and communion ceremonies in various pagan cults, argued that the Devil had in advance counterfeited Christianity" [Nock, #60218].

The meal, the hammer and the buried caves

Vermaseren's reading of the sacred meal shows why the charge was felt so sharply. In the Aventine (Santa Prisca) mithraeum, a painting of about AD 220 shows Sol and Mithras reclining at table, served by a Raven and by Lions carrying bread, a mixing-bowl, a cock and tapers. In the rite the Father and the Heliodromus took the places of the two gods. Justin, Vermaseren notes, "is careful to use the word 'water' and not 'wine', although there is certain evidence for the use of wine", including the meat-and-wine accounts scratched on the walls at Dura-Europos. "It is precisely this scene of the sacred meal which suffered most at the hands of the Christian iconoclasts at the end of the fourth century; the other wall was left untouched. The reason for such vehement hatred is not hard to find." Tertullian had called the meal a "devilish imitation of the Eucharist" [Vermaseren, #38300, pp. 99-103]. Elsewhere Vermaseren says the Christians "hacked at the paintings with axes", because the images "portrayed the Christians' most hated rival", especially "the sacred meal of Mithras and Sol with its affinities to the Eucharist" [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 7, Santa Prisca].

Vermaseren also cites "a mediaeval text, published by Cumont, in which the word of Christ is set beside the sayings of Zarathustra". In it Zardusht says: "He who will not eat of my body and drink of my blood, so that he will be made one with me and I with him, the same shall not know salvation". He sets this beside John's "He who eats of my body and drinks of my blood shall have eternal life". In Vermaseren's view the text, "though of later date … seems to confirm Justin's assertion" [Vermaseren, #38300, pp. 103-104]. He is careful about how far the comparison goes. Kristensen and Loisy concluded that the bull was Mithras himself, offered and eaten as in the Dionysiac mysteries, "but neither the temples nor the inscriptions give any definite evidence to support this view" [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 103]. Vermaseren does identify one direct borrowing in art, running from Mithraism to Christianity. Christian sarcophagi showing Elijah's fiery chariot drew their inspiration from "the extant representations of Mithras's ascent to heaven in a sun-chariot", with Oceanus replaced by the Jordan [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 105].

The physical fate of the sanctuaries is part of the record. Jerome praises the prefect Gracchus for destroying "the cave of Mithra with all the monstrous crew that give names to the initiates in their grades" [Geden, #38272, "Jerome" (a)]. Fideler writes that "after Christianity became the official state religion of the Roman Empire, many churches were constructed atop sanctuaries formerly sacred to Mithras, including St. Peter's in Rome", while "in other instances, the

Mithraic sanctuaries were destroyed or ritually polluted so that they were unfit for use". He adds that Christians "refused to send their children to pagan schools and, during the fourth century and most of the fifth, pagan literature and science were banned". He quotes Augustine's principle: "Nothing is to be accepted except on the authority of Scripture" [Fideler, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, #69295, Mithras chapter and later chapter]. Chulev speaks of "furious attacks by Christian worshipers and of brutally destroyed Mitraic sanctuaries, which are to be found among early Christian temples" [Chulev, The Continuity Paradigm within the Mysteries of Mitra, #38297, n. 19].

The modern catalogue of parallels

Modern authors build on these patristic admissions. Fideler gives the popular summary: Mithras' "birthday was celebrated on December 25, the shortest day of the year, marking the return of Sol Invictus". He "was born on December 25 in a cave and his birth was witnessed by shepherds". "Initiates into the mysteries were baptized, and the initiates enacted a resurrection scene", and, following Justin, they "partook of a eucharist" [Fideler, #69295, Mithras chapter]. Autran sets out a sacramental system: "il y avait sept sacrements mithriaques sur lesquels nous sommes assez mal au clair". Among them was "une sorte de baptême, rite lustratoire hérité d'une vieille tradition qui, par-delà l'Iran, se maintient encore associé au culte archaïque de Durgâ au cap Comorin", and "une sorte de « confirmation » où l'on « signait au front le soldat »". He also lists "une communion même, où le vin, l'eau et le pain constituent l'objet essentiel d'un banquet mystique destiné à procurer à l'initié le salut et la vie éternelle" [Autran, Mithra, Zoroastre et la préhistoire aryenne du christianisme, #60164, ch. VI]. Autran's wider thesis, given in his title, is an "Aryan prehistory" of Christianity, in which the Mithraic sacraments come from a pre-Christian Indo-Iranian inheritance.

Vaknin's Romanian essay, which draws on Cumont and on Ruck, Hoffman and González Celdrán, states that "Mitra s-a născut pe 25 decembrie" and that "Papa Liberius" put Jesus' birth on the same date. He also cites a Persian tradition that Mitra was born of the immaculate virgin Anahita from the seed of Zarathustra. He sets this inside his own thesis that the rock-birth symbolizes a virion [Vaknin, Zeul Mitra si virusul, #60323, sections 1-2]. Koster, from a Hebrew-roots standpoint, counts "Serapis, Mithras and Attis" among the gods identified with the Sun. He calls Sunday, Easter and Christmas the three great Christian days of

sun-worship origin, and lists Mithra among sun-deities "all born on 25 December, according to their legends" (after Titcomb) [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909, nn. 23, 80-85]. Julia Lawless's Christmas book repeats the popular form: "The ancient Persian festival of Mithras, 'the day of the birth of the unconquered sun,' also fell in late December" [Lawless, Heaven Scent, #67495].

Claimed parallel	Ancient witness	Modern claimant(s)	Caution recorded in the sources
Bread and cup at initiation	Justin, 1 Apol. 66	Fideler, Autran	Justin says "water"; wine attested at Dura (Vermaseren)
Baptism / lustration	Tertullian, De bapt. 5	Autran (Durga rite), Fideler	Autran: "assez mal au clair" on the sacraments
Signing the forehead	Tertullian, Praescr. 40	Autran ("confirmation")	Linked to the grade Miles (Vermaseren, p. 144)
"Image of resurrection"	Tertullian, Praescr. 40	Fideler, Chulev	Nock: Mithras "did not die"
Rock/cave birth, shepherds	Justin, Dial. 70; reliefs	Fideler, Vaknin	Vermaseren: shepherds on "some representations" only
25 December	Imperial natalis Invicti	Fideler, Koster, Vaknin, Lawless	A feast of Sol, not attested as a Mithraic rite (ch. 25)
Salvation by blood	Augustine (attrib.)	Koster, Chulev	Bull = Mithras unproven (Vermaseren)

The scholarly cautions

Nock gives the strongest structural objection. Unlike the cults of Isis, Attis or Adonis, "in Mithraism the initiatory ceremonies were in the foreground … and there was no annual rite of a dramatic kind. Mithras was not born annually and did not die and he had a complete Vita". There was "no ceremony which could be made into a public rite, and Mithras never became a civic god" [Nock,

#60218, "Mithraism", pp. 428-429]. He then gives the social limits: Mithraism "omitted vast areas of the Empire: above all, it was weak in those very regions in which Christianity spread with particular strength". In addition, "the absence of women deprived it of the support of what was in antiquity, as it is to-day, the sex more interested in religious practices" [Nock, #60218, p. 430]. In general, he says, "the Oriental cults were symptomatic of change rather than productive of it" [Nock, #60218, p. 435]. Christianity escaped absorption into Graeco-Roman religion through "the principle of authority and a binding code of conduct, largely taken from the Old Testament" [Nock, #60218, "Christianity and Hellenism", pp. 444-445].

Geden, though he calls Mithraism "the most serious rival of Christianity", argues that contact was limited. Christianity "was ... a religion of the cities", while "Mithraism was the religion of the army and followed the troops in the garrison towns". Hence "the contact between the two religions was therefore, at least in the earlier period, not so intimate as has sometimes been represented" [Geden, #38272, Introduction, pp. 1-2]. He doubts several alleged echoes, among them Prudentius' "cleft rock", which "is probably sufficiently explained by Matt. xvi. 18, I Cor. x. 4". On Augustine's "mitred god" he concludes that "it is likely that rites and customs were borrowed on both sides" [Geden, #38272, "Prudentius", "Augustine"]. Vermaseren handles the most famous dictum the same way. Ernest Renan wrote: "Si le christianisme eût été arrêté dans sa croissance par quelque maladie mortelle, le monde eût été mithraïste." Vermaseren calls this "too sweeping", since "it is impossible to tell whether ... Mithraism could ever have achieved complete dominance" [Vermaseren, #38300, p. 188]. Radu Sergiu Ruba quotes the same sentence from Renan's *Marc-Aurèle et la fin du monde antique* and agrees that the strongest rivalry to Christianity in the first centuries came "not from the polytheistic religions, but from the cult of Mithra" [Ruba, Dialoguri și eseuri, #20487, "Un centru al lumii"].

The strong theses

Against these cautions stand authors for whom the identity is substantive. Chulev writes that "the supposed death and resurrection of this universal deity, a god of many names but of essentially one nature (today refurnished as Jesus Christ), was the same indistinguishable subject of the Mitraic cult" [Chulev, #38297, n. 19]. Koster holds that Constantine "syncretized and reconciled" Mithraists, Manichaeans and Christians "even if it meant the latter's surrender of most vital Scriptural truths, especially its Hebrew roots" [Koster, #86909,

n. 80]. Fideler reads the shared solar symbolism as a common Logos theology rather than a theft. Christ as "Sun of God" and Mithras as Sol Invictus are, for him, expressions of the same cosmological imagery [Fideler, #69295]. Autran derives both from the Aryan religious substrate [Autran, #60164, ch. VI].

Keshe: Rome patched the story to Mithraism

Mehran Tavakoli Keshe takes the borrowing thesis furthest and assigns it a political author. On 16 October 2025 he said: "When we talk about the way he was put on the cross by Romans, was for a physical behavior … What we hear, what we've seen in the literatures, of the three days, and the ascension, and the rest of it, is what was added to, by the, what we call, the rulers of Rome, to bring it to Mithraism. To see, to understand the whole structure of return, you have to read, understand the life of Mitra and Zoroaster". Believers should "be aware how it was patched together": "Physically hanging is from the Christians, resurrection in the three days from Mitra from the Emperors". He calls Christianity a "Roman Persian Empire" religion, with "religions - same story of Mitra - told differently - keep separate". He describes the crucifixion as "a punishment of his adulterous life" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612, #378324, section 1]. In the same session Keshe made claims about Judaism and Israel: that "90% of them are not Jews", being "a tribe which came from Northern Europe" who adopted Judaism after a lost war, so that Israeli Jewry is "business, it's not religion". He also claims that the rituals at the Western Wall are a "sexual behavior" going "back again to Mithraism" [Keshe, KSW 612, #378324, sections 1-2]. Against this he sets "the Ethos of Mitra, which is, 'Talk good, Think good and Act good' ": "the guideline for humanity is set by Mitra, and in different names. And Mitra is the Soul of the Man (STM)" [Keshe, KSW 612, #378324, section 2]. In section 7 he calls religious tithing "tax by Man - not God", comparable to Roman building taxes [Keshe, KSW 612, #378324, section 7].

In an earlier workshop Keshe gives the institutional version. According to the session's study guide, early Roman soldiers adopted "Persian Mithraism's concept of an internal deity, which later merged with the crucifixion narrative to form Christianity and the cross symbol". The guide says St. Peter's Basilica was built over a former Mithraic temple "to unify Roman power with public belief", and that communion was adapted from Mithraic energy-drinking practice with wine. The same session sets out a model in which Creator, Earth (Mitra) and physicality together create man [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 386,

#378098, section 8]. On St. Peter's, Keshe's claim agrees with Fideler's statement quoted above.

Key points

- Justin (c. 150) and Tertullian (c. 200) admit the likeness of Mithraic rites (bread and water with formulae, baptismal washing, forehead-signing, an "image of resurrection", rock-birth in a cave) and explain it as demonic counterfeit. Nock: they "regarded it as a diabolic copy of Christianity".
- According to Vermaseren, the meal scene at Santa Prisca suffered most from late-fourth-century Christian iconoclasts because Tertullian had branded it an imitation of the Eucharist. He cites a medieval text, published by Cumont, that puts eucharistic words in Zarathustra's mouth.
- Fideler, Autran, Koster, Vaknin and Lawless list parallels: 25 December, shepherds, baptism, "confirmation", communion, resurrection. Fideler adds that churches, St. Peter's among them, were built over mithraea.
- Nock objects that Mithras "was not born annually and did not die", that the cult had no public drama, and that it was weak where Christianity was strong and excluded women.
- Geden argues that army religion and city religion had limited early contact and that borrowing ran "on both sides". Vermaseren calls Renan's "le monde eût été mithraïste" "too sweeping"; Ruba endorses its spirit.
- Chulev sees the dying-and-rising universal god "refurnished as Jesus Christ". Autran derives both religions from an Aryan prehistory.
- Keshe teaches that Rome's rulers added the three days, resurrection and ascension "to bring it to Mithraism", that Mitra is the Soul of the Man, and that all religions retell Mitra's story. The same session contains his claims about Jewish and Israeli identity and the Western Wall.

Chapter 27.

After Rome: Mani's Mithra, Mehregan and Yalda, Armenian Mher, and Modern Claims of a Mithraic Root of All Religions

When the last mithraea of the West were destroyed, Mithra did not disappear. In the Iranian world his name passed into a new universal religion, Manichaeism, which carried it from Mesopotamia to Central Asia. His festivals survived the Arab conquest and are still kept. In Armenia he became Mher, a hero enclosed in a rock until the end of the world. In modern times a series of authors has argued that Mithra is the hidden root of later religions: medieval dualist heresies, Protestantism, the secret societies, a European entheogen cult, or, in Mehran Keshe's teaching, all religions without exception. This chapter follows these afterlives, records the sources' disagreements, and ends with a comparative table of the forms of Mithra presented in this Part.

Mani: the prophet between Babylon and Iran

The *Encyclopedia of World History* gives the standard summary: "Mani was born in 216 in Mesopotamia. His parents were Elkesaites, Jewish-Christian Gnostics. Mani also seemingly was influenced by another Gnostic sect called Mandaeism. Inspired by a vision of his 'twin,' the Holy Spirit, Mani left the Elkesaites. Mani's teaching briefly enjoyed the favor of Persian kings; however, Bahram I favored Zoroastrianism, resulting in Mani's imprisonment" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Manichaeanism"]. Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln give a different date and place. They describe Manichaeism as "in essence, a fusion of Gnostic Christianity with elements of early Zoroastrianism and Mithraism", founded by Mani,

"born in the year 214 after Christ, in Baghdad, related to the royal family of Persia". They say that in 276, "by order of the king, Mani was imprisoned, beaten to death, flayed and beheaded", and that his martyrdom only increased the credibility of his teaching [Baigent, Leigh, Lincoln, Sângele Sfânt și Sfântul Graal, #17849, part on the heresies; translated from the Romanian]. The two sources therefore differ by two years (216 against 214) and in place (Mesopotamia in general against Baghdad specifically).

The political setting was the Sasanian court. Sundermann discusses the third-century Zoroastrian high priest Kerdir (Kartir). Kerdir's inscription records his vision of the afterlife: "the woman meets Kerdir's likeness, greets him and proceeds with him hand in hand". This, Sundermann argues, "proves that the legend of the Virgin of Good Deeds must have been a well known story in the Zoroastrian tradition of the third century". The Manichaean "Virgin of Good Deeds" among the redeeming gods "is an adaptation of the Zoroastrian Virgin of Good Deeds" [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067, "The Virgin of Good Deeds"]. Mani's church was thus competing with, and borrowing from, the state priesthood that defeated it.

Jackson places Mani's doctrine inside the Iranian dualist tradition. Mani took over "the two principles of light and darkness, good and evil, which Zoroaster taught". "This doctrine Mani amplified, modified, developed, and above all spiritualized. Like Zoroaster, he postulated the existence of Two Principles from the beginning to eternity. To Mani, Light was synonymous with spirit and good, Darkness with matter and evil. He recognized three Ages in the history of beginningless and endless time". Man's body belongs to the kingdom of darkness, but "he has spiritually in him some of the lost particles of light", to be released by pure living [Jackson, Zoroastrian Studies, #55164, monograph on Mani]. The encyclopedia describes the church that put this into practice: "the 'chosen,' who abstained from meat, wine, sex, and many other things, and 'hearers,' who did not". Its central rite was "the 'table' of the chosen, the daily meal of plants containing much light, such as melons, wheat bread" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204]. The Christian side of the polemic appears in Hegemonius' *Acta Archelai*, which Geden quotes because it calls the Manichaean "foreign priest and partner of Mithra" who will "worship Mithra alone as the sun" [Geden, Select Passages Illustrating Mithraism, #38272, "Hegemonius"]. Geden also recalls that Augustine "was himself in early life a Manichaean and therefore acquainted from within with forms of heresy nearly related to Mithraism" [Geden, #38272, "Augustine"]. The library's *Grand Bible* compilation lists the Manichaean texts in English, including Henning's translations of the Manichaean scriptures (1932-

1936) and "The Manichaean Book of the Giants or The Kawan" (Henning, 1943) [The Grand Bible, #38287, table of contents].

Mithra in the Manichaean pantheon (Boyce)

Mary Boyce's article explains how the old god entered the new religion. Mani held that earlier prophets had taught the truth under different names, so his missionaries "translated" Manichaean gods into local ones. "Mithra came to be identified with two Manichaean gods. Among the Sasanian Persians his name was used to render that of the Living Spirit", probably "as a warrior-god and conqueror of the powers of evil". The Avestan Mithra is the "head-smasher of evil gods", and the Living Spirit "fettered the tyrants of the earth". Boyce judges this identification "largely a paper one". The Living Spirit was stationed in the west, the quarter of the setting sun, and his work was finished before the world began [Boyce, On Mithra in the Manichaean Pantheon, #38266, pp. 45-47].

The missionaries to Parthia, probably Mar Ammo and his companions, instead identified Mithra with the first of the redeeming gods, the Third Messenger. He was a warrior, lived in the sun, was assigned to the east and was "invoked in many hymns". A Middle Persian fragment hails him as dawn: "The morning-light and dawn is come, the radiant Light from the east". Among the Sasanians he had first been equated with Nairyosangha, the Zoroastrian messenger-god. That equation covered traits Mithra lacked: envoy, and prototype of humanity, since "the Third Messenger was further believed to have shown himself naked to the demons in the skies, so that it was in his image that mankind was made" (the seduction of the Archons). In the surviving Parthian hymns, however, this myth "is given little emphasis". Instead "the dominance of Mithra was such that his identification with the Third Messenger led to cultic emphasis on the Mithraic traits". Most strikingly, "the Third Messenger became a sun-god among the Parthians", though Mani "did not teach worship for it [the sun] as a personal god" [Boyce, #38266, pp. 47-52].

Boyce traces specific traits back to the *Mihr Yasht*, where Mithra "is not presented as a sun-god, but only as a deity closely associated with the sun" and bears "the epithet 'making plants grow' ". The god of the Contract, "the swiftest of the gods", with "ten thousand eyes", produced a Parthian Third Messenger who is "faster than thought", "the thousand-eyed", and repeatedly "the Judge" and "judge and witness". Boyce notes this last function "is not readily comprehensible in terms of Manichaean dogma". She concludes that "even he, the most literate of the

prophets, could not wholly prevent distortion of his carefully-enshrined doctrine", and that the episode "shows the power of the Iranian Mithra, who thus set his bright and ancient stamp on the intruding Manichaean god". In her notes she records that the attempts since Cumont to identify Mithra with Gayomard, or Nairyosangha with Mithra, "have failed to win general assent" [Boyce, #38266, pp. 48 nn. 2, 5; 52-54]. Chulev reads the same history as concealment: "the Mysteries of Mitra concealed itself in cognate Manichaeism, which long survived as a harbor of refuge for the shipwrecked gnostics and mystics" [Chulev, The Continuity Paradigm within the Mysteries of Mitra, #38297, "The fading of Mitra's cult"].

Living festivals: Mehregan and the night of Yalda

The Byzantine traveller Cosmas Indicopleustes (c. 550) reported that "to the present time the Persians keep the festival of Mithra, that is of the sun" [Geden, #38272, "Cosmas Indicopleustes"]. Dhalla describes the autumn festival of Mihragan: "The festival was observed for several days, which were given over to thanksgiving, feasting, and rejoicing by all classes of people. It soon became the chief national festival of Iran … It is still observed not only by the Zoroastrians of India and Persia, but even by the Moslems of Persia" [Dhalla, Zoroastrian Civilization, #60424, "Feasts and Festivals: The festival of Mithra"]. Campos Méndez places it among the old Indo-Aryan seasonal feasts (*jashan* or *gahambars*) inherited by the Avestan calendar. He explains its "relación con el equinoccio otoñal" as "consecuencia del carácter solar del dios" and of the year's beginning at the moment "en el que el sol comienza su retorno" [Campos Méndez, El Culto del Dios Mithra, #60243, nn. 67, 77]. Murdock and Barker date "the Zoroastrian/Persian festival of Mihragan or Mehregan" to "October 2nd", describing it as representing the equinox and "harvest time" (their text says "vernal equinox") [Murdock & Barker, The Astrotheology Calendar Guide, #71969, "October"].

The winter-solstice festival is a different matter. The reference shelf describes Yalda or Chelle Night as "an ancient festival in Iran" and neighbouring lands, held on the night of 21 December with fruit, pomegranates and readings of Hafez. Shab-e Yalda was added to UNESCO's Intangible Heritage lists in 2022. The article stresses that the name "Yalda" is a borrowing "from Syriac-speaking Christians", in whose language it "literally means 'birth' " and was "the Syriac Christian proper name for Christmas". It adds that "in Zoroastrian tradition the longest and darkest night of the year was a particularly inauspicious day", when

Ahriman's forces were at their peak. It also reports journalist Hashem Razi's 1979 theory that Mehregan, "the day-name festival of Mithra", had shifted to the winter solstice in early Islamic times; the article notes that the theory "has a significant following on the Internet, but while Razi's documentation has been academically accepted, his adduction has not" [Wikipedia: Yalda Night]. Two Western accounts have to be weighed against this. Lawless repeats the claim that "the ancient Persian festival of Mithras, 'the day of the birth of the unconquered sun,' also fell in late December" [Lawless, Heaven Scent, #67495]. Keshe celebrates "the birth of Mitra during the night of Yalda" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 517, #378229, section 4].

Armenian Mihr and the hero in the rock

The Armenian sources quoted by Cumont, in Geden's translation, show Mihr as a living god in late antiquity. Agathangelos reports that St Gregory went "to the temple of Mihr, the reputed son of Ormuzd … and rased it to the ground". Elisaeus records Persian officials who say that "the god Mihr was born of a human mother" and swear the death sentence on Christian martyrs "by the god Mihr". Moses of Khorene preserves the royal oath: "We swear by the great god Mihr that we will not do any harm to thy royal throne" [Geden, #38272, "Agathangas", "Elisaeus Vartabad", "Moses of Khorene"]. Mihr outlived the conversion as an epic figure. Petrosyan notes "two Mhers in the standard versions of the epic of Sasun: Mher the Elder (or: Lion Mher) and Mher the Younger". He finds traits shared with the Western Mithras, "the figure of the horseman Mher inside the rock", and also a link to the Urartian Haldi [Petrosyan, Haldi and Mithra/Mher, #38285]. Boyle's text of the epic ends with the door closing on Mher and a voice from the rock: "thou with thy horse shall remain in the rock until the barleycorn grows to the size of the hip … When that day comes Mher and his horse will again come out of the rock". A raven guides Mher to the rock, which leads Boyle to ask, in his title, whether the rock is "a Mithraic spelaeum in Armenian folklore?" [Boyle, Raven's Rock, #60215].

Modern theses of a Mithraic root

Chulev's title states his thesis: "Zoroastrian-macedonic-Phrygian Mithraism of the I-IV centuries - a Chauvinistic predecessor of the X-century Bogomilism/Catharism and later Protestantism". He argues that Mithraism's legacy was

"its rejection of the theism and the doctrine polemics", opposing "experience" to faith and "liberation and enlightenment" to the God of theism. He says the same ideals reappear in "the Macedonic Bogomilism movement", "a modified form of Manichaeism, thus consequently a modified medieval form of Magianism and Mysteries of Mitra". Bogomilism then "descended further in the west under the name of Catharism, which turned out to be the 11th-13th centuries predecessor of the later Protestantism" [Chulev, #38297, "The fading of Mitra's cult and its legacy"]. Chulev also finds Mithraic symbols "still placed in the coves of these secret societies (as the 'Freemasons', 'Priory of Sion', 'Opus Dei', 'Illuminati', 'Lions Club'...)" [Chulev, #38297].

A second modern line is the entheogen thesis. Vaknin bases his essay on Cumont and on Ruck, Hoffman and González Celdrán's *Mushrooms, Myth and Mithras*. He writes that Mithraism initiated its members through seven stages culminating in an ecstatic vision, and that "Western civilization was profoundly influenced by a secret spiritual practice centred on the use of entheogenic plants and mushrooms" [Vaknin, Zeul Mitra si virusul, #60323, section 1; translated from the Romanian]. He adds his own theory that religions are the work of retroviruses in the human genome [Vaknin, #60323]. Ferrara cites the same book, subtitled "The Drug Cult that Civilized Europe". He qualifies it: "spiritual restoration required more than the ingestion of plant entheogens; additional components of the Mithraic liturgy included breathing techniques, medicinal recipes, magical rites, charming amulets, and reciting magical words" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 2].

Keshe: Mitra as mother, soul and source of all religions

Mehran Tavakoli Keshe's teaching makes Mitra the origin of every faith. In April 2021 he said: "in time we'll come to understand that all the religions come from Mithraism, the essence of Ahura Mazda, it has changed name as it changed time in place". In the same session he derived the wedding ring and the royal circlet from Mithraism [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 374, #378086]. In KSW 360 he dates Mitra's birthday "some 8,000 years ago" and calls Mithraism "the fundamental culture of the Universe" that predates all named religions [Keshe, KSW 360, #378072, sections 0, 8]. Where the scholarly sources present Mithra as a male Indo-Iranian god, Keshe teaches that Mitra was a woman. As early as 2014 the session notes read: "RNA is line of connection to gods, goes back

26,000 years … Mother in Iranian house is the head, Mithra was female" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 33, #377676]. KSW 517 celebrates "her arrival" as humanity's passage from darkness to light [Keshe, KSW 517, #378229, section 2]. KSW 612 defines her metaphysically: "Mitra is the Soul of the Man (STM)" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612, #378324, section 2]. In December 2025 the workshops announced the birthday of "Mitra's Daughter" on 6 December, and the speakers presented the Faravahar on screen as "the sign of Zoroaster" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 619, #378331]. Keshe described his own position this way: "I live deeply by Zoroastrianism, by Mitraism, in the school of thoughts. Maybe because it was the way I was brought up" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 620, #378332].

Form of Mithra	Name	Sex	Function	Ritual setting	Political role
Vedic / Avestan (Boyce, Vaknin)	Mitra / Mithra	Male	God of the Contract, warrior, "making plants grow", associated with the sun	Yasht hymns, Mihragan feast	Witness of oaths, royal protector
Commagene / Armenian (Boyce; Geden)	Mithra-Helios-Hermes; Mihr	Male	Sun, son of Ormuzd	Temples (Mihr temple razed by St Gregory)	Royal oath "by the great god Mihr"
Roman (Vermaseren, Nock)	Mithras, Sol Invictus	Male	Bull-slayer, saviour of initiates	Cave mithraea, seven grades, meal	"Fautor imperii" of the Tetrarchs; Julian
Manichaean (Boyce)	Mihr for the Living Spirit (MP), Third Messenger (Parthian)	Male	Redeemer, sun-god, judge	Hymns of the hearers	Missionary translation in the Sasanian and Parthian east
Iranian folk (Dhalla; Wikipedia)	Mehr / Mehregan; Yalda	n/a	Festival of the god; solstice "birth"	Feasting, poetry, fruit	National festival, kept by Muslims too
Armenian epic (Petrosyan, Boyle)	Mher	Male	Hero sealed in the rock until the end	Folk epic of Sasun	Eschatological return
Keshe (KSW 33, 360, 517, 612)	Mitra, "Mother Mitra"	Female	Soul of the Man (STM), source of all religions	Workshops; 21/22 Dec, 6 Dec	Guideline for humanity beyond rulers

Key points

- The *Encyclopedia of World History* gives Mani's birth as 216 in Mesopotamia, to Elkesaite parents, influenced by Mandaeism, with Bahram I's preference for Zoroastrianism leading to his imprisonment. Baigent, Leigh and Lincoln say 214 in Baghdad and call Manichaeism a fusion of Gnostic Christianity, Zoroastrianism and Mithraism.
- Jackson describes Mani as having "amplified, modified, developed, and above all spiritualized" Zoroaster's dualism into Two Principles and Three Ages. His church was divided into the elect, who kept a daily "table" of light-rich foods, and the hearers.
- Boyce shows that Mithra's name went to the Living Spirit among the Sasanian Persians and to the Third Messenger among the Parthians. Under Mithra's influence the Messenger became a sun-god, "thousand-eyed" and "Judge".
- Sundermann traces the Manichaean Virgin of Good Deeds to the Zoroastrian motif found in Kerdir's vision.
- Mihragan survived as a several-day feast and became, in Dhalla's words, "the chief national festival of Iran", kept even by Muslims. The solstice night of Yalda carries, according to the reference shelf, a Syriac Christian name meaning "birth"; the same article reports Razi's contested theory linking it to Mehregan, while Lawless and Keshe present the solstice as Mithra's birth.
- In Armenia Mihr was sworn by kings, and as Mher he survives in the Sasun epic, sealed in a rock until the world is renewed (Petrosyan, Boyle).
- Chulev links Mithraism, Manichaeism, Bogomilism, Catharism and Protestantism, and finds its symbols in modern secret societies. Vaknin (after Ruck et al.) and Ferrara put forward or qualify the entheogen thesis.
- Keshe teaches that "all the religions come from Mithraism", that Mitra was female and is the Soul of the Man, and that her day is a universal celebration. The academic sources of this Part, by contrast, describe a male Indo-Iranian god.

Part IV.

Israel, Judaism and the Second Temple

Chapter 28.

Out of Canaan: El, Baal, Asherah and the Emergence of Yahweh

Part 4 turns from Iran to the small highland people whose god became the God of three world religions. The scholarly literature in the library agrees on one starting point. Israelite religion did not arrive from outside Canaan as a finished monotheism. It grew up inside a West Semitic religious world, and that world became directly readable only when the archives of Ugarit were recovered. On that view the biblical "Yahweh alone" is the end of a long process of merging, borrowing and exclusion. This chapter sets out the comparative evidence, then the main scholarly reconstructions (John Day, Mark S. Smith and the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons*), and finally the non-mainstream readings the library also holds, each given as its author presents it.

The Ugaritic Window

Excavations at Ras Shamra on the Syrian coast began in 1928. They produced about 1,500 texts and fragments written in the 13th and 12th centuries BCE in Ugaritic, a previously unknown Northwest Semitic language. The best known are the Baal Cycle, the Legend of Keret and the Aqhat epic [Wikipedia: Ugaritic texts]. The pantheon in these texts is headed by El, the aged, wise and benevolent "father of years". His consort Asherah is "mother of the gods", and the gods as a body are "the sons of El". Below El stand the active deities: Baal (Hadad), the storm and fertility god; Yam (Sea/River); Mot (Death); Anat; and Astarte [Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, #86469, ch.1].

Karen Armstrong gives a narrative summary of the central myth. Baal and Yam both lived with El, and "at the Council of El, Yam demands that Baal be delivered

up to him. With two magic weapons, Baal defeats Yam and is about to kill him when Asherah (El's wife and mother of the gods) pleads that it is dishonourable to slay a prisoner." In another version, she notes, "Baal slays the seven-headed dragon Lotan, who is called Leviathan in Hebrew" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999, ch.1]. Armstrong also observes that in the patriarchal stories "El gives them friendly advice, like any sheikh or chieftain," and is sometimes seen in human form. That idea, she says, later became anathema to Israel [Armstrong, #68999, ch.1].

Day sets out how the Ugaritic Baal Cycle is built. It has three parts: Baal's conflict with Yam and his exaltation as king; the building of Baal's palace-temple on Mt Zaphon; and his struggle with Mot [Day, #86469, ch.4 "Yahweh's Appropriation of Baal Imagery"]. Each part, Day argues, reappears in transformed form in the Hebrew Bible.

Yahweh and El: One God or Two?

Day opens his study with the question directly: "In the Old Testament Yahweh is frequently called El. The question is raised whether Yahweh was a form of the god El from the beginning or whether they were separate deities who only became equated later." The Bible itself, he notes, records both continuity and a break. The E and P sources say the patriarchs did not know the name Yahweh, which was first revealed to Moses (Exod 3:13-15; 6:2-3). P says they knew God as El-Shaddai. The J source, by contrast, has the name known from primaeval times (Gen 4:26) [Day, #86469, ch.1 "Yahweh and El"].

Wellhausen, F.M. Cross and J.C. de Moor identified Yahweh with El. Day rejects this on three grounds. First, the Ugaritic El is wholly benevolent, whereas Yahweh "has a fierce as well as a kind side". Second, the earliest texts (Judg 5:4-5) associate Yahweh with the storm, "which was not something with which El was connected at all. Rather, this is reminiscent of Baal." Third, Cross's derivation of the name Yahweh from a cultic title of El is "pure speculation". Day concludes: "El and Yahweh were originally distinct deities that became amalgamated," the view of Movers, Eissfeldt and Mettinger [Day, #86469, ch.1]. On origins, Day reports that most recent scholars place Yahweh "outside the land of Israel to the south, in the area of Midian" (Judg 5:4-5; Deut 33:2; Hab 3:3, 7). The evidence he cites includes the epithet "Yahweh of Teman" at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Egyptian references to "Shasu Yahweh". Yahweh "does not appear in the Ugaritic pantheon lists". The equation with El was acceptable because El was supreme,

a creator and wise, whereas Baal was subordinate and "dead in the underworld for half the year" [Day, #86469, ch.1].

Mark S. Smith reaches a similar result by a different route. He states plainly: "The original god of Israel was El." His evidence is that the name *Israel* "is not a Yahwistic name with the divine element of Yahweh, but an El name" [Smith, The Early History of God, #67245, ch.1 §2 "Yahweh and El"]. He develops the same point in *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*. There, drawing on B.A. Levine's work on El traditions in Iron Age Transjordan, he explores "who was the original chief god of Israel?" [Smith, The Origins of Biblical Monotheism, #64008, ch.7 "El, Yahweh, and the Original God of Israel and the Exodus"].

The key text for both scholars is Deuteronomy 32:8-9, which Smith translates from the older textual witnesses:

> "When the Most High (*'elyôn*) gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated humanity, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of divine beings. For Yahweh's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage." [Smith, #67245, ch.1]

Smith reads this as presenting "an order in which each deity received its own nation". Here Yahweh is "one of the sons of El", a "literary vestige of the initial assimilation of Yahweh, the southern warrior-god, into the larger highland pantheism, headed by El" [Smith, #67245, ch.1]. He reports that the Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls readings preserve this sense, and that E. Tov labels the Masoretic text's reading ("sons of Israel") an "anti-polytheistic alteration" [Smith, #64008, Part III]. Day links the same verse to "the seventy sons of El" at Ugarit, the seventy nations of Genesis 10, and the seventy guardian angels of later Jewish tradition [Day, #86469, ch.1 "The Sons of El (God)"]. Smith adds that there are "no biblical polemics against El". The identification was early and peaceful, while Yahweh and Baal "co-existed and later competed as warrior-gods" [Smith, #67245, ch.1].

Asherah: From El's Consort to "Yahweh and his Asherah"

At Ugarit Asherah is El's wife. Day's argument follows from this: once Yahweh had absorbed El, the goddess was available as Yahweh's consort. The finds that revived the debate, he writes, are "inscriptions from both Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom referring to 'Yahweh and his Asherah' ". Debate has centred on

"whether Asherah in these texts refers to the goddess or her wooden cult symbol" [Day, #86469, ch.2 "Yahweh and Asherah"]. Day translates the Khirbet el-Qom tomb text: "Uriah the rich wrote it. Blessed be Uriah by Yahweh, yea from his enemies by his Asherah he has saved him..." [Day, #86469, ch.2]. Kuntillet 'Ajrud in north Sinai was occupied c. 801-770 BCE by carbon-14 dating. On its pithos A, drawings of a cow and calf and a seated musician sit beside the phrase "Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah" [Wikipedia: Kuntillet Ajrud inscriptions].

Day's conclusion is that the texts refer to the cult object. Even so, they "imply a close relationship (doubtless that of god and consort) between Yahweh and the goddess Asherah, since the cult object symbolized the goddess". The "vast numbers of pillar figurines of the goddess Asherah", especially from eighth- and seventh-century Judah, "clearly imply the popularity of her cult" [Day, #86469, ch.8]. Smith is more cautious. On his reading the Hebrew *'šrth* in these inscriptions "refers to the symbol originally named after the goddess, although during the eighth century it may not have symbolized the goddess" [Smith, #67245, ch.1]. The *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* points out that 24 of the 40 biblical references to the asherah come from the Deuteronomistic History. One of that work's "chief concerns is cultic purity, a strictly monolatrous Yahwism, and it therefore regards the presence of the asherah as evidence of apostasy" [van der Toorn et al., Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, #66939, "Asherah"].

Baal, the Goddesses, the Astral and the Underworld Gods

Day's central chapters follow the other deities one by one. Yahweh was set against Baal, yet he also took over Baal's imagery. Day traces the "rider of the clouds" language, the defeat of the sea and its dragon (Leviathan, Rahab, Tannin), and the holy mountain Zaphon. A paganised version of Psalm 20 in Papyrus Amherst 63 even replaces Zion with Zaphon [Day, #86469, chs 3-4]. On Daniel 7 he finds the clearest survival of all. The "Ancient of Days" with hair "like pure wool" reflects El, and the "one like a son of man" coming with the clouds "derives ultimately from Baal, 'the rider of the clouds' " [Day, #86469, ch.1]. He also derives the New Testament Beelzebul from the Ugaritic title *zbl b'l*, "Prince Baal" [Day, #86469, ch.3].

On the goddesses, Day weighs Ishtar, Asherah and Astarte as the "Queen of Heaven" to whom Judean women baked cakes (Jer 7; 44). He concludes that

"the best case can be made for the Queen of Heaven being Astarte", given "the deep-seated, folk nature of the cult depicted in Jeremiah 44" [Day, #86469, ch.5]. He notes the worship of Anat-Yahu and Anat-Bethel beside Yahu at Elephantine, "most naturally understood as a continuation of the worship of Anat in pre-exilic Israel" [Day, #86469, ch.8]. Chapter 6 treats sun, moon and "Lucifer". Day observes that most solar allusions date from the seventh and sixth centuries (Deut 4:19; 17:3; 2 Kgs 23:5, 11), and that the Elyon language of Isaiah 14:13-14, with its "mount of assembly", is "El-like" [Day, #86469, chs 1, 6].

J. Glen Taylor's monograph argues for a Yahwistic solar cult in Jerusalem itself. It centres on 2 Kings 23:11, where Josiah "removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun". Taylor rejects M. Cogan's view that "the horses and chariots of the sun in the Jerusalem temple" arose under Assyrian influence, and he surveys horse figurines with discs and the winged sun-disk iconography, together with the problems of dating them [Taylor, Yahweh and the Sun, #66074, ch.2]. Day's chapter 7 adds the underworld deities. Mot, whose insatiable throat swallows the dead, survives as the personified Sheol of Isaiah 5:14 and Habakkuk 2:5. Isaiah 25:8 ironically has God "swallow up death for ever". Resheph, Molech (whom Day elsewhere treats as "a god of human sacrifice") and the Rephaim, cognate with the Ugaritic *rp'um* (divinised dead), complete the picture [Day, #86469, ch.7].

How Monotheism Arose: The Scholarly Positions

Question	Day (#86469)	Smith (#67245, #64008)	Tigay (as reported by Day)
Yahweh and El	Originally distinct; amalgamated	El original god of "Israel"; Yahweh a southern warrior-god absorbed into El's pantheon	Not addressed in source
Asherah	Cult object, but implies goddess as Yahweh's consort	Symbol named after goddess; may no longer have symbolised her by 8th c.	Goddess names absent from personal names

Question	Day (#86469)	Smith (#67245, #64008)	Tigay (as reported by Day)
Extent of polytheism	Frequent; Yahweh "chief god" of a pantheon	Deities "integrally related to Yahweh" in Judges period	Rare; Israel essentially monolatrous
Arrival of absolute monotheism	Deutero-Isaiah in the exile; fully operative after it	Late development out of "convergence" and "differentiation"	—

Day concludes that "Yahweh was very much the chief god in ancient Israel, and the other gods and goddesses would have been worshipped as part of his pantheon". He rejects J.H. Tigay's theophoric-name argument (Yahwistic names sixteen times more common than pagan ones, a ratio Graham Davies puts nearer ten to one). He also rejects A.P. Hayman's opposite claim that absolute monotheism arrived only in the Middle Ages. Day's own position is that monotheism "was first given explicit expression by the prophet Deutero-Isaiah in the exile". Elijah, the classical prophets, the Deuteronomic movement and Josiah's reform were stages on the way, and the "Yahweh alone movement" (B. Lang, after Morton Smith) is part of the story [Day, #86469, ch.8]. Smith stresses method. Biblical historiography, especially Deuteronomy 32 ("there was no foreign god with him"), "omits any reflection of the fact that Israel's cultural heritage was largely Canaanite; indeed, it implicitly denies this idea". Scholars who call early Israel "syncretistic" have, he argues, taken over the Bible's own view and treated it as historical reality [Smith, #67245, ch.1 §1]. The *Dictionary of Deities and Demons*, in its entry "Angel of Yahweh", notes that "in many early narratives Yahweh himself appears to humans (just like other ancient Near Eastern deities), in later texts there is a marked" shift towards mediating figures. That shift is part of the same move away from a more plural divine world [van der Toorn et al., #66939, "Angel of Yahweh"].

Non-Mainstream Readings

Several authors in the library read the same material in radically different ways. Mauro Biglino proposes a literal reading of the Hebrew. On his account the Elohim are "flesh-and-blood" individuals "not concerned with theology", and the *malakhim* (angels) were likewise "individuals of blood and flesh" [Biglino, Gods

of the Bible, #69369, ch.11 "The Messengers of God"]. He uses the same Deuteronomy 32 tradition to argue that "the 'God' of Israel was only one of several Elohim who shared control over the territories of the Middle East, namely, Yahweh of Teman (Lord of the south, of Sinai) and Baal Zaphòn (Lord of the north, of Lebanon)". He asks how Moses could warn against "other Elohim among the Elohim" if *Elohim* meant a single God, and he cites Freud on "the similarities between the worship of the Egyptian sun god Aten and Mosaic monotheism" [Biglino, #69369].

Marilyn Hopkins and Tim Wallace-Murphy write in their "Rex Deus" framework: "In the era covered by Judges and Kings, it is obvious that the ancient Israelites were not monotheistic as we now understand the term. Yahweh, the God of Akenhaten/Moses, was described as their one true God," while many continued to worship other deities "as their Egyptian ancestors had done" [Hopkins & Wallace-Murphy, Custodians of Truth, #70623, "The Era of the Judges"]. They follow Ahmed Osman's identification of Moses with Akhenaten, which they call "plausible though it may be, … still a matter of considerable debate" [#70623, ch.2] (see chapter 29).

Mehran Tavakoli Keshe's reading in Knowledge Seekers Workshop 520 (11 January 2024) comes from a different direction again. He states that the tribe, having "lived a harsh life, didn't have anything, so they chose the god of ancient time, who was a god of murder, torture, god of pain". In his words, "the Hebrew name of the god they chose at that time, is the god of fighting and torture and deceive" [Keshe, KSW 520, #378232, (1:26)]. He also claims that "if you look at in the Jewish principles and works, there is a lot of hints of Mitra, which they ignore. Because it's written by the Persians", and that "the principle of the Judaism, it's the principle of the Mithraism" [Keshe, KSW 520, #378232, (2:14-2:16)]. Set beside the scholars, the claims compare as follows. Day and Smith also find a warrior deity at the origin of Yahweh ("the southern warrior-god"), but they derive his features from the Midianite south and from Baal's storm imagery, not from a choice of character. The Persian and Mithraic link that Keshe asserts is not discussed in the critical works cited here. Its Persian-period dimension returns in chapter 31.

Key points

- The Ugaritic texts (13th-12th c. BCE) show the pantheon behind much biblical language: El and his council of "sons", his consort Asherah, Baal the

storm-god who defeats Yam and Lotan/Leviathan, and Mot [Day, #86469; Armstrong, #68999].

- Day holds that Yahweh and El were originally distinct and later merged. Smith holds that El was Israel's original god (the name *Isra-el*), with Yahweh a southern warrior-god absorbed into El's pantheon, as Deuteronomy 32:8-9 preserves [Day, #86469; Smith, #67245, #64008].
- The Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom inscriptions ("Yahweh ... and his Asherah", c. 800 BCE) and the Judean pillar figurines are the main evidence for Asherah as Yahweh's consort in popular religion. Scholars dispute whether the inscriptions mean the goddess or her cult symbol [Day, #86469, ch.2; Smith, #67245].
- Yahweh took over Baal's imagery (cloud-rider, sea-dragon fight, Zaphon) while the biblical writers condemned Baal. Day traces Daniel 7's Ancient of Days to El and its "son of man" to Baal [Day, #86469, chs 1, 4].
- Astarte (the probable Queen of Heaven), Anat, solar cult objects (2 Kgs 23:11) and underworld figures (Mot, Resheph, Molech, Rephaim) all left traces in the text [Day, #86469, chs 5-7; Taylor, #66074].
- Day places explicit monotheism with Deutero-Isaiah in the exile, after a long "Yahweh alone" struggle. Smith and the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* warn that the Deuteronomistic ideology of "strictly monolatrous Yahwism" shapes the biblical picture [Day, #86469, ch.8; Smith, #67245; #66939].
- Alternative readings: Biglino treats the Elohim as flesh-and-blood rulers; Hopkins and Wallace-Murphy treat Yahweh as "the God of Akhenaten/Moses"; Keshe claims the Hebrews chose a god of war and deception and that the Torah carries hidden Mithraic content [#69369; #70623; #378232].

Chapter 29.

Patriarchs, Exodus and Conquest: The Biblical Story and the Archaeological Record

The books of Genesis to Joshua tell Israel's founding story. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob receive the promise of the land. Seventy souls go down to Egypt. After 430 years of sojourn and bondage, Moses leads some 600,000 men on foot, besides women and children, out through the sea to Sinai. A conquest under Joshua follows. For believing Jews and Christians this narrative is sacred history. For modern archaeology it is a set of claims to test against the ground. For a third group of writers in the library (Freud's successors, polemicists and Mehran Keshe) it is either a coded Egyptian memory or a fabrication. This chapter sets the three positions side by side, attributing each claim to its source.

The Biblical Outline and Its Numbers

The narrative's own figures shape every later debate. Seventy people of Jacob's household enter Egypt. Israel dwells there 430 years (Exod 12:40). At the Exodus about 600,000 men leave (Exod 12:37). Armstrong notes that when the Israelites looked back to their own golden age they saw the patriarchs "living on familiar terms with their god", who guided their wanderings and spoke to them in dreams. The covenant with Yahweh at Sinai came only with Moses [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999, ch.1]. The Priestly source makes the same break explicit: God "appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as El Shadday, but by my name Yahweh I did not make myself known to them" (Exod 6:2-3) [Smith, The Early History of God, #67245, ch.1 §2].

Mehran Keshe takes the numbers literally as a demographic claim. In Knowledge Seekers Workshop 520 he argues: "we know how many children can be

reproduced. And ... if you say, equal men and women, and they're all (sexually) active, and all the children survive, scientifically, data tells us they cannot be more than 10,000. How did the Jews became 3 million in 400 years from 70? All lies." Elsewhere in the same session he puts the ceiling at 15,000 ("even if like rabbits we do ... even put it at twins"). He adds a military objection: if there were 600,000 men of fighting age, "this six hundred thousand (army) couldn't (with) stand the pharaohs, that they had to escape from him?" He also cites "one of the historical books" for the claim that 600,000 soldiers marching four abreast would form a column 600 kilometres long [Keshe, KSW 520, #378232, (2:08-2:12), (2:24)].

What Archaeology Reports: Mazar and Smith

Amihai Mazar's *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* frames the debate as a spectrum. At one end is "the fundamentalist approach-which strictly adheres to the biblical text regarding the patriarchal traditions, the enslavement in Egypt, the Exodus, and the conquest of Canaan"; at the other is a position "which entirely negates any historicity in the biblical tradition, regarding it as fiction". He confines himself to what archaeology can contribute, and warns that excavated data "can lead to different interpretations; such interpretations are often subjective and slanted toward a particular historical view" [Mazar, #68234, "The Material Culture of the Israelite Tribes in the Period of the Judges"].

He then goes through the conquest sites one by one. At Kadesh-Barnea, "thorough archaeological research ... did not reveal even one sherd from the Late Bronze Age or Iron Age I". The Arad Valley shows "no evidence of any Canaanite settlement of the Late Bronze Age". Mazar thinks it most likely that the Arad stories "were formulated as a literary tradition of no historical value". In Transjordan, "there is no archaeological testimony of an 'Amorite' state ... which could have been conquered" [Mazar, #68234, "The Israelite Conquest of Canaan in the Light of Archaeological Evidence"]. At 'Ai there was a long gap after the Early Bronze city, and the "lack of any Late Bronze Canaanite city at the site or in the vicinity contradicts the narrative in Joshua 8 and shows that it was not based on historical reality"; the story "can only be explained as being of etiological nature". Jericho, by contrast, "cannot serve as decisive evidence to deny a historical nucleus", and at Hazor, Lachish and Bethel archaeology "does not contradict" the stories. His overall verdict: "the conquest tradition must be understood as a telescoped reflection of a complex historical process in which some of the Canaanite city-states, weak and poor after three hundred years of

Egyptian domination, were replaced during Iron Age I by a new national entity, Israel" [Mazar, #68234].

The positive evidence is the settlement wave. "Intensive archaeological surface surveys revealed an entirely new settlement pattern in Iron Age I. Hundreds of new small sites were inhabited" in Galilee, the hills of Samaria and Ephraim, Benjamin, the northern Negev and parts of Transjordan. There were about a hundred sites in Manasseh and about a hundred in Ephraim. Finkelstein estimated the population at about 60,000 [Mazar, #68234, "The Israelite Settlement"]. Mazar sees "a simultaneous, independent settlement of various regions by loosely related population groups … partly … indigenous and partly … from the periphery of the country". He notes, however, that the Canaanite traditions in their material culture "do not necessarily point to the origin of the Israelites in Canaanite society". He records the hypothesis linking early Israel to the Shasu, in whose land one Egyptian document names "Yahu" [Mazar, #68234, notes 55].

Mark S. Smith pushes the cultural argument further. Iron I pottery, scripts, the four-room house and the collared-rim jar are no longer thought to be distinctively Israelite. "It is at present impossible to establish, on the basis of archaeological information, distinctions between Israelites and Canaanites in the Iron I period". His conclusion is direct: "In sum, Iron I Israel was largely Canaanite in character" [Smith, The Early History of God, #67245, ch.1 §1]. For a judgement on the competing archaeological syntheses he points readers to W.G. Dever's *What Did the Biblical Writers Know and When Did They Know It? What Archaeology Can Tell Us about the Reality of Ancient Israel*, and to "the somewhat one-sided work of I. Finkelstein and N. [Silberman]" [Smith, #67245, notes to ch.1]. The Merneptah stele (c. 1208 BCE) is the anchor of the debate. It reads "Israel is laid waste, his seed is not". Its scribe used the determinative for a people for Israel and the one for a land for Canaan, so that, in Smith's words, "Israel was differentiated as early as 1200 from its Canaanite forebears" [Smith, #67245, ch.1]. Smith still counts "Israel's early tradition of the Exodus from Egypt (Exod. 15:4)" and Yahweh's southern sanctuary (Sinai, Paran, Teiman) among the features that are not Canaanite [Smith, #67245, ch.1]. The reference shelf summarises the current consensus: the Exodus "as described in the Torah, is not historical, even though there is a historical core behind the Biblical narrative" [Wikipedia: Sources and parallels of the Exodus].

The Traditional and Evangelical Position

The library's conservative works keep Mosaic authorship and a historical Exodus. Norman Geisler's survey dates the events precisely: "The events of Exodus cover the period between 1445 and 1405 B.C." He argues that Moses wrote the book: "No other known person from that period had the time, interest, and ability to compose such a record" [Geisler, A Popular Survey of the Old Testament, #62050, on Exodus]. John Walton and Brent Sandy take a subtler view informed by ancient literary culture. "The book of Deuteronomy explicitly claims to preserve oral traditions originating with Moses as well as documents that he generated. There is no reason to doubt that Moses generated such documents or that they were preserved." The archive "could have been expanded and revised over centuries". The scribes who shaped the Pentateuch might have worked "as early as the judges period, but more likely later on in the monarchy (even if it were as late as the postexilic period it would not matter)". Biblical authority, they argue, rests on Moses as the authority behind the words, not on Moses as the writer of a book in the modern sense [Walton & Sandy, The Lost World of Scripture, #65622, Part 1].

The Egyptian Theories: Freud, Osman, Greenberg

A long line of authors has argued that the Exodus remembers real events in Egypt but the Bible has misread them. Gary Greenberg sums up the founding thesis: "Sigmund Freud, in *Moses and Monotheism*, argued that Moses was an Egyptian noble who followed the Atenist beliefs of the heretic pharaoh, and he even identified Aten with Adonai" [Greenberg, The Moses Mystery, #81927, Introduction]. Ahmed Osman gives the details of Freud's 1939 book. Freud held that the name Moses derives from the Egyptian *mos*, "child", and that the birth story copies other hero myths. He proposed that a high official "probably named Tutmes", a follower of the Aten religion, chose after the king's death "the tribe of the Hebrews, who already lived in the land of Goshen in the Eastern Delta, to be his chosen people" and led them out in the Exodus [Osman, Moise, Faraonul Egiptului, #9487, introduction; Romanian edition, rendered here].

Osman goes further than Freud. "As Freud almost succeeded in demonstrating, Akhenaten and Moses were one and the same person." The identification commits him to showing that the two had the same parents, birth date and place, and similar monotheisms. On his chronology, Akhenaten "was removed from

power and fled to Sinai in 1361 BC, at the age of 34 or 35". If he was Moses, "he was about 60 when he returned to Egypt and led the Exodus during the reign of Ramesses I" [Osman, #9487]. Greenberg proposes a variant: "Moses was the chief priest of the Aten cult and that at the time of Akhenaten's death Moses fled from Egypt to avoid execution". He dates the Exodus to 1315 BCE, with Moses born in 1395 BCE [Greenberg, #81927, ch.15]. His subtitle, *The African Origins of the Jewish People*, states the wider claim: Egyptian texts preserve a version of the Exodus that "reverse[s] the roles of Moses and the pharaoh, making Moses the cruel ruler", and the patriarchal genealogies encode Egyptian dynastic and mythological history [Greenberg, #81927, ch.10]. Hopkins and Wallace-Murphy adopt the Osman line ("the arrival of Moses/Akenhaten's people following the Exodus"). They note that David Rohl places the Exodus instead under the 13th-dynasty pharaoh Dudimose [Hopkins & Wallace-Murphy, Custodians of Truth, #70623, chs 2-3].

The Outright Rejections: Hitchens and Keshe

Christopher Hitchens states the sceptical case without qualification: "It goes without saying that none of the gruesome, disordered events described in Exodus ever took place." He credits the archaeologists. "Israeli archaeologists are among the most professional in the world, even if their scholarship has sometimes been inflected with a wish to prove that the 'covenant' between god and Moses was founded on something" [Hitchens, God Is Not Great, #65383; Romanian ed. *Dumnezeu nu este mare*, #77051]. His moral charge rests on Exodus 32. After the golden calf, "the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses, and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men". Hitchens calls this "a small number when compared to the Egyptian infants already massacred by god in order for things to have proceeded even this far", and says it "helps to make the case for 'antitheism' " [Hitchens, #65383, ch. on the Old Testament].

Keshe's rejection, in KSW 520, rests on the absence of external records. "If you had a pharaoh disappearing under the ocean … why don't we read it in Greek mythology, in Greek history, in other histories, the Persian Empire, in the Romans … There is no indication of such a thing." "Where is the Babylonians who had all these papers and stones …? There is no name of any tribe existing in that time and a pharaoh disappearing in the (Red) Sea, with all his soldiers. It's all fabrication." He extends the claim to the plagues and the forty years of hunger: "Why it is never recorded anywhere?" [Keshe, KSW 520, #378232, (2:10-2:18)]. He holds that the Ten Commandments were "copied from another Babylonian

king. It's not theirs. And it was there 2,000 years before Christ". He also holds that the Moses birth story reproduces that of an earlier king whose mother set him adrift in a basket and who "ruled for 48 years" [#378232, (2:18-2:22)]. He reads the spoiling of the Egyptians (Exod 12:35-36) as an instruction to deceive. In his paraphrase the last instruction was "Teach your men and women ... how to deceive the Egyptians, to get their silver and gold before you leave town tomorrow". He asks, "Why do you need silver and gold when you're going to the desert?" [#378232, (1:28), (2:26)]. In the earlier Workshop 204 (28 December 2017) he gives a different account of Sinai. "All the knowledge had been given to Moses but he changed them and only brought down 12". He says he was releasing "all the 24 Commandments", and wishes Moses had kept only one: " 'thy shall believe in One Creator for all men,' then things would have been different" [Keshe, KSW 204, #377847, summary and teaching].

Three Positions Compared

Issue	Mainstream archaeology (Mazar, Smith)	Traditional / evangelical (Geisler, Walton & Sandy)	Alternative and critical (Freud-Osman-Greenberg; Hitchens; Keshe)
Origin of Israel	Highland settlement wave c. 1200-1000 BCE; largely Canaanite culture	Descendants of the patriarchs who came out of Egypt	Egyptian Atenists (Osman, Greenberg); a fabricated people-history (Keshe)
The Exodus	No direct evidence; perhaps a historical core	Historical, c. 1445 BCE (Geisler)	Atenist flight under Akhenaten/Moses (Osman) or his priest (Greenberg, 1315 BCE); "never took place" (Hitchens); "fabrication" (Keshe)

Issue	Mainstream archaeology (Mazar, Smith)	Traditional / evangelical (Geisler, Walton & Sandy)	Alternative and critical (Freud-Osman-Greenberg; Hitchens; Keshe)
The conquest	Telescoped memory of a long process; 'Ai and Arad contradict the text	Historical	Not discussed by Osman; rejected by Hitchens and Keshe
Moses as author	Not addressed by Mazar; texts late (Smith)	Moses produced documents; later editing possible	Written centuries later, in Persia according to Keshe (see ch. 30-31)
Numbers (70 to 600,000 men)	Population of settlers c. 60,000 (Finkelstein, cited by Mazar)	Accepted	Demographically impossible (Keshe)

Key points

- Mazar finds "an outright conflict" between archaeology and the conquest stories in "southern Transjordan, Arad, 'Ai, Yarmuth, and Hebron", and no contradiction at Hazor, Lachish and Bethel. He reads Joshua as a "telescoped reflection" of a long process [Mazar, #68234].
- The material trace of early Israel is the Iron I highland settlement wave: hundreds of small villages, about 60,000 people on Finkelstein's estimate. The Merneptah stele (c. 1208 BCE) gives the first mention of "Israel" [Mazar, #68234; Smith, #67245].
- Smith concludes that "Iron I Israel was largely Canaanite in character", while keeping the Exodus tradition and Yahweh's southern origin as distinctive features [Smith, #67245].
- Conservative authors keep Mosaic authority and date the Exodus to 1445-1405 BCE (Geisler). Walton and Sandy see "no reason to doubt that Moses generated such documents", allowing for centuries of revision [#62050; #65622].
- Freud placed Moses among Akhenaten's Atenists. Osman identifies Moses with Akhenaten himself. Greenberg makes Moses Aten's chief priest, fleeing in 1315 BCE [#81927; #9487].

- Hitchens declares that none of the Exodus events "ever took place" and uses the Levites' killing of 3,000 (Exod 32) as a moral charge [#65383; #77051].
- Keshe rejects the Exodus on the absence of Egyptian, Babylonian, Greek or Persian records and on demographic grounds. He claims the Decalogue was copied from a Babylonian king and that Moses withheld 12 of 24 commandments, including "One Creator for all men" [#378232; #377847].

Chapter 30.

Kings and Prophets: Monarchy, the Two Kingdoms and the Deuteronomic Revolution

Between about 1000 and 586 BCE the highland tribes of chapter 29 became first a kingdom, then two rival kingdoms, and finally a single surviving Judah whose priests and scribes wrote the core of the Hebrew Bible. This is the period in which religion and state merged most tightly in ancient Israel. The god of the dynasty became the god of the nation. Prophets attacked kings in the name of that god. A king, Josiah, made "Yahweh alone" state law on the basis of a book found in the Temple. The sources in the library disagree sharply over how much of the biblical account of this period is history and how much is the ideology of the scribes who wrote it. This chapter covers the archaeology, the political history, the prophetic movement, the reform of 622/621 BCE and the theories of how the Bible was written, and sets critical, traditional and radical readings side by side.

From Confederacy to Monarchy

J. Moore's compact summary gives the conventional frame. "The basic source for the early history of the Hebrew tribes is the Old Testament, plus a little information from archaeology and the records of neighboring people." The tribes, pressed by the Philistines (who "proved to be far better warriors than the Canaanites or the Hebrews—a major reason being that their swords and spears were made of iron"), turned to kingship. The united kingdom then split after Solomon. Later "Assyria conquered the Kingdom of Israel and dispersed its inhabitants, who disappeared from history as organized communities", and Babylon ended Judah [Moore, From Genesis to Genetics, #27071, "Hebrew Political History and Biblical Source Criticism"]. Isidor Epstein, writing from inside Jewish tradition,

describes the period of the Judges as a tribal federation "too frail to survive Joshua", when "every man did what was right in his own eyes" (Judg 17:6) [Epstein, Iudaismul - origini şi istorie, #15429, opening chapters; Romanian, rendered here].

Mazar's chapter on the United Monarchy (Iron IIA, c. 1000-925 BCE) states the archaeological problem frankly: "the archaeological evidence for the period of the United Monarchy is sparse, often controversial, and it does not provide unequivocal answers". "The time of Saul hardly finds any expression in the archaeological record." The only candidate is a fortress corner at Tell el-Ful, identified by Albright as Gibeah, which "may have been part of Saul's headquarters". For David, the "stepped structure" above the Gihon spring in Jerusalem, preserved 16.5 m high, is a "tempting" candidate for the "fortress of Zion". The destructions of Megiddo VIA and Tell Qasile X "can perhaps be attributed to David". Mazar concludes: "the modest archaeological data from the time of David, although not conforming with the image of an empire founder, is consistent with the biblical accounts, which do not attribute to him any building operations" [Mazar, Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, #68234, "Archaeology of the Time of Saul and David"]. For Solomon, Mazar admits there are no remains in Jerusalem. He nevertheless argues that the biblical temple plan (tripartite, 50 x 100 cubits, with the pillars Jachin and Boaz) has close prototypes at Ebla, Megiddo, Shechem and Tell Tainat. In his view "the archaeological parallels to the biblical descriptions of Solomon's buildings ... validate the accuracy of these descriptions". Solomon's taxation and corvée, under which "the northern tribes were treated unfairly", made "a division between the northern and southern parts of the kingdom ... inevitable" [Mazar, #68234, "The Time of Solomon"; "Solomonic Buildings in Jerusalem"].

Two Kingdoms, Two Cults

Epstein describes the religious side of the split. Jeroboam installed golden calves at the northern and southern ends of his kingdom and "created a new clergy which, in opposition to the hereditary priesthood of the Levites, owed its favours to the king". He also moved the Feast of Tabernacles, "driven by the same thirst for schism" [Epstein, #15429]. Under Omri (c. 886-874 BCE) Israel "knew a period of prosperity and military strength" and made Judah a near-permanent ally. Under Ahab and Jezebel, however, Baal worship flourished. The people, says Epstein, served both: "others served YHVH and Baal, YHVH being the god who

protected the nation, and Baal the territorial god, the one who supplied the harvests and the fruit of the vine" [Epstein, #15429].

The prophet Elijah forced the choice. Epstein quotes his challenge: "If YHVH is God, serve him, but if it is Baal, then serve Baal!" On Carmel the people cried "YHVH is God!" and at Elijah's command "threw themselves upon the prophets of Baal and killed them". Yet "in spite of the 'awakening' on Carmel, Baalism remained dominant": Jezebel swore to kill Elijah, who fled to Horeb [Epstein, #15429]. Armstrong tells the same scene: Elijah drenched the altar, called upon Yahweh, "fire fell from heaven", and the people cried "Yahweh is God". She adds that the Israelites "continued to worship Yahweh in the ancient shrines which they had inherited from the Canaanites at Beth-El, Shiloh, Hebron, Bethlehem and Dan, where there were frequently pagan ceremonies" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999, ch.1]. John Day counts Elijah's "monolatrous challenge" as the first stage in a long process that ran through the classical prophets to the Deuteronomic movement and Josiah [Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, #86469, ch.8].

The Assyrian conquest of Samaria (722 BCE) changed the balance. Ephraim Stern reports that after the northern deportations the Assyrians "made major efforts to rebuild the entire area and replace its exiled inhabitants with new immigrants" throughout the seventh century. Jerusalem, meanwhile, "expanded considerably, both in area and in the size of its population. It is even claimed that the city's built-up area equaled that of all the rest of the Judaean settlements combined and that the entire kingdom was but a large polis" [Stern, Archaeology of the Land of the Bible vol. II, #67114, chs on the Assyrian period].

Josiah's Reform, 622/621 BCE

According to 2 Kings 22-23, the priest Hilkiah found a "Book of the Law" during Temple repairs in Josiah's eighteenth year. Josiah then purged the Temple and the countryside. Armstrong writes: "It is almost certain that the 'Book of the Law' discovered by Hilkiah was the core of the text that we now know as Deuteronomy. There have been various theories about its timely 'discovery' by the reforming party. Some have even suggested that it had been secretly written by Hilkiah and Shapan themselves with the assistance of the prophetess Huldah, whom Josiah immediately consulted" [Armstrong, #68999, ch.2]. Day treats the reform as "one significant factor in the decline of the Canaanite deities and the

enforcement of monolatry". Josiah "abolished the high places, centralizing worship in Jerusalem and purifying the cult of Yahweh", in accordance with a law book "traditionally understood as an early form of our book of Deuteronomy". Day notes that "some scholars have doubted the historicity of Josiah's reform" [Day, #86469, ch.8]. The objects removed, listed in 2 Kings 23:4, were "all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven" [Day, #86469, ch.2]. Among them were "the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun" (2 Kgs 23:11). J. Glen Taylor reads these as evidence of a solar form of Yahweh worship inside the Temple, not an Assyrian import [Taylor, Yahweh and the Sun, #66074, ch.2].

William Schniedewind places the reform within the history of scribal communities. "During the First Temple period, there are two defining moments—the Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah. These Reforms would also shape the spatial aspects of priestly scribes by marginalizing the non–Jerusalem Temple priests" [Schniedewind, Who Really Wrote the Bible, #70950]. On this account, centralising the cult also centralised writing.

The conservative counter-reading is given by Walton and Sandy. The book of Deuteronomy "explicitly claims to preserve oral traditions originating with Moses as well as documents that he generated", and "there is no reason to doubt that Moses generated such documents or that they were preserved". That a document surfaced under Josiah does not, on their view, show that it was composed then: "We need not think that a book was written all at once as a literary piece in the time when the traditions it holds originated" [Walton & Sandy, The Lost World of Scripture, #65622, Part 1].

How the Books Were Written: J, E, D, P and the Deuteronomistic History

The critical framework behind most of these sources is the documentary hypothesis. Marc Zvi Brettler explains: "The so-called documentary hypothesis of the Torah discerns at least four major sources: J (Yahwist), E (Elohist), D (Deuteronomist), and P (Priestly)." His example is the call of Moses: "The classic source-critical analysis of Exodus 3–4 assigns the main narrative in Exodus 3 to E (3:1–6, 9–15, and 21–22) with short passages from J (3:7–8, 16–20), and the main narrative in chapter 4 … to J with short passages from E" [Brettler, Enns & Harrington, The Bible and the Believer, #50887, Jewish chapter]. Moore gives the conventional dates for Genesis: "The J source is the oldest and is thought to

have been first produced in the tenth century b.c." The redactor R, "in the fifth century, possibly between 450 and 400 b.c., combined J, P, and other sources to produce Genesis" [Moore, #27071].

The *Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* presents the current European model of continuous growth. "Under the influence of the eighth-century prophets and their demand for exclusive loyalty to God backed by social justice", Deuteronomy (D) was composed in the seventh century. It "absolutizes the practice of monolatry within the former national cult and … ascribes transcendent aspects to the former national God". The narrative works "were permanently revised and enlarged in the course of the seventh century, and above all after the fall of Jerusalem in 597/587 BCE". The Decalogue itself "draws upon prophetic sources (cf. Hos. 4:2) as well as a legal source", the Book of the Covenant [Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies, #363277, "The Growth of the Old Testament"]. In the Deuteronomistic books of Kings, "against the background of the original unity of the kingship under David, the divided kingship which existed until 720 BCE is taken as an infringement of the command to centralize the cult". The *Handbook* also notes the later theory, shared by Josephus (*Against Apion* I.37-41), "that each epoch had its prophets, and that the prophets were the chroniclers of their time" [#363277].

Mark S. Smith warns that this Deuteronomistic History (Joshua-Kings) is ideological history, not neutral record. When scholars describe early Israel as a pure Yahwism corrupted by Canaanite "syncretism", they are extending biblical historiography. "Because the historical works of the Bible view the religion of the Judges period in this way, then some scholars have concluded that the biblical view represents historical reality" [Smith, The Early History of God, #67245, ch.1 §1]. The *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* makes the same point about the asherah: the Deuteronomistic History supplies 24 of 40 references, and "one of its chief concerns is cultic purity, a strictly monolatrous Yahwism", so that "the Deuteronomistic historians have done their work so well" that scholars tend to treat such cult objects as foreign [van der Toorn et al., Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible, #66939, "Asherah"].

Schniedewind stresses the cost of the catastrophe that ended the period. "The Babylonians destroyed the larger cities and towns … over the course of a few decades, the population declined by as much 85 percent … The entire economy and infrastructure of Judah collapsed." "Writing and scribal communities require affluence, infrastructure, and patronage." The Babylonian period also "marks a major shift in the language of scribal communities—Aramaic becomes the stan-

dard language" [Schniedewind, #70950]. Where the Bible was written after 586 BCE, and by whom, therefore becomes the question of chapter 31.

A Radical Reading: Douglas Reed

Douglas Reed's *The Controversy of Zion* puts the documentary hypothesis to polemical use. "During the hundred years that followed the Assyrian conquest of Israel, the Levites in Judah began to compile the written Law. In 621 BC they produced Deuteronomy and read it to the people in the temple at Jerusalem. This was the birth of 'the Mosaic law,' which Moses, if he ever lived, never knew" [Reed, #64653, ch.3 "The Levites and the Law"]. Reed separates the two kingdoms morally. "Israel rejected the chosen people creed which was beginning to take shape in Judah and went its own way". "Israel had fallen from grace, but Judah had betrayed; the allusion is plainly to the Levites' new Law" [Reed, #64653, ch.2 "The End of Israel"]. From this he draws a modern political conclusion: "the use of the name 'Israel' by the Zionist state which was created in Palestine in this century is in the nature of a forgery", since it is "the name of a people who were not Jews and would have none of the creed which has become Judaism" [Reed, #64653, ch.2].

Question	Critical scholarship	Traditional / evangelical	Radical (Reed)
United Monarchy	Sparse evidence; David modest, Solomon's temple plausible by parallels (Mazar)	Historical as narrated	Not disputed; focus on later sect
Josiah's "Book of the Law"	Core of Deuteronomy, 7th c.; possibly written by the reformers (Armstrong)	Preserves Mosaic documents (Walton & Sandy)	Produced by the Levites in 621 BC
Composition of the Torah	J, E, D, P; redaction to c. 450-400 BCE (Moore); continuous growth (Oxford)	Mosaic authority, later editing	A Levitical construction

Question	Critical scholarship	Traditional / evangelical	Radical (Reed)
Israel vs Judah	Two kingdoms; Deuteronomist condemns the North's cult	Schism of Jeroboam	Israel rejected Judah's creed; modern use of "Israel" a "forgery"

Key points

- Mazar finds the United Monarchy archaeologically "sparse, often controversial". Saul barely appears, David's remains are modest but "consistent" with the Bible, and Solomon's temple is supported only by architectural parallels [Mazar, #68234].
- After the split, Jeroboam's calves and royal clergy and the dual worship of "YHVH and Baal" (national god and god of the land's crops) set the stage for Elijah's challenge on Carmel [Epstein, #15429; Armstrong, #68999].
- After Samaria's fall in 722 BCE Jerusalem grew until, on one claim Stern reports, Judah was "but a large polis" [Stern, #67114].
- Josiah's reform (622/621 BCE) centralised worship and purged the cults of Baal, Asherah, the host of heaven and the sun's horses. Armstrong finds it "almost certain" that the Book of the Law was the core of Deuteronomy, possibly written by the reformers themselves [#68999; Day, #86469; Taylor, #66074].
- The documentary hypothesis (J, E, D, P) and the *Oxford Handbook*'s model of continuous growth place D in the seventh century and much revision after 587 BCE. Brettler's analysis of Exodus 3-4 shows the method at work [#50887; #363277; #27071].
- Smith and the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* warn that the Deuteronomistic History's "strictly monolatrous" ideology has shaped modern pictures of Israel's religion [#67245; #66939].
- Walton and Sandy dissent: a document's discovery under Josiah does not prove it was composed then [#65622].
- Reed reads the same data polemically. The Levites "produced Deuteronomy" in 621 BC, Israel and Judah were opposed peoples, and the modern state's use of "Israel" is "a forgery" [#64653].

Chapter 31.

By the Rivers of Babylon: Exile, Cyrus and the Persian Imprint on Judaism

The half-century between the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar and the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus the Great is the point where the history of Israel meets the history of Iran. The Judaism that came back from Babylon was not the religion of the monarchy that went into exile. It had a written Torah enforced by a foreign empire, a priestly-scribal elite, and an expanding world of angels, demons, judgment and life after death. Whether these new elements were borrowed from Zoroastrianism, grew out of native roots, or came from a shared Near Eastern environment is one of the longest-running debates in comparative religion. This chapter connects Part 4 back to the Zoroastrian material of Part 1 and sets out the case for Persian influence, the case against it, and the political use the Persian crown made of the returning exiles.

Catastrophe and Collapse: 587/586 BCE

The Babylonian armies destroyed Jerusalem and the First Temple in 587/586 BCE. Earlier and later deportations took the royal house, the priesthood and the skilled classes to Mesopotamia. Schniedewind stresses how complete the collapse was: "The Babylonians destroyed the larger cities and towns, but some small agricultural villages survived. According to archaeological surveys and excavations, over the course of a few decades, the population declined by as much 85 percent, and the continuity was mostly in smaller agricultural villages. The entire economy and infrastructure of Judah collapsed" [Schniedewind, Who Really Wrote the Bible, #70950, ch.10]. For a historian of writing, the consequence is that scribal activity had to find new patrons. Schniedewind looks for "Hebrew

scribal communities during the Babylonian period" and notes a few material anchors for the "(short) Babylonian period (586–539 BCE)", such as the fortress at Ramat Raḥel, which "continued as a Babylonian and Persian administrative center" [Schniedewind, #70950, ch.10]. He argues that the Deuteronomistic scribes made "another edition that included the destruction and the exile and concluded by explicitly explaining the fate of the monarchy" [Schniedewind, #70950]. In his account, the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel record the scribal communities of the exile itself (his ch.10, "The Stories of Jeremiah and Ezekiel").

Cyrus the "Anointed": Was the Liberator a Zoroastrian?

In 539 BCE Cyrus took Babylon. His policy of returning displaced peoples and their gods, known from the Cyrus Cylinder, allowed Judahites to go home and rebuild their temple [Wikipedia: Cyrus Cylinder]. Deutero-Isaiah calls him the Lord's "anointed" (*mashiach*, Isa 45:1), the only non-Israelite given that title in the Hebrew Bible. The anonymous author of *How All Religions Are False and Harmful* tells the event plainly: "In 539 BCE, Cyrus, the Persian king invaded and defeated Babylon," after which "Jews were permitted to return to their place under Ezra's leadership" [Anon., How All Religions Are False and Harmful, #78476, ch.2]. That author compresses the chronology; Ezra belongs to the following century.

Whether Cyrus himself held Zarathushtra's faith was already disputed in Moulton's 1912 Hibbert lectures. Moulton quotes Eduard Meyer's "summary dictum" that "it cannot be doubted by any unprejudiced mind that Cyrus was a Zoroastrian," and then questions whether "Cyrus was in any sense a Zoroastrian" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, "Before Zarathushtra"]. He points out that the Cylinder shows Cyrus as "the worshipper of the Assyrio-Babylonian gods," which "it may at least be supposed was done in order to please his new subjects, and to gain the favour of the powerful sacerdotal body." He also notes that Cambyses "had no fear of the wrath of the sacred element when he burnt the corpse of Amasis," and that the Achaemenid royal burials show "that the Magi had not yet come upon the scene" [Moulton, #55011]. His cautious conclusion is that Cyrus should be regarded "as probably a Mazdean not a Zoroastrian," a worshipper of Ahura Mazdah as "god of the Aryans" without the prophet's reform [Moulton, #55011]. The political point that follows is that Judaism's "anointed" was a polytheist-tolerant imperial monarch, whatever his private creed.

The Case for Iranian Influence: Carter and Mills

George William Carter's 1918 dissertation sets out the classic case. He observes that "the Hebrew idea of Yahveh immediately after the exile took on a richer and broader content. How shall we explain it? In part by foreign influence" [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114]. He lists the shared elements directly: "Belief in angels and demons and in the future life were ideas common to both" [Carter, #55114, p.39]. On the angels he distinguishes two periods. Before the exile, angels "stand as simple ministers or messengers of Yahveh, sometimes appearing in bodily shape" (Gen 16, Josh 5, Judg 13). After it they become named and ranked beings, which Carter sets beside the Bundahishn [Carter, #55114, pp.39-40]. On the afterlife he writes: "In the Persian period of Jewish writings a belief in immortality has for the first time taken definite form, and this becomes clearer in still later writings," against an earlier faith in which "their hopes of the future related to the enjoyment of Yahveh upon earth and to Israel's glory" [Carter, #55114, p.102].

Lawrence H. Mills, the Avesta translator, puts the argument in geographical terms. The northern Israelites deported by Assyria had been "forcibly settled" in the "Cities of the Medes." Recopying of the sacred texts "was done by men who lived near Babylon among the Persian garrisons as well as immediately within the 'Cities of the Medes'." He concludes: "Here then was Judaism in the heart of Media which was even more Zoroastrian than Persia proper or than Persian Babylonia" [Mills, Avesta Eschatology, #60373]. In his view the "tone of thought" on the last things in Jewish writing "at the time of the Exile and subsequently to it, was strikingly different from the tone of thought upon these subjects in the earlier Biblical literature" [Mills, #60373]. Mills extends the comparison to Daniel and Revelation, for example reading "the Throne of God and of the Lamb" as recalling "Ahura's throne with Vohu Manah" and the revealing angel as recalling Sraosha [Mills, #60373].

Angels and Demons: Asmodaios, the Seven and Tir

Werner Sundermann's 2007 Mary Boyce memorial lecture takes up the question with what he calls "small but precise and hardly contestable pieces of evidence." He starts from the broad claim that Zoroastrian ideas "such as the all-encompassing dualism of good and evil, light and darkness, or the resurrection of the dead in the flesh" influenced, "from the middle of the first millennium BCE

on," Judaism, "and by way of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, too" [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067, "Asmodaios"].

His test case is the demon of the Book of Tobit. The story was "probably composed in the first half of the second century BCE," and is set in Nineveh, Ecbatana and Rages (Rey near Tehran). Asmodaios has killed seven bridegrooms of Sara, and the archangel Raphael drives him off with the smoke of a fish's heart and liver [Sundermann, #55067]. "Ever since Theodor Benfey, scholars have regarded Asmodaios/Ašmedai as a demon of Iranian, Zoroastrian origin," derived from Avestan *Aēšmō daēuuō*, "Wrath the demon," which is attested in Middle Persian as *Xēšm dēw* [Sundermann, #55067; Wikipedia: Asmodeus].

Sundermann then states the objections. "For Isidor Scheftelowitz this was an argument against the Iranian origin of the name": the vowel *ai* should have produced a different Aramaic form [Sundermann, #55067, citing Scheftelowitz 1920]. Others derive the name from Hebrew *šmd*, "to destroy." E. Stave argued that the natures differ: Aeshma is "the creator of wrath and revengefulness," while Asmodaios is "particularly characterised by his lewdness" [Sundermann, #55067]. S. Pines accepted demonised wrath in both religions "but he also expressed his doubts about a total dependence of this idea in Judaism and Christianity on Iranian influence" [Sundermann, #55067].

His answer has several parts. The loan could have come through a Middle Iranian (Parthian) form, *išm(ə)dēw*, reshaped by Philippi's law in Aramaic. The Jews probably also heard their own verb *šmd* in the name. So the Greek form goes back to an Aramaic *Ašmedai* in which "the Iranian word was remodelled." On the demon's character, Zoroastrian texts make Aēšma the enemy of the next-of-kin marriage (*xwēdōdah*) and of the procreation of children, active at night against married couples. He concludes: "Both the similarity of the names Aēšmō daēuuō and Asmodaios and the role they play as enemies of marital union lead me to conclude that the assumption of an Iranian origin of the Jewish demon Asmodaios is correct." He adds that Tobit's travelling dog reflects Iranian esteem for dogs, unlike the rest of the Near East [Sundermann, #55067]. His result is therefore mixed: the origin is Iranian, but the name and figure were refashioned through Aramaic and a Jewish reading.

Moulton notes a parallel among the higher spirits. The six Amesha Spentas, with Sraosha as a seventh, have "their common relation to one Father, the Creator Ahura Mazdah," and "it is noteworthy that in Tobit the 'seven spirits' " appear, a reference to Raphael's words in Tob 12:15 [Moulton, #55011, "The Prophet and the Reform"]. In discussing the old Iranian month-gods he also lists "the six Zoroastrian angels" next to the star-god Tir, whom he treats separately (p.435

f.) [Moulton, #55011]. The non-academic author Andrew Collins goes further. He claims that "the Persian angel Tir is a prime example of how Zoroastrianism has influenced the Judaic understanding of angelology, for in Hebrew mysticism he becomes Tiriel, who, like his Persian counterpart, presides over all activities appertaining to the planet Mercury" [Collins, From the Ashes of Angels, #71550, ch.25]. Collins also quotes Josephus on the tower of Daniel at Ecbatana: "they bury the kings of Media, of Persia, and Parthia, in this tower, to this day; and he who was intrusted with the care of it, was a Jewish priest" [Collins, #71550, ch.25]. He takes this as evidence of close Magian-Jewish relations in the Median capital.

The richest Second Temple angelology, however, is in 1 Enoch. Annette Yoshiko Reed follows the Book of the Watchers, the story of angels who descend, take human wives and teach forbidden arts. She documents its circulation in Palestine "from the second century BCE (BD, EE, Jubilees, BG?) to first century CE (Sim., Jude)", and notes that it was "still being copied at Qumran." She shows that the Damascus Document cites "the Watchers in a didactic context, as paradigms" of sin, and that the pairing of Asael with Azazel "ha[s] precedents in Second Temple sources" [Reed, Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity, #66169, chs.1-3]. The Parables of Enoch then speak of humans who "have learned all the secrets of the angels and all the oppressive deeds of the satans" [Reed, #66169, quoting 1 En.]. These are the beings that Carter and Mills would trace partly to Iran.

Resurrection and Judgment

The bodily resurrection of the dead, found only in late texts such as Daniel 12, is the doctrine most often credited to Iran. C. Norman Shealy, writing in a work on energy medicine, states: "the concept of resurrection of corpses originated with the Zoroastrian religion in Persia … These Zoroastrian doctrines were incorporated into Judaism" [Shealy, Energy Medicine, #63535, "From Zoroastrianism to Judaism"]. The anonymous *How All Religions Are False* gives a psychological route: such beliefs "might have been taken from Zoroastrianism … when Bible composers came into contact with them after Persian ruler Cyrus defeated Babylonians and released Israelites from the captivity in 539 BCE. Israelites must have felt grateful to Cyrus and Persians and hence might have studied Zoroastrianism favorably" [Anon., #78476, ch.2, part 16]. Within Judaism the doctrine stayed contested: the Temple aristocracy of the Sadducees rejected it into the first century CE (see Chapter 33).

Element	Pre-exilic Israel (per Carter, Mills)	Post-exilic Judaism	Zoroastrian parallel cited	Critics
Angels	unnamed messengers of Yahveh	named archangels, "seven spirits" (Tobit)	Amesha Spentas + Sraosha (Moulton)	native development of the divine council
Demons	few, ill-defined	Asmodaios, Watchers, satans	Aēšma daēva (Sundermann)	Scheftelowitz, Stave, Pines
Afterlife	hopes "upon earth" (Carter)	immortality, resurrection (Dan 12)	frashokereti, bodily resurrection	Sadducees reject it
Last things	national restoration	world judgment, cosmic dualism	Avesta eschatology (Mills)	apocalyptic as Hellenistic-era genre

Ezra, Nehemiah and the Persian-Enforced Torah

The restoration was a political project of the Persian crown. Schniedewind writes that "Ezra and Nehemiah will illustrate two different aspects of the post-exilic Hebrew scribal community." Ezra, "titled both 'Priest' and 'scribe,' represents the main development of the Hebrew scribal community—namely, its association with the temple and temple service." Nehemiah, "a Persian administrator and governor," represents the imperial-administrative side [Schniedewind, #70950, ch.12, "Ezra and Nehemiah: Persian Scribal Communities"]. Schniedewind stresses that Ezra was "not just any priestly scribe. He has a pedigree": his father Seraiah carries the name of the last high priest before the destruction. He also clarifies that Ezra "is indeed called a 'scribe,' but that is not his profession. He was a priest, who was literate" [Schniedewind, #70950]. The public reading of Nehemiah 8, where "Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra, the priest and scribe, and the Levites" interpret "the Torah of God" to the assembly, marks the arrival of a written law as the constitution of the community [Schniedewind, #70950, quoting Neh 8]. His ch.11 places the rival Samaritan sanctuary on Mount Gerizim in the same Persian setting.

Douglas Reed's *The Controversy of Zion* gives a polemical reading of the same events. In his account the returned Judahites had "gradually developed normal relationships with their neighbours," and "many of the people still prayed to 'other gods' ". Then: "in 458 BC, the Levites struck. Their Law was ready, which was not by itself of much importance. The Persian King was ready to enforce it for them, and that was of the greatest importance, then and up to the present moment" [Reed, The Controversy of Zion, #64653, ch.6]. Reed writes that "Ezra brought the new racial Law with him." Acting "as emissary of the Persian king" he ordered "that all mixed marriages were to be dissolved." Men who "could not satisfy Persian officials and the Levite elders of their descent from Judah, Benjamin or Levi were rejected 'with horror' " (quoting Kastein). Finally, "in 444 BC, Nehemiah had Ezra embody the ban on mixed marriages in the Torah," and clan heads were required to sign a pledge to keep it [Reed, #64653, ch.6, parts 6-8]. Reed adds a parenthetical comparison with twentieth-century racial decrees. This is his interpretation of Ezra 9-10 and Nehemiah 9-10. Its core claim, that a foreign power enforced a sectarian law, is a thesis he develops across the whole book.

The Modern Echo: Keshe on Persians and Jews

In the Knowledge Seekers Workshops, Mehran Tavakoli Keshe, himself Iranian-born, presents the Persian-Jewish link as an unfinished prophetic cycle. In KSW 608 he says: "we are in the last days of the 6,000 years of anarchy and everything else. And somebody has to be that the Jews win over the Persians. This is what's in the Holy Books. And then the peace will come," and "The Kingdom of Moses and the King David will complete, when the Jews win over Iran" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 608, #378320, parts 13-14]. He presents modern Iran-Israel hostility as "all set up by religions which you are not aware" of, tied to sacred calendars. He also calls the Christian calendar "based on a lie" because Jesus' birth "was brought forward to coincide with the festivals … commemorating the birth of Mitra" [Keshe, #378320, part 12]. Recalling his earlier words, "We've taken the love of God from the blood of Moses," Keshe goes on: "They shall have no home, let alone the land they took by occupation," adding that "this is not just to the followers of Moses," but "the same for the Muslims, the same for Christians … the whole of humanity" [Keshe, #378320, part 15]. So Cyrus the "anointed" and the Persian-Jewish rivalry reappear in Keshe's account as a cosmic scheme still being played out.

Key points

- The Babylonian destruction (587/586 BCE) cut Judah's population by up to 85 percent and forced scribal culture into exile and imperial service (Schniedewind).
- Cyrus, Isaiah's "anointed," was in Moulton's judgement "probably a Mazdean not a Zoroastrian," against Meyer's view that he was certainly Zoroastrian.
- Carter and Mills argue that angels, demons, immortality and eschatology took "definite form" in Judaism only in the Persian period, partly "by foreign influence."
- Sundermann's Asmodaios case concludes for an Iranian origin (Aēšma daēva), remodelled through Aramaic and the Hebrew *šmd*; Scheftelowitz, Stave and Pines doubted it.
- Moulton links the Amesha Spentas to Tobit's "seven spirits"; Collins traces Tir to Tiriel and cites a Jewish priest guarding the Median-Persian royal tomb at Ecbatana.
- Reed (Annette Yoshiko) documents the Book of the Watchers as the centre of Second Temple angelology, copied at Qumran.
- Ezra (priest-scribe) and Nehemiah (Persian governor) made a written Torah the community's law under imperial authority; Douglas Reed reads this as a Persian-backed "racial Law" (458/444 BCE).
- Keshe (KSW 608) presents a prophetic end-cycle in which "the Jews win over the Persians."

Chapter 32.

Athens and Jerusalem: Hellenism, Antiochus IV and the Maccabean State

Alexander's conquest of the Levant in 332 BCE drew the small temple-state of Judea into the Greek world. Over the next three centuries the Persian pattern of a priestly community under a tolerant empire broke down. In its place came a sharp contest between Jews who adopted Greek language, education and dress and Jews who saw that adoption as apostasy. The contest led to the only known ancient attempt to abolish a religion by decree, a successful guerrilla war, a new Jewish dynasty that combined crown and high priesthood, and finally the arrival of Rome. At the same time, Greek-speaking Jews in Alexandria produced the Septuagint and Philo's philosophical Judaism, which became the intellectual bridge to Christianity. This chapter follows both lines, the political and the philosophical.

Between Ptolemies and Seleucids: The Hellenizing High Priests

Jonathan G. Campbell summarises the framework: "After his death in 323 BCE, two opposing kingdoms emerged out of his vast empire … the Ptolemaic kingdom in Egypt, and the Seleucid kingdom." Judea "continued under Egyptian control for most of the third century BCE, but the Seleucids wrested it from the Ptolemies in 200 BCE" [Campbell, Deciphering the Dead Sea Scrolls, #62203, ch.3, "Understanding the Second Temple Period"]. Greek *poleis* were set up along the coast (Gaza, Ascalon, Joppa, Dor, Ptolemais) and inland (Philadelphia, Scythopolis, Samaria), and their citizens were "encouraged to adopt Greek language and social customs – and to make room for Greek deities in their religious systems."

Campbell notes that language and commerce were "unproblematic," but "religious and philosophical issues were more controversial and, from around 200 BCE, serious divisions ... emerged among Jews." He cites Ben Sira's complaint that some had "forsaken the law of the Most High God" and Jubilees' insistence on Sabbath and circumcision as evidence that these were being neglected [Campbell, #62203, ch.3].

The crisis began with the purchase of the high priesthood. In 175 BCE Antiochus IV, "short of funds in the imperial treasury," accepted a bribe from Jesus, brother of the high priest, "who preferred the Greek name Jason." Jason "set about turning Jerusalem into a polis, establishing institutions for inculcating Jewish youth with Greek intellectual and sporting ideals" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. Campbell quotes 1 Maccabees 1:11-15: "certain renegades came out from Israel and misled many, saying, 'Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles around us' ... So they built a gymnasium in Jerusalem, according to Gentile custom, and removed the marks of circumcision, and abandoned the holy covenant." In 172 BCE "another Greek enthusiast called Menelaus" bought the office again. The changes included "nude participation in athletics – thereby flouting the biblical taboo against nakedness and causing some Jewish embarrassment over circumcision, viewed by Greeks as a crude practice" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3].

Antiochus Epiphanes and the Abolition of Judaism (167 BCE)

Campbell writes: "Not only did Antiochus IV Epiphanes raid the Jerusalem Temple's funds, but in 167 BCE he set about eradicating Judaism altogether. Such religious persecution was unheard of in the ancient world and scholars disagree as to its causes." His own "best guess is that Antiochus IV was quashing rival supporters of Jason and Menelaus, rather than opposing Judaism itself; he may also have felt the need to reassert his authority after a recent military withdrawal from Egypt forced on him by the Romans." Jewish customs were banned "on pain of death," and the Temple "was rededicated to the Greek god Olympian Zeus," the act that "probably lies behind the reference to the 'abomination that makes desolate' in Daniel 11:31" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. Campbell also notes that a Qumran text, 4QHistorical Text A, shares phrasing about Antiochus's actions "before his persecution of Judaea's Jews in 167 BCE" and may have been a source for Daniel [Campbell, #62203, ch.2].

The Romanian *Originea Bibliei* frames the decree in imperial terms. Antiochus "tries to homogenise the numerous ethnic and religious groups of the empire into a single loyal Hellenistic kingdom," and it quotes 1 Maccabees 1:44: "And king Antiochus wrote to his whole kingdom that all should be one people, and each should abandon his own law" [Skulski, Originea Bibliei Vol.1 - Torah, #47119, §1.3.5]. Zecharia Sitchin, in the Romanian edition of *The End of Days*, tells the episode as part of his wider thesis that the Jerusalem Temple was a former "Mission Control Center." He writes that Antiochus "came to Jerusalem. It was not a courtesy visit. Violating the sanctity of the Temple, he entered the Holy of Holies. At his command the sacred ritual objects of the Temple were confiscated, a Greek governor was appointed over the city and a fortress for a permanent garrison of foreign soldiers was built next to the Temple." After returning to his Syrian capital, Antiochus "issued a proclamation" [Sitchin, Sfârşitul Zilelor, #49306]. The fortress is the Akra, which a Seleucid garrison held until Simon expelled it.

Circumcision, the bodily mark of the covenant, was at the centre of the struggle. The Romanian *Tăierea împrejur – Complotul tăcerii* is a translated digest of Sami A. Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh's study of male and female circumcision, catalogued in the library under Ion Coja, and it is polemical against the practice. It reads 1 Maccabees as evidence that the conflict was also internal. Under "Antiochus Epiphanes, the Greek king of Syria (d. 164 BCE)," it says, "the Judeans wishing to merge with other nations restored their foreskins, refusing to circumcise their boys any longer (1M 1:15). This, however, provoked the anger of the Judean priests." It then quotes 1 Maccabees 2:44-46: Mattathias and the Hasideans "gathered an army and struck down the sinners in their anger … and tore down their altars … and circumcised by force all the uncircumcised boys they found within the borders of Israel" [Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh, Tăierea împrejur, #369786, Part II ch.1]. The same text then follows the issue into later times. It cites Celsus' description of operations to restore the foreskin and Paul's advice in 1 Cor 7:18. It also claims that "around the year 140 the rabbis invented a more severe form" of the cut so that restoring the foreskin became "almost impossible" [#369786, Part II ch.1]. 1 Maccabees 1:60-61, which the book does not quote here, records the royal enforcement: mothers who had circumcised their sons were put to death with their infants hung around their necks [Wikipedia: Maccabean Revolt].

Revolt, Hanukkah and the Hasmonean Priest-Kings

Campbell describes the resistance. Some Jews "simply acquiesced (1 Maccabees 2:23), while others hoped for divine intervention (Daniel 7–12). Yet others embarked on a course of violent resistance," led by "a priest from Modein called Mattathias and his five sons." Aided by "the obscure Hasideans," the Maccabees wore down the Seleucid armies by guerrilla war, and "in 164 BCE, Judah Maccabee succeeded in his main aim of restoring proper Jewish worship to the Jerusalem Temple" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. That rededication is commemorated in Hanukkah [Wikipedia: Maccabean Revolt]. Once Antiochus V rescinded the decrees, "the impetus behind the Maccabean campaign faded" [Campbell, #62203].

The war of faith then became dynastic politics. Jonathan sided with the Seleucid claimant Demetrius I "in return for the High Priesthood." His appointment in 152 BCE "must have earned him many enemies, for neither Jonathan nor his brothers belonged to the priestly family descended from Zadok." Simon, after Jonathan's execution in 143 BCE, "all but declared the small province of Judaea an independent state in 142 BCE, expelling ... the garrison of Seleucid troops" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. The esoteric timeline *allreligionsareone* gives the same year with more emphasis on dependence: "142 Simon Maccabee, priest and ruler of Israel, and the Hasmonean kingdom in alliance with the Roman Senate gives support to Demetrius 2, the Seleucid king. Although the Maccabees win autonomy, the region remains a province of the Seleucid Empire and Simon is required to provide troops to Antiochus" [Anon., allreligionsareone, #53197, timeline entry 142 BCE].

Campbell lists the Hasmonean rulers who "combined the role of High Priest with that of secular ruler": John Hyrcanus I (134-104), Aristobulus I (104-103) and Alexander Jannaeus (103-76). They conquered Samaria, Idumaea, Peraea, Galilee and the coast, and in the process "some of the non-Jewish population was expelled or converted." The Idumaeans were "converted under Hyrcanus I," and the people of Galilee were "forcibly circumcised by Aristobulus I" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. The rebels against Hellenism also became Hellenistic rulers: "Many practical aspects of public and private life under the Hasmonean dynasty were influenced by Hellenism." Their coins carry "the traditional Hebrew name of the High Priest on one side, while the reverse bears his Greek secular title," and their palace at Jericho "combine[s] the best of Hellenistic artistry with the provision of ritual baths" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. Domestic opposition was harsh. Pilgrims pelted Jannaeus "with ceremonial fruit," and after a Pharisee-backed appeal to Demetrius III (c. 88 BCE) "Jannaeus had eight hundred of his Phari-

saic opponents crucified," an event recalled in the Qumran Nahum commentary [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. The dynasty ended when the rival brothers Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II "petitioned Rome for help," which allowed Pompey "to take control of Jerusalem in 63 BCE, thereby rendering the Jewish state a political puppet of Rome" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3; Wikipedia: Hasmonean dynasty].

The Books of Maccabees as Dynastic Propaganda

Both main sources treat 1 Maccabees as a political document. Campbell calls its author a man "writing propaganda for the Maccabees' successors in around 100 BCE." He notes that the praise of Simon, "All the people sat under their own vines and fig trees" (1 Macc 14:12), "deliberately echoes the glorious days of King Solomon" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. *Originea Bibliei* dates the book to about 134-104 BCE and says it was written in Hebrew though it survives only in Greek. It states that "1 Maccabees reflects the intense religious feelings of the new rulers. The book could have had the purpose of legitimising the Hasmonean dynasty in the face of two internal objections," which go back to the view taught by Ben Sira in the generation before the revolt. The first passage it quotes from Ben Sira is "in the land of the people Aaron shall have no inheritance nor dominion among the people, for God is the portion of his inheritance." That is a direct objection to priests who rule as princes [Skulski, #47119, §1.3.5]. The same source notes that 1 Maccabees stresses "the international recognition granted to the Hasmonean declaration of independence by citing no fewer than nine royal documents." It concludes that the author "probably supported the Hasmonean court and considered that his book continued the biblical tradition of Chronicles" [Skulski, #47119, §1.3.5].

	Seleucid policy (Antiochus IV)	Maccabean revolt (167-164)	Hasmonean state (142-63)
Religious aim	"all should be one people" (1 Macc 1:44)	restore Torah worship	Torah plus Greek forms of rule
Circumcision	banned, mothers executed (1 Macc 1:60)	forced on uncircumcised Jewish boys (1 Macc 2:46)	forced on Idumaeans and Galileans
Priesthood	sold to Jason, then Menelaus	Hasmonean priests (non-Zadokite)	high priest = king

	Seleucid policy (Antiochus IV)	Maccabean revolt (167-164)	Hasmonean state (142-63)
Foreign policy	Seleucid hegemony, Roman pressure	guerrilla autonomy	Roman Senate alliance, then Pompey (63)

Alexandria: The Septuagint and Philo

The other Jewish answer to Hellenism was to translate and interpret rather than fight. The Septuagint, the Greek Torah begun in third-century BCE Alexandria, gave the large Greek-speaking diaspora its scripture. Kieren Barry, writing on Greek letter-mysticism, notes "a large Jewish community at Alexandria in Egypt" and states: "Traces of Pythagorean influence exist in the oldest Jewish-Hellenistic work, the Septuagint." He extends the argument to later Jewish esotericism. The *Sefer Yezirah* "was written in a Platonic-Pythagorean spirit," and "the ten sefiroth are nothing other than abstract forms of the Pythagorean decad" [Barry, The Greek Qabalah, #64708]. J. Moore points to the textual consequences: "The three major ancient versions of the Bible—the Septuagint, the Masoretic text, and the Vulgate—differ in detail." For example, "Isaiah 7:14 in the Septuagint reads 'The virgin will conceive and bear a son,' whereas in the Masoretic text virgin is replaced by young woman." He adds that Jerome's Vulgate (c. 400 CE) drew on Hebrew texts "no longer available" and on the Septuagint [Moore, From Genesis to Genetics, #27071]. Campbell adds that the Qumran finds show the biblical text was "in a state of flux" until after 70 CE. Then "the synagogue opted for a particular edition ... MT," while "the Christian community likewise chose specific Greek translations ... LXX" [Campbell, #62203, ch.2].

Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 BCE-50 CE) brought the two worlds together most fully [Wikipedia: Philo]. David Fideler places him within a "symbolic commonplace in the Hellenistic period in pagan, Jewish, and early Christian thought": "In this emanationist cosmology, Philo refers to God as the Intelligible or Spiritual Sun, and the Logos, his offspring, as 'the Son of God'." For Philo God is "the 'Sun behind the sun'," and Fideler suggests "similar views were held concerning the solar divinity Mithras" [Fideler, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, #69295, chs.2-3]. That link points back to Part 3 (ch. 25). John D. Greenwood includes Philo in the history of thought as one who "claimed that knowledge is revealed by God and cannot be attained through sense experience or reason," and places him in the Pythagorean-Platonic current that led into Neoplatonism [Greenwood, A

Conceptual History of Psychology, #25954, ch.4]. James W. Thompson shows how close Philo is to Paul. Paul's "first" and "second" man (1 Cor 15:45-50) and his "heavenly person" and "earthly person" "employ identical terminology with that of Philo." Thompson endorses a scholar's verdict on the two: "Both men fished in the same pool" [Thompson, Apostle of Persuasion, #67385].

Two Conceptions of Time: Heisman's Reading

Mitchell Heisman's *Suicide Note* gives a philosophical frame for the clash. In Part II he argues that the Exodus created a "counter-cycle." "While the Jewish yearly calendar is as cyclical as any other, holidays such as Passover celebrate the counter-cycle of the Exodus paradigm." In that paradigm, "a directional conception of history would culminate in the ultimate, messianic triumph of good over evil. Instead of the eternal recurrence of repression … the ultimate pattern of human history would begin from the trough of Egyptian slavery and peak with the coming of the messianic" age [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II, part 88]. He describes the Exodus as turning the Egyptian social pyramid "upside down" [#38252, Part II, part 24]. Elsewhere he describes the Greek gods as "the presumptions of human superiority inherent in the notion of aristocracy taken to superlative, imaginative extremes" [#38252, part 881]. Heisman does not apply this scheme to the Maccabean crisis itself in the passages cited here. Read through it, the gymnasium and the Maccabean revolt would set an aristocratic, cyclical Hellenic order against a Jewish messianic history moving toward an end, and the apocalyptic book of Daniel, written during the persecution, would be that directional view's sharpest expression; this application is the present study's, not Heisman's.

Key points

- Judea passed from Ptolemaic to Seleucid control in 200 BCE; high priests Jason (175) and Menelaus (172) bought office and built a gymnasium in Jerusalem (Campbell, 1 Macc 1:11-15).
- In 167 BCE Antiochus IV raided the Temple and "set about eradicating Judaism," rededicating the Temple to Olympian Zeus; Campbell attributes the move to factional politics and humiliation by Rome.

- 1 Macc 1:44 gives the decree's aim, "that all should be one people." Sitchin describes Antiochus entering the Holy of Holies and building the Akra garrison.
- Circumcision was fought over on both sides: Hellenizers restored foreskins, Mattathias circumcised boys by force (Aldeeb Abu-Sahlieh/Coja edition), and the Hasmoneans later circumcised Idumaeans and Galileans by force.
- Simon won near-independence in 142 BCE in alliance with the Roman Senate. The Hasmoneans merged high priesthood and kingship, ruled in a Hellenistic style, crucified 800 Pharisees under Jannaeus, and invited Pompey in (63 BCE).
- Campbell and *Originea Bibliei* both read 1 Maccabees as pro-Hasmonean propaganda meant to answer internal objections, among them Ben Sira's teaching that Aaron's house should hold no dominion; the dynasty was also not Zadokite.
- In Alexandria the Septuagint (with Pythagorean traces, per Barry) and Philo's Logos and "Intelligible Sun" (Fideler) gave the philosophical vocabulary later shared by Paul (Thompson).
- Heisman contrasts the Exodus "directional," messianic view of history with the eternal recurrence of aristocratic order.

Chapter 33.

The Four Philosophies: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, Zealots and the Qumran Scrolls

In the last two centuries of the Second Temple, Judaism was a field of competing schools. Each had its own view of scripture, fate, purity, the Temple and the end of days, and each took its own position toward the Hasmonean, Herodian and Roman rulers. The historian Josephus, a priest who had served as a rebel commander and later lived as a Roman client, organised this variety into "philosophies" for Greek readers. In 1947 the caves near Khirbet Qumran gave up the library of one of these groups, and their discovery started a scholarly and political argument that has lasted to the present. This chapter sets out Josephus' scheme, each group's doctrines, the scrolls and their identification, the dispute over who controlled their publication, and the modern revivals of the "Essene" name.

Josephus' Scheme: Three Sects and a "Fourth Philosophy"

Josephus introduces the schools in his accounts of the Maccabees and Hasmoneans (Antiquities XIII.171-173), describes them in detail in *Jewish War* II.119-166, and returns to them in *Antiquities* XVIII.11-25. In his short general description they are distinguished by fate: "As for the Pharisees, they say that certain events are the work of Fate, but not all … The sect of the Essenes, however, declares that Fate is mistress of all things … But the Sadducees do away with Fate, holding … that all things lie within our own power" [Josephus, quoted in Campbell, Deciphering the Dead Sea Scrolls, #62203, ch.3]. Campbell comments that despite "the language of Fate, well-suited to his Graeco-Roman

readers, there is no reason to doubt Josephus' basic point: the Essenes believed everything to be foreordained by God, the Sadducees held the opposite view, and the Pharisees took up a midway position" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. In the *War*, the Pharisees "are esteemed most skillful in the exact explication of their laws ... These ascribe all to fate [or providence], and to God, and yet allow, that to act what is right, or the contrary, is principally in the power of men." Of the Essenes Josephus reports that they hold souls to be immortal, "united to their bodies as to prisons," and that when freed "from the bonds of the flesh, they then, as released from a long bondage, rejoice and mount upward". He adds that this view resembles "the opinions of the Greeks" [Josephus, The Complete Works, #65483, War II.8.11-14].

The *War* passage begins with the political event that produced the fourth group: "Archelaus's part of Judea was reduced into a province, and Coponius ... was sent as a procurator ... Under his administration it was that a certain Galilean" (Judas) raised a revolt [Josephus, #65483, War II.8.1]. Campbell explains that the census of 6 CE "outraged one Judas the Galilean and a Pharisee called Zadok." Judas's family remained leaders of "a loose coalition of revolutionary nationalists – including the *sicarii*, men armed with a dagger or *sica*" who "sought freedom from Rome under the jurisdiction of God alone." He warns that "Josephus makes plain his loathing for the Zealots ... blaming them almost entirely for the disaster of the First Revolt" and that, given Josephus' own part in the revolt, "his representation should not be taken at face value" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3].

Pharisees: Oral Torah and Its Modern Critics

Josephus states the central Pharisaic doctrine in a passage that Nehemia Gordon quotes: "the Pharisees have delivered to the people a great many observances by succession from their fathers, which are not written in the laws of Moses; and for that reason it is that the Sadducees reject them, and say that we are to esteem those observances to be obligatory which are in the written word" [Gordon, The Hebrew Yeshua vs. The Greek Jesus, #67593, ch.11, quoting Antiquities XIII.10.6]. Tim Wallace-Murphy and Marilyn Hopkins, writing within their "Rex Deus" thesis, summarise Josephus' praise of the party: "Their principal doctrine was that oral law had been revealed in spiritual teaching to Moses when he received the Ten Commandments. They were liberal in their attempt to interpret this body of oral law and tradition, trying to modify its meaning and observance in order to make it relevant" to daily life [Wallace-Murphy & Hopkins, Custodians of Truth, #70623, ch.5]. Campbell adds that the Pharisees were "predominantly lay

Jews who … sought to organize their lives as though they were priests subject to Temple purity rules," numbering only "about six thousand" in the first century but "highly regarded by ordinary people." The name probably comes "from the Hebrew verb *parash* ('to separate')" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3].

Nehemia Gordon, a Karaite (scripture-only) Jew, writes from the opposite side. He told a friend "that the modern Orthodox Rabbis were the continuation of the ancient Pharisees; it says that right in the Talmud," and that both "adhere to the same five fundamental principles which I call the 'Five Iniquities of the Rabbis' " [Gordon, #67593, ch.3]. Iniquity #1 is "Two Torahs." He cites the Talmud's story of Shammai telling a gentile that there are two, "the Written Torah and the Oral Torah," and a Midrash in which the Oral Torah was given "by word of mouth to preserve it as the exclusive domain of the Rabbis as a sort of secret knowledge" because God foresaw the Greek translation. Iniquity #2 is the "Authority of the Rabbis," whose rulings are "binding, even if it is known to be factually untrue." He illustrates it with the oven of R. Eliezer (Baba Metsia 59b), where the sages reply even to a heavenly voice, "we do not listen to Heaven," and God laughs, "My sons have defeated me!" Iniquity #3 is "Irrational Interpretation," and #5 is the enactment of new laws (*takanot*), such as ritual hand-washing [Gordon, #67593, ch.3]. The *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* notes a related historical link: medieval "Karaite exegetes often employed the term *pashar*," the Qumran *pesher* method of interpretation [Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls, #63530].

Sadducees, Essenes and the Afterlife

Campbell sums up what is known of the Sadducees, all from hostile sources (the New Testament, Josephus, the rabbis). They were "closely connected to Jerusalem's leading aristocratic and priestly families," their name probably comes "from Zadok," and "their favour was courted by all Second Temple leaders of Judaea from the Hasmoneans to the Roman procurators." Josephus says they rejected angels and an afterlife [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. Most other Jews believed in resurrection. The Soviet scholar I. D. Amusin, in the Romanian edition, writes: "The Qumranites' belief in the resurrection of the dead, not only spiritual but also physical, agrees with the similar belief of the Essenes described by Josephus Flavius, and with analogous conceptions in the apocryphal Book of Enoch. Belief in the resurrection of the dead was widespread among all Jews (with the exception of the Sadducees)" [Amusin, Manuscrisele de la Marea Moartă, #15031]. He links the arrival of the messiah in 1 Enoch (chs. 45-47) to "the resurrection of the dead, the universal judgment, the bliss of the righteous

in paradise and the torment of sinners in hell." He also records reports that the Essenes said a morning prayer "addressed to the rising sun" and were famed as healers using herbs and "the power of the word" [Amusin, #15031]. Campbell is more cautious: the scrolls affirm "everlasting life" (1QS 4:6-8), "even though it remains unclear whether the soul's immortality, bodily resurrection, or some combination of both, was envisaged" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3].

	Pharisees	Sadducees	Essenes / Qumran	Fourth philosophy
Scripture	written + oral tradition	written Torah only	Torah + Enoch, Jubilees as authoritative	(Pharisaic views)
Fate / free will	both	free will only	all foreordained	God alone as ruler
Afterlife	resurrection	none	immortal soul / resurrection (debated)	—
Angels	yes	rejected	central (1QS, Sabbath Songs)	—
Social base	lay, popular, ~6,000	priestly aristocracy	priestly (sons of Zadok), communal	Galilean, anti-Roman
Politics	opposed Jannaeus; allied with Salome	courted by every ruler	anti-Hasmonean ("Wicked Priest")	revolt from 6 CE; Masada 73 CE

The Scrolls: Discovery, Purchase and Dating

Vermes begins his account with the find: "1947 a young Arab shepherd climbed into a cave in the Judaean desert and stumbled on the first Dead Sea Scrolls," at the end of the British Mandate [Vermes, The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English, #62421, Introduction]. Eleven caves followed. Yigael Yadin, son of the scholar Sukenik who bought the first scrolls for the Hebrew University, tells how the remaining four were bought from the Syrian Metropolitan Mar Athanasius Samuel, whom "the Jordanian Government had already declared … a smuggler and a traitor." They had been "advertised in the Wall Street Journal," and "on

the 1st of July, exactly one month after the advertisement," the final negotiation began, conducted through intermediaries so that "agents from one or two Arab states" could not block a sale to Israel [Yadin, The Message of the Scrolls, #67253, chs.2-3]. Vermes notes that the fragments were "partly found by the archaeologists, but mostly purchased from the Arabs, who nine times out of ten outwitted their professional rivals." He also reports that "in January 1996, two Israeli archaeologists" (M. Broshi and H. Eshel) "investigated man-made caves close to the settlement which, in their opinion, were used as sleeping quarters by members of the sect" [Vermes, #62421].

Campbell gives the dating evidence. A radiocarbon test in 1950 gave "33 CE – albeit within a 200-year margin of error." AMS tests in 1991 gave, for example, 1QIsaiah^a at 335-327 or 202-107 BCE. Palaeography classifies the hands as "archaic (circa 275–150 BCE), Hasmonean (circa 150–30 BCE), and Herodian (circa 30 BCE–70 CE)." De Vaux's excavations (1951-1956) showed Qumran reoccupied in the late second century BCE, with communal facilities "for up to two hundred people," and overrun by Roman troops in 68 CE [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. Vermes summarises that "the general scholarly view today places the Qumran Scrolls roughly between 200 BCE and 70 CE" [Vermes, #62421].

Teacher of Righteousness, Wicked Priest and the Essene Hypothesis

The sect's own texts name figures who do not appear in Josephus. Yadin cites the Habakkuk Commentary on "the 'Wicked Priest' who was persecuting the 'Master of Justice' (or the 'Teacher of Righteousness'), the leader of the sect." He then admits: "But who was the Teacher of Righteousness …? Here again, scholars are divided according to their theories about the sect and its date" [Yadin, #67253, chs.11, 18]. The classic "Qumran-Essene Hypothesis," as Campbell sets it out, runs as follows. When Jonathan Maccabee "scandalously assumed the High Priesthood in 152 BCE, the Essenes broke away" from the Hasidim. They "dubbed Jonathan Maccabee the 'Wicked Priest' (*kohen ha-rasha'*), a play on 'High Priest' (*kohen ha-rosh*)," of whom 1QpHab 8:8-12 says he "was called by the name of truth when he first arose. But when he ruled over Israel his heart became proud, and he forsook God." In Nahum's commentary, the Pharisees are "Ephraim" and "Seekers of Smooth Things," and the Sadducees are "Manasseh" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. Campbell explains why the Teacher is missing from the classical sources: "Philo and Josephus only had superficial knowledge of the

Essenes," and they wrote for non-Jewish readers, so Josephus likens the Essenes to "the Pythagoreans, just as the Pharisees are likened to the Stoics" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3].

Campbell lists eight parallels between the classical Essenes and the Community Rule (1QS). They include a staged admission with an oath; common property handed to "the Bursar of the Congregation"; a hundred-member court; and a ban on spitting "into the midst of the company or to the right," which is "too specific – not to say odd! – to be coincidental." Pliny the Elder places "the solitary tribe of the Essenes" with "no women … no money … only palm trees for company" above Ein Gedi [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. The marriage question remains open. The Damascus Document (CD 7:6-9) "speaks of those who do take wives and have children," and the cemetery "probably contained a few female skeletons" [Campbell, #62203]. Prentis and Wilson, summarising the scholarship, conclude that the view "that Qumran was run on celibate lines like a medieval monastery … proved untenable after the emergence of the Damascus Document, with its regulations governing husbands and wives, and the discovery of skeletons" of women [Prentis & Wilson, The Essenes: Children of the Light, #81330, "New Light on the Essenes"]. Campbell also reviews and rejects rival identifications. Schiffman's Sadducean thesis fails, in his view, because the scrolls affirm "angels and resurrection." Golb's fortress, Donceel-Voûte's villa (a dining couch "50 centimetres wide" would have been "unique in the ancient world") and a trading-post theory he also finds unconvincing [Campbell, #62203, ch.7]. The *Encyclopedia* adds that Jubilees is attested in more copies than any book except Psalms, Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Exodus, a sign of its authority at Qumran [Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls, #63530].

The Politics of the Scrolls: Baigent and Leigh against the Consensus

In 1991 the journalists Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh argued that the consensus itself was the product of control. Campbell states their case. The reader "is informed of the delay in publishing Cave 4 material and the restrictions on access before 1991," and of the fact that most of the team "were or became Roman Catholic and had an association with the Ecole Biblique … which operated under the auspices of the Vatican." From this they "founded their main accusation: the Vatican directed de Vaux's editorial team and was at pains to control

the interpretation of the Qumran DSS to protect traditional Christianity," using the Essene hypothesis to "separate the contents of Caves 1–11 … from early Christianity" [Campbell, #62203, ch.7, "The Qumran Dead Sea Scrolls and the Vatican"]. In their own book they argue that "even when … Yigael Yadin, in his excavations at Masada, found scrolls identical to some of those discovered at Qumran, the international team refused" to draw the conclusion. They say a Qumran calendar text found at Masada shows "the defenders of the fortress used the same calendar as the Qumran community." The Masada garrison are "generally acknowledged to have been Zealots – not a religious sect, according to conventional interpretations, but adherents of a political and military movement," yet "the doctrine of the garrison's defenders would appear to have been that of the Essenes" [Baigent & Leigh, The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception, #71853, chs.8, 16]. They dismiss Vermes' derivation of "Essene" from the Aramaic "*as-sayya*, which means 'healers'," which "has fostered an image … of the Essenes as medical practitioners, a Judaic equivalent of the Alexandrian ascetics known as the 'Therapeutae' " [Baigent & Leigh, #71853, ch.11]. Their identification of the Teacher with James the Just and the Liar with Paul comes from Robert Eisenman [Campbell, #62203, ch.7].

The opposing case is made by Campbell, and indirectly by Vermes. Campbell accepts that the authors "draw on several factors which are true" but calls the cover-up thesis "unsustainable," for three reasons. First, key parts of the consensus came from outsiders. "Geza Vermes … was the first to argue seriously that the Wicked Priest … was Jonathan Maccabee," and he was "at the same time, a vociferous critic of the editorial team's scandalous publication record." Second, the Ecole Biblique's *Revue Biblique* "remains at the cutting edge." Third, Catholics such as José O'Callaghan and Joseph Fitzmyer dissented from the team [Campbell, #62203, ch.7]. Vermes himself describes how de Vaux "improvised, in 1953 and 1954, a team of seven on the whole young and untried scholars" for Cave 4, and how farming out texts to doctoral students "further delayed progress" [Vermes, #62421, Introduction]. He maintains that "none of the competing theories associating the Qumran group with Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, or Jewish-Christians can withstand critical scrutiny" [Vermes, #62421]. Campbell gives his own explanation of the Masada copy: Qumran refugees may have fled there in 68 CE "taking a handful of documents with them" [Campbell, #62203, ch.3]. The two sides therefore agree that publication was delayed and access restricted. They disagree on whether the cause was ordinary academic failure or a deliberate shaping of interpretation.

The Modern Essene Revival

The Essene name later took on a life outside scholarship. Edmond Bordeaux Szekely's *Essene Gospel of Peace* circulates in health literature. Steve Meyerowitz, in a work on wheatgrass, reprints Szekely's account of its discovery and a passage from Book IV in which Jesus speaks "about the angel of air, water and sun to his Brothers of the Elect," and praises the translation's "purity and simplicity" [Meyerowitz, Wheatgrass, Nature's Finest Medicine, #65359]. Joanna Prentis and Stuart Wilson also draw on Szekely, citing "an alternative form on page 12 of *The Essene Gospel of Peace*, Book Four" [Prentis & Wilson, #81330]. Most of their book is based on past-life regression. Prentis writes that she "put him [Wilson] into an altered state of consciousness" and recorded an account of "how (and why) the Damascus Document ... was written" [Prentis & Wilson, #81330]. Neither source questions Szekely's provenance. In this literature the Essenes are healers, vegetarians and solar worshippers, a picture that partly matches Amusin's notes on healing and the morning prayer to the sun [Amusin, #15031].

Key points

- Josephus classifies the sects by fate and free will: Essenes (all foreordained), Pharisees (both), Sadducees (free will only). The "fourth philosophy" of Judas the Galilean arose from the Roman census of 6 CE.
- The Pharisees held an oral law "not written in the laws of Moses" and revealed at Sinai (Josephus; Wallace-Murphy & Hopkins). Gordon sees modern Orthodox rabbis as their direct continuation and lists "Five Iniquities."
- The Sadducees, the priestly aristocracy, rejected resurrection and angels; Amusin finds physical resurrection at Qumran, matching Josephus' Essenes and 1 Enoch.
- The scrolls (from 1947; c. 200 BCE-70 CE) were bought partly through a Wall Street Journal advertisement (Yadin); caves near the site were identified as living quarters in 1996 (Broshi and Eshel, per Vermes).
- The Qumran-Essene hypothesis identifies the "Wicked Priest" with Jonathan Maccabee (152 BCE). Yadin admits that scholars are "divided according to their theories" about the Teacher.
- The Damascus Document's marriage rules and the female skeletons undermine the "celibate monastery" model (Campbell; Prentis & Wilson).

- Baigent and Leigh accuse a Vatican-linked team of delaying publication and separating the scrolls from Christianity and from the Zealots of Masada. Campbell, citing Vermes and Catholic dissenters, rejects the conspiracy but concedes the "scandalous publication record."
- Szekely's *Essene Gospel of Peace* and regression literature (Prentis & Wilson) carry the Essene name into modern alternative spirituality.

Chapter 34.

Under Rome: Herod, the Great Revolt, the Fall of the Temple and Bar Kokhba

Between Pompey's entry into Jerusalem in 63 BCE and the crushing of Simon bar Kokhba in 135 CE, Judaea moved from Hasmonean independence to client kingship, then to direct Roman rule, two catastrophic wars, and finally to the loss of its name and its capital. The period shaped both rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity, and most of what is known about its central war comes from one man, Flavius Josephus, a rebel commander who went over to the Romans and wrote under Flavian patronage. This chapter follows the political story, sets out what the library's sources say about Josephus as a witness, and then presents the revisionist and theological readings of the year 70 that the library holds, each attributed to its author.

From Pompey to Herod: the client kingdom and its fortresses

The reference shelf summarises the starting point: "In 63 BCE, the kingdom of Judaea was conquered by the Roman Republic, ending Jewish independence under the Hasmonean dynasty." Pompey intervened in the succession war between the brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus and, after taking Jerusalem, entered the Holy of Holies, "an act of desecration as only the High Priest was permitted to enter"; the monarchy was abolished and Hyrcanus left as High Priest only [Wikipedia: First Jewish–Roman War, "Judaea under the Romans"].

Out of this settlement rose the Idumaean house of Antipater and his son Herod. The *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* uses the history of Masada to show how contested Herod's rise was: "In the year 42 BCE Jewish rebels who were

opposed to the house of Antipater gained control of Masada. They held the fort until they were forced to surrender to Herod (*The Jewish War* 1.236-238; *Jewish Antiquities* 14.296)." In 40 BCE, fleeing the Parthians and the Hasmonean claimant Antigonus, Herod left eight hundred of his family and close friends at Masada (*War* 1.246-267) [Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls, #63530, "Masada: History"].

As king, Herod fortified the desert strongholds. The same encyclopedia records that he "fortified the top of Masada with a casemate wall (a double wall divided into rooms that could serve as barracks or as an arsenal for storing weapons; many of the casemate rooms were used as dwellings by the Sicarii)" [Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls, #63530, "Masada: Archaeology"]. Herodium and Machaerus belonged to the same system. His greatest work was the sanctuary: "in the fifteenth year of his reign, Herod rebuilt the temple, and encompassed a piece of land about it with a wall, which land was twice as large as that before enclosed" [Josephus, The Complete Works, #65483, War I, ch.21].

Procurators, Zealots and the outbreak of 66 CE

After Herod's death (4 BCE) his kingdom was divided; Josephus records that when the ethnarchy of Archelaus "was fallen into a Roman province," Herod's other sons Philip and Antipas governed their tetrarchies [Josephus, The Complete Works, #65483, War II, ch.9]. Davis dates the first organised resistance to the census: "The first mention of a popular leader resisting Roman rule is that of Judas of Galilee in A.D. 6/7. He preached resistance to the census ordered by the Romans ... He was killed in this revolt, and his death gave rise to the Zealots," who were "politically active in opposing Roman rule and were fundamentalist in their interpretation" of the Law [Davis, An Encyclopedia of Great Sieges, #4471, "Masada"].

The *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* describes the breaking point: "During the procuratorship of Gessius Florus (64-66 CE), matters became so tense and anarchy so widespread that open rebellion broke out. Jewish rebels seized several fortresses, including first of all Masada ... and sacrifices for the emperor were canceled in the Jerusalem Temple (*The Jewish War* 2.408-410). Battles between Jewish factions broke out in Jerusalem" [Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls, #63530, "Masada: History"]. The reference shelf adds the trigger (a Greek sacrificing a bird at the entrance of a Caesarea synagogue) and Florus' looting of the

Temple treasury, and records that Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, "invaded Judaea but was defeated at Bethoron," after which a provisional government under Ananus ben Ananus was formed [Wikipedia: First Jewish–Roman War]. Davis argues that this victory misled the rebels: rebel confidence "grew stronger when an ambush of Roman legions in the Beth Horon Pass northwest of Jerusalem gave the Jews an overly optimistic view of their chances against Rome's might" [Davis, An Encyclopedia of Great Sieges, #4471, "Jerusalem, 70"]. Josephus states that Nero, "upon Cestius's defeat, was in fear of the entire event of the war," and therefore sent Vespasian [Josephus, The Complete Works, #65483, War, Preface].

Vespasian took Galilee in 67 (Yodfat, Tarichaea and Gamla). Refugees poured into Jerusalem, the moderate government was overthrown, and the city fell into "a three-way factional war between Eleazar ben Simon, John of Gischala and Simon bar Giora" [Wikipedia: First Jewish–Roman War]. Davis regards the disunity as decisive: "The only thing that may have prevailed against the Roman army was a strongly unified Jewish leadership, but such did not exist. Only in the direst straits did any of the factions cooperate." He separates the Sicarii, "an offshoot of the Zealots," who were not present in Jerusalem during the siege [Davis, An Encyclopedia of Great Sieges, #4471, "Jerusalem, 70"].

The siege of 70 and the problem of Josephus

Nero's death and Vespasian's proclamation as emperor left the siege to his son. Davis: "Titus laid siege to Jerusalem in the spring of 70, with four legions and auxiliary troops on hand. He weakened the city's defense by allowing pilgrims to enter to celebrate Passover, then bottling them up inside to strain the food supply," with three legions on the west and the fourth "on the Mount of Olives." He describes Josephus' "fruitless appeals for negotiations" from the Roman lines, the four siege towers raised near the Fortress Antonia, two destroyed by undermining and two burned by a sally [Davis, An Encyclopedia of Great Sieges, #4471, "Jerusalem, 70"]. Davis gives the dates as March to 8 September 70 and the Roman force as 70,000 men.

On the casualties Davis writes: "The numbers of people killed during the siege are incredible: Josephus claimed 1.1 million, while the Roman historian Suetonius numbered casualties at 600,000. True, Jerusalem was a major city and was packed with pilgrims … but many historians think the number reflects the casualties inflicted on all Jews in the entire campaign" and not just at Jerusalem [Davis, An Encyclopedia of Great Sieges, #4471, "Jerusalem, 70: Results"]. The reference

shelf repeats Josephus' figures (1.1 million in Jerusalem, 100,000 in Galilee), reports a modern estimate that perhaps a quarter of Judaea's population died, and notes that "Josephus's figure of 97,000 enslaved individuals is accepted by multiple scholars" [Wikipedia: First Jewish–Roman War].

The burning of the sanctuary is the most disputed point. Josephus insists that Titus wished to spare it and calls him as witness against the rebel "tyrants": the internal sedition "occasioned the burning of our holy temple," and "Titus Caesar, who destroyed it, is himself a witness, who, during the entire war, pitied the people who were kept under by the seditious" [Josephus, The Complete Works, #65483, War, Preface §4]. Josephus wrote this as a captured commander adopted into the Flavian household, in a history addressed to the victors; Davis treats his casualty figures and his Masada narrative with explicit caution (see below), and the same position bears on his account of who set the sanctuary alight.

Masada, 73/74 CE

After Jerusalem fell, "three fortresses remained in the hands of the rebels: Herodium, Machaerus, and Masada (*The Jewish War* 4.55). It is difficult to determine the number of people who escaped to Masada following the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE. Meshorer theorized that until 73 CE people were still arriving at Masada, since coins that were minted in Ashkelon during" the following years were found there [Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls, #63530, "Masada: History"]. Davis' entry lists the defenders as "Sicarii: 960 men, women, and children. Commander: Eleazar ben Yair." He follows Josephus through the ramp, the battering, the timber-and-earth wall the Sicarii built behind the breach and the Roman fire set against it, then warns: "None of this seems to be in dispute, but Josephus' account of the next several hours certainly is." In Josephus' account, Eleazar gave two speeches during the night persuading the garrison to kill themselves rather than be enslaved [Davis, An Encyclopedia of Great Sieges, #4471, "Masada"].

Who the defenders were is itself disputed. Davis and the *Encyclopedia* call them Sicarii. Baigent and Leigh write: "The defenders of Masada are generally acknowledged to have been Zealots — not a religious sect, according to conventional interpretations, but adherents of a political and military movement. As it has been preserved for posterity, however, the doctrine of the garrison's defenders would appear to have been that of the Essenes." They point to Yadin's discovery at Masada of scrolls "identical to some of those discovered at Qumran,"

and argue, following Cecil Roth and G. R. Driver, that the Qumran sectarians were militant nationalists rather than pacifist mystics [Baigent and Leigh, The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception, #71853, ch.4 and ch.16].

Bar Kokhba, Aelia Capitolina and Syria Palaestina

The reference shelf describes the Bar Kokhba Revolt (dated there 132–136 CE) as "the last and most devastating of three major Jewish rebellions against the Roman Empire." Around 130 Hadrian planned to rebuild Jerusalem as Aelia Capitolina, "a Roman colony dedicated to Jupiter, extinguishing hopes for the restoration of the Temple," possibly together with a ban on circumcision. Simon bar Kokhba was declared *nasi* (prince) of Israel and struck his own coins. Sextus Julius Severus devastated the country after 133; "In 135, the stronghold of Betar fell, and Simon bar Kokhba was killed." Its infobox gives 580,000 killed (Cassius Dio's figure). The lasting result was "the renaming of the province from Judaea to Syria Palaestina, an act intended to sever the region's historical association with the Jewish people, and the exclusion of Jews from Jerusalem." The same article adds that "Rabbinic Judaism adopted a non-revolutionary stance, and Jewish messianism became more abstract" [Wikipedia: Bar Kokhba Revolt; Wikipedia: Syria Palaestina; Wikipedia: Aelia Capitolina].

Revisionist and theological readings of 70 CE

Atwill: the Flavians invented Christianity. Joseph Atwill argues that the Gospels and Josephus' *War* were composed together as Flavian propaganda: the authors "created Jesus' entire ministry as a 'type' of the military campaign of Titus. In other words, events from Jesus' ministry parallel events from Titus' campaign." He presents sequences of "typologically related events that occur in the same sequence" as "the proof they left us that the ministry of Jesus was the 'type' for the campaign of Titus." Among them are parallel Mount of Olives assaults, which in his reading "separate the identities of the two 'kings,' Jesus and Titus," and the "naked young man" of Mark as "a prototype of Titus" escaping his pursuers [Atwill, Caesar's Messiah, #63252, ch.3]. The thesis is reported here as Atwill's own.

Martin: the Temple was not on the Temple Mount. Ernest L. Martin argues that "The Holy Scriptures clearly place the 'Temple Mount' over and around the

Gihon Spring on the southeast ridge (on top of the original 'Mount Ophel')," and that "The Haram is the site of Fort Antonia, NOT the Temple!" On his view Titus left standing the Roman fortress, whose Herodian courses "continue to this day as a witness to the greatness of Rome. And, that central monument is now called the Haram esh-Sharif!" He attributes the later identification to the Caliph Omar's visionary acceptance of the site [Martin, The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot, #84703, ch.2, ch.8, ch.9].

White: judgment and prophecy. The Adventist writer Ellen G. White (Romanian edition) reads the destruction as fulfilled prophecy: "Toate prezicerile făcute de Hristos cu privire la distrugerea Ierusalimului s-au împlinit la literă" ("All the predictions made by Christ concerning the destruction of Jerusalem were fulfilled to the letter"). Jesus foretold "judecăţile care aveau să cadă peste Israelul apostat" (the judgments that would fall on apostate Israel) for rejecting the Messiah. She treats the atrocities as "o demonstrare a puterii răzbunătoare a Satanei" (a demonstration of Satan's avenging power) over those who submit to him, and as a type of the last generation [White, Distrugerea Ierusalimului, #13012].

Date numerology. The anonymous New Age compilation *allreligionsareone* places both destructions on one date: "587 Nebuchadnezzar II destroys and plunders the temple of Solomon, with help from the red haired giants … on 9/11," and "70 Titus destroys Herod's temple in Jerusalem on 9/11, builds a temple for Jupiter on the same spot" [allreligionsareone, #53197, timeline entries 587 and 70]. These are that text's claims. Jewish tradition places both destructions on the 9th of Av [Wikipedia: Tisha B'Av].

Reading	Source	Core claim about 70 CE
Eyewitness-apologetic	Josephus #65483	Sedition of the "tyrants" caused the fire; Titus pitied the people
Military-historical	Davis #4471	Disunity doomed the revolt; Josephus' casualty figures and Masada account disputed
Fringe-revisionist	Atwill #63252	Gospels are Flavian satire typologically mirroring Titus' campaign
Topographical	Martin #84703	Temple stood over the Gihon; the Haram is Fort Antonia

Reading	Source	Core claim about 70 CE
Providential	White #13012	Divine judgment fulfilling Christ's prophecy
Numerological	allreligionsareone #53197	Both destructions fell on "9/11"

Yohanan ben Zakkai and the rabbinic choice

The decisive answer to 70 CE came from inside Judaism. Karen Armstrong: "It is said that after the conquest of Jerusalem, Rabbi Yohannan had been smuggled out of the burning city in a coffin. He had been opposed to the Jewish revolt and thought that the Jews would be better off without a state. The Romans allowed him to found a self-governing Pharisaic community at Jabneh, to the west of Jerusalem. Similar communities were founded in Palestine and Babylonia" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999]. She quotes the tradition in which Rabbi Joshua, seeing the ruins, cried: " 'Woe unto us! ... that this, the place where the iniquities of Israel were atoned for, is laid waste!' 'My son,' Rabbi Yohannan said, 'be not grieved' " [ibid.]. In that tradition the consolation is that deeds of loving-kindness now take the place of sacrifice. Here the political lesson of the period becomes explicit. Messianic nationalism against imperial power (Zealots, Sicarii, Bar Kokhba) ended twice in catastrophe. The rabbis chose to accept statelessness and to replace the Temple with Torah. That debate returns with Zionism (Chapter 4.10), and the institutions built at Yavneh are the subject of the next chapter.

Key points

- Pompey's conquest (63 BCE) ended Hasmonean independence; Herod, opposed by rebels who seized Masada in 42 BCE, became Rome's client king and rebuilt the Temple and the desert fortresses [#63530, #65483].
- The revolt of 66 began under Gessius Florus; Cestius Gallus' defeat at Beth Horon encouraged the rebels, and Jerusalem then split into rival factions [#63530, #4471, Wikipedia].
- Davis reports Josephus' 1.1 million dead against Suetonius' 600,000, notes that many historians read these as campaign-wide totals, and records that Josephus' account of Masada's last hours is disputed [#4471].

- Masada's defenders were Sicarii under Eleazar ben Yair per Davis; Baigent and Leigh call them Zealots with Essene doctrine; Meshorer's coins suggest refugees arrived until 73 [#4471, #71853, #63530].
- Bar Kokhba's defeat (135) brought Aelia Capitolina, the renaming of the province to Syria Palaestina, and a non-revolutionary rabbinic stance [Wikipedia].
- The library holds sharply divergent readings of 70 CE: Atwill's Flavian-invention thesis, Martin's Gihon-spring Temple, White's providential judgment, and a "9/11" numerology [#63252, #84703, #13012, #53197].
- Yohanan ben Zakkai, opposed to the revolt, left Jerusalem in a coffin and founded the Yavneh academy with Roman permission, choosing statelessness over messianic war [#68999].

Chapter 35.

The Oral Law Written: Yavneh, the Mishnah and the Two Talmuds

The destruction of the Temple removed the institution around which Judaism had been organised: the priesthood, the sacrifices and the pilgrim feasts. What replaced it was a religion of study, built by Pharisaic sages who had learned their traditions by heart and who, over five centuries, wrote them down as the Mishnah and the two Talmuds. This chapter follows that process from Yavneh to Babylon and to the Islamic era, when Talmudic authority became the norm across the diaspora. Because the Talmud has also been the object of sustained hostile polemic, the chapter then sets the Jewish and scholarly presentations in the library beside the hostile readings it holds, and states in each case who makes which claim.

Yavneh and the parting of the ways

Karen Armstrong describes the first generation after 70 as a slow conversion of a minority method into a national religion: "during the Second Temple period, midrash had been a minority pursuit. It would take the rabbis about twenty years to make any serious impact on the wider Jewish community. It was not easy to make textual study attractive to the masses. How could it possibly compete with the dramatic temple rituals?" The rabbis "had retained the ancient reverence for oral communication and in the early days at Yavneh did not commit their traditions to writing but learned them by heart. Graduates of the academy were called *tannaim*, 'repeaters,' because they recited the Torah aloud and developed their midrash together" [Armstrong, The Case for God, #66157]. She compares midrash to the Socratic dialogue as "a joint enterprise," and notes that Christian

pesher exegesis, like that of the Qumran sectarians, used a method "not unlike Greek 'bricolage' or rabbinical midrash" [ibid.].

The same period separated the two communities. Armstrong writes that "Once Christians made it clear that they were no longer members of the synagogue, they were regarded by the Romans as impious fanatics who had committed the cardinal sin of breaking" with ancestral tradition [Armstrong, The Case for God, #66157]. Douglas Reed, from a hostile standpoint, places the same break at Jamnia: "The period of government from Jamnia lasted for about a century, and then it was transferred to Usha in Galilee, where the Sanhedrin was reestablished. 'Judaism set limitations about itself and grew ever more exclusive'; at this time the special curse on Jewish Christians was pronounced" [Reed, The Controversy of Zion, #64653, ch.14].

Mishnah, Gemara, Talmud

Isidor Epstein, whose *Judaism* (1959) the library holds in Romanian translation, gives the standard structure. The secular intellectual work of the schools "a sfârşit prin a se cristaliza în Ghemara (lit. 'desăvârşire')" (ended by crystallising into the Gemara, literally "completion"). "Ansamblul Mişna + Ghemara constituie Talmudul" (Mishnah plus Gemara constitute the Talmud), from a Hebrew root meaning "to study," and it exists in two versions, the Palestinian (usually called the Jerusalem Talmud) and the Babylonian. "Talmudul este deci, în mod iniţial, Mişna lui Rabi Iuda urmată de un comentariu. În această calitate el este esenţialmente halahic" (The Talmud is therefore originally the Mishnah of Rabbi Judah followed by a commentary, and as such it is essentially halakhic) [Epstein, Iudaismul - origini şi istorie, #15429, "Mişna şi Ghemara"].

Epstein ties the Palestinian Talmud to imperial politics: "Sub forma sa actuală, Talmudul de la Ierusalim (din Palestina) este un produs al mediului secolului al IV-lea. La acea epocă, ca urmare a convertirii lui Constantin (306-337), creştinismul a devenit deja religia oficială a imperiului, iar Ierusalimul o capitală creştină. De acum, Iudaismul era o erezie atât religioasă, cât şi politică" (In its present form the Jerusalem Talmud is a product of fourth-century conditions; after the conversion of Constantine, Christianity had become the official religion of the empire and Jerusalem a Christian capital; Judaism was henceforth a heresy both religious and political), and "a militant Church" made Jewish life in Palestine impossible [ibid.]. Armstrong dates the two compilations a little later, the Jerusalem Talmud "compiled during the fifth century, and the more

authoritative Babylonian Talmud (known as the Bavli) a century later," and she stresses that they "were commentaries on the Mishnah" and open-ended: "The Bavli has thus been described as the first interactive text" [Armstrong, The Case for God, #66157]. Jonathan Campbell gives the round dates used in Qumran scholarship: "the rabbis who compiled the Mishnah (circa 200 CE) and the Babylonian Talmud (circa 550 CE) were at pains to establish themselves as the heirs of the Pharisees," and "Both writings place obedience to the Torah at the heart of Judaism" [Campbell, Deciphering the Dead Sea Scrolls, #62203, ch.5].

Why Babylon: Sura, Nehardea, Pumbedita

Epstein explains the shift eastward. Rabbi Judah died in 217; "with his death, as an ancient source says, 'glory departed from Israel.' " Persecution, heavy taxation, bad harvests and epidemics closed Palestinian schools, and leadership passed to Babylonia [Epstein, Iudaismul, #15429]. There, "în anul 219, Aba Arika (175-247), care fusese discipolul lui Iuda, ... a întemeiat faimoasa şcoală de la Sura, unde a şi predat Mişna maestrului său" (in 219 Abba Arikha [Rav], a disciple of Judah, founded the famous school at Sura and taught his master's Mishnah there). "Aproape concomitent s-a înfiinţat o şcoală rivală la Nehardea, de către Samuel (180-250)," an authority in civil law and author of the maxim *dina de-malkhuta dina*, "the law of the State is law," which strongly influenced Jewish civil law. After Nehardea was sacked, its school moved to neighbouring Pumbedita [ibid.]. Campbell's summary: "Babylon, it should be noted, took over as the centre of Jewish learning from the fourth century CE, explaining why the Babylonian Talmud (circa 550 CE), rather than the Palestinian (circa 450 CE), gained the upper hand." In the same note he cites tractate Gittin 59b as one of the rabbinic sources for a story he narrates [Campbell, Deciphering the Dead Sea Scrolls, #62203, ch.5 n.54]. Epstein describes the Bavli as "written in eastern Aramaic," setting out "the discussions held in the schools of Babylon concerning the Mishnah of Rabbi Judah" [Epstein, Iudaismul, #15429].

Consolidation under Islam and the rabbinic ethic

Epstein's chapter 17, "Consolidarea iudaismului talmudic," dates the Talmud's dominance to the Arab conquests: "Influenţa considerabilă a Talmudului, mai ales a celui din Babilon, exercitată asupra evreimii din diaspora, datează aproximativ de la sfârşitul secolului VII. Este epoca în care oştirile islamului au pornit

victorioase la cucerirea lumii" (The considerable influence of the Talmud, especially the Babylonian, over diaspora Jewry dates from about the end of the seventh century, the time when the armies of Islam set out to conquer the world), sweeping over Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Babylon and Persia [Epstein, Iudaismul, #15429, ch.17]. He adds that the first encounter of Jews and Islam "was not unhappy," since Muhammad at first sought Jewish support and adopted strict monotheism, ritual prayer, fasting and charity [ibid.]. One empire now united the Babylonian academies and the diaspora, and that political fact allowed the Bavli to become the law of the Jewish world.

Epstein presents the content of that law as an ethic. Rabbinic morality extends justice "to the whole of creation, inanimate as well as animate": the biblical ban on destroying fruit trees (Deut. 20:19) "a fost extinsă de Talmud la tot felul de lucruri utile, sub comandamentul general numit *bal taşhit* (să nu distrugi)" (was extended by the Talmud to all kinds of useful things under the general commandment called *bal tashhit*, "do not destroy"). Respect for the person forbids deceiving by lies "oricine ar fi victima" (whoever the victim may be), citing Lev. 19:11. Above the fear of God stands the love of God, "stârnită de contemplarea glorioaselor Sale perfecţiuni"; fear is recommended "as an obstacle to evil," love "glorified as the strongest stimulus to virtue," and love of God leads to "the sanctification of His Name" (*Kiddush ha-Shem*) [Epstein, Iudaismul, #15429, chapters on rabbinic ethics]. Armstrong adds that "there was no official orthodoxy in Judaism but that ideas about God were essentially private matters," and that "To this day, theological ideas about God are private matters in Judaism and are not enforced by the establishment"; the rabbis taught that at Sinai each Israelite experienced God "according to the comprehension of each" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999].

The hostile readings

The library also holds works that read the Talmud as a political-criminal code. They are reported here as their authors present them.

Douglas Reed (1956). Chapter 15, "The Talmud and the Ghettoes," opens: "Whatever else is in dispute, one thing is incontestable: that great force must repose in a Law which for nineteen centuries obtains obedience from people scattered over the earth, when by an effort of will they could escape its thrall. The Talmud was (and is) such a law, and the only one of its kind." For Reed the Talmud continues the Babylonian-era priestly redaction: "The compilation of the Talmud

began at Jamnia, the part played in Babylon by Ezekiel and Ezra being played in this new revision of the Law, by the rabbi known as Judah the Holy," and "The attack on Christianity gave the Talmud its distinctive tone and is indeed the only new thing in the Talmud. Its other teaching remains that of Ezekiel and the Pharisees." The Pharisees at Jamnia, he writes, "invoked once more their claim to possess the oral secrets of God" and reinterpreted the commandments "so that these could be shown to apply to Christianity" [Reed, The Controversy of Zion, #64653, ch.12, ch.14, ch.15].

Nicolae C. Paulescu (Romanian, 1913). The physiologist Paulescu, credited in Romania with the discovery of "pancreine" (insulin) in 1921, is introduced by the edition's anonymous editor in a preface that defends his nationalist politics and frames the Nobel award to Banting and Macleod as an injustice [Paulescu, Spitalul, Coranul, Talmudul, Kahalul şi Franc-Masoneria, #18519, "În loc de introducere"]. Paulescu says he read Moïse Schwab's French translation of the Jerusalem Talmud and found in it only "interminable discussions, most often childish and ridiculous." He insists that "the Talmud the Jews use is the Talmud of Babylon," which "was received by all Israel" [ibid., #47481]. His charges, many sourced through August Rohling, are that the Talmud teaches dominion over other peoples ("As men rule over animals, so the Jews must rule over the other nations"), that Israel must receive the wealth of all peoples without labour, and the Purim and Passover ritual-murder accusation, which he states as fact [ibid., #47481; #18519]. His conclusion: the Talmud, "the politico-religious legislation of the Jews," instead of fighting the passions of property and domination as the Gospel does, "pushes these vices to an unheard-of peak." He then links it to Freemasonry: the Jews, unable to reach their aim alone, "resorted to Freemasonry, created by them precisely for this purpose," which made the French "work at rebuilding the Temple of Solomon" in the Constituent Assembly (emancipation, 1791). This argument leads into the Freemasonry parts of this study [ibid., #18519, Concluzie].

The anonymous *Talmudul — Învăţăturile criminale ale religiei Jidanilor*. The library catalogues this Romanian pamphlet with a 1930 date. The scan has no extractable text, so its contents cannot be quoted here. Its title ("The Talmud: the criminal teachings of the religion of the Yids") places it in the interwar Romanian anti-Talmudic pamphlet literature to which Paulescu's book also belongs [Anonymous, Talmudul, #369744, catalogue record].

Shahak, second-hand. Israel Shahak's *Jewish History, Jewish Religion* (1994) reaches the library only through quotation. Henry Makow writes that Shahak "confirmed my suspicion that Judaism is not a religion," and reports Shahak's

view that "Classical Judaism (1000-1880 AD)" mediated "the oppression of the peasants on behalf of the nobility and the Crown," and that the Jewish people "need to overcome the 'tyranny' of their religion" [Makow, Illuminati, #64886, "The Real Cause of Anti-Semitism"]. Edward Hendrie quotes Shahak on the halakhic distinction: "According to the Halakhah, the duty to save the life of a fellow Jew is paramount," whereas the obligation toward a Gentile is framed by the danger that "the refusal of a Jew — particularly a Jewish doctor — to save the life of a Gentile may, if it becomes known, antagonize powerful Gentiles and so put Jews in danger" [Hendrie, Solving the Mystery of Babylon the Great, #50134, ch.7]. The quotations are Shahak's as Makow and Hendrie report them.

Internal critics and a philosopher's reading

Criticism of rabbinic authority also comes from inside Judaism. The Karaite Nehemia Gordon defines the "Oral Law" as the "body of information which the Pharisees claim was revealed to Moses orally on Mt. Sinai," written down "in the form of the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash." He calls "Mosaic Authority" the "Pharisaic doctrine claiming the Rabbis have the exclusive authority to interpret Scripture." He argues that Yeshua "was speaking out against the man-made laws of the Rabbis to bring people back to the Torah which is the primary message of Karaite Judaism" [Gordon, The Hebrew Yeshua vs. The Greek Jesus, #67593, ch.4, glossary].

Mitchell Heisman reads the same system functionally: "Judaism is a form of technology in an essential sense," and "Since Judaism is a technology, a behavioral self-corrective, Judaism can be described as a form of Jewish self-criticism." In "Jewish thinking," he notes, "the Yetzer ha-tov [is] the good inclination and the Yetzer ha-ra … the evil inclination," which he compares with Freud's id; "Jews exist because they embody this paradox of a genetic inclination to correct genetic inclination with 'nurture', i.e. the laws of Moses." He finds the closest analogue in China: "Of the major religions, Confucianism might be the closest analog to early Judaism," since both emphasise ancestral wisdom, and Confucius' golden rule (Analects 15:23) "is virtually identical to Hillel's" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II, part 80].

Author	Stance	The Talmud is…
Epstein #15429	Jewish scholar	Mishnah + Gemara; halakhic commentary; an ethic of justice, *bal tashhit*, love of God
Armstrong #66157, #68999	Historian of religion	An open, "interactive" commentary; no official orthodoxy about God
Campbell #62203	Qumran scholar	Rabbinic heirs of the Pharisees; Bavli prevails as Babylon leads
Gordon #67593	Karaite	Man-made Pharisaic law claiming Mosaic authority
Heisman #38252	Philosopher	A behavioural technology of self-correction
Reed #64653	Polemicist	A Law of nineteen centuries continuing Ezekiel, aimed at Christianity
Paulescu #18519/#47481	Nationalist polemicist	A code of domination linked to Freemasonry
Makow #64886 / Hendrie #50134 (citing Shahak)	Polemicists (second-hand Shahak)	A tribal law distinguishing Jew and non-Jew

Key points

- After 70 the sages at Yavneh built Judaism around oral study; Armstrong notes that the rabbis needed about twenty years to win the wider community and that the Christians' break with the synagogue cost them Roman tolerance [#66157].
- Mishnah (Judah ha-Nasi, c. 200) plus Gemara ("completion") form the Talmud; Epstein sets the Jerusalem Talmud in the fourth century, after Constantine made Christianity the imperial religion [#15429].
- Rav founded Sura in 219 and Samuel founded Nehardea (later Pumbedita); Babylon led from the fourth century, so the Bavli (c. 550) prevailed [#15429, #62203].
- Epstein dates the Talmud's dominance over the diaspora to the late seventh century, under the Islamic conquests [#15429, ch.17].

- Epstein presents the rabbinic ethic as *bal tashhit*, honesty toward every person, fear and love of God and *Kiddush ha-Shem*; Armstrong finds no official orthodoxy about God [#15429, #68999].
- Reed, Paulescu (who links the Talmud to Freemasonry and repeats the ritual-murder charge) and the 1930 anonymous pamphlet read the Talmud as a hostile code; Shahak's halakhic arguments reach the library only through Makow and Hendrie [#64653, #18519, #369744, #64886, #50134].
- Gordon criticises rabbinic authority from a Karaite position inside Judaism; Heisman calls Judaism a "behavioral self-corrective" technology and compares it with Confucianism [#67593, #38252].

Chapter 36.

Mystics, Messiahs and Moderns: Kabbalah, Sabbateanism, Hasidism, Reform and Orthodoxy

Between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries, rabbinic Judaism, the Talmudic order described in the previous chapter, broke into the forms it has today. Kabbalah, a mystical system, produced a messianic explosion in 1666 that ended in apostasy. Out of the wreckage came a popular revival, Hasidism, and the rabbinic establishment that opposed it. Emancipation then offered Jews citizenship in the new nation-states, and that offer produced the Haskalah, Reform Judaism and, in reaction, self-conscious Orthodoxy and the Haredim, some of whom would reject the Zionist state outright. This chapter follows that sequence, gives the political context through Arendt and Solzhenitsyn, and records the readings of Sabbateanism that other authors in the library connect to later secret-society theories, as those authors themselves state them.

Kabbalah after Safed

Kabbalah is treated in full in Part 6. Here only its role as the trigger matters. Karen Armstrong describes the Lurianic myth formed in sixteenth-century Safed after the expulsion from Spain: in Isaac Luria's creation story "Sparks of divine light fell into the abyss of all that was not God," and the exile of the Shekhinah and the Jews' own lives "as displaced people were not two separate realities but one and the same." *Zimzum* (God's self-contraction) "showed that exile was inscribed in the very ground of being" [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064].

Isidor Epstein traces how the doctrine spread: "De la Safed, doctrina Cabalei s-a extins şi la alte centre evreieşti din Palestina: Tiberiada, Hebron şi Ierusalim, ca şi la marile centre din diaspora: Italia, Germania şi Olanda" (from Safed the doctrine of the Kabbalah spread to other Jewish centres in Palestine, Tiberias, Hebron and Jerusalem, and to the great diaspora centres, Italy, Germany and Holland). It reached Poland, where Isaiah Halevi Horowitz (c. 1570–1630), author of the "most admired and read work" *Shnei Luhot ha-Berit* (The Two Tablets of the Covenant), did much to popularise it [Epstein, Iudaismul - origini şi istorie, #15429]. Epstein also links the earlier "practical" Kabbalah of German Jewry to their oppressed status: persecuted and fearing for their lives, they turned to its "talismanic and ecstatic effects" [ibid.].

Sabbatai Zevi and Jacob Frank

Arthur Goldwag gives the outline: "a significant number of history's greatest Kabbalists have believed themselves to be the Messiah. Shabbetai Zevi (1626–1676) and Jacob Frank (1726–1791) were self-styled Messiahs who came out of the cauldron of Kabbalah only to end in heresy and out-and-out apostasy — Zevi as a convert to Islam; Frank to Catholicism. Both of them were antinomians." He adds that Zevi "almost certainly suffered from a bipolar disorder" [Goldwag, Cults, Conspiracies, and Secret Societies, #73961, "Kabbalah"/"Shabbetai Zevi"]. Zevi proclaimed himself in Smyrna in 1666 and, under Ottoman pressure, converted to Islam. Frank later led a Polish sect that was received into the Catholic Church.

Peter Levenda follows the line into revolutionary Europe. "The Sabbataean movement was the subject of a massive volume by the respected Kabbalah scholar Gershom Scholem." Frank's relative and close associate "Moses Dobruschka (1753–94), had been considered as Frank's successor, but Dobruschka demurred and found his way into Western Europe." There, "With another Frankist — Ephraim Joseph Hirschfeld — he formed the Lodge of Asiatic Brethren as a Masonic organization that would admit Jews." He then "changed his name yet again. This time he was Junius Frey, he was in France, and a Jacobin," arriving in 1792. In Levenda's summary he was among the Frankists "who became a Jacobin during the French Revolution and who died — along with Danton — under the guillotine"; Levenda writes that he was "executed at the guillotine on the same day in 1794 as Georges Danton" [Levenda, The

Secret Temple, #64792]. In Levenda's account, Dobruschka's career joins a messianic Jewish heresy, a Masonic lodge and the Revolution in one documented biography, the link on which the later theories below also draw.

The conspiracist readings. Henry Makow, in a section titled "Satanists Champion the Cabala," argues that "The main reason for mainstreaming Cabala was to underpin belief in the arrival of the Messiah and with it, Jewish world dominion," and that "the infamous Cabalist Sabbatai Zevi … announced in Smyrna in 1666 that he was the Messiah," preaching "the satanic doctrine, Praised be He who permits the forbidden." For Makow, "The Cabala is the unacknowledged religion of the West … the belief system of Freemasonry and organized Jewry, the two forces that govern the world" [Makow, Illuminati 3, #70762, "Satanists Champion the Cabala"]. Susan Bradford writes: "Historians have identified the Rothschilds as members of the Sabbatean cult, which traces to a crazy 17th century character by the name of Sabbatai Levy who believed himself to be the Messiah," and that "By the 18th century, as Rothschild-inspired revolutions were getting underway, Sabbatean Frankism emerged as a religious movement" [Bradford, Royal Blood Lies, #66643, "The Sabbatean Frankists"]. The Rothschild link is Bradford's claim; neither her thesis nor Makow's appears in the scholarly sources cited in this chapter (Goldwag, Levenda, Epstein, Armstrong).

Hasidism: a conservative revival

Armstrong contrasts Hasidism with the modernising New Light Protestantism of the same century: "Hasidism was a typically conservative reform movement. Its spirituality was mythical, based on the Lurianic symbol of divine sparks that had been trapped in matter during the primal catastrophe, but the Besht transformed this tragic vision into a positive appreciation of the omnipresence of God" [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064]. Epstein gives the theory: the Besht's doctrines "se întemeiază pe gândirea cabalistică a lui Luria," keeping the Lurianic *tikkun* (repair), the Shekhinah and cosmic universalism. But instead of inviting, as Luria did, the apocalyptic vision of a future messianic release, Hasidism concentrated on the present [Epstein, Iudaismul, #15429]. For all its antinomian tendencies, Epstein says, Hasidism "a rămas … ferm ancorat în Şulhan Aruh" (remained firmly anchored in the *Shulhan Arukh*). Though Ashkenazi, the Hasidim "au adoptat cartea de rugăciuni a lui Luria, care urmează în esenţă ritul sefard" (adopted Luria's prayer book, which essentially follows the Sephardi rite). Opposite them stood the Gaon of Vilna, author of more than seventy books and "the first to practise the critical study of the Talmud" [ibid.]. The reference

shelf records that the movement "arose in the 18th century as a spiritual revival movement in contemporary Western Ukraine before spreading rapidly throughout Eastern Europe," and counts roughly 250,000 adherents in 2015 [Wikipedia: Hasidic Judaism].

Solzhenitsyn sets the revival inside the politics of the *Kahal*, the self-governing community board: "The whole of Jewish life was guided by the Kahal." The rabbis "were the executive enforcement arm of the Kahal, and owed their position to appointment," and in the conflict "The rabbis had Hasidic books publicly burned and the Hasidim emerged as defenders of the people against abuses of the Kehilot." When Polish Jewry passed to Russia "this indigenous system remained, in which the hierarchy of the Kahal had a self-interest" [Solzhenitsyn, 200 Years Together, #70714, ch.1].

Emancipation, Haskalah and Reform

Hannah Arendt identifies the political problem: "The series of emancipation edicts which slowly and hesitantly followed the French edict of 1792 had been preceded and were accompanied by an equivocal attitude toward its Jewish inhabitants on the part of the nation-state. The breakdown of the feudal order had given rise to the new revolutionary concept of equality, according to which a 'nation within the nation' could no longer be tolerated." Its enemies "coined the new nationalist phrases 'state within the state,' and 'nation within the nation' " [Arendt, The Origins of Totalitarianism, #63233, Part One, ch.2]. Armstrong cites Christian Wilhelm von Dohm's argument that a modern nation "must mobilize the talents of as many people as possible, so it made sense to emancipate the Jews ... even though they should not be granted citizenship," on "The underlying assumption ... that Jews were objectionable" [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064].

The Jewish response was the Haskalah, which the reference shelf dates from the 1770s to about 1881. It "worked to diminish the authority of traditional community institutions such as rabbinic courts and boards of elders" and so "collided both with the traditionalist rabbinic elite ... and with the radical assimilationists" [Wikipedia: Haskalah]. In Russia, Solzhenitsyn reports, following J. I. Gessen, "all the anger that enlightened Jews felt against the ossifying Talmudic tradition became stronger in the middle of the 19th century." A Warsaw teacher's memorandum, "without relying on the Talmud, but on the contrary, by opposing it, imputed to the Kahal and the rabbinate 'the spiritual stagnation which had

petrified the people' " [Solzhenitsyn, 200 Years Together, #70714, ch.1–2]. On Jacob Brafman's *Book of the Kahal* he records both sides: Jewish critics conceded "the quality of his translation but blamed him for false interpretation," while the *Russian Jewish Encyclopedia* (1994) judged that "the documents published by Brafman are a valuable source for studying the history of Jews in Russia" [ibid., ch.4].

Reform went furthest. Armstrong: "This Reform Judaism began as an almost wholly pragmatic movement and, as such, was guided entirely according to the principles of logos. Its aim, indeed, was to abolish the mythos of Judaism. Israel Jacobson (1768-1828) believed that if Judaism appeared less outlandish to the German people, this would improve the chances of emancipation" [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064]. The political consequence came later. Epstein writes that "în tabăra reformată atitudinea faţă de sionism a fost o ostilitate dârză, căci reformaţii vedeau în Mişcare o sfidare ... faţă de doctrina lor de bază: evreii nu sunt decât o comunitate religioasă" (in the Reform camp the attitude to Zionism was stubborn hostility, for the Reformers saw in the movement a public challenge to their basic doctrine that the Jews are only a religious community). Many Orthodox and Reform Jews alike "considered political Zionism contrary to political loyalty to the country where we have become citizens" [Epstein, Iudaismul, #15429].

Orthodoxy, the Haredim and religious anti-Zionism

Against Reform, tradition organised itself as Orthodoxy. Epstein records that Orthodox rabbis and laymen, "strongly opposed to Zionism, because they saw in the Jewish nation a profane nation and not 'the messianic people of God,' " met at Katowice under Jacob Rosenheim and founded Agudat Israel [Epstein, Iudaismul, #15429]. Armstrong traces a more radical rejectionism. Rabbi Hayyim Eleazar Shapira of Munkacs (1872–1937) campaigned from 1922 against Agudat itself as collaborating with the Zionists. In Jerusalem, Blau and Katzenellenbogen formed a group that told the Zionists, "You are not the city's guardians but its destroyers. The scholars who study the Torah are the true guardians of the city," and took the Aramaic name Neturei Karta ("Guardians of the City"). She sizes them: "These anti-Zionist Haredim constitute a small minority: there are only about ten thousand of them in Israel, and several tens of thousands in the United States. But their influence is considerable. Even though most of the ultra-Orthodox are a-Zionist rather than anti-Zionist, the Neturei Karta and other radicals, such as the Satmar Hasidim, confront them with the dangers of

cooperating too closely" with the state [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064]. This is the rabbinic choice of Yavneh, statelessness over messianic politics, carried into the twentieth century (see Chapter 4.10).

Movement	Dates / founder	Attitude to Law	Attitude to Zionism	Source
Lurianic Kabbalah	Safed, 16th c.	Mystical deepening of halakha	(pre-Zionist; exile as cosmic)	#53064, #15429
Sabbateanism / Frankism	Zevi 1666; Frank d. 1791	Antinomian; ends in apostasy	Messianic return, failed	#73961, #64792
Hasidism	Baal Shem Tov, 18th c.	Anchored in Shulhan Arukh	Mostly a-Zionist; Satmar anti-Zionist	#15429, #53064
Haskalah	1770s–1881	Against rabbinic/Kahal authority	Fed later nationalism	Wikipedia, #70714
Reform	Jacobson (1768–1828)	Abolish "mythos"	Hostile: Jews only a religious community	#53064, #15429
Orthodox / Haredi	Agudat Israel; Neturei Karta	Strict observance	Opposed: Zionist nation "profane"	#15429, #53064

Two outside readings: Heisman and Keshe

Mitchell Heisman reads the whole trajectory as secularisation. "Judaism, as the source of the original monotheist insight, had to combine contradictory values. As a first decisive alignment with an ultimate trajectory of postbiological evolution, Judaism took a step towards a pattern of 'progress' culminating in a transcendence of biology: God." He speaks of a succession of revolutions, "From Judaism to Christianity to the neo-Judaism of liberal democracy to neo-Christianity of Marxism," and states that his work, "As a logical fulfillment of the enlightenment founding of liberal democracy, … puts liberal democracy on trial" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II, part 64 and passim]. Heisman does not discuss Reform Judaism in the passages cited; applied to this chapter,

his scheme would make Reform's abolition of mythos one step in a longer conversion of Jewish ethics into modern egalitarian politics.

Mehran Keshe, speaking about a war with Iran, presents messianism as a live political force on both sides: "I think the Islamic religious leaders and Jewish religious understand exactly what I mean. This war with Iran is done by religious leaders, paving the path for coming of their Methi, according to their script. And you have been waiting for this, for the coming of the same Methi at the same time. But whose Methi is the real one?" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 636, #378348, "Prophecy of Religious War and the False Messiah"]. In KSW 633 he claims that flags in Tehran signal "the awakening for the coming of Messiah, is Methi (Al Mahdi)," that "Khamenei established the army for coming of Methi," and that "Jews are doing the same. Vatican is spending huge amount of m[oney]" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 633, #378345, "Religious Denial and the Arrival of Methi"]. These are Keshe's assertions. They put him alongside the authors who treat the Sabbatean expectation as a recurring political script rather than an episode closed in 1676.

Key points

- From Safed, Lurianic Kabbalah (divine sparks trapped in matter, exile built into creation) spread to Palestine, Italy, Germany, Holland and Poland, where Horowitz's *Shnei Luhot ha-Berit* popularised it [#53064, #15429].
- Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676) proclaimed himself Messiah in 1666 and converted to Islam; Jacob Frank (1726–1791) converted to Catholicism; Goldwag calls both antinomians and suggests Zevi was bipolar [#73961].
- Levenda documents the Frankist Moses Dobruschka: co-founder of the Asiatic Brethren lodge, then the Jacobin "Junius Frey," guillotined with Danton [#64792]. Makow and Bradford build Satanist and Rothschild theses on Sabbateanism; these are their claims [#70762, #66643].
- Armstrong calls Hasidism a conservative reform that turned Lurianic tragedy into joy in God's omnipresence; Epstein says it stayed anchored in the *Shulhan Arukh*; Solzhenitsyn sets it in the struggle against the Kahal [#53064, #15429, #70714].
- Arendt: emancipation after the French edict of 1792 came with the nation-state's refusal to tolerate a "nation within the nation" [#63233].
- Jacobson's Reform sought to abolish Judaism's mythos for emancipation and opposed Zionism because Jews were "only a religious community";

Orthodoxy and Agudat Israel opposed it too, and Neturei Karta and Satmar remain anti-Zionist [#53064, #15429].

- Heisman sees secularised Judaism continuing in liberal democracy and the idea of progress; Keshe claims Jewish and Islamic religious leaders are each "paving the path for coming of their Methi" through the war with Iran [#38252, #378348, #378345].

Chapter 37.

Who Is a Jew? The Khazar Debate, Jewish Identity and the Road to Zionism

Part 4 closes with a question the Second Temple period did not settle and modern history made political: who, by descent, belief or law, counts as a Jew? The question matters for the study of religion because modern answers to it have been used to justify a state, to oppose that state, and to build theories about hidden power. This chapter sets out the main positions in the library side by side. First come the revisionist theses of Arthur Koestler (the Khazar origin of East European Jewry) and Shlomo Sand (the "Jewish people" as a modern national construct). Then come the reference shelf's genetic counter-evidence and the medical-genetics literature, followed by the polemical and conspiracist uses of the Khazar theme, each attributed to its author. The chapter ends with the political road from Herzl through Balfour to 1948, read through Reed, Robert John, Khalidi, Heisman and Keshe. Part 14 continues the later history.

Khazaria and the Conversion

Koestler opens *The Thirteenth Tribe* with a geopolitical claim: "About the time when Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of the West, the eastern confines of Europe between the Caucasus and the Volga were ruled by a Jewish state, known as the Khazar Empire. At the peak of its power, from the seventh to the tenth centuries AD, it played a significant part in shaping the destinies of mediaeval, and consequently of modern, Europe" [Koestler, The Thirteenth Tribe, #67932, Part One, ch. I "Rise"]. He describes the Khazars as "a people of Turkish stock" holding the gateway between the Black Sea and the Caspian. As evidence of their standing he cites Constantine Porphyrogenitus: imperial letters to the Khazar

king carried a gold seal worth three solidi, against two for letters to the Pope or the Western Emperor [Koestler, #67932, Part One, ch. I].

The military argument rests on D. M. Dunlop, whom Koestler quotes at length. In the Arab-Khazar wars, which "lasted more than a hundred years", the Khazars held the Caucasus line, so that "but for the existence of the Khazars in the region north of the Caucasus, Byzantium... would have found itself outflanked by the Arabs" [Koestler, #67932, Part One, ch. I, quoting Dunlop]. In 732 the future Constantine V married a Khazar princess, and their son became Leo IV, "Leo the Khazar". Then, "probably AD 740, the King, his court and the military ruling class embraced the Jewish faith, and Judaism became the state religion of the Khazars" [Koestler, #67932, Part One, ch. I]. Koestler follows Bury in reading the choice as political: Judaism was a third creed that let the Khagan avoid submitting to either the Caliph or the Emperor. "There can be no question that the ruler was actuated by political motive" [Koestler, #67932, Part One, quoting Bury]. His main Hebrew source is the tenth-century exchange between Hasdai ibn Shaprut of Córdoba and King Joseph of Khazaria. Joseph's reply contains "the story of the conversion" [Koestler, #67932, Part One, on the Hasdai-Joseph correspondence].

The best-known medieval Jewish literary treatment of the conversion is Judah Halevi's *Kuzari* ("Book of the Khazar"), completed in 1139-40 CE. It is a dialogue between a rabbi and the Khazar king; the reference shelf adds that the historicity of the conversion "is debated" (Moshe Gil and Shaul Stampfer doubt it) and "the scale of conversions within the Khazar Khaganate (if, indeed, any occurred) is unknown" [Wikipedia: Kuzari].

Koestler's "Heritage" Thesis

Part Two of Koestler's book, "The Heritage", follows the Khazars after their state was destroyed. Koestler's conclusion is direct: "The evidence quoted in previous chapters adds up to a strong case in favour of those modern historians — whether Austrian, Israeli or Polish — who, independently from each other, have argued that the bulk of modern Jewry is not of Palestinian, but of Caucasian origin" [Koestler, #67932, Part Two "The Heritage"]. He argues that Yiddish, "a curious amalgam of Hebrew, mediaeval German, Slavonic and other elements", counts against a Franco-Rhenish origin of Eastern Jewry [Koestler, #67932, Part Two]. The book's jacket states what is at stake: if the theory were confirmed, "the term

'anti-Semitism' would become void of meaning", being based "on a misapprehension shared by both the killers and their victims. The story of the Khazar Empire, as it slowly emerges from the past, begins to look like the most cruel hoax which history has ever perpetrated" [Koestler, #67932, jacket text].

The reference shelf notes that Koestler's source Dunlop was "much more tentative", that academic critiques were "generally negative", and that Koestler's aim, per his biographer Scammell, was to remove "the racial basis for anti-Semitism"; Koestler himself held that "the problem of the Khazar infusion a thousand years ago… is irrelevant to modern Israel", whose claim rested in his view on the UN mandate [Wikipedia: The Thirteenth Tribe].

Sand: Mythistory, the Exile and the Realms of Silence

Shlomo Sand's *The Invention of the Jewish People* (2009) widens the argument from Khazaria to the whole national narrative. Chapter 1, "Making Nations", treats peoples as products of modern nationalism. Chapter 2, "Mythistory", examines how nineteenth-century historiography turned the Bible into national history. Sand writes that Heinrich Graetz, "although he was never a complete Zionist… formed the national mold for the writing of Jewish history". Graetz pictured the people as "an organic body with a miraculous capacity for rebirth" [Sand, The Invention of the Jewish People, #70790, ch. 2]. Sand sets Graetz against Heinrich von Treitschke, who answered that "a full merger of Jewry with the peoples of the West will never be achieved" [Sand, #70790, ch. 2].

Chapter 3, "The Invention of the Exile", asks: "Was the population of Judea exiled after the fall of the Second Temple, or is that a Christian myth that not accidentally ended up as part of Jewish tradition?" [Sand, #70790, Introduction and ch. 3]. Sand's answer is "exile without expulsion": Judaism spread through proselytism and conversion. Chapter 4, "Realms of Silence", follows the converts: the kingdom of Himyar in southern Arabia, the Berbers and the "Mysterious Queen Kahina", and the Khazars ("Jewish Kagans? A Strange Empire Rises in the East") [Sand, #70790, ch. 4, contents].

In the section "The Enigma: The Origin of Eastern Europe's Jews", Sand argues that until the 1960s the Caucasian-Volga origin of most Yiddish speakers "was an acceptable assumption, caused no shock, and was not considered anti-Semitic, as it was after the early 1970s". He links the change to 1967: the "City of David" had to be conquered "by the direct descendants of the House of David — not… by the offspring of tough horsemen from the Volga-Don steppes" [Sand, #70790,

ch. 4]. He also cites Ben-Zion Dinur calling Khazaria the "diaspora mother" of Russian, Lithuanian and Polish Jewry, Paul Wexler on the Slavic base of Yiddish, the Turkic etymology of *davenen*, and the Rhineland's tiny medieval Jewish population ("a few hundred to a few thousand") as unable to explain the East's "demographic 'big bang' ". He concludes: "No one wants to go looking under stones when venomous scorpions might be lurking beneath them, waiting to attack the self-image of the existing ethnos and its territorial ambitions" [Sand, #70790, ch. 4]. Chapter 5, "The Distinction: Identity Politics in Israel", turns to the state. Sand writes that Israel "still refuses, sixty years after its establishment, to see itself as a republic that serves its citizens", while one quarter of its citizens are not classed as Jews [Sand, #70790, Introduction and ch. 5].

The Counter-Evidence: Genetics and Founder Effects

The reference shelf takes the opposite view. It calls the Khazar theory "a largely abandoned historical hypothesis" and states that "genetic studies on Jews have found no substantive evidence of a Khazar origin among Ashkenazi Jews". Behar et al. (2013) found no Caucasus/Khazar markers. Atzmon et al. found "mixed Near Eastern and Southern European/Mediterranean origins", though they "did not exclude" some later Khazar and Slavic admixture. Xue et al. consider a wholly Khazar origin "out of the question" [Wikipedia: Khazar hypothesis of Ashkenazi ancestry]. The same article traces the idea back to Johann Ewers (1808), Isaac Baer Levinsohn (1828) and Ernest Renan's Paris lecture of 1883. It notes that Eran Elhaik revived the hypothesis in 2013, and that it is "still sometimes used in antisemitic conspiracy theories and in various anti-Zionist approaches" [Wikipedia: Khazar hypothesis of Ashkenazi ancestry].

The *Genetic studies of Jews* article summarises autosomal work as showing "high levels of genetic relatedness among Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi Jews, corresponding to a shared Middle Eastern ancestry with variations in regional admixture". It adds that there is "no single definitive Jewish prototype", and that Southern European reference populations themselves carry ancient Middle Eastern ancestry [Wikipedia: Genetic studies of Jews].

Nicholas Gillham's medical-genetics textbook approaches the question through disease. "Tay-Sachs disease is 100 times more frequent in infants of Ashkenazi Jewish ancestry than in non-Jewish infants". Small founding populations can amplify a harmful gene "just by chance". Gillham notes that the main Cajun Tay-Sachs mutation is identical to one found in 70% of Ashkenazi carriers [Gillham,

Genes, Chromosomes and Disease, #27274, "Ethnicity and Genetic Disease: Acadians and Ashkenazi Jews"]. He then presents the two competing explanations. Neil Risch's view is that the Ashkenazi diseases are "the result of genetic drift". Cochran, Hardy and Harpending's 2006 paper, "Natural History of Ashkenazi Intelligence", instead proposed selection: carriers of the four lysosomal storage diseases gain neuronal growth. Risch was "not persuaded". Gillham himself suggests the hypotheses "need not be mutually exclusive" [Gillham, #27274, "Evolutionary Hypotheses for Ashkenazi Genetic Diseases"].

Position	Source	Origin of Ashkenazim	Implication drawn
Khazar "Heritage"	Koestler #67932	Mainly Caucasian-Turkic	Racial antisemitism "void of meaning"
Constructed nation	Sand #70790	Converts: Khazars, Slavs, plus others	"Exile" a myth; ethnos-state critique
Genetic mainstream	Wikipedia (shelf)	Levantine plus Southern European admixture	Khazar hypothesis "largely abandoned"
Founder effect	Gillham #27274	Small founding population; drift or selection	Medical screening; origins left open
Conspiracist	Icke, Perloff, Niculae, *Serpent People*	Khazar/Japhethite	Delegitimises Jewish claims and power

Polemical and Conspiracist Uses

Several library authors turn the Khazar thesis into an argument about power. David Icke quotes Koestler on Jews in Hungary and Poland as "mintmasters… tax-collectors and 'money-lenders' ". He claims that the Khazars were "the ancestors of at least 90 per cent of those calling themselves 'Jewish' today" and "had nothing whatsoever to do with the land called Israel". He also claims that an Ashkenazi leadership "not Jewish by blood… took over Palestine on an historical fabrication" [Icke, Tales From the Time Loop, #6170, ch. on the Khazars]. James Perloff, in his chapter "Zionism", cites a genetics report that "52 percent of Levites of Ashkenazi origin have a particular genetic signature that originated in

Central Asia". He reads this Y-chromosome lineage from "a few men, or perhaps a single ancestor... about 1,000 years ago" as possibly Khazar [Perloff, Truth Is a Lonely Warrior, #74108, ch. 13].

The Romanian author Cornel-Dan Niculae states that "the Khazar or Ashkenazi Jews, Turkomans from the Asian steppes, are today the owners of the great businesses of the whole world, of high finance", and that they lead the "mondialist" bodies of the West under a Jewish identity. He calls Yehuda Halevi "a Zionist Khazar Jew" whose *Kuzari* (dated by Niculae to 1141) held that the Jewish nation is the sole mediator between God and humanity [Niculae, Războiul nevăzut al evreilor sionişti cu românii, #75037, chs. 5-6]. The anonymous *Modern Day Serpent People of the Bible* argues from a Black Hebrew Israelite position that Ashkenazim "are not Shemites; they're the children of Ashkenaz", descendants of Japheth, and "the Khazar currently impersonating the true Israelites of the Bible" [Unknown Hebrew, The Modern Day Serpent People of the Bible, #68765, parts 3-6]. On the reference shelf's account, the neo-Nazi *Thunderbolt* and the Christian Identity movement also took up Koestler's book [Wikipedia: The Thirteenth Tribe].

From Herzl to Balfour to 1948

According to Isidor Epstein, Herzl's Basel congress of 1897 formulated the programme of political Zionism as the creation "in Palestine of a legally guaranteed homeland for the Jewish people" (Epstein's Romanian text, rendered here in English). The movement met strong opposition from both the Orthodox and the Reform. The Reform saw it as defying their doctrine that Jews are "only a religious community", and many in both camps held it contrary to political loyalty to their countries of citizenship [Epstein, Iudaismul, #15429, Part on modern Judaism]. Karen Armstrong records that for "the vast majority of the Orthodox" Zionism meant trampling "blasphemously upon a sacred reality", led as it was by atheists, socialists and Marxists. She adds that the Neturei Karta and the Satmar Hasidim remain anti-Zionist today [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064].

Mitchell Heisman reads Herzl as confirming a thesis about enmity. Herzl held that the "propelling force in the creation of a Jewish state" was antisemitism: "our enemies have made us one... It is only pressure that forces us back to the parent stem" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II, part 104]. In Heisman's broader scheme, Judaism "had to combine contradictory values". It took a step towards "a transcendence of biology: God", yet "since Jews themselves could

not fully escape being biological beings", they also had to secure their own survival [Heisman, #38252, Part II, part 64]. He applies this paradox to Israel and Palestine.

The Balfour Declaration was issued on 2 November 1917 as a letter to Lord Rothschild. Robert John's diplomatic history reconstructs what happened behind the scenes. Louis Brandeis "had either persuaded Wilson that there was nothing in the draft (Rothschild) declaration of 19 September" amounting to "any real commitment", or had induced the President to change his mind. On 12 November Weizmann wrote to thank Brandeis [John, Behind the Balfour Declaration, #39567, drawing on the Wilson Papers in Stein, *The Balfour Declaration*]. John also quotes Sokolow, writing two months before the Declaration, on a falling-off in British "philo-sémitisme" that some ascribed to the view that Russian Jews were "the mainspring of Bolshevism" [John, #39567].

Douglas Reed's chapters "Herzl", "The 'Protocols' " and "The Aberration of Mr. Balfour" present the Declaration as a capture of British policy [Reed, The Controversy of Zion, #64653, chs. 26-28]. Reed argues that Weizmann "arrived in Palestine in 1917, supported by British arms and British gold, and in 1947, supported by American money and power" [Reed, #64653]. He also holds that because the biblical Israelites rejected Judah's creed, the use of the name "Israel" by the Zionist state "is in the nature of a forgery" [Reed, #64653, ch. 2].

Rashid Khalidi gives the Palestinian reading. Balfour mentioned the Arab majority, then "around 94 percent", only "in a backhanded way as the 'existing non-Jewish communities' ". Khalidi writes: "the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate constituted the first declaration of war on the Palestinian people by a great power", followed by the 1947 UN partition resolution [Khalidi, The Hundred Years' War on Palestine, #62730, ch. 1]. Slavicek's chronology gives the standard sequence: 1947, UN recommendation of partition into Jewish and Arab states; 14 May 1948, declaration of the State of Israel as Britain withdraws; 1948-49, the First Arab-Israeli War; 1956, Suez-Sinai; 1967, the Six-Day War. The same chronology states, against Sand, that the revolt ending in 135 CE brought the "exile of most Jews from Judea" [Slavicek, Israel, #63054, Chronology].

Keshe's Position

Mehran Keshe treats the identity question in moral and spiritual terms. To the claim "We are the chosen ones" he replies: "Yes, you are chosen to be punished for the rest to learn from. You are not chosen to be, to own everything. You

are the chosen to be the examples of the humanity to learn about how evil can be" [Keshe, KSW 598, #378310, part 51]. In KSW 608 he declares: "They shall have no home, let alone the land they took by occupation". He adds at once that "this is not just to the followers of Moses, it's the same for the Jews, the same for the Muslims, the same for Christians, same for Buddhists, the same for the whole of humanity" [Keshe, KSW 608, #378320, part 15]. In KSW 654 he sets out the Foundation's membership rules: "You carry Israeli passport, you're denied. You carry Belgian passport, you're denied", and members of armed forces should "not apply". He describes himself as "half Jewish" in the same workshop [Keshe, KSW 654, #378366, membership section].

Key points

- Koestler dates the Khazar conversion to c. 740 CE. He credits the Khazars with blocking the Arab advance and argues that "the bulk of modern Jewry" is Caucasian, not Palestinian, in origin [#67932].
- Sand treats the Exile as a myth and Jewish peoplehood as a modern national construction. He emphasises mass conversion (Himyar, the Berbers, the Khazars) and the post-1967 political stakes [#70790].
- The reference shelf calls the Khazar hypothesis "largely abandoned". It reports shared Middle Eastern ancestry with Southern European admixture among Jewish populations [Wikipedia].
- Gillham reports the Ashkenazi founder-effect diseases and the unresolved choice between drift (Risch) and selection (Cochran-Hardy-Harpending) [#27274].
- Icke, Perloff, Niculae and the *Serpent People* author use the Khazar theme to deny Jewish descent or to allege Khazar financial and political power. Their claims are reported here as their claims.
- Herzl saw antisemitism as Zionism's "propelling force". Reform and most Orthodox opinion initially opposed the movement [#38252, #15429, #53064].
- Balfour (2 November 1917) is read as backstage diplomacy (John), as a capture of British policy (Reed), and as a "declaration of war" on Palestinians (Khalidi). It leads to partition (1947) and the founding of the state (14 May 1948).
- Keshe reframes "chosenness" as exemplary punishment. He applies landlessness to all religions and excludes holders of Israeli passports from his Foundation.

Part V.

The Greco-Roman World: Mysteries, Philosophy, Gnosis

Chapter 38.

Gods of the City: Olympian Religion, Civic Cult and the Politics of Piety

Part 5 moves from the Iranian and Near Eastern worlds to the Greek city-state, where religion took a form very different from the scripture-based and priest-led systems treated earlier in this study. Greek cult ran through the institutions of the polis: its sacrifices, festival calendar, oracles, sanctuaries and laws on impiety. Religious authority and political authority were so closely woven together that modern scholars now hesitate to separate the two. This chapter sets out that civic system, the debates over how to describe it, and the political uses of piety, ending with the trial of Socrates. It also records two non-academic readings found in the library: Mitchell Heisman's view of the Olympians as an idealised aristocracy, and Julius Evola's view of Greek religion as a struggle between "Olympian" and "chthonic" orders. The chapter closes by pointing to the mystery cults, which offered what the civic gods did not.

A religion without a church: the framing debates

Charles Seltman's *The Twelve Olympians* sums up what the Greek system lacked compared with the "religions of authority". In his words, the Greeks "had a religious system which was deficient in a number of things: no priestly caste, no unquestioning obedience, neither dogma nor missions, no martyrs, no Sacred Book, and very little concern about sin" [Seltman, The Twelve Olympians, #87245, "The Pictures"]. Seltman insists that the Olympians were living objects of worship, not the allegorical figures of later European art. The Renaissance, "through the work of Raphael, Rubens, and many another genius", painted heroic nudes "meant to depict pagan gods", but "such are not the gods and goddesses

of the Greeks. They are not symbols of Greek religion—of the Greeks' living belief in the Divine" [Seltman, The Twelve Olympians, #87245, "The Pictures"]. He also stresses how open the system was to newcomers. The Greeks "were ready to accept foreign gods or goddesses, to worship them after the proper fashion due to them, to honour them as guests, and finally to give them 'papers of naturalisation' ", so that "religious particularism was not a possibility for civilised Greeks" [Seltman, The Twelve Olympians, #87245].

The *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion* opens with four chapters built as paired oppositions. In "Unity vs. Diversity", Robin Osborne questions whether the word "religion" fits at all, and proposes instead a Greek "theology of diversity" expressed through ritual practice. Thomas Harrison's "Belief vs. Practice" looks at how scholars have struggled with the idea of belief. Emily Kearns's "Old vs. New" examines how innovation and continuity coexisted. Vinciane Pirenne-Delforge and Gabriella Pironti's "Many vs. One" argues that Greek gods must be understood as "simultaneously one and many, at every level of their cult" [Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion, #66316, "Chapter Overview"]. Osborne puts the theological point this way: the gods were "at the same time universal, found everywhere and powerful over the whole world, and intensely local, manifesting themselves in particular places" [Osborne in Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, ch. 1]. ## Old and new gods: change inside tradition

Kearns argues that the Greeks themselves knew their religion had changed: "the Greeks were very clear that change had taken place in matters concerning the gods. The theogonic traditions exemplified in Hesiod and the Orphic poets narrated the violent overthrow of gods older than Zeus and the Olympians" [Kearns in Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, ch. 3]. On the human level, new cults often began in crisis. The Persian Wars, she notes, "apparently stimulated the cults of Boreas, Pan, Artemis Agrotera, and Artemis Aristoboule (among others) in Athens", which can be read as thank-offerings [Kearns, ibid., ch. 3]. Her case study is the Andanian mysteries in Messenia. In the version Pausanias gives, these "are represented as both new, at the birth of the modern Messenian polis, and very old". Kearns concludes that the cult shows "not merely a mélange of old and new, but a pattern in which old and new have a tendency to acquire and represent certain significances" [Kearns, ibid., ch. 3].

How foreign deities were admitted was a matter of public regulation. Ralph Anderson's chapter "New Gods" examines "the ways in which communities regulated the transmission of new deities between, and their introduction into, poleis" [Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, "Chapter Overview", ch. 21].

This is the mechanism through which the oriental cults of Part 5's later chapters (Cybele, Isis, Mithras) entered the Greek and then the Roman world.

The machinery of civic religion

Michael Flower observes that "Greek priests did not mediate between gods and men/the city", which raises the question of how religious decisions were made at all. Andrej Petrovic reviews the prescriptive cult texts known as *leges sacrae*. Fred Naiden questions the dominant theories of blood sacrifice (Burkert, Vernant) and "challenges the usefulness of the term 'sacrifice' itself". Sarah Iles Johnston treats divination as the other main channel of contact between humans and gods. Jan-Mathieu Carbon shows how festival ritual "suffused everyday life" [Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, "Chapter Overview", chs. 20, 23, 31-32, 36]. The great Athenian festivals belong to this calendar. The City Dionysia, with its processions, sacrifices and dramatic contests (comedies from 487 BCE), ranked as "the second-most important festival after the Panathenaia" [Wikipedia: Dionysia].

Space was political too. Michael Scott treats sanctuaries as "multidimensional and polyvalent sacred spaces", and Matthew Dillon studies household and women's cult. Christy Constantakopoulou examines the management of shared cult centres and the "different kinds—and scales—of regional religious networks", the setting of amphictyonies such as the Delphic league [Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, "Chapter Overview", chs. 16-19].

Institution	Function in the polis	Handbook chapter
Sacrifice	Communal feast and gift to the gods; social ranking	Naiden, ch. 31
Oracles and divination	Sanction for war, colonisation, law	Johnston, ch. 32
Sacred law	Written cult regulation by city or sanctuary	A. Petrovic, ch. 23
Religious experts	Seers, exegetes, priests without a mediating monopoly	Flower, ch. 20
Amphictyonies and leagues	Interstate management of shared sanctuaries	Constantakopoulou, ch. 19

Impiety law	Boundary-keeping of acceptable conduct	Bowden, ch. 22

Heroes and god-men: the ground of ruler cult

The line between human and divine could be crossed. Gunnel Ekroth's chapter on heroes considers "real or imagined human beings that, after their death, received quasi-divine honours", and Ivana Petrovic's "Deification—Gods or Men?" examines how "the human–divine boundary is negotiated in processes of deification" [Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, "Chapter Overview", chs. 26, 29]. Radcliffe Edmonds gives concrete political cases. Battos, founder of Kyrene, received a tomb in the agora, and the people of Amphipolis "turned the tomb of the Spartan general Brasidas into a hero shrine and held annual festivals" in honour of the man who had fought for them against Athens [Edmonds in Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, ch. 37]. Hero cult of founders and benefactors was the Greek ground on which Hellenistic and Roman ruler cult would later be built (see the following chapters on ruler cult and the imperial religion).

Impiety and the trial of Socrates

Hugh Bowden notes that *asebeia* appears mainly in Athenian texts, and that Athens had a specific procedure, the *graphe asebeias*, "used most famously to bring Sokrates to trial in 399 BCE". The evidence is narrow, however: "There is only one trial that is recognized beyond doubt as resulting from a graphe asebeias, that of Sokrates". Other famous cases are known only from much later sources, and "their very existence has been challenged by some" [Bowden in Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, ch. 22]. Scholars disagree on whether *asebeia* referred to a narrow set of actions or was "left largely undefined, and open to the interpretation of prosecution, defence, and jury". They also disagree on whether it covered beliefs as well as acts, and whether charges were "genuinely 'religious' " or "a pretext for what were fundamentally 'political' attacks". Bowden regards that last distinction as anachronistic: it imports "a distinctly modern conception of what counts as 'religious' " into a culture where

such distinctions "cannot be made". Ancient definitions were broad. Pseudo-Aristotle defines asebeia as "error concerning gods and daimons or concerning the departed, and parents and homeland" [Bowden, ibid., ch. 22].

Plato's *Apology* gives the charge as Socrates reports it: "Socrate calcă legea stricându-i pe tineri şi necrezând în zeii în care crede cetatea, ci în alte divinităţi, noi" ("Socrates breaks the law by corrupting the young and not believing in the gods the city believes in, but in other, new divinities") [Platon, Apărarea lui Socrate, #19606]. The translator's note to the *Euthyphron* links the "new gods" charge to Socrates' *daimon*, the inner voice that held him back from wrong acts [Platon, Euthyphron, #19610, n. 10]. In that dialogue, set as Socrates awaits Meletos' prosecution, Euthyphro holds that failing to prosecute a wrongdoer, even one's own father, "e o impietate" ("is an impiety"). This leads to the famous question of whether the pious is loved by the gods because it is pious, or pious because it is loved [Platon, Euthyphron, #19610].

Neel Burton traces the charge partly to comedy: "Aristophanes had assimilated Socrates with the sophists, leading, ultimately, to the charges of impiety". Socrates' *daimonion* "contributed in no small part to the charge of impiety and 'inventing new gods' ". Burton sets out the interpretive problem: was the accusation that Socrates believed in "some gods but not in the right ones, or that he did not believe in any gods at all?" [Burton, The Gang of Three, #67276, Part II].

Non-mainstream readings: Heisman and Evola

Mitchell Heisman's *Suicide Note* gives a sociological genealogy of godhood. "Greek aristocrats, by definition of the rule of the best, were considered superior to Greek commoners", he writes. In the same way "the Greek gods were imagined superior to the Greek aristocracy. The gods, then, embodied the presumptions of human superiority inherent in the notion of aristocracy taken to superlative, imaginative extremes" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, part 881]. Heisman contrasts this aristocratic-pagan conception with monotheism, holding that "pagan, Greek gods conflicted with the values of a God both good and supernatural" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252]. On his reading the Olympians were idealised superior beings, not moral judges of mankind.

Julius Evola, writing as a Traditionalist, makes the Olympian/chthonic opposition the key to Greek religion: "All the main characteristics of the Greek religion

are related to the opposition between chthonic and Olympian deities. The opposition was not merely between Hades, Persephone, Demeter, Dionysus and Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo. It was not just a matter of the difference between two orders of gods, but also of the opposition between radically different cults" [Evola, Revolt Against the Modern World, #67630]. Evola carries this into politics. In the traditional view, "the state was related to the people, just as the Olympian and Uranian principles are related to the chthonic and 'infernal' world", and deriving the state from the *demos* he calls "an ideological perversion typical of the modern world" [Evola, Revolt Against the Modern World, #67630, ch. 4]. Academic scholarship treats the same polarity much more cautiously. Susan Deacy's Handbook chapter calls the Olympian/chthonian duality "one of the most fundamental yet not unproblematic distinctions" structuring the pantheon [Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, "Chapter Overview", ch. 24].

Toward the mysteries

Civic religion secured the city's relationship with its gods. It promised individuals little about death. Caroline Tully, in the *Memento Mori* anthology, warns that "the Greek gods were not overly concerned with the activities or individual fates of mortals" [Tully in Huggens (ed.), Memento Mori, #74105]. Edmonds notes that in Homer "there is nothing there to look forward to" after death [Edmonds in Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, ch. 37]. The initiation cults of the next two chapters grew up in that gap.

Key points

- Seltman stresses that Greek religion had "no priestly caste… neither dogma nor missions… no Sacred Book", yet its gods were real objects of worship, not Renaissance-style symbols.
- The Oxford Handbook frames Greek religion through four debates: unity/diversity (Osborne), belief/practice (Harrison), old/new (Kearns) and many/one (Pirenne-Delforge and Pironti).
- Kearns shows that the Greeks recognised religious change. Cults such as the Andanian mysteries were presented as both new and very old.
- Sacrifice, divination, sacred law, sanctuaries and regional leagues were the machinery of polis religion. Priests did not hold a monopoly on mediation (Flower).

- Hero cult of founders and benefactors (Battos, Brasidas) and deification debates laid the ground for later ruler cult.
- Bowden argues that *asebeia* cannot be neatly sorted into "religious" or "political". Socrates' trial in 399 BCE is the only securely attested *graphe asebeias*.
- Heisman reads the Olympians as aristocratic superiority "taken to superlative, imaginative extremes". Evola reads Greek religion as a clash of Olympian and chthonic orders with political consequences.
- The civic gods' indifference to individual fate (Tully) leads into the mystery cults.

Chapter 39.

The Two Goddesses: The Eleusinian Mysteries

The civic gods of the previous chapter guarded the city but promised the individual little beyond the grave. The Mysteries of Demeter and her daughter Persephone (Kore) at Eleusis, west of Athens, filled that gap for close to two thousand years. They were the most famous initiation cult of the ancient world: secret and open to almost anyone, Athenian in administration yet Panhellenic in reach, and admired by Romans and pagan philosophers until the Christian empire closed them. This chapter follows the foundation myth, the ritual sequence and the promise made to initiates. It then sets the scholarly reconstruction beside the entheogen hypothesis and its descendants, and finally considers the politics of the sanctuary.

The foundation myth: the Homeric Hymn to Demeter

The cult's charter text is the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, dated to around 650-550 BCE. Caroline Tully places it at a time of changing attitudes, when Late Archaic Greeks moved "from a general acceptance of death to an outlook expressing greater anxiety about the afterlife and the possibility of post-mortem happiness" [Tully in Huggens (ed.), Memento Mori, #74105]. The Hymn tells how Hades seized Persephone, how Demeter searched for her and caused a famine that deprived the gods of sacrifice, and how Persephone returned. Because she had eaten pomegranate seeds in the underworld, she was bound to spend part of each year there [Wikipedia: Eleusinian Mysteries]. Kearns notes that the Hymn is also an institutional document: "Demeter comes to Eleusis, … giving instruction concerning [her] worship. The priesthood is established (… the lords of Eleusis and—by implication—the family of Keleos…), and a link with the present is suggested" [Kearns in Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion, #66316, ch. 3].

In the Hymn's central episode, Demeter, disguised as an old nurse in King Keleos' palace, places the infant Demophoon in the fire to make him immortal and is interrupted by his mother. Tully reads this episode as the key to the rite: "the mortal participant in the Eleusinian Mysteries was identified with the mythical child Demophoon … through ritual processes thought to mimic, echo or refer to Demeter's treatment of him and this process, while not able to cheat death, nevertheless modified the initiate's experience of death" [Tully in Huggens (ed.), Memento Mori, #74105]. She also warns against a sentimental reading. Since "the Greek gods were not overly concerned with the activities or individual fates of mortals", Demeter's founding of the Mysteries should not be taken simply as "a favour to humankind" [ibid.].

Ioan Petru Culianu places Demeter within a comparative typology of female "trickster" figures. Demeter, he writes, "shows all the traits of a feminine entity whose despair has harmful consequences for the whole world, but whose cultural action, on the other hand, brings major benefits to humanity" [Culianu, Gnozele dualiste ale Occidentului, #87087, ch. I §9].

What is known and not known

Mircea Eliade's *History of Religious Ideas*, whose first volume runs "from the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries", points out a paradox: "Există puţine informaţii asupra Misterelor din Eleusis sau a celui mai vechi orfism; totuşi fascinaţia pe care ele au exercitat-o asupra elitelor europene timp de peste douăzeci de secole…" ("There is little information about the Eleusinian Mysteries or the earliest Orphism; yet the fascination they exercised over European elites for more than twenty centuries…") [Eliade, Istoria credinţelor şi ideilor religioase I, #44130, ch. 1]. The secrecy was enforced by law. The reference shelf records that divulging the *aporrheta* (the "unrepeatables") carried the death penalty. Diagoras was condemned partly on this charge, and Aeschylus was allegedly tried for revealing secrets in his plays but acquitted [Wikipedia: Eleusinian Mysteries]. These cases tie the Mysteries to the impiety law discussed in Chapter 38.

The ritual sequence

The reference shelf gives the standard reconstruction. The Lesser Mysteries at Agrai (February-March) involved a piglet sacrifice and purification in the Ilis-

sos. The Greater Mysteries in Boedromion (September-October) lasted about ten days: the sacred objects were carried to the Eleusinion in Athens, initiates washed in the sea at Phaleron, and the great procession went from the Kerameikos along the Sacred Way, with shouts of "Iakch', O Iakche!" and ritual obscenities recalling Iambe, who made the grieving goddess laugh. At Eleusis the initiates entered the Telesterion and declared: "I have fasted, I have drunk the kykeon, I have taken from the kiste and after working it have put it back in the calathus." Inside, the rite is usually described as *dromena* (things done), *deiknumena* (things shown) and *legomena* (things said). The Church Father Hippolytus reports that its climax was "an ear of grain in silence reaped" [Wikipedia: Eleusinian Mysteries].

Arnold van Gennep, in *The Rites of Passage*, uses Eleusis as a model of initiation structure. He lists the "transportation of the Iakchos and of the sacra to the Eleusinion and numerous stops on the way: in the quarter of the sacred Fig tree, at the palace of Krokon…". He argues that the showing of sacra, at Eleusis as with the Australian churinga, "is the culminating rite, without constituting, by itself, 'the mysteries' ". He rejects Foucart's theory of an Egyptian origin, explaining the resemblances by the universal need to act out "passage from one state to another" [Van Gennep, Riturile de trecere, #10512, "Riturile de iniţiere"].

The promise: a better lot after death

Radcliffe Edmonds notes that "the Homeric Hymn to Demeter (480–2) promises that those who honour Persephone in the mysteries will receive a favourable place in the underworld". He adds that "while the Eleusinian mysteries had the greatest reputation, particularly within the culture sphere of Athens, participation in such rituals was widely recognized as a means of securing a better afterlife". He warns that *teletai*, "often misleadingly translated as 'initiations' ", established "a closer relation with the god" rather than "entry into an organized group" [Edmonds in Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, ch. 37]. In Aristophanes' *Frogs* the chorus of Eleusinian mystai revel in sunlight, while politicians who exploit the city's troubles are sent to "the great muck and everflowing excrement" [ibid.]. Cicero wrote that the rites taught men "to die with a better hope" [Wikipedia: Eleusinian Mysteries, citing Cicero, Laws II.36].

The entheogen hypothesis and its descendants

In 1977-78 R. Gordon Wasson, Albert Hofmann and Carl Ruck proposed that the kykeon, the barley-and-pennyroyal drink of the initiates, was psychoactive. Terence McKenna summarises it: "Wasson's notion, worked out in collaboration with … Albert Hofmann and Carl Ruck and unveiled at a mushroom conference in San Francisco in 1977, was that Eleusis was a rite of visionary intoxication but mushrooms were not directly involved". The source, they argued, was ergot, a fungus that "infects edible grains" and produces "powerful alkaloids capable of causing hallucination". McKenna adds that Demeter's purple robe "may signify the distinctive purple color of the sclerotia" [McKenna, Food of the Gods, #42710, "The Ergotized Beer Theory"]. He then raises the toxicological objection. Ergotism has "two clinical types…, the gangrenous and the convulsive", the second culminating "in epileptic-like convulsions", so "clearly unpleasant experiences may lie ahead for those who set out to prove by self-experiment the Wasson-Hofmann theory" [ibid.]. McKenna's own book goes on to discuss Robert Graves's psilocybin alternative [ibid., contents].

Brian Muraresku recounts how the book was written: "Wasson wrote the first chapter. Hofmann wrote the second". *The Road to Eleusis* "made a passionate and detailed argument for why the kukeon, the sacramental beverage of the Mysteries, must have" been psychedelic [Muraresku, The Immortality Key, #74770]. Muraresku extends this into what he calls the "pagan continuity hypothesis". He asks: "Did the Ancient Greeks pass a version of their sacrament along to the earliest, Greek-speaking Christians, for whom the original Holy Communion or Eucharist was, in fact, a psychedelic" experience? His answer is that their "original Eucharist was therefore intensely psychedelic" [ibid.]. He presents the claim as testable by archaeochemistry: "it's either right, or it's wrong" [ibid.]. The library's catalogue summary describes the book as arguing that the Church "suppressed these ecstatic experiences to maintain control over the populace" [ibid., catalogue summary]. The reference shelf records some supporting archaeology. Ergot fragments were found in a vase and in the dental calculus of a young man at a sanctuary of the two goddesses at Mas Castellar (Girona). The same article notes that classicists have "not well received" the drug hypothesis and that sceptics stress "the lack of any solid evidence" [Wikipedia: Eleusinian Mysteries].

Luke Myers, in *Gnostic Visions*, gives Eleusis its own sections ("The Greek Eleusian Mysteries", "The Sacred Drinking Cup", "Claviceps Paspali") within his chapter on the Hellenistic mysteries. He notes that "even later in early Christian times when the Great Olympian Zeus had lost his ancient supremacy, and the

Delphic Oracle … was reduced greatly in influence, Demeter and the Eleusinian mysteries still enjoyed a high reputation" [Myers, Gnostic Visions, #70923, ch. 2]. In "Claviceps Paspali" he distinguishes the toxic "non-water soluble peptide alkaloids" from the "water soluble Lysergic acid derivatives with psychedelic effects more pronounced and far less toxic". In his account this is how a visionary drink could have been prepared without poisoning initiates [ibid.].

Other authors propose other agents. Brian Jackson links the question to the soma debate and reports Hofmann's hypothesis that contaminated barley gave "a psychedelic drink, possibly a form of beer" [Jackson, Mushroom Medicine, #66219]. Mark Ferrara, writing a spiritual history of cannabis, states that "Eleusinian, Dionysian, and Mithraic Mysteries employed entheogens during secret rituals" and that "the ingestion of entheogens, such as kykeon, at Eleusis occurred annually, and only in sacramental contexts" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 5]. The library's study guide to his book summarises his position as treating the kykeon as "likely cannabis" [ibid., guide §42]. The reference shelf lists ergot, psilocybin, *Amanita*, opium and DMT as proposed candidates, "without consensus or conclusive evidence" [Wikipedia: Eleusinian Mysteries].

Theory	Proposed agent	Main proponent in library	Stated objection or caveat
Ergotised kykeon	*Claviceps* alkaloids in barley	Wasson-Hofmann-Ruck (via McKenna, Muraresku, Myers)	Gangrenous and convulsive ergotism (McKenna)
Psychedelic Eucharist	Inherited "drugged" sacrament	Muraresku	Classicists' scepticism; evidence still contested
Mushrooms	Psilocybe, *Amanita*	Graves, McKenna; Jackson (soma link)	No conclusive evidence
Cannabis	Hemp preparation	Ferrara (per guide)	No consensus (reference shelf)
Non-drug	Drama, sacred objects, fasting	Standard reconstruction (Van Gennep, Edmonds)	Seen by critics as insufficient to explain the rite's power

Esoteric readings

Healer Rosalyn Bruyère treats Eleusis as a stage in a universal initiatory path. “The Temple of Eleusis was regarded as, in some sort, the common sanctuary of the whole earth… Prospective initiates prepared themselves for seven years… There they experienced the mystery of Demeter, whose name means ‘to measure.’ ” She contrasts it with “the initiation within the pyramids”, saying it “did not involve astral projection” [Bruyère, Wheels of Light, #48514]. Demetra George, writing on lunar and goddess spirituality, states that “the ancient Eleusinian Mysteries tell us that the Divine Child is conceived in the underworld” [George, Mysteries of the Dark Moon, #46459]. Albert Pike’s Scottish Rite manual draws Eleusis into Masonic symbolism as an example of wisdom conveyed “through symbols” (per the library’s guide to the book) [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, guide §155].

Politics: Athens, Rome and the end

The reference shelf records that under Peisistratos the Mysteries “became pan-Hellenic”. It also reports that around 300 BCE “the state took over control”, with the priesthoods held by the Eumolpidae and Kerykes families. The requirements for initiation were freedom from blood-guilt and the ability to speak Greek, and “men, women, and even slaves were allowed” [Wikipedia: Eleusinian Mysteries]. Muraresku reports an interlocutor’s remark that “every city of Greece sent part of its production of grain to the Sanctuary of Demeter, because … Demeter was the one who taught the people” agriculture. This is the economic and diplomatic side of the cult’s prestige [Muraresku, The Immortality Key, #74770]. Under Rome the sanctuary was rebuilt by Marcus Aurelius after the Sarmatian raid of 170 CE. Julian tried to restore the rites and was the last emperor initiated. According to Eunapius, Theodosius I closed them in 392, and Alaric’s Goths looted the shrines in 396. The historian Hans Kloft holds that peasants transferred Demeter’s agrarian role to Saint Demetrius [Wikipedia: Eleusinian Mysteries].

Key points

- The Homeric Hymn to Demeter is both myth and charter. It founds the rite and its priesthood in Keleos' family (Kearns).
- Tully argues that initiates were ritually identified with Demophoon, a process that "modified the initiate's experience of death" without abolishing it.
- Eliade stresses how little is known against the fascination Eleusis held for "over twenty centuries". Divulging the secrets was a capital offence.
- The Hymn promised initiates "a favourable place in the underworld". Edmonds notes that *teletai* created a bond with the god, not membership of a sect.
- Wasson, Hofmann and Ruck (1977/78) proposed an ergotised kykeon. McKenna objects on toxicological grounds, and Myers answers with water-soluble ergot alkaloids.
- Muraresku extends the thesis to a psychedelic proto-Eucharist later suppressed by the Church. Ferrara and Jackson propose cannabis or mushroom variants; the reference shelf records no consensus among the proposed agents.
- Esoteric authors (Bruyère, George, Pike) recast Eleusis as a universal initiatory school.
- Politically, Eleusis was a Panhellenic sanctuary run by Athenian families, patronised by emperors and closed under Theodosius in 392.

Chapter 40.

Dionysus and Orpheus: Ecstasy, Orphic Asceticism and the Bacchic Threat to Order

Eleusis offered a better lot after death through a single, publicly administered rite. A second current of Greek religion offered something more radical. Through Dionysus it offered ecstatic union with a god of wine, madness and rebirth. Through the literature attributed to Orpheus it offered a doctrine of the soul as a divine fragment imprisoned in a Titanic body, to be freed by a pure way of life. The two were intertwined: Orphic myth made Dionysus its suffering god, and Bacchic rites carried Orphic ideas into graves across the Greek world. Both also stood in tension with civic order. This chapter treats Dionysus' antiquity, Orphic theogony and anthropogony, Orphic asceticism and its link to Pythagorean and later Gnostic dualism, and Rome's suppression of the Bacchanalia. It ends with modern Traditionalist, ecofeminist and Keshe readings.

An ancient and foreign-seeming god

Greek myth often presented Dionysus as a latecomer. Alain Daniélou's comparative study *Gods of Love and Ecstasy* argues the reverse: "The Mycenaean tablets from Pylos (about 1500) already mention the name of Dionysus together with those of the Aryan gods" [Daniélou, Gods of Love and Ecstasy, #63449, ch. 2]. Daniélou's thesis is that Dionysus and the Indian Shiva are forms of one pre-Aryan god of ecstasy. He finds parallels even in the god's violence: "Dionysus' wars are also presented as the chastisement of the Titans. Like Shiva, Dionysus takes part in the destruction of his unfaithful followers" [ibid.]. He also reads Apollo's killing of the Python at Delphi as symbolising "the change-over from a

feminine to a masculine representation" of divine protection [ibid., ch. 2]. This is Daniélou's comparative argument.

Within the polis, Dionysus was also the god of the theatre. Claude Calame's Handbook chapter argues that Greek tragedy "also served as part of ritual practice" [Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion, #66316, "Chapter Overview", ch. 13]. The City Dionysia, with its dramatic competitions, was Athens' second festival after the Panathenaia [Wikipedia: Dionysia].

Orphic theogonies and the Titanic crime

Kearns notes that "the theogonic traditions exemplified in Hesiod and the Orphic poets narrated the violent overthrow of gods older than Zeus" [Kearns in Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, ch. 3]. The Orphic versions diverged sharply from Hesiod. The reference shelf summarises several. In the Eudemian theogony Night comes first. The Rhapsodic theogony begins with Chronos (Time), who produces the egg from which the bisexual Phanes is born. The Derveni papyrus, found in Macedonia in 1962 and dated to around 340 BCE, preserves an allegorical commentary on an Orphic poem of the later fifth century BCE and is described as "Europe's oldest surviving manuscript" [Wikipedia: Orphism].

The central Orphic myth concerns Dionysus-Zagreus, son of Zeus and Persephone, whom Zeus names as his heir. Incited by Hera, the Titans lure the child with toys and a mirror, tear him apart and eat him. Athena saves the heart, and Zeus burns the Titans with his thunderbolt. Culianu, quoting Guthrie, gives the anthropogonic conclusion: "from their smoking remains came forth a race unknown until then, the race of mortal men. By virtue of these facts our nature is double: we are born from the Titans, the hateful sons of the earth, but in us there yet subsists something of the divine nature, because into our body have passed fragments of the body of Dionysus" [Culianu, Gnozele dualiste ale Occidentului, #87087, ch. I §5, quoting Guthrie p. 98]. The reference shelf states the consequence in Orphic terms: "The soul of man (the Dionysus part) is therefore divine, but the body (the Titan part) holds the soul in bondage", bound to "the wheel of rebirth" [Wikipedia: Orphism]. It also notes that the sources differ. The extant witnesses to the Hieronyman theogony "do not mention the Titans' eating of Dionysus", and the Derveni text breaks off before Dionysus appears [ibid.].

The Orphic life: asceticism and dualism

For Culianu the myth explains a way of life. He writes: "it seems that, for the authors who speak of it, 'Orphism was a way of life, namely an ascetic way of life' (Guthrie, p. 27), implying vegetarianism. The well-known Orphic 'abstentions' (apochai) were justified by a dualist myth created around the child Dionysus" [Culianu, Gnozele dualiste ale Occidentului, #87087, ch. I §5]. The Titanic crime is, in Ugo Bianchi's term, an "antecedent sin" that marks the human condition for ever. It can be expiated only by embracing the "Orphic life" (*orphikos bios*), consisting in "abstention from eating the flesh of living beings" (*apoche ton empsychon*) and the practice of asceticism [ibid.]. Culianu judges it "exaggerated" to attribute an anticosmic doctrine to these "Greek puritans". They were, however, "clearly antisomatic", antinomian in relation to majority custom (they taught men "not to kill") and vegetarian. He thinks it "almost certain" that they held metempsychosis together with the Pythagoreans, Empedocles and Plato [ibid.].

Culianu places Orphism in Bianchi's typology of dualisms, where "Orphism and Empedocles" are classed as radical and dialectical (cyclical), alongside Heraclitus and Indian *atman/maya.* Zoroastrianism, by contrast, is "radical, eschatological, procosmic", and "moderate" Gnosticism is "moderate, eschatological, anticosmic" [Culianu, Gnozele dualiste ale Occidentului, #87087, ch. I §7]. Bianchi traces the Platonic dualist inheritance to "older traditions linked to the names of Orpheus, Pythagoras and Empedocles" [ibid., §5]. Culianu's genealogy runs from Orphism through Plato to the Gnostic systems examined in later chapters of this study.

B. R. Hergenhahn's history of psychology reaches a similar result from another discipline. Of the two theologies available in the sixth and fifth centuries, Olympian and Dionysiac-Orphic, the Olympian gods "showed little concern with the anxieties of ordinary humans" [Hergenhahn, An Introduction to the History of Psychology, #30761, ch. 2]. He adds: "We see many elements in common between Dionysiac-Orphic religion and Pythagorean philosophy. Both viewed the body as a prison from which the soul should escape … Both accepted the notion of the transmigration of souls" [ibid.]. The reference shelf records the long dispute over priority. Ion of Chios claimed that Pythagoras wrote poems under Orpheus' name, while Neoplatonists such as Proclus held that "all the Grecian theology is the progeny of the mystic tradition of Orpheus" [Wikipedia: Orphism].

Feature	Olympian civic cult	Dionysiac-Orphic current	Pythagoreanism
Human origin	Not a central concern	From Titans' ashes, with a Dionysian spark	Soul of divine kinship
Body	Unproblematic	Bondage of the soul	Prison (Hergenhahn)
Afterlife	Shadowy Hades for most	Purity and liberation; cycle of rebirth	Transmigration
Diet	Meat sacrifice central	Abstention from animal flesh	Dietary abstentions
Authority	Polis, priesthoods	Books of Orpheus, itinerant *teletai*	School and master

Gold tablets and Bacchic afterlife

The material evidence for this current is the "Orphic" gold tablets buried with the dead. Edmonds describes them as "designed for a very private audience, perhaps only the individuals in whose graves they were placed". Some ask Persephone to send the bearer "to the seats of the blessed", and others refer to "celebrations of festivals beneath the earth, where the deceased will receive wine". The deceased "claims to be pure and from the pure or to have been specially liberated by Dionysos Bacchios". The tablets assert "a special identity of the deceased that transcends the usual categories of polis, genos, and family" [Edmonds in Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), Oxford Handbook, #66316, ch. 37]. That last point explains why such cults could seem politically threatening: they defined the self outside the city's categories. Edmonds sees Greek afterlife ideas as "an ongoing contest of differing views… jostling for authority", not a clean replacement of Homer by Orphism [ibid.].

The Bacchanalia: Rome confronts ecstasy

The sharpest political collision came in Italy. The reference shelf, drawing on Livy, reports that a Bacchic cult reached Rome around 200 BCE via southern Italy and Etruria. In Livy's account, Paculla Annia, a Campanian priestess, turned the

rites into nocturnal gatherings mixing sexes, ages and classes, with wine and loud music. A Senate inquiry under the consuls Spurius Postumius Albinus and Quintus Marcius Philippus claimed that under cover of religion initiates committed crimes and even murders. Livy "claims that seven thousand cult leaders and followers were arrested, and that most were executed", and he presents the cult as "a murderous instrument of conspiracy against the state" [Wikipedia: Bacchanalia]. The *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* of 186 BCE survives as an inscription. It did not ban the cult. It dismantled its colleges, limited gatherings to "no more than two men and three women", required Senate permission and forbade men the priesthood [ibid.]. Modern interpretations differ. The article calls Livy "tendentious to say the least". Gruen reads the decree as *Realpolitik*, the Senate asserting its authority over Italian allies after the Second Punic War, while Burkert sees signs of "moral panic" [ibid.].

Samuel Dill's study of imperial Roman society records the lasting moralist suspicion of ecstatic and eastern worships. Juvenal "had all the old Roman prejudice against those eastern worships which captivated so many women of his day". In Dill's own judgement, "there were the gravest moral abuses connected with such worships as that of Magna Mater" [Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, #60232]. The Bacchanalia affair set the template for Roman dealings with Cybele, Isis and, later, Christians (see the following chapters).

Modern reinterpretations

Julius Evola puts Dionysus on the chthonic side of the opposition that, for him, defines Greek religion. The struggle was "not merely between Hades, Persephone, Demeter, Dionysus and Zeus, Hera, Athena, Apollo" but between "radically different cults" [Evola, Revolt Against the Modern World, #67630]. He maps the polarity onto politics: in the traditional view "the state was related to the people, just as the Olympian and Uranian principles are related to the chthonic and 'infernal' world" [ibid., ch. 4]. On this reading the Dionysian current falls on the side of the ruled. Evola frames the argument as Traditionalist metaphysics of history rather than as a reconstruction from historical evidence.

Sophie Strand's *The Flowering Wand* reverses the valuation from an ecological and feminist standpoint. She describes discovering that "the masculine hadn't always been conflated with the violence of hierarchy and domination" and urges readers, "like Dionysus", to "remember our deeper, pre-patriarchal root systems"

[Strand, The Flowering Wand, #62689, Part II]. She calls on "the vine and the ivy of Dionysus/Liber" and "Orpheus's mycelial underworld", and she contrasts Dionysus with the Christ of the Gospels: "The Gospels disembody Jesus, while Dionysus is primarily a god of embodiment" [ibid., Part II]. Dionysus, she suggests, "does not need to commit rape or violent assault in order to attract lovers", which "makes him even more masculine" [ibid.].

Mehran Keshe, in Knowledge Seekers Workshop 520 (11 January 2024), offers a polemical genealogy of Judaism that makes the wine god its source. He claims: "The god of wine, and the man who's always drunk in Greek mythology, is quoted (in Torah) because they were all living in the same area". He also says: "they chose the story of his life, the Greek, the God of wine, drunken man, and he's become the rule of the Torah" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 520, #378232]. The workshop summary adds that the stories were "copied from 1000 years earlier into Torah". Keshe presents this as part of a programme to "dismantle religions by the truth of their own history - not accusations" [ibid., part 8]. These are Keshe's assertions, recorded here for the comparative thread on how Keshe reads the origins of religions. In the same workshop he ties the claim to arguments from Torah narrative and population figures ("70 people could not become 6 (3) million") and calls the result "all the story of a drunken man - god (from Greek mythology)" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 520, #378232, part 32].

Key points

- Daniélou dates Dionysus' name to the Mycenaean Pylos tablets and argues that Dionysus and Shiva are forms of one god of ecstasy. Their parallels include the "chastisement of the Titans".
- Orphic theogonies (Eudemian, Rhapsodic, Derveni, Hieronymian) rewrote Hesiod. The Derveni papyrus (c. 340 BCE) is Europe's oldest surviving manuscript.
- In the Zagreus myth humans arise from the ashes of the Titans who ate the child Dionysus, so human nature is double: a Titanic body and a Dionysian spark.
- Culianu, after Guthrie, calls Orphism "an ascetic way of life", vegetarian and "clearly antisomatic". Bianchi classifies it as a radical, cyclical dualism that fed Platonic and later Gnostic dualism.
- Hergenhahn finds the body-as-prison and transmigration common to Dionysiac-Orphic religion and Pythagoreanism.

- The gold tablets promise the "pure" a place among the blessed and an identity beyond polis and family (Edmonds).
- Rome's *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* (186 BCE) regulated rather than banned the cult. The reference shelf calls Livy's account "tendentious", and Dill records the moralists' hostility to ecstatic eastern cults.
- Evola (Traditionalist), Strand (ecofeminist) and Keshe (who claims the Torah derives from the wine-god myth) offer modern reinterpretations, each attributed here to its author.

Chapter 41.

Number, Soul and the Good: Pythagoras and Plato on Immortality and God

Between the sixth and the fourth centuries BCE the Greek world produced a new kind of religious thinking. It did not replace the civic cults or the mysteries. It recast their promises (purification, the survival of the soul, a better lot after death) as doctrines that could be argued for. Pythagoras of Samos founded a community at Croton in southern Italy that was at once a school, a cult brotherhood and a political faction. Plato, two centuries later, turned Orphic-Pythagorean themes into the doctrines that later Jewish, Christian and Gnostic theologians would borrow, attack or claim as their own: the immortal soul, recollection, the Forms, the Good and the divine craftsman of the *Timaeus*. This chapter sets out what the library's sources report about both men, the ancient claims about where their wisdom came from, and the political theology Plato built on these foundations.

Pythagoras: an uncertain life and a sacred community

The sources agree that the historical Pythagoras is hard to recover. Mario Livio writes that "most of the details of Pythagoras' life and the reality of his mathematical contributions remain veiled in uncertainty" [Livio, The Golden Ratio, #83579]. Livio reports, as "some accounts", that Pythagoras spent years in Egypt, "where he would have learned mathematics, philosophy, and religious themes from the Egyptian priests", and that "after Egypt was overwhelmed by Persian armies, Pythagoras may have been taken to Babylon, together with members

of the Egyptian priesthood", where he would have met Mesopotamian mathematical lore [Livio, The Golden Ratio, #83579]. Even his death has two versions: self-starvation at the Temple of the Muses in Metapontum, or death at the hands of the Syracusans (Hermippus) [Livio, The Golden Ratio, #83579].

The course *Pythagoras and Music of the Spheres* begins its account at Samos, "the birthplace of Pythagoras, whose ideas dominate most of the material in this course". It repeats the tradition that "it was Thales [who] advised his student to visit Egypt, and that student was Pythagoras" [Unknown, Pythagoras and Music of the Spheres, #48013, "Pythagoras"].

The fullest ancient biography in the library is Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras*, in the Romanian edition that also contains the *Life of Plotinus*. Its table of contents gives the shape of the tradition: travels in Egypt (§§7–8), returns to Samos and Italy (§§10–12), the episodes of Astraios and of Zalmoxis (§§13–15), and a journey "through Delphi and Crete to Croton" (§§16–20) [Porphyrios, Viața lui Pitagora; Viața lui Plotin, #84080]. Porphyry presents Pythagoras as an initiate of foreign mysteries. In Crete "he made contact with the initiates (*mystai*) of Morgos, one of the Idaean Dactyls, who purified him with a thunder-stone", and he went down into the Idaean cave [Porphyrios, Viața lui Pitagora, #84080, §17]. The Romanian editors note that Herodotus (*Histories* II 81 and II 123) suggests an Egyptian origin for Pythagoras' philosophy, and they quote Isocrates (*Busiris* 38): "Pythagoras of Samos … arriving in Egypt and becoming there a disciple of the priests, was the first to bring to Hellas the other teachings of philosophy" [Porphyrios, Viața lui Pitagora, #84080, editorial notes].

On doctrine, Porphyry separates what is certain from what is not. "Nevertheless," he writes, "the master's primary assertion is accepted without reservation: that the soul is immortal; secondly, that it migrates into other animal species" [Porphyrios, Viața lui Pitagora, #84080, §19]. He also explains the famous bean taboo through a cosmogony. At the origin of the universe, he says, germs lay mixed and rotting together in the earth, and men and beans sprang from one and the same putrefaction [Porphyrios, Viața lui Pitagora, #84080, §44].

Number, harmony and the spheres

The Pythagorean claim that reality is structured by number came out of acoustics. The *Music of the Spheres* course describes Renaissance woodcuts of Pythagoras sounding bells, strings and glasses marked 8 and 16, "an interval of 1:2 called the octave, or diapason". It adds that the simple ratios of the consonances were

"the very numbers in their beloved sacred tetractys" [Unknown, Pythagoras and Music of the Spheres, #48013, "Product of the first square numbers"]. It quotes Aristotle's summary of the school: the Pythagoreans "saw that the … ratios of musical scales were expressible in numbers [and that] all things seemed to be modeled on numbers", so that "they supposed the elements of number to be the elements of all things, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number" [Unknown, Pythagoras and Music of the Spheres, #48013]. Porphyry gives the "harmony of the spheres" its own section (§§30–33), in which Pythagoras is said to hear the music of the cosmos [Porphyrios, Viața lui Pitagora, #84080].

B. R. Hergenhahn shows how this mathematics carried a metaphysics. "The Pythagoreans assumed a dualistic universe: one part abstract, permanent, and intellectually knowable … and the other empirical, changing, and known through the senses." Hence "sensory experience … cannot provide knowledge. In fact, such experience interferes with the attainment of knowledge and should be avoided" [Hergenhahn, An Introduction to the History of Psychology 6th ed, #30761, ch. 2]. Hergenhahn marks this as a break with the earlier philosophers: "In Pythagoras … we have a full-fledged dualism between the mind and the body and between the physical and the abstract" [Hergenhahn, History of Psychology, #30761].

Opting out of the city: diet, sacrifice and politics

In a Greek city, religion was carried out through animal sacrifice and the shared meal that followed it. Pythagorean abstinence was therefore a political act. John Wilkins and Shaun Hill write: "Purist followers of Pythagoras removed themselves from the Greek city states of southern Italy and opted out of the sacrificial system and therefore of civic life and identity" [Wilkins & Hill, Food in the Ancient World, #363193]. They cite Diogenes Laertius (*Life of Pythagoras* 13), who says the bloodless altar of Apollo was "the only altar at which Pythagoras worshipped", and Diogenes' explanation of the ban on meat: "his real reason for forbidding animal diet was to practise people and accustom them to simplicity of life, so that they could live on things easily procurable … for this was the way to a healthy body and a keen mind" [Wilkins & Hill, Food in the Ancient World, #363193, quoting Diogenes Laertius, trans. Hicks]. They also point to Marcel Detienne's critique of Pythagorean food rules, which brings out "the political aspect of the cult" [Wilkins & Hill, Food in the Ancient World, #363193].

Metempsychosis and its fate

Norman McClelland's encyclopedia treats Pythagoras and Plato as the classical "champion[s] of metempsychosis". It also records the critics of the idea. "In specific regards to the platonic concept of metempsychosis Aristotle criticized the idea that a human soul could be reborn as an animal". McClelland adds that it was this criticism "that allowed some of Aristotle's views to find more acceptance in the late medieval Church than were the views of Plato" [McClelland, Encyclopedia of Reincarnation and Karma, #66947, "Arguments"]. He sets rebirth against the conceptions of "resurrection that have traditionally been favored by orthodox Christianity". He also warns that Clement of Alexandria has been "mistakenly" claimed by reincarnationists because of a passage on the soul's preexistence that makes no reference to metempsychosis [McClelland, Encyclopedia of Reincarnation and Karma, #66947, "Anthropopathism"; "Clement"].

Hergenhahn links the Pythagorean soul doctrine to the Dionysiac-Orphic mysteries. "Both viewed the body as a prison from which the soul should escape … Both accepted the notion of the transmigration of souls" [Hergenhahn, History of Psychology, #30761, ch. 2].

Plato: the soul, the cave and the Good

According to Hergenhahn, Plato inherited and systematized this dualism: "Plato created a dualism that divided the human into a body, which was material and imperfect, and a mind (soul), which contained pure knowledge" [Hergenhahn, History of Psychology, #30761]. In the *Republic* the soul has three parts, and these mirror the three classes of the ideal city ("whether the soul has these three principles or not?") [Platon, The Republic, #79552, Book IV]. The allegory of the cave and the Form of the Good in Books VI–VII, and the myth of Er in Book X, in which souls choose their next lives, carry this teaching into Plato's best-known images [Platon, The Republic, #79552].

The Romanian commentary to *Opere* VII adds an esoteric dimension. It notes that adherents of the "unwritten doctrine" read passages of the *Timaeus* (e.g. 53d) as Plato's allusions to "that esoteric theory of first principles which was to be communicated only to the initiated". They rely on Aristotle, who in *Physics* 209b refers to Plato's "unwritten teachings" [Platon, Opere vol. VII, #25718, n. 108].

The Demiurge of the Timaeus

The *Timaeus* gives Greek philosophy its creator god. The *Opere* VII commentary observes that the Demiurge's "principal determination … is that of maker [*făuritor*] of the universe", and that at 28c3–4 he is called "the author (*poietes*) and the father of the universe". All his other traits are tied to the process of putting the world together [Platon, Opere vol. VII, #25718, commentary]. In the dialogue itself the Demiurge fashions time and the heavens, and models the universe on its eternal pattern so that it should "contain all the forms" [Platon, Opere vol. VII, #25718, Timaios 37–39]. The world-body, bound "by geometric proportion", becomes "indissoluble by any other than the one who made it" [Platon, Opere vol. VII, #25718, Timaios 32]. This benevolent craftsman is the figure that later Gnostic systems would demote into an ignorant or hostile world-maker (see Chapter 46).

Ancient claims of borrowing: Egypt and Moses

Ancient authors argued about where Greek wisdom came from long before modern scholars did. The *Opere* VII commentary sets out the apologetic tradition: "It has been asserted of Plato that he was strongly influenced by the writings of Moses (Aristobulus of Alexandria; cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 5.14.97.7; Philo of Alexandria, *De opif. mundi* 6.25), that, like Orpheus, Homer, Solon and Pythagoras, he studied the teachings of Moses while he was in Egypt" [Platon, Opere vol. VII, #25718, commentary]. The commentator presents this as part of the "long tradition" of reading Platonism in Christian terms. On Egypt he takes a more cautious view. He lists passages showing Plato's familiarity with Egyptian customs and religion (*Gorgias* 482b; *Laws* 656d–657, 799, 819; *Statesman* 264, 290d–e; *Phaedo* 80; *Phaedrus* 274c–275b; *Timaeus* 21e–25) and concludes that it would be "natural to suppose" Plato had direct access to Egyptian information [Platon, Opere vol. VII, #25718, commentary].

Claim	Who makes it	Evidence offered	Status in the sources
Pythagoras studied with Egyptian priests	Herodotus, Isocrates; Porphyry	Biographical tradition	"Some accounts" (Livio); uncertain
Pythagoras taken to Babylon	Later biographers	Persian conquest of Egypt	"May have been" (Livio)

Claim	Who makes it	Evidence offered	Status in the sources
Plato learned from Moses	Aristobulus, Philo, Clement	Apologetic chronology	Ancient Jewish-Christian claim
Plato knew Egyptian religion	Modern commentary	Passages across the dialogues	Judged plausible (*Opere* VII)

Plato's political theology

Plato's ideal states rest on religion managed by the rulers. In the *Republic* Socrates hesitates before introducing "an old Phoenician tale". The citizens are to be told that they were born from the earth with gold, silver, brass or iron mixed into their souls. The guardians are told that "nature orders a transposition" if a golden parent produces a child of baser metal. Socrates concedes that the fiction must be believed by "their sons' sons, and posterity after them", and he defends it because "the fostering of such a belief will make them care more for the city and for one another" [Platon, The Republic, #79552, Book III]. The guardians "alone of all the citizens may not touch or handle silver or gold … And this will be their salvation" [Platon, The Republic, #79552, Book III]. The poets are censored for the same reason: terrifying tales of the underworld "will do harm to our future warriors" [Platon, The Republic, #79552, Book III].

The *Laws* goes further and makes theology a matter of statute. The Romanian edition summarizes Book X as a refutation of three forms of impiety: that of those who deny the gods exist, of those who "say there are gods, but that they do not care for us", and of those "who imagine that rich sacrifices can corrupt the gods". The counter-theses are that "the world is governed by the good soul", that the gods "are good", and that their providence follows from their perfection [Platon, Legile, #25711, summary of Book X]. Throughout the *Laws* belief is backed by penalties. The marriage law, for instance, imposes yearly fines and public dishonour on any man unmarried at thirty-five [Platon, Legile, #25711, Book IV]. A note in the same edition links the Athenian Stranger's ritual rules to "the precepts of Pythagoras": offerings to the heavenly gods in odd numbers, to the underworld gods in even [Platon, Legile, #25711, n. 2].

Key points

- Livio stresses that the details of Pythagoras' life "remain veiled in uncertainty". Egyptian and Babylonian study appear in the sources only as "some accounts".
- Porphyry presents Pythagoras as an initiate of foreign mysteries (Crete, Egypt). He treats the soul's immortality and its migration into animals as the one securely known Pythagorean doctrine.
- The Pythagorean number cosmology came from musical ratios (octave 1:2, the tetractys). Hergenhahn traces to it a split between an intelligible world and a sensible world.
- Wilkins & Hill show that Pythagorean vegetarianism meant withdrawal from civic sacrifice, and so from civic identity: a religious choice with political consequences.
- McClelland records Aristotle's attack on transmigration and orthodox Christianity's preference for bodily resurrection.
- Plato's *Timaeus* gives the Demiurge, "maker and father" of the universe (28c), the figure later reinterpreted by the Gnostics.
- Aristobulus, Philo and Clement claimed Plato learned from Moses in Egypt. Modern commentary treats this as apologetic and finds Egyptian familiarity more plausible.
- The *Republic*'s "Phoenician tale" and the *Laws*' theology of Book X make religion an instrument of political order.

Chapter 42.

Philosophy as Religion: Stoics, Epicureans and the Gods of the Philosophers

After Alexander, the free city-state lost its central place in Greek life. Rome then built a world empire, and the philosophical schools came to offer educated Greeks and Romans what the civic cults no longer could: a rule of life, consolation in the face of death, and a theology that could be defended by reason. The two great Hellenistic systems answered the question of the gods in opposite ways. Stoicism taught a divine reason, the Logos, immanent in matter and governing everything by providence. Epicureanism kept the gods but removed them from human affairs, and used atomism to free people from fear of divine punishment and of death. This chapter compares the two theologies. It follows the transformation that Samuel Dill describes, in which philosophy under the Empire became spiritual direction and preaching, looks at the political career of Stoicism from the opposition under Nero to the philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius, and sets out the debate over whether Epictetus knew Christianity.

The Stoic Logos: god inside matter

The Romanian history of philosophy *Din Istoria Gândirii Filozofice* defines the Stoic god precisely: "The Stoic Logos is the creative agent of the world out of matter. It is a creative power, but it is not a supernatural, personal and independent force; it orders and creates the Cosmos, but it cannot step out of and cannot separate itself from the Cosmos." Since it is "inherent in matter", the textbook continues, "without matter the Stoic Logos is non-existent". It then distinguishes the universal Logos from the *logos spermatikos*, the "seminal logos" [Unknown, Din Istoria Gândirii Filozofice, #86306, "Stoicism"]. The same

textbook stresses that "the centre of gravity of the Stoics' theory lay in the domain of ethics". Physics and logic were "given an auxiliary role, subordinated to ethical reflection" [Unknown, Din Istoria Gândirii Filozofice, #86306].

The textbook presents Heraclitus as the forerunner of this cosmic reason. For Heraclitus, "out of all things one and out of one all things are made", and the unity of the world is a tension of opposites: "what draws apart comes together, and from different things the most beautiful harmony is formed, and everything is born through struggle (*agon*)". It also cites the testimony of the Christian theologian Origen on Heraclitus' teaching about war [Unknown, Din Istoria Gândirii Filozofice, #86306, "Heraclitus", citing Plato, *Cratylus* 402a, and Origen].

Modern Stoic anthologies keep this cosmic theme at the centre. The *Daily Stoic* quotes Marcus Aurelius: "Meditate often on the interconnectedness and mutual interdependence of all things in the universe. For in a sense, all things are mutually woven together and therefore have an affinity for each other" [Holiday & Hanselman, The Daily Stoic, #71984, October 3rd]. Its editors paraphrase the doctrine: "all things are guided by reason—but … it is a vast and universal reason that we cannot always see" [Holiday & Hanselman, The Daily Stoic, #71984].

The Epicurean gods: real, blessed, uninvolved

Jules Evans begins his account of Epicurus with biography. Epicurus was born around 341 BCE on Samos, "which was also the birthplace of Pythagoras" [Evans, Filosofie pentru viață și alte situații periculoase, #16416, "Epicurus and the philosophy of pleasure"]. Evans sets out the religious question that the new materialist physics forced on its followers: "Since the cosmos obeys natural laws rather than the will of the gods, how should human beings behave? What is the good life in a cosmos in which the gods either do not exist or do not evidently intervene?" [Evans, Filosofie pentru viață, #16416]. His chapter heading gives the Epicurean answer: "The universe does not care what we do." Evans explains its force historically. Fear of divine punishment "was, as a rule, a huge source of anxiety. The human imagination was infested with nightmare visions of what comes after death. That is why the message of Epicureanism—enjoy life here, do not torment yourself over the one beyond—was a radical one and, for some, truly liberating" [Evans, Filosofie pentru viață, #16416, "The universe does not care what we do"]. Death is removed in the same way. " 'Death is nothing to

us,' Lucretius stresses. After we die, we shall no longer be. Non-existence is not something to fear" [Evans, Filosofie pentru viață, #16416].

The atomism behind this argument appears in the Romanian textbook's materialist account of ancient philosophy. It records the atomist thesis that "the divisibility of matter to infinity is impossible", and the principle that thought itself "must be explained from the being of matter, and not the reverse" [Unknown, Din Istoria Gândirii Filozofice, #86306]. Evans adds that Lucretius saw that people freed from "religious superstitions" needed "new myths, new stories, new songs" [Evans, Filosofie pentru viață, #16416].

Comparing the final good: Annas on virtue and tranquillity

Julia Annas holds that ancient ethics must be read as a system: "ethical theories are theories: the notions of final good, virtue, nature, happiness and so on are systematically connected" [Annas, The Morality of Happiness, #69464]. On her account the Epicurean and Stoic schools differ over the place of tranquillity. For Epicurus, freedom from disturbance (*ataraxia*) amounts to happiness, yet he ties pleasure to virtue: "It is impossible to live pleasantly without living intelligently and finely and justly, … [or] intelligently and finely and justly without living pleasantly" [Annas, The Morality of Happiness, #69464, quoting Epicurus]. The Stoics, Annas writes, "do not agree with Epicurus that untroubledness or tranquillity (ataraxia) amounts to happiness", but "they do hold that happiness will include tranquillity. From Zeno on they characterized happiness as 'a smooth flow of life' (*eurhoia biou*)" [Annas, The Morality of Happiness, #69464]. | Question | Stoics | Epicureans | |—|—|—| | Nature of god | Immanent Logos, inseparable from matter; providence | Blessed beings who do not intervene in the world | | Cosmos | Rational, ordered, "woven together" | Atoms and void, governed by natural law | | Fear of death | Accept the rational order; death is natural | "Death is nothing to us" (Lucretius) | | Final good | Virtue; happiness as "smooth flow of life" | Pleasure as *ataraxia*, inseparable from virtue | | Relation to popular religion | Later Stoics reinterpret external worship and imagery (Dill) | Strip away the fear of the beyond (Evans) |

Philosophy becomes spiritual direction

Samuel Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* gives this change its classic treatment. Book III, chapter I, "The Philosophic Director", opens with "the great change in the motive and character of philosophy". There "the schools forsook metaphysical speculation, and devoted themselves to the cultivation of character", and Dill attributes this to "the loss of free civic life and the establishment of world-empires" [Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, #60232, Book III ch. I, contents]. Seneca is his central figure. He has "an evangelistic passion" and conceives of "philosophy as the art of saving souls". He teaches that "the kingdom of Heaven is within" and that freedom lies in "submission to the Universal Reason". Dill calls him "a pagan Thomas à Kempis", who "was claimed by the Church" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book III ch. I]. In a footnote Dill records that Seneca adopted "the Pythagorean discipline under the influence of Sotion", but gave it up "on the proscription of suspected rites in the reign of Tiberius" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book I ch. I, note]. So even private religious practice could become politically dangerous.

Chapter II, "The Philosophic Missionary", turns from the aristocratic director to the street preacher. "The masses needed a gospel." It surveys the sermons of Apollonius of Tyana, Musonius and Maximus of Tyre, the Cynic "mendicant monks of paganism", and "the ideal Cynic in Epictetus—An ambassador of God". Dill also notes that "Demonax ... [was] prosecuted for neglect of religious observances" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book III ch. II, contents]. Chapter III, "The Philosophic Theologian", records a decisive change of doctrine among the later Stoics: "God no longer mere Force or Fate or impersonal Reason—He is a Father and Providence, giving moral support and comfort" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book III ch. III, contents].

Epictetus, "the most religious of the Stoics"

Traian Diaconescu's preface to his Romanian Epictetus places him at the summit of this development: "The fervent religious feeling found in Epictetus' work gives it originality. Epictetus is the most religious of all the Stoics. In his thought the god is no longer impersonal, as in Seneca or Marcus Aurelius, but personified. The god watches over the universe and the life of man, is immanent, dwells in us, sees and understands everything" [Diaconescu (ed./trans.), Epictet: Manualul și fragmente, #42286, Preface]. Diaconescu places Dill's "Father and Providence"

within the Stoic system itself. Note that he places Seneca on the impersonal side, while Dill reads Seneca's "varying conceptions of God" as already mixing in Platonic elements [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book III ch. I].

The closeness of this language to Christianity raised an old question. Diaconescu summarises it: "The religious ideas and attitude of Epictetus made possible the thesis of his direct relation with Christian teaching. Scholars such as Th. Zahn and K. Kuiper consider that Epictetus read the New Testament, but A. Bonhöffer and Douglas Sharp reject these suppositions, affirming that Stoicism and Christianity were parallel and independent movements." He takes a middle position: "We consider that there are interferences." In Epictetus' time, he adds, Christianity "was consolidating itself in the cities and conquering not only the crowd but also high society", while Stoicism had been renewed by Seneca and Musonius Rufus. "These movements, which aimed at the moralisation of society, did not ignore each other. Stoicism and Christianity used common methods of propagating doctrine" [Diaconescu, Epictet: Manualul și fragmente, #42286, Preface]. Dill gives the opposite emphasis. To Plutarch, Dion Chrysostom, Lucian and Marcus Aurelius, he writes, "the Church is hardly known, or known as an obscure off-shoot of Judaism, a little sect, worshipping a 'crucified Sophist' " [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Preface].

Stoicism and power: from opposition to the throne

Stoicism's political record runs in two directions. Under Nero and Domitian it was the creed of "the philosophic opposition", a group Dill examines under the question "Was it really revolutionary?". He names Demetrius as "a leader of the philosophic opposition" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book I ch. I; Book III ch. II, contents]. Seneca himself held up an ideal of the principate to Nero in the *De Clementia* [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book I ch. I]. Tacitus, in Dill's reading, writes with "pessimism" about "the corrupting influence of despotic power" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book I ch. I]. Under the Antonines the relation was reversed. Dill's period "closes with the realisation of Plato's dream of a reign of the philosophers", and "the influence of philosophy on the legislation of the Antonines is a commonplace of history" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Preface]. Yet he judges that philosophy "failed … to find an anodyne for the spiritual distresses of the mass of men". It "was an esoteric creed, and the masses remained untouched by it". The answer they sought "came to them at last from the regions of the East … through the worships of Isis and Mithra" [Dill, Roman

Society, #60232, Preface]. That is the subject of the next chapter. ## A modern counterpoint: Heisman on timeless order

Both Stoic providence and Epicurean natural law assume that the cosmos has a permanent rational order. Mitchell Heisman, discussing Leo Strauss, questions any such assumption: "Strauss claimed that he assumed the existence of an eternal whole. The capacity for reason requisite for arguing for a timeless order or timeless values cannot be more timeless than the principles of logic themselves. To assume the logical precedence of eternity over history is to assume that the principles of logic themselves are eternal" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, part 49]. Elsewhere he reports Meinecke's view that historicism "liberated modern thought from the two-thousand-year domination of the theory of natural law", replacing the vision of "timeless, absolutely valid truths which correspond to the rational order dominant throughout the universe" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, part 41]. That two-thousand-year tradition begins with the Stoic Logos described in this chapter.

Key points

- The Romanian textbook defines the Stoic Logos as the creative agent of the cosmos, inherent in matter and "not a supernatural, personal and independent force". It is distinct from the *logos spermatikos*.
- Epicureans kept the gods but denied that they intervene. Evans sums up the message as "the universe does not care what we do", a cure for fear of divine punishment and of death.
- Annas shows that the two schools disagree on whether *ataraxia* is happiness itself (Epicurus) or a component of a virtuous "smooth flow of life" (Stoics).
- Dill describes the imperial schools as having "forsook metaphysical speculation" for spiritual direction (Seneca) and popular preaching (Cynics, Dion, Epictetus).
- Diaconescu calls Epictetus "the most religious of all the Stoics", with a personal, immanent, all-seeing god. Zahn and Kuiper thought he read the New Testament; Bonhöffer and Sharp denied it. Diaconescu sees "interferences".
- Politically, Stoicism moved from the "philosophic opposition" under Nero and Domitian to the Antonine "reign of the philosophers". Dill judges that it never reached the masses, who turned to Isis and Mithra.

- Heisman's critique of an assumed "eternal whole" questions the timeless rational order on which Stoic theology rests.

Chapter 43.

Gods from the East: Cybele and Attis, Isis and Serapis, and the Mystery Cults of Rome

Philosophy, as Chapter 42 showed, remained the creed of an educated few. Samuel Dill argues that the masses of the Roman Empire found their "Divine light" elsewhere: "the voice came to them at last from the regions of the East. It came through the worships of Isis and Mithra, which promised a hope of immortality, and provided a sacramental system to soothe the sense of guilt" [Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, #60232, Preface]. This chapter covers the main "oriental" cults other than Mithraism, which is treated in Chapters 22–26: the Phrygian Great Mother Cybele and her consort Attis, the Egyptian Isis, and Serapis, the god created under the Ptolemies. The political facts come first. Each of these cults reached Rome through acts of state, and each was at times treated as a threat to it. Their rites of initiation and promises of salvation follow. The chapter ends with the long-running controversy over "dying and rising gods" and their alleged parallels to Christ.

The Great Mother comes to Rome: religion as war policy

Carl Olson's anthology states it directly: "The goddess Cybele—or 'Magna Mater deum Idaea,' as she was called in Rome—was the first oriental deity officially adopted by the Romans" [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988, "Magna Mater: Great Mother of the Roman Empire"]. The chapter rebuilds the decision from Livy. The Hannibalic war "had strained the religious and social fabric of traditional Roman society". Foreign cults in Rome between 218 and 205 BCE "came to be viewed by the Roman aristocrats as a threat to the overall authority

of the Roman state", and their rites "were officially banned by the magistrates in 213, but the cults themselves could not be suppressed". In 205, after "frequent showers of stones", the Sibylline books were consulted. An oracle was found saying that "if ever a foreign foe should invade the land of Italy, he could be driven out of Italy as defeated if the Idaean Mother should be brought from Pessinus to Rome", and Delphi confirmed it [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988].

Olson's contributor stresses the calculation behind this piety. "By officially adopting a foreign cult, the Roman aristocrats could more effectively control the cult and its rites." Aristocratic families who claimed descent from Aeneas' Trojans could also treat the goddess of Mount Ida as "a sort of national Roman patroness". And Rome "wanted to secure relations with King Attalus of Pergamum to form a common front in opposition to King Philip of Macedon". "This combination of religious, political, and social factors led to the official adoption of the cult." In Livy's account, "King Attalus of Pergamum willingly handed over the goddess, in the form of a sacred black stone", which was later set as the face of her cult statue. In Ovid's version the goddess herself declares, "Rome is a place meant to be the resort of every god" [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988]. She arrived on 4 April 204 BCE and was received by P. Scipio Nasica, judged "the best citizen". When Hannibal was defeated in 201, "the prediction of the Sibylline books had come true", and the Magna Mater was honoured "as the conqueror of Hannibal and as the mother of the Trojans". Unusually for a foreign god, she received a temple inside the sacred boundary, on the Palatine, dedicated in 191 BCE [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988]. Dill's chapter "Magna Mater" likewise dates "its arrival from Pessinus in 204 B.C." [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book IV ch. IV, contents].

Galli, castration and the Attis festival

The state took the goddess but tried to contain her clergy. According to Olson, the April *ludi Megalenses* were "intentionally 'romanized' ... to minimize the dangerous, exotic oriental element of the cult", with a magistrate's sacrifice, plays and aristocratic banquets. But Ovid also describes eunuch priests running through the streets "whipping themselves into a frenzy", and the pontifex maximus therefore "confined the rites of these priests to the temple sanctuary". "Only oriental priests were allowed to serve the Magna Mater; Roman citizens were not allowed to hold priesthoods until the time of Emperor Claudius (41-54 C.E.)", chiefly because "the priests of the goddess practiced self-castration; their

very name, gallus ('cock') makes an ironic point of their condition" [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988]. Ovid's myth of Attis supplies the model. The Phrygian youth breaks his vow of chastity and, driven mad, "mangled … his body with a sharp stone … 'Ah, perish the parts that were my ruin!' His madness set an example, and still his unmanly ministers cut their vile members". The galli imitated the act "using such instruments as a sharp stone, a potsherd, or a knife". The Roman attitude was "a mixture of bewilderment and pity". "Although Emperor Claudius reformed and reorganized the cult to allow Roman citizens to serve as priests … Emperor Domitian (81-96) forbade Roman citizens to practice emasculation" [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988].

The Claudian spring cycle (15–27 March) dramatized death and return: the entry of the pine tree at the equinox, mourning for Attis, the "Day of Blood" (24 March) of flagellation and self-castration, the "sacred night" in which new galli were inducted, and then the *Hilaria*. In the myth, "the mother goddess mourns him so violently that he returns to life". The most solemn rite was the *taurobolium*, in which a bull was killed on a perforated platform so that its blood bathed the initiate standing in a pit below [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988]. Dill writes of "the fascination of the worship of the Great Mother", which was "still powerful in the days of S. Augustine". He describes "vagabond priests in Thessaly described by Apuleius" and "their wild orgies". He also argues that "from a gross origin, they became transmuted into a real spiritual power", with the *taurobolium* "a challenge to the Church" in the last age of the Empire [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book IV ch. IV, contents].

Serapis: a god made by a king

Serapis shows religion created by policy from the start. Cristian Gănescu, an author of the esoteric shelf, writes that in the third century BCE "the pharaoh Ptolemy Soter raised Osiris to the rank of national god, under the name Serapis (Oser-apis, or Osiris-Apis)", Apis being the bull form of Osiris venerated at Memphis. "In a short time, Manetho and Timotheus sketched the main features of the new cult of Serapis. For the practice of the cult, the pharaoh Ptolemy Soter built at Alexandria a vast sanctuary called the Serapeum, in which the statue of Serapis (Osiris-Apis) was enthroned. It is said that the model of the statue of Serapis was received by the pharaoh in a dream" [Gănescu, Tainele inițiaților Vechiului Egipt, #11850]. Miron Ciho's academic study places this within Ptolemaic royal religion. Temples were "the consequence of the goodwill of the Lagid kings and Roman emperors towards Egyptian religion, from Ptolemy I

Soter down to Decius". Hellenistic ruler cult drew on "oriental and in particular Achaemenid influence", and Ptolemy I himself kept a founder's cult (*ktistes*) at Ptolemais [Ciho, Civilizația Egiptului greco-roman, #18260, ch. I]. Dill's chapter "Isis and Serapis" lists "the new propaganda of the Ptolemies—Theories of the origin of Serapis—The new Egyptian Trinity" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book IV ch. V, contents].

Isis: theology, initiation and Roman suspicion

The main literary source on Isiac theology is Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*. Ciho devotes a monograph to it, including a full translation of the Osiris myth and a chapter on "Plutarch and Egyptian eschatology". He concludes that Plutarch's intention "was above all the presentation of a Platonic interpretation of the myth", without ignoring the sources he thought most credible [Ciho, Civilizația Egiptului greco-roman, #18260, ch. IV, ch. VII]. Dill likewise uses the treatise as the model of how philosophy reinterpreted myth "to discover the kernel of truth which is reverently veiled" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book III ch. III, contents].

For initiation the key text is Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* XI. Arthur Darby Nock notes that in *Met.* XI 29 "Lucius has to undergo a new initiation at Rome in order to wear an Isiac vestment on festal days" [Nock, The Roman Army and the Roman Religious Year, #60166]. Dill lists "the initiation of Lucius", "the faith in immortality", daily offices ("Matins and Vespers"), and an "Isiac presbytery" whose rule of life "Tertullian holds ... up as an example" [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book IV ch. V, contents].

The politics was turbulent. Dill traces "efforts of the Government in the first century B.C. to repress the worship—A violent struggle with varying fortunes—The triumvirs in 42 B.C. erect a temple of Isis—Persecution of eastern worships in the reign of Tiberius". After that "there was little opposition", and "Domitian builds a temple of Isis, 92 A.D." [Dill, Roman Society, #60232, Book IV ch. V, contents]. Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince, writing as alternative historians, put the conflict in class terms: "The popular masses of Rome loved the cult of the goddess Isis and embraced it wholeheartedly. Popular movements of this type were always treated with suspicion by the authorities, who considered them a starting point for subversive currents; consequently the Isiacs of Rome were subjected to numerous persecutions. In the end, the Senate ordered the destruction

of the temples dedicated to the gods Isis and Serapis" [Picknett & Prince, Misterul templierilor, #17309]. They go further than the academic sources. Their picture captions claim that studies have revealed "Jesus was an initiate of the cult of Isis and Osiris" and that a secret belief in Isis, disguised as devotion to Mary Magdalene and the Black Madonnas, lay at the root of European "heresy" [Picknett & Prince, Misterul templierilor, #17309].

How the cults spread, and how they differed from Christianity

Nock's *Cambridge Ancient History* chapter explains the mechanism. "Oriental cults sometimes came to Greece as a result of political considerations, but in a far larger measure they were brought by soldiers, trading groups or individuals, and slaves" [Nock, The Development of Paganism in the Roman Empire (CAH XII ch. 12), #60218]. Nock draws two distinctions. Mithraism had "no ceremony which could be made into a public rite, and Mithras never became a civic god … the cult and the temples were always private" [Nock, CAH XII ch. 12, #60218, p. 429]. And "in Christianity initiates were not, as in the Oriental mystery-religions other than Mithraism, an inner circle". In the pagan cults public worship "was open to all worshippers and not only to initiates; initiations were something additional, not available at all times, in all shrines or to any who could not pay enough" [Nock, CAH XII ch. 12, #60218].

Cult	Origin	Entry to Rome	State response	Promise to initiates
Magna Mater / Attis	Pessinus, Phrygia	Official import, 204 BCE	Adopted; clergy confined; citizens barred until Claudius; Domitian bans emasculation	Rebirth (Attis); *taurobolium*
Isis	Egypt, Hellenised	Merchants, slaves, Campanian towns	Repressed in the 1st c. BCE and under Tiberius; later imperial temples	Immortality; personal initiation (Lucius)

Cult	Origin	Entry to Rome	State response	Promise to initiates
Serapis	Created under Ptolemy I	With Isis	As Isis	Healing; "sovereign lord of life" (Aristides, per Dill)
Mithras (Chs. 22–26)	Persia via Asia Minor	Soldiers, officials	Never civic; private (Nock)	Ascent of the soul; seven grades

The "dying and rising god" controversy

The parallels with Christianity were noticed early, and they are still argued over. Olson's contributor writes that "the similarities between the spring rites of Attis, the celebration of his death and miraculous rebirth symbolized by the evergreen tree, and the Easter cycle of Christian holidays are striking", down to the palm-bearers and the wooden cross [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988]. Earl Lee, following Frazer ("the dying god is found in many pagan religions"), quotes a list of pagan saviours: "the Egyptian Osiris was called Savior, so was Horus; so was the Persian Mithras; so was the Greek Hercules … So also was the Phrygian Attis called Savior, and the Syrian Tammuz or Adonis likewise—both of whom … were nailed or tied to a tree, and afterwards rose" [Lee, From the Bodies of the Gods, #65592, ch. 22]. Merlin Stone reads the same material as evidence of an older religion. The son/lover of the Goddess "occurs and recurs throughout the legends of the Goddess religion", from "the most ancient legends of both Sumer and Egypt" down to "the first centuries of Christianity", and in it the king "played the role of the son/lover to the high priestess of the Goddess" [Stone, When God Was a Woman, #87745].

The critical side is set out in *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism.* It explains that the category "received great currency after the work of Sir James George Frazer (1854–1941), but more recently J. Z. Smith, H. Barstad, and other scholars" have challenged it. It argues that Frazer turned Robertson Smith's "more nuanced differentiation of these gods" into a single rubric, and that "within the field of anthropology, Frazer's comparative approach never recovered" [Smith, The Origins of Biblical Monotheism, #64008, ch. 6].

A third view, from within Christianity, treats the borrowing as corruption. C. J. Koster writes that " 'Zeus Helios Great Serapis' was the exceedingly common formula". He says that "not only did the statues of Zeus and Serapis resemble each other, but we … are alarmed at the striking similarity between these statues and that of the images of our Messiah which have been made by the Church". He quotes Jerome, who exclaimed when a church was erected on the site of the Serapeum: "The Egyptian Serapis has become Christian!" [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909, nos. 140–144]. Mehran Keshe puts the derivation at the level of the calendar. In KSW 464, given on the night he calls "Shabe Yalda", the "birth of Mitra", he tells Western listeners that "you celebrate the 25th of December as the birth of Christ" because of the Romans. The session's topic index records "Christmas copy of Mitra" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 464, #378176].

Key points

- Olson's anthology calls Cybele "the first oriental deity officially adopted by the Romans" (204 BCE). The adoption was driven by the Hannibalic war, the Sibylline books, Trojan-descent politics and the alliance with Attalus of Pergamum.
- Rome controlled the cult: the galli's rites were confined to the temple sanctuary, citizens were barred from the priesthood until Claudius, and Domitian forbade citizens to castrate themselves.
- Gănescu says Manetho and Timotheus shaped the cult of Serapis under Ptolemy I, who built the Serapeum from a statue model seen in a dream. Ciho places this within Ptolemaic royal religion.
- Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* is a Platonic reading of the Isis myth (Ciho). Apuleius' Lucius undergoes a further initiation at Rome (Nock).
- Dill records repression of Isis in the first century BCE and under Tiberius, followed by imperial patronage (Domitian, 92 CE). Picknett & Prince describe Senate-ordered destruction of the temples of Isis and Serapis.
- Nock: the cults spread through soldiers, traders and slaves. Mithras never became civic, and unlike the pagan mysteries Christianity did not keep initiates as an inner circle.
- Lee, Stone and Olson's contributor stress the Attis/Osiris/Adonis parallels to Christ. *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism* records that Frazer's approach "never recovered" in anthropology.

- Koster (Serapis imagery; Jerome's "Serapis has become Christian!") and Keshe (KSW 464, Christmas as a copy of Mitra's birth) give two further derivation claims.

Chapter 44.

The Divine Emperor: Ruler Cult, State Religion and the Politics of Worship in Rome

The Roman Empire had no creed, but it did have a cult that every subject could be asked to perform. Between Augustus and Constantine the worship of the emperor, his Genius and his deified predecessors became the common language of loyalty from the Euphrates to Dacia. It sat beside the Capitoline gods and the imported deities of the East and did not replace them. This chapter follows that system from its Hellenistic roots through its organisation in the army and the provinces to Aurelian's solar monotheism. It then turns to the conflict that arose when communities refused to take part. The scholarly picture comes chiefly from A. D. Nock, Miron Ciho and Adrian Bejan. The chapter closes with authors from the library's alternative shelf: Comyns Beaumont on Jewish resistance to the cult of Augustus, and Michael Tsarion and Mehran Keshe, who in different ways see the Roman religious order surviving inside Christianity.

Hellenistic antecedents: from hero to "present god"

The Roman Republic, as the reference shelf summarises it, "did not give worship to any historic figure, or any living man" for five centuries. Its conservative, anti-monarchic *mos maiorum* acknowledged no citizen as divine, although triumphal honours, *imagines* and the household cult of the *genius* came close [Wikipedia: Roman imperial cult]. The Greek East had already gone further. Lysander was worshipped by the Ionian cities, and Alexander "made the divinity of kings standard practice among the Greeks". In 324 BCE he asked the Greek cities to make him a god. The Athenians later lodged Demetrius Poliorcetes in the Parthenon and hymned him as "a present god who heard them, as the other gods did not"

[Wikipedia: Roman imperial cult]. The *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion* gives the whole question a closing chapter, Ivana Petrovic's "Deification—Gods or Men?" [Eidinow & Kindt (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Greek Religion, #66316, ch. 29]. Its title states the ambiguity that ran through ruler cult from the beginning.

Ciho places the Egyptian line of this development in Ptolemaic Egypt. From the fourth century BCE, he writes, there developed "the idea of divine or semi-divine qualities of rulers, likened to gods (*isotheoi*), without however being considered gods". He traces Hellenistic royal cult to oriental and especially Achaemenid influence and to the Greek practice of honouring city founders; Ptolemy I Soter, for example, received a founder's cult at Ptolemais [Ciho, Civilizația Egiptului greco-roman, #18260, Cap. I]. When the Romans took over the Greek world they were fitted into this habit. Flamininus called himself *isotheos* at Delphi, though "not in Latin, or at Rome", and the Greeks created a goddess Roma whose joint cult with Flamininus is attested in 195 BCE [Wikipedia: Roman imperial cult].

Augustus and the shared honours

Ciho states the Augustan settlement precisely: "The imperial cult was a continuation of the Ptolemaic dynastic cult, but with notable differences. Consequently the emperors of the first two centuries, in their great majority, accepted only with reservations the honours brought to their person as a divine power. Augustus accepted divine honours on condition that they were addressed at the same time to the goddess Roma" [Ciho, Civilizația Egiptului greco-roman, #18260, Cap. I, part 15]. In Egypt the cult nonetheless "developed rapidly", and by 6 CE Augustus appears there as "Caesar, emperor, son of Zeus the liberator, Augustus" [Ciho, #18260, Cap. I]. Ciho also records that Rome kept Egyptian temples on a short leash. They had to file yearly registers of all priests and their property, the right of asylum was restricted, and no priestly synods are known from the imperial period [Ciho, #18260, Cap. I, part 5].

Nock describes the official policy as directed by the *princeps* "as pontifex Maximus, as member of all the priestly colleges, and as responsible for public morals and well-being". Under the Julio-Claudians it "continued and reinforced *mos maiorum*... but could not change existing trends except by adding the new religious sentiment towards the princeps" [Nock, The Development of Paganism in the Roman Empire (CAH XII ch. 12), #60218, §II "Official Religion"]. Bejan presents the same development from the provincial side. Augustus "involved the

imperial institution in the social-economic and cultural-religious life of the empire… placing imperial authority in connection with the authority of the gods". Veneration of the dead emperor as *divus* grew until the emperor was considered a god "while still alive, and his family of divine origin". Bejan reads the titles on inscriptions as a record of this growth, from *dominus noster* under Septimius Severus to Caracalla as *felicissimus fortissimusque princeps* [Bejan, Dacia Felix: Istoria Daciei romane, #377460, "Cultul imperial"].

The army's calendar: the Feriale Duranum

The best single document for official cult in the army is the *Feriale Duranum*, a papyrus list of "days with prescribed offerings" found at Dura-Europos on the Euphrates. Nock reports that it "has been dated between 224/5 and 235, and with some probability in 225-7 A.D.". It "records official religious practice, almost certainly that of the cohors XX Palmyrenorum". Its holy days are "exclusively Roman, Imperial, or military" [Nock, The Roman Army and the Roman Religious Year, #60166, §I]. They fall into three groups:

Group	Examples in the Feriale (Nock's list)
Imperial	*vota* of 3 January; birthdays of *divus Iulius* and deified emperors and empresses; the commemoration of Germanicus; *dies imperii* of Trajan, Antoninus, Marcus and Verus, Septimius Severus, Caracalla; days of Severus Alexander's family
Public festivals of Rome	*natalis Martis* (1 March), Quinquatria, *natalis urbis Romae aeternae* (21 April), Vestalia, Neptunalia, Saturnalia
Military	*honesta missio* (7 January, doubtful), two *Rosaliae signorum* (10 and 31 May)

Nock's conclusions are cautious. The Feriale proves that "one military unit, and probably all military units, performed acts of worship not only on numerous Imperial anniversaries but also on various other festivals". This was "the outcome of a special directive, probably due to Augustus". Yet "we cannot suppose any deliberate purpose of Romanization by cult… Roman policy aimed at *disciplina*", and "Roman troops showed a marked neutrality in the religious conflicts of the third and fourth centuries" [Nock, #60166, §VI "Conclusions"]. He grants

"a marked preponderance of Imperial festivals over divine festivals", but adds: "this does not mean that the Emperors outranked the gods" [Nock, #60166, §VI]. On the cult of the standards he allows "perhaps a certain analogy between the cult of the standards and the cult of the Emperor". He cites a British dedication "to the Genius of our lord and of the standards", and an oath from the cohort's own archive: "at every command we shall be prepared to stand watch at the signa of our lord the emperor". He still insists that neither standards nor rulers could be taken seriously as gods: "No honors could cause either to be taken seriously for what they were not" [Nock, #60166, §V and Appendix].

Provincial religion: Dacia as a case study

Bejan's survey of Roman Dacia shows how the imperial cult worked inside a mixed provincial pantheon. Greco-Roman gods account for 73% of the province's roughly 2,100 religious monuments, Mithras for 10%, Syro-Palestinian deities for almost 5%, Anatolian cults for 3.8%, Thraco-Moesian for 3.6% and Egyptian for almost 3%. Over 130 deities are attested in Dacia and Moesia Inferior [Bejan, Dacia Felix, #377460, religion section]. Bejan names two defining features, syncretism (Jupiter merged with the Thracian Zbelsurdos) and *interpretatio romana* (local gods worshipped as Silvanus, Liber and Libera, Diana or Hercules Invictus).

The imperial cult had its own network. A temple of the imperial house stood at Ulpia Traiana from Hadrian's time, and inscriptions began "in honorem domus divinae". The *ordo augustalium*, with its *aedes augustalium* and main altar at Ulpia Traiana, held its most lavish festival on 3 November. *Flamines* took the augustales' role in smaller towns. Units ended their dedications with "devota numini maiestatique eius", and gods themselves took imperial epithets (Apollo Augustus, Minerva Augusta). Bejan calls the worship of emperors as genii "an alliance of throne and altar", in keeping with the view that "the gods are made to serve the state" [Bejan, #377460, "Cultul imperial"]. Jupiter Optimus Maximus appears in more than 250 Dacian inscriptions dedicated by magistrates, legionary commanders and soldiers. His cult "was celebrated on 3 January in the Roman camps". Silvanus ranks third in votive inscriptions after Jupiter and Mithras, with about 100 known texts [Bejan, #377460, "Cultul lui Jupiter", "Cultul lui Silvanus"].

The oriental cults arrived with soldiers and traders. Bejan describes Jupiter Dolichenus as the patron of soldiers. Of the god's dedicants in Dacia, 14 were

soldiers, 6 priests and 4 merchants, and the names break down as 26.7% Syrians, 11.7% Greeks and 6% Romans. Jupiter Heliopolitanus appears on altars at Micia and Sarmizegetusa. Bejan describes Mithras as "the only divinity of Persian origin" to have conquered the empire. In his account Mithras was "born in a cave on 25 December" and worshipped by shepherds, and the cult had seven grades of initiation open only to men. Some 50 Mithraic monuments are known from Oltenia, centred on Romula. Bejan further states that the Mithraic cult "had the greatest role in the formation of the Christian religion" before declining after 391 [Bejan, #377460, "Cultele orientale"]. These are Bejan's statements; the sources on the Mithraic birthday tradition are compared in Chapters 25–26.

Sol Invictus and 25 December

Nock calls Aurelian's solar reform "one innovation of the greatest importance". Rome's Republican cult of Sol "had faded, and the importance of Sol in the City is due to Aurelian, who on his return from Syria built the great temple of Sol Invictus, introduced the celebration of his birthday (*natalis Invicti*) on December 25, and established the college of *pontifices Solis*" [Nock, CAH XII ch. 12, #60218, §II "New Cults at Rome"]. Nock judges it "a creative act, like the Ptolemaic creation of the cult of Sarapis: it made what was potentially a 'cosmopolitan religion', and it gave a new concentration and emphasis to official piety". Sol was prominent from then on. Nock traces the coins that led up to it: Commodus's *Herc. Commodiano*, Jupiter *exsuperantissimus*, and types "on which Sol is the Imperial comrade" [Nock, #60218, "Coin Evidence"]. Under the Tetrarchy, dedications such as *deo Soli invicto Mithrae fautori imperii sui* at Carnuntum (probably 307) show solar and Mithraic piety tied directly to the throne [Nock, #60218]. Because 25 December later became the date of Christmas, the *natalis Invicti* is a central piece of evidence in the later controversy over Christian borrowing. Nock's bibliography lists Usener's *Das Weihnachtsfest* for that question [Nock, #60218, bibliography].

Absorbing gods, testing loyalty

Nock explains why Rome absorbed foreign gods so easily by looking at how its cult was organised. Apart from domestic cult, "Rome's worships were the care of the State", run by boards of the highest-ranking citizens; "no one other than the *nobiles* and a few paid subordinates had any real function in the worship of

the great gods of the State". In a crisis the governing class consulted the Sibylline Books and incorporated "one foreign cult after another in the worships of the State" under the *quindecimviri*. "The hellenization of a worship was cultural; the romanization of a cult was political" [Nock, #60218, §I]. In Rome's case there was "no chance of a static equilibrium". Augustus himself could not halt the change that wars, migrations, slaves and soldiers brought into the city [Nock, #60218, §I]. The same class "interfered repeatedly", often citing fear of immorality in secret rites, "sometimes from a feeling that the solidarity of the State was menaced" [Nock, #60218, §I]. This was the pattern behind the repeated measures against Isiac cult in the late Republic and early Principate. Under the Illyrian emperors the Decian *libelli* "for the first time defined pagan loyalty" [Nock, #60218, §II]. The edict of 250 ordered everyone in the empire to sacrifice to the gods and for the emperor's well-being before witnesses [Wikipedia: Decian persecution]. A cult that had once expressed loyalty now became a test of it, and Christians who refused were exposed to prosecution.

Monotheist opposition was older than the edict. Comyns Beaumont, a revisionist author who places the biblical geography in Britain, reports Josephus on Herod's building of Caesarea. He writes that "the erection of the colossi of Augustus and of Urbs Roma was not only a clear indication of homage to the Imperial Caesar, but it offended the Jews themselves". Beaumont reads Herod's work as "commands and injunctions to please Caesar" under Roman pressure [Beaumont, The Great Deception, #75803, ch. 11 "Suppression"].

Alternative readings: the empire inside the Church

The library's alternative authors argue that the Roman system did not end but changed form. Michael Tsarion reproduces, under the heading "Augustus", a passage holding that after the death of Julius Caesar and "the firm establishment of the Messianic religion and ritual, Augustus ascended the sacred throne of his martyred sire and was in turn addressed as the Son of God, whilst Julius was worshipped as the Father", with "the flamens of the Sacred college" consecrating the cult [Tsarion, Atlantis, Alien Visitation and Genetic Manipulation, #69277, ch. 22 "Epilogue"]. This is Tsarion's presentation. The academic sources above record the cult of *divus Iulius* and the title *divi filius* that correspond to his wording, but do not describe a "Messianic religion" in these terms.

Mehran Keshe goes furthest. In KSW 520 he states: "The Roman gods survived in the Catholic Church and continue to rule the world." He adds that "the subcon-

scious message you get when you walk into a Catholic Church is, if you try to go for truth you will end up on the cross". He also claims that the Vatican does not let anything come out about Mithraism, "because it matches things too closely" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 520, #378232]. In KSW 612 (16 October 2025) the workshop summary lists "changes to scriptures by Roman Rulers - practiced Mithraism; Resurrection from Mitra & Zoroaster". Keshe says that the three days and the ascension "is what was added to, by… the rulers of Rome, to bring it to Mithraism", and he tells listeners not to take the Bible literally but to "separate religious doctrine" from history [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612, #378324, opening and part 3]. Against these manipulations he sets the ethos "Talk good, Think good and Act good", which he attributes to Mitra as "the true soul of humanity" [Keshe, KSW 612, #378324, guide section 2].

Key points

- Ciho describes the imperial cult as a continuation of Ptolemaic dynastic cult. Augustus accepted divine honours only jointly with the goddess Roma, and most emperors of the first two centuries accepted them with reservations, but the cult spread fast in Egypt (Augustus as "son of Zeus the liberator" by 6 CE).
- Greek precedents (Lysander, Alexander, Demetrius as "present god", the goddess Roma of 195 BCE) supplied the forms that Rome took over.
- The Feriale Duranum (c. 225-235, cohors XX Palmyrenorum) shows imperial anniversaries outnumbering divine festivals in army worship. Nock nonetheless denies a deliberate policy of "Romanization by cult" and allows only "a certain analogy" between the cult of the standards and the cult of the emperor.
- In Dacia, Bejan documents the augustales, *flamines*, the formula *in honorem domus divinae* and an "alliance of throne and altar", alongside Jupiter, Silvanus, Mithras, Dolichenus and Heliopolitanus.
- Aurelian built the temple of Sol Invictus, founded the *pontifices Solis* and introduced the *natalis Invicti* on 25 December. Nock calls this a creative act comparable to the creation of Sarapis.
- Nock argues that Rome's lay, state-run priesthood made it easy to absorb foreign gods. The Decian *libelli* of 250 turned cult into a defined test of loyalty.
- Beaumont records Jewish offence at Herod's colossi of Augustus and Roma. Tsarion and Keshe argue in different ways that imperial religion

survived in Christianity. Keshe's "the Roman gods survived in the Catholic Church" and his claim that the resurrection narrative was added to align it with Mithraism are given here as his own claims.

Chapter 45.

Thrice-Great Hermes: The Corpus Hermeticum and Hermetic Spirituality

Hermes Trismegistus had two careers in the history of ideas. The first was in late antique Egypt, where Greek-speaking authors wrote dialogues of revelation in his name. The second was in the Renaissance, which took him for a sage older than Moses. This chapter deals mainly with the first career: the treatises, how they were composed and dated, their visionary core, and the Coptic Hermetica found at Nag Hammadi. It marks clearly where later alchemical and esoteric reception begins. The library's main witnesses are the Romanian Herald edition of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Wouter Hanegraaff's 2022 monograph, the Nag Hammadi Scriptures edited by Marvin Meyer, and Luke Myers' *Gnostic Visions*. A group of later esoteric authors carries the story forward.

The figure: Hermes, Thoth and "Thrice-Great"

The preface to the Romanian edition says that "from the fourth century BCE the Greeks designated the Egyptian god Thoth by the… name of Hermes Trismegistos". Thoth was revered as the creator of the arts and sciences and the inventor of hieroglyphs. The epithet *Trismegistos*, however, "is of relatively late origin and is not found in any author earlier than the second Christian century" [Hermes Trismegistus, Corpus Hermeticum (Herald 2012), #40797, Preface §1]. The preface records the ancient explanations. The *Chronicon Alexandrinum* says Hermes taught one God with three supreme powers. The alchemical tradition says he held "three parts of the philosophy of the whole world": alchemy ("the work of the Sun"), astrology ("the work of the Moon") and theurgy ("the work of the stars") [#40797, Preface §2]. It also gives the pious chronologies that made Hermes a contemporary of Moses, or even Adam, Enoch or Joseph. Its footnote

adds that in 1614 Isaac Casaubon showed the writings "belong to the Christian era" [#40797, Preface §3, n. 2]. On dating, the preface concludes that the treatises were "composed probably in Egypt, roughly between the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD". Hermes himself was "a Hellenistic fusion of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth". The literature, it says, "comes from the same religious and philosophical setting that produced Neoplatonism, Christianity and the various groups of writings gathered under the name 'gnosticism' " [#40797, Preface §6]. The reference shelf gives c. 100 to c. 300 CE and notes that earlier dates, such as Flinders Petrie's 500-200 BCE, "have been rejected by most other scholars" [Wikipedia: Corpus Hermeticum].

The shape of the corpus

The Romanian editors divide the surviving Greek and Latin Hermetica into five classes. They are (A) the *Corpus Hermeticum*, (B) the Latin *Asclepius* or *Perfect Sermon*, (C) the extracts preserved by Stobaeus, including the *Kore Kosmou* ("Virgin of the World"), (D) fragments in the Church Fathers, and (E) fragments in Zosimus, Fulgentius, Iamblichus and Julian. They "have followed here the structure given by G. R. S. Mead in *Thrice-Greatest Hermes* (London, 1906)", while "A. D. Nock and A. J. Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum* (Paris, 1945), present a slightly different classification" [#40797, Preface §3 and n. 3; the same apparatus in Hermes Trismegistus, Corpus Hermeticum (Dumbrăveanu & Anghel), #65517]. Within the corpus they describe CH I, the *Poimandres*, as a revelation from "the Shepherd of men, an expression of the universal Mind". CH II-IX are "general sermons", CH X "The Key" sums them up, CH XI-XIV deal with particular aspects, and CH XVI contains the Definitions of Asclepius to King Ammon [#40797, Preface §3].

Text	Language of survival	Content (per the library's editions)
CH I *Poimandres*	Greek	Vision of Nous; cosmogony; fall of Anthropos; ascent; mission
CH VII	Greek	Sermon: "the greatest evil in mankind is ignorance concerning god"

Text	Language of survival	Content (per the library's editions)
CH XIII	Greek	Secret dialogue on the mountain: rebirth, vow of silence
Asclepius	Latin (Coptic excerpt NHC VI,8)	Temple dialogue; god-making statues; apocalypse of Egypt
On the Eighth and Ninth	Coptic (NHC VI,6)	Initiation of the son into the eighth and ninth spheres

Byzantine editors assembled the compilation, and it is first attested in Michael Psellos. Ficino translated treatises I-XIV and Lodovico Lazzarelli translated the rest, which is why the conventional numbering skips chapter XV [Wikipedia: Corpus Hermeticum].

The Poimandres: vision, cosmogony, fall and ascent

The preface calls the *Poimandres* "one of the oldest Hermetic treatises in existence", reworked "probably in the period of the first centuries of the Christian era" but containing "many of the original concepts of the Hermetic cults". It also makes the unusual claim that the work "is composed of seventeen fragmentary writings gathered together and presented as a single work" [#40797, Preface §4]. The editors discuss the name at length. Reitzenstein linked it to the Shepherd of Hermas and to the Gnostic sense of *authentia*. Granger proposed a Coptic etymology meaning "the witness". Griffith and Scott proposed "knowledge of the Sun-God". The editor's own etymology is "the reason of sovereignty", which reflects the Stoic *hegemonikon* [#40797, Preface §4].

The treatise opens with the visionary state itself. In the Romanian translation it reads: "Once, when I was deeply absorbed in thought about the things that are, my thought rose to a great height, with all the bodily senses restrained as far as possible, as when they are numbed by sleep… It seemed to me that I saw someone immeasurably great… calling me by name: What do you wish to hear and see, and what do you wish to know and understand?" The figure answers: "I am Poimandres, the Mind (*nous*) of the supreme sovereignty (*authentia*)" [Corpus Hermeticum, #40797, CH I §§1-2]. Everything then becomes Light, and a

serpentine Darkness descends. A holy Word (Logos) comes down on the moist nature. Poimandres explains: "I am that Light, Mind, your God… and the luminous Word that came forth from Mind is the Son of God" (§6). The Mind-God, "being male and female", produces a Demiurge-Mind, who fashions seven Governors "whose government is called Fate" (§9).

The anthropology follows. The Father begets *Anthropos* in his own image. Anthropos enters the Demiurge's sphere, bends down through the Harmony and shows Nature his form. She "smiled with love", he desired to dwell in his reflection, and "Nature… wrapped herself wholly around him" (§§12-14). For this reason man is double: "mortal because of the body, and immortal because of the essential Man", and "though above the Harmony, he became a slave of the Harmony" (§15). Salvation is ascent. At death the soul gives back a vice to each of the seven zones and reaches "the Eighth Nature, clothed in its own Power". It then enters God: "This is the good end of those who have attained knowledge: to become one with God" (§§24-26). Hermes is then sent to preach: "O you earth-born men, who have given yourselves to drunkenness and sleep and ignorance of God, wake up" (§27) [#40797, CH I].

Revelation or literature? Hanegraaff's thesis

Hanegraaff arranges the Hermetic texts in concentric circles. "At the center of the circle we find first of all the divine revelation of CH I, to which I attach the visionary's sermon based on that revelation (CH VII)". He defines CH I as "Revelation by the divine nous in a visionary state, including an account of the loss and regaining of knowledge, after which the visionary embarks on a mission to spread the word" [Hanegraaff, Hermetic Spirituality and the Historical Imagination, #63731]. His close reading rests on the vocabulary. Hermes first reflects using "fairly conventional terms for thinking or intellectual reflection, *ennoia* and *dianoia*", but Poimandres asks what he would understand "by his nous". The *nous* is at once "an ultimate reality" in ontology and a faculty in epistemology. Poimandres then takes "one further and truly radical step" and makes clear that the divine nous Hermes perceives is not external to him [#63731]. From this Hanegraaff concludes that "different modalities of consciousness imply different types of knowledge". He holds that Hermetic gnosis "was not concerned with domination but with knowledge and understanding – or, more precisely, with knowledge as understanding". He criticises "conventional patterns of resistance against straightforward textual evidence" of ecstasy, and cites colleagues' "discomfort" and "embarrassment" [#63731, notes]. Hanegraaff's point is that

the texts report visionary practice, and that reading them only as philosophy ignores what they say about themselves.

The Romanian editors defend Hermetism against the charge of world-hatred in a similar spirit. The Hermetist "recognises the Divinity in every part of nature" and sees in "ignorance of God the greatest of all evils". "The pessimism attributed to some Hermetic sentences, especially in the Poimandres, is only apparent, not real", and comes "only from the imperfection of existence compared with pure and divine Being". They add that the system values beauty and the union of the sexes, and that the Fall is an allegory "which does not imply… a sin or a state of inferiority for any individual or sex" [#40797, Preface §5].

The Asclepius and the Nag Hammadi Hermetica

The *Asclepius* survives whole only in Latin. Wikipedia describes it as a dialogue "set in the sanctuary of an Egyptian temple" between Hermes and Asclepius, Tat and Hammon, probably written in Alexandria between 100 and 300 CE. It was falsely attributed to Apuleius in the Middle Ages and was the only religio-philosophical Hermetic text available in Latin before Ficino [Wikipedia: Asclepius (treatise)]. Its best-known passage concerns the making of gods: "Just as the Lord and Father… is the creator of the heavenly gods, so man is the creator of the gods in the temples". These gods have "two natures", one divine and one human, the latter being the matter of which they are made. Asclepius asks, "Are you speaking of statues?" and Hermes replies that he means statues "so full of life, feeling and aspiration, which work so many wonders; prophetic statues which give dreams and foretell the future". He continues: "Egypt is the image of heaven… this land is in truth the temple of the whole world" [Corpus Hermeticum (Herald), #40797, Asclepius XXIII-XXIV]. A prophecy follows. Divinity will abandon Egypt, foreigners will fill the land, worship of the gods will be "forbidden and punished by laws", the land "will be filled with tombs and the dead", and only "words inscribed in stone" will bear witness to its piety (XXIV-XXV). The Romanian notes record that Augustine quotes this passage in *De Civitate Dei* [#40797, Asclepius XXIII n.].

The Romanian edition also notes that "in 1945, among the Gnostic manuscripts of Nag Hammadi, writings of a Hermetic character were also discovered (in the form of conversations between Hermes and Asclepius) and texts about the Ogdoad and Ennead, written in Coptic". It cites Stephan Hoeller [#40797, Preface §3 n. 1; #65517]. Meyer's edition presents these texts as tractates of Codex VI. They

are *On the Eighth and Ninth*, *The Prayer of Thanksgiving* and an *Excerpt from the Perfect Discourse*, translated by Jean-Pierre Mahé and Marvin Meyer [The Nag Hammadi Scriptures (Meyer ed.), #69839]. The introduction notes that when the Greek original of *On the Eighth and Ninth* was written in the second century CE, "these terms would have evoked astrological ideas, namely, the eighth and the ninth heavenly spheres, rather than the primeval deities of Egypt". In the text the initiator tells his son: "copy this book for the temple at Diospolis, in hieroglyphic characters... copy the contents of the book on turquoise steles" [#69839, *On the Eighth and Ninth* 61,18-63,32]. Mahé's introduction contrasts the Perfect Discourse, which "seems at first glance confused, down-to-earth, and polytheistic", with "such initiatory texts as Poimandres and the Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth" [#69839]. Wikipedia reports that the 1945 find led Mahé and others to suggest a background in Hellenistic Egyptian texts [Wikipedia: Corpus Hermeticum].

Hermetism, Gnosticism and Egypt

Luke Myers places Hermetism inside the Gnostic phenomenon. "The Egyptian Hermetic tradition has been defined as a form of Gnosticism. It represents a non-Christian lineage of Hellenistic Egyptian Gnosticism. The central texts of the Egyptian Hermetic tradition are known as the Corpus Hermeticum". These texts, in his reading, show the same "visionary experience of gnosis and union with the divine mind that is found in later Christian Gnosticism" [Myers, Gnostic Visions, #70923, ch. 4 "The Egyptian Hermetic Tradition"; "Hermetism & Gnosticism"]. Myers' wider argument, discussed in the next chapter, is that these visions had ritual and pharmacological causes. The Romanian editors' notes support the link between the two traditions. They compare the serpentine Darkness of CH I §4 with the Sethian "coiled Water" in Hippolytus, and with a Sethian or Ophite system preserved by Irenaeus' Latin translator and by Theodoret [#40797, CH I nn.].

Later reception: the Emerald Tablet and the Renaissance (marked as later)

The material in this section belongs to medieval and modern reception, not to the ancient corpus. The Romanian preface says the *Tabula Smaragdina* first ap-

peared in the West in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum.* Its oldest surviving copy is Arabic, probably from Syriac and ultimately from a Greek original, possibly Alexandrian. The editors give its thirteen maxims, starting with "What is below is like what is above" [#40797, Preface §2]. Dennis William Hauck, an alchemical writer, says the spirit of Hermes lives on "in seventeen documents containing teachings ascribed to him and known as the Corpus Hermeticum". He also claims that phrases of the Tablet "can be found much earlier in the Papyrus of Ani" and the Book of the Dead [Hauck, The Emerald Tablet, #83313, ch. 2]. Clare Goodrick-Clarke writes that "as we might expect of a work coming out of Alexandria at the beginning of the Christian era, the Corpus Hermeticum combines Hellenistic and Gnostic ideas with Egyptian cosmology". She also records that when Leonardo of Pistoia brought the manuscript to Cosimo de' Medici in 1460, "it was considered a work more venerable than that of Moses or Plato" [Goodrick-Clarke, Alchemical Medicine for the 21st Century, #68643, "Corpus Hermeticum"]. Christian Rebisse says Ficino gave the West its first translations of Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, Iamblichus and Dionysius the Areopagite, and dates his published translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* to 1471 [Rebisse, Rosicrucian History and Mysteries, #66262, ch. 2]. The reference shelf dates the start of Ficino's work to 1462-1463 and calls the result central to his *prisca theologia* [Wikipedia: Corpus Hermeticum]. Later parts of this study follow that line of reception.

Key points

- Hermes Trismegistus is a Hellenistic fusion of Hermes and Thoth. The epithet is not attested before the second century CE, and the treatises are dated to c. 100-300 CE in Egypt, from the same milieu as Neoplatonism, Christianity and Gnosticism.
- The Romanian edition follows Mead's 1906 arrangement and notes that Nock and Festugière (1945) classify the texts slightly differently. Casaubon's 1614 analysis removed the claim that Hermes predated Moses.
- The *Poimandres* (CH I) describes a vision of Nous with the senses "numbed as by sleep", a Logos cosmogony, the fall of Anthropos into Nature, the soul's ascent through seven zones to the Eighth, and a mission to preach.
- Hanegraaff places CH I and CH VII at the centre of the corpus as revelation and sermon. He argues that Hermetic gnosis is "knowledge as understanding" tied to an altered state, and criticises scholarly discomfort with the evidence of ecstasy.

- The Romanian editors reject the charge of pessimism. For them "ignorance of God" is "the greatest of all evils", and the Hermetist sees God in all nature.
- The *Asclepius* teaches that humans make temple gods, living and prophetic statues, and prophesies the abandonment of Egypt. Coptic Hermetica, including *On the Eighth and Ninth*, came to light at Nag Hammadi in 1945.
- The Emerald Tablet, the alchemical Hermes and Ficino's Renaissance Hermes belong to later reception. Hauck, Goodrick-Clarke and Rebisse represent that later reading.

Chapter 46.

Gnosis and the Demiurge: Nag Hammadi, Sethians and Valentinians

For about sixteen centuries the Gnostics were known mainly through the books written to refute them. That changed in December 1945, when a find in Upper Egypt returned their own texts. This chapter reconstructs the main Gnostic movements of the second and third centuries: Sethian myth and its ignorant creator, Valentinian sacramental practice, and Gnostic anthropology. It then turns to the polemic that set Gnostics against the emerging Catholic Church, the scholarly dispute over whether "Gnosticism" is a valid category, and the modern revival in Jung and Thomas Mann. The textual basis is Marvin Meyer's *Nag Hammadi Scriptures* and Ioan Petru Culianu's history of the Western dualist gnoses. The esoteric and polemical readings of Luke Myers, Manly P. Hall and John Lamb Lash stand beside them and are attributed to their authors.

The discovery

James M. Robinson's essay in Meyer's edition describes the Nag Hammadi Scriptures as "a collection of thirteen papyrus codices—bound books, not scrolls—that were buried near the city of Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt" [Meyer (ed.), The Nag Hammadi Scriptures, #69839, "What Are the Nag Hammadi Scriptures?"]. The Berlin codex (Papyrus Berolinensis 8502) already held duplicates of the Secret Book of John and another tractate. Codex Tchacos came to light more recently. With the 1945 discovery, "for the first time in more than fifteen hundred years, scholars could open and read other gospels—the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Truth, the Gospel of Philip" [#69839]. The codices contain Christian, Sethian, Valentinian and Hermetic material; the Hermetic tractates of Codex VI

were treated in the previous chapter. Robert Lloyd describes how "an Arab countryman accidentally discovered a large collection of Gnostic codices" and says the find "became responsible for an unprecedented amount of interest in the early Christian tradition usually known as Gnosticism" [Lloyd, The Knowledge That Leads to Wholeness, #62400, ch. 20]. Myers notes that the complete English translation, "The Nag Hammadi Library, published in 1977, is a result of this effort" [Myers, Gnostic Visions, #70923, ch. 10].

Sethian myth: Sophia, Yaldabaoth and the archons

The Sethian myth is the best documented, and it centres on a fault in the divine world. In the Secret Book of John the Wisdom (Sophia) of the Pleroma brings forth, without her consort, a misshapen offspring, Yaldabaoth. He creates the archons and the lower heavens. Meyer's introduction notes that the first part of the revelation "concludes with Yaldabaoth's boast, 'I am a jealous god and there is no other god beside me' (II 13, 8–9)". The text itself says: "When he saw creation surrounding him, and the throng of angels around him that had come forth from him, he said to them, 'I am a jealous god and there is no other god beside me' " [#69839, Secret Book of John]. Here the God of Genesis becomes an ignorant demiurge quoting Isaiah. On the Origin of the World presents the same scene. The ruler says "I am God, and there is no other but me", and Pistis replies: "You are wrong, Samael—which means 'blind god.' An enlightened, immortal human exists before you" [#69839, On the Origin of the World].

Meyer's introduction describes The Nature of the Rulers (*Hypostasis of the Archons*) as two narratives. The first (86,20-93,13) "gives a Sethian interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis (1–6)", with the Father of the All, Incorruptibility and Pistis Sophia among its characters [#69839, introduction to The Nature of the Rulers]. Culianu retells the episode from the Berlin codex in Romanian. Sophia "becomes aware of the evil (*kakia*) that follows from Ialdabaoth's apostasy. Full of shame, she hides in the darkness of Ignorance, prey to chaotic motions (BG p. 130 Till). Then Ialdabaoth-the-Arrogant (*Authades*) learns of the existence of his Mother, but continues to ignore what is above her" [Culianu, Gnozele dualiste ale Occidentului, #87087, "Evanghelia Egiptenilor"]. Culianu identifies two founding dualist myths, that of "the Mother who errs" and that of her Son, "the ignorant and boastful Demiurge of this world". Because the Demiurge's "double characteristic is to be ignorant and boastful, arrogance being the logical consequence of the feeling of his uniqueness", most versions say

"he completely ignores his origin" [#87087]. Culianu's larger project is a typology of dualism. It sorts dualisms into eschatological or dialectical according to whether the conflict ends or repeats, and it reads the dualist gnoses from antiquity to the medieval Cathars as one system "generated by the same premises" [#87087]. In the same tradition the archons, seeing "the spark of light that shines in Adam", decide "to shut him in matter forever, creating for him… the physical body" [#87087].

Valentinian sacraments and Sethian rites

The Valentinians formed a Christian school rather than a separate religion. Valentinus (c. 100-c. 165) taught in Alexandria and then in Rome. He divided humanity into pneumatics, psychics and hylics, and his followers, including Heracleon and Ptolemy, "continued to consider themselves orthodox" [Wikipedia: Valentinus (Gnostic)]. The Gospel of Philip, which Meyer's edition calls predominantly Valentinian, speaks in a sacramental language. It names five mysteries: baptism, chrism, Eucharist, redemption and bridal chamber. One passage reads: "Anyone who goes down into the water and comes up without receiving anything and says, 'I am a Christian,' has borrowed the name. But one who receives the Holy Spirit has the name as a gift". The bridal chamber is explained in these words: "If the female had not separated from the male, the female and the male would not have died… Christ came to heal the separation that was from the beginning and reunite the two" [#69839, Gospel of Philip 64,22-31; 70,9-22].

Myers' chapter on Gnostic ritual describes a Sethian baptismal sequence "which the texts often designate by the term 'the Five Seals' ". He concludes that the Five Seals "were a five step ritual purification process" [Myers, Gnostic Visions, #70923, ch. 5 "Sethian Baptism"]. He goes further and argues for a "Gnostic Cup of Visions". In his account the cup of the monad in the Hermetic texts and the "living waters" of Sethian texts both point to a visionary drink. He proposes that "if suitable psychoactive ingredients can be identified", a theory "can be built to uncover evidence for the use of these substances in the visionary ritual experiences of the Gnostic and Hermetic traditions" [#70923, ch. 5-6]. In chapters 7-9 he names the candidate as *Peganum harmala*. He traces it through the Zoroastrian haoma and suggests that Ephedra later replaced the "more controversial and psychoactive plant Peganum Harmala" in the Zoroastrian rite during periods of persecution. He then links harmala to Gnosticism and the Mandaeans

in “Identifying the Gnostic Sacrament” [#70923, chs. 7-9]. This is Myers’ own thesis.

Feature	Sethian (Myers, Meyer, Culianu)	Valentinian (Meyer, Wikipedia)
Creator	Yaldabaoth/Samael, ignorant and boastful	Demiurge as ignorant but not wholly evil
Fallen principle	Sophia, ashamed, in “darkness of Ignorance”	Lower Sophia / Achamoth
Ritual	Baptism of the Five Seals	Baptism, chrism, Eucharist, redemption, bridal chamber
Anthropology	Spark of light imprisoned in body by archons	Pneumatics, psychics, hylics
Relation to Church	Separate lineage of Seth	Self-understood as Christian, often inside congregations

Body, soul and spirit

Gnostic anthropology split the human being into three parts. The point is summarised in an unexpected place, the guide to a medical compilation in the library, *Cancer Is A Fungus*. In a section on the soul-body problem it contrasts “the well-defined Gnostic trichotomy of spirit, psyche, and body with the intermediate stance of Christian orthodoxy, which views soul-body separation as temporary and unnatural” [Cancer Is A Fungus (compilation), #63306, guide chunk 44 “Philosophical Dichotomies and the Soul-Body Problem”]. The orthodox hope for bodily resurrection thus stood against the Gnostic hope for the spirit’s escape. The Valentinian triad of pneumatics, psychics and hylics turned the same division into a ranking of persons [Wikipedia: Valentinus (Gnostic)].

Heresiology and the politics of suppression

Until 1945 the Gnostics were known chiefly through Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Tertullian and Epiphanius, and those authors shaped the picture. The chapter on the Gnostic Sophia in Carl Olson’s anthology warns that “Gnostic systems as we find them in the Nag Hammadi codices and the church fathers flourished on

amalgamation and complexity", and that "one cannot expect to find some single Gnostic Urmythos". It adds in a note that patristic authors present Ptolemy "as Valentinus's successor because they seek to make the Gnostic movement fit into a single chain of traditions", citing Lüdemann [Olson (ed.), The Book of the Goddess, #39988, chapter on the Gnostic Sophia and n. 5]. Tertullian's story that Valentinus turned heretic out of pique at losing a bishopric is rejected by "few modern historians" [Wikipedia: Valentinus (Gnostic)].

Manly P. Hall, writing as an esotericist, reads the polemic as persecution. The Gnostic teachers "have been men of exceptional brilliance, for they were singled out by the Church Fathers as the objects of particular and continued persecution". Simon Magus "was subjected to an especially spiteful and unchristian tirade of abuse" [Hall, Wisdom of the Knowing Ones, #70964, "Gnosticism, the Key to Esoteric Christianity"]. Hall suggests that "Gnosticism may have originated in the Syrian teachings of Simon Magus", and notes that the Fathers "seemed better informed on heresies than orthodoxies" [#70964]. Myers' chapter 10 puts the conflict in institutional terms. Its sections are "Early Christian Conflict", "Christian Persecution", "Two churches", "Extraction of Gnostic Rituals" and "The Destruction of Gnosticism" [#70923, ch. 10]. His thesis is that the orthodox church took over Gnostic rites while destroying the movement.

John Lamb Lash makes the strongest charge, writing from an avowedly Pagan and Sophianic standpoint. He sets out to "recover the Sophianic vision of the Pagan Mysteries". Writing of Caesar's destruction at Alexandria, he says it "dramatically demonstrated the license to destroy Pagan writings with impunity, and every Christianized Roman emperor followed his example". Alesia (52 BCE) and Alexandria (47 BCE) were for him "the two definitive acts of political and intellectual genocide in Pagan antiquity" [Lash, Not in His Image, #64168]. In Hypatia's lifetime, he writes, the dominant story "crystallized in favor of a patriarchal scheme of divine redemption, stamped with the imprimatur of Roman Empire. The authority of the off-planet deity suited imperial lust for power to a T. The fourth century saw the imposition of the death penalty on Pagan religion and heretical schism" [#64168]. In Lash's account political power and theology work together: the Church allied with the empire (whose religious politics are traced in Chapter 44) suppresses the Sophia myth because it threatens the claim of a single sovereign god.

The pagan critique: Plotinus

Opposition did not come only from the Church. Plotinus wrote a treatise against the Gnostics (*Ennead* II.9), and Nock observes: "From Plotinus—or from Amelius—the opposition of Neoplatonism and gnosticism was clear: and many of the arguments used would be applicable to Catholic Christianity" [Nock, The Development of Paganism in the Roman Empire (CAH XII ch. 12), #60218, §VI]. Grimstad, summarising Hans Jonas, likewise stresses "the distinction between the catastrophic character of the Gnostic system and the closely related Neoplatonic system" [Grimstad, Thomas Mann and Gnosticism (Introduction), #44037]. Pagan philosophers and Catholic bishops thus shared one ground: the cosmos is good and its maker is not ignorant. This anticipates the Neoplatonism treated in the next chapter.

Is "Gnosticism" a real category?

Kirsten Grimstad sets out the two sides of the modern debate. One side holds that "in stamping out Gnosticism, Christianity lost the radiance and vitality that accompanies the individual's experience of God". On the other side, "in *Rethinking Gnosticism: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (1996), Michael Williams contends that 'Gnosticism' as constructed by historians of religion is so rife with contradictions" that the category should be abandoned [Grimstad, #44037, part 6]. Olson's anthology makes a related point when it says that many scholars define Gnosticism as "a particular hermeneutic, a radical reversal and revaluation of traditional symbols" rather than a single religion [#39988]. Culianu takes a middle position. He keeps "dualist gnoses" as a family of mythic transformations generated by shared premises, not as a single church [#87087].

Modern reception: Jung and Thomas Mann

The modern revival of Gnosticism began before Nag Hammadi. Grimstad traces "the first wave of the modern revival of Gnosticism" through European Aestheticism into "popular esoteric schools". She reads a "Gnostic subtext in *Doktor Faustus*" and starts from the observation that "the first figure associated with the name Faust was none other than the legendary Simon Magus" [Grimstad,

#44037]. Mann's novel is set against Germany's descent into National Socialism, and Grimstad treats the fate of Leverkühn, "loved but cursed", as Mann's judgement on a Gnostic-aesthetic sensibility in German culture [#44037]. Lloyd reads Gnostic myth through Jung. He writes that the Gnostics "realized that the Demiurge isn't necessarily evil; rather he is simply deluded, ignorant of the facts of his own existence". Because "the god image reflects the psychology of the human person", the Demiurge "is the cause of tremendous suffering". The task is to rescue the Valentinian "Achamoth, to heal her, and to help her to find her wholeness", which Lloyd takes as an image of individuation [Lloyd, The Knowledge That Leads to Wholeness, #62400, ch. 3 and ch. 20].

Key points

- Thirteen papyrus codices found near Nag Hammadi in December 1945 (English edition 1977, per Myers) restored the Gnostics' own voices: Sethian, Valentinian, Thomasine and Hermetic texts.
- In Sethian myth Sophia's unauthorised offspring Yaldabaoth boasts "I am a jealous god and there is no other god beside me" and is rebuked as Samael, "blind god". Culianu describes the ashamed Sophia hiding in "the darkness of Ignorance" while Authades remains ignorant of what lies above his Mother.
- The Valentinian Gospel of Philip names five mysteries, ending in the bridal chamber that heals the separation of male and female. Myers describes a Sethian rite of Five Seals and argues for an entheogenic "Cup of Visions" based on *Peganum harmala*, which is his own thesis.
- Gnostic anthropology split spirit, psyche and body, whereas orthodoxy treated the separation of soul and body as temporary and unnatural.
- Olson's anthology argues that the Fathers built the Valentinian "chain of traditions". Hall sees deliberate persecution, and Lash calls the destruction of Pagan and Sophianic writings "political and intellectual genocide" tied to imperial power.
- Plotinus also opposed the Gnostics, with arguments Nock judged equally usable by Catholic Christianity.
- Michael Williams (1996) argues for dismantling the category "Gnosticism". Against him stands the view that Christianity lost its "radiance and vitality" by suppressing it. The Gnostic revival continues in Jung, as Lloyd presents it, and in Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*, as Grimstad reads it.

Chapter 47.

The Last Philosophers and the Last Pagan Emperor: Neoplatonism, Theurgy, Julian and the End of the Old Gods

Part 5 has followed the Greco-Roman world through its civic cults, mysteries, philosophical schools and gnostic sects. This last chapter of the part deals with paganism's final synthesis and how it ended. Neoplatonism, begun by Plotinus, became the intellectual core of late paganism. Under Iamblichus it took on a ritual form, and under Julian (361-363) it was briefly the creed of the Roman state. Within a generation, sacrifice had been banned, the Serapeum pulled down and Hypatia killed. The library's sources describe these events very differently. Christopher P. Jones describes a gradual "Christianization from above", John Lamb Lash a "genocide of Pagan culture", and Mitchell Heisman a conquest of Rome by "Jewish-based God memes".

Plotinus and Porphyry

Greenwood dates Plotinus to c. 204-270 CE, calls him "the most influential Neoplatonist", and says he was "educated in Alexandria and supported by Emperor Gallienus" [Greenwood, A Conceptual History of Psychology, #25954, "Neoplatonic Influences on Early Christianity"]. Nock calls him "an Egyptian by birth but in the purest Greek tradition, a mystic". In Nock's words he "resented dogma, but he was above all the disciple of Plato and, after the flesh, of Ammonius Saccas". A footnote, citing Dodds, adds his "indebtedness to Moderatus" [Nock, The Development of Paganism in the Roman Empire, #60218, "Neoplatonism", pp. 441-442]. Hergenhahn sums up the doctrine as an escape from the material

world through meditation toward union with eternal things, an idea that went on to shape Christian thought [Hergenhahn, An Introduction to the History of Psychology, #30761, "Neoplatonism and Early Christian Thought"].

Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* opens: "Plotin, filozoful trăitor în zilele noastre, părea că se ruşinează fiindcă [trebuia să vieţuiască] în trup" ("seemed ashamed of being in the body") [Porphyrios, Viaţa lui Pitagora; Viaţa lui Plotin, #84080, ch. 1]. The Romanian editors note that Plotinus studied with Ammonius, who "left no written work", from 232 to 243 [#84080, n. 26]. Porphyry records that Gallienus and Salonina "greatly honoured" Plotinus, who asked them to revive a ruined city of philosophers in Campania under Plato's laws, the planned Platonopolis [#84080, ch. 12]. The editors also write that Plotinus experienced ecstasy four times in six years, reaching "in the language of the mysteries" the degree of *epopteia*. Porphyry arranged the treatises into the *Enneads* "in a systematic order for pedagogical purposes" [#84080, introduction].

Porphyry wrote in two very different registers. His *Isagoge*, published in the library's Romanian edition with Boethius' Latin, sets out genus, species, difference, property and accident. Its example is "man" as species, "rational" as difference and "capable of laughing" as property [Porphyry of Tyre, Isagoga, #368596, § 2]. Through Boethius it became the starting point of medieval logic. His *Against the Christians* is, for the editors of the *Life*, "the second alarm signal" after Celsus against the danger that Moses and Jesus would replace Homer and Plato [#84080, introduction]. Nock notes that the Church's ranks came to include "those who cared for classical culture, and these naturally included Neoplatonists", and he discusses how much of the polemic survives. He also records the opposite front: Neoplatonism against the gnostics "whom Plotinus attacked", who "professed to be in cultural rebellion against Hellas" [Nock, #60218, pp. 441-442].

Iamblichus, theurgy and the charge of magic

Liz Greene describes "the chain of 'hieratic' or 'priestly' Platonism – Platonic philosophical ideas translated into ritual action". It runs "from Plotinus and Porphyry through Iamblichus to the later Neoplatonists", and she cites *De mysteriis* 4.12 and Shaw's *Theurgy and the Soul* [Greene, Jung's Studies in Astrology, #81101, ch. 4 "The chain of hieratic Platonism"]. Luke A. Myers instead stresses the differences between the schools. Iamblichus, "a pupil of Porphyry", led the Syrian school, which "at first ... was distinct from those established by

Plotinus and Porphyry, both of whom considered the knowledge of practical Theurgy as dangerous to the majority of men". Iamblichus, Myers says, shows "the strongest connections to the mystical occult works of the Egyptian, Chaldaean, and Gnostic mysteries" [Myers, Gnostic Visions, #70923, ch. 3 "Mysteries of Pagan Philosophy: Iamblichus"].

The theurgists themselves denied that they practised magic. An essay in *Daughters of Hecate* states that "as far as they were concerned, it was certainly not magic, goetic or otherwise", and that Iamblichus' *De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum*, "our first (and best) Platonist treatise on the subject", draws exactly that distinction. Modern scholars have tried "with … no consensus" to divide theurgy into a "low" form close to magic and a "high" form of "mystical union with the One" (Sheppard, Dodds, Shaw) [Daughters of Hecate, #39449, Part III and n. 46]. Contemporaries were less careful. Iamblichus' pupil Sopater, a counsellor at Constantine's court, was ruined on the charge of having "magically fettered the winds", a charge that, Jones notes, "readily clung to Neoplatonists" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, p. 17]. Samuel Dill judged that in the circle around Julian "Neoplatonism lost its philosophic purity", as "the theurgic virtues, miracle and magic, overshadowed" the earlier idealism [Dill, Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire, #60233, "Degeneracy of Neoplatonism in the reign of Julian"].

Julian: Hellenism as state religion

According to Lemerle, Constantius II issued "a series of ordinances that limited the activity of pagans". His successor Julian, given his education, knew paganism and Christianity equally well. "He had been baptised, which later allowed the Church to give him the epithet of Apostate." As emperor he reopened the temples, restored sacrifice and reorganised the pagan priesthood on the Christian model. He did not persecute Christians, but he removed them from high office and barred them from teaching. Lemerle calls his paganism "very elevated", far from the "gross superstition" Christians imputed to it [Lemerle, Istoria Bizanțului, #19180, "Sfârșitul păgânismului"].

Jones writes that Julian "ruled for a mere eighteen months from 361 to 363". He judges that Julian "was more fanatical than most of the Christian emperors, with the possible exceptions of Theodosius I and Justinian", and calls the reign "an interlude, of greater importance in historiography than in history". He quotes Libanius' joy that "the altars again received their offerings of blood …

even though only a few people were left who understood them" [Jones, #67425, pp. 23-24]. Julian let Athanasius return from exile [#67425, p. 25]. The *Encyclopedia of World History* adds that Athanasius was expelled again and that "the death of Julian the same year permitted his return" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Athanasius"]. Koster stresses the solar side of Julian's religion: he "reverted back to the former, older frank Sun-worship, calling himself a 'follower of King Sun,' being a devotee of Mithras" [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909].

Laws, the Serapeum and Hypatia: two narratives

Date	Measure or event	Source
341	Constans: "that superstition cease and the madness of sacrifices be abolished"	Jones #67425, p. 25
late 350s	Constantius II closes the temples; governors who fail to execute offenders are threatened	Jones #67425, p. 25
381-391	Theodosius bans divinatory sacrifice, then all sacrifice and temple visits	Jones #67425, p. 26
392-396	Edict of 392; Olympic games ended 393, Eleusinian Mysteries 396; Serapeum demolished	Lemerle #19180
415	Hypatia killed by a crowd	Jones #67425, p. 30; Lash #53938
527-529	Justinian's laws against heretics and "Hellenes"; Isis and Amon temples closed	Babuș #13066; Jones #67425

Jones calls the law codes an index "requiring cautious treatment". Laws often went unenforced, and persecution "was often at the local level, the action of ordained clergy or monks". In Alexandria, "Theophilus, the ruthless bishop ... aided

by the governor, … destroyed the chief temple of Alexandria, the Serapeum". "A generation later Theophilus's nephew and successor, Cyril, took a large part in the notorious lynching of the Alexandrian philosopher Hypatia." Jones quotes Socrates: they "killed her with scraps of pottery, and after tearing her limb from limb … destroyed them by fire" [Jones, #67425, pp. 24, 29-30]. He also records a bishop whom pagans killed "by throwing him on a bonfire" during a temple seizure [#67425, p. 94].

Lash frames the same events as extermination: "In 386, when Hypatia was sixteen, Pagan rituals were outlawed by state decree" [Lash, Not in His Image, #53938, ch. 2]. He writes of "the brutal suppression of the Mysteries, the destruction of Gnostic writings, and the wholesale genocide of Pagan culture in Europe", concealed by "a cover-up" that "continues to this day". He quotes a historian on Theodosius I and II as "two of the most cruel and powerful Christians of any time" [#53938, ch. 1 "The Murder of Hypatia"]. Jones describes restrictions on practice that were often unenforced; Lash describes deliberate cultural murder.

In the East the end came under Justinian. Babuș writes that "already in the years 527-528 Justinian had issued severe laws against heretics and had closed the temples of Isis and Amon in Egypt", and that the temple of Amon at Audjila became a church [Babuș, Aspecte ale istoriei și spiritualității Bizanțului, #13066]. Jones adds the 529 law: relapsed baptised Christians faced "extreme penalties", while the unbaptised had to undergo catechism or be "stripped of all their possessions". Even so, "forced conversion is the penalty for pagan sacrifice, not for pagan belief" [Jones, #67425, pp. 28-29].

Interpretations and the four options

Heisman: "Just as Roman conquerors penetrated the territorial-sociobiological boundaries of the ancient Jewish state, the Jewish-based God memes of Christianity penetrated the ancient Roman world." In his view Christianity, like Jesus, "was born through violation of the sociobiological boundaries", and it "economized the ethics of the West", turning politics from "the arena of highest human virtue to the arena of the lowest human virtue" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, parts 177, 193]. In Heisman's framing, Christianity reversed the direction of Roman conquest: Rome had penetrated the Jewish state, and Jewish-derived ideas then penetrated Rome [ibid., part 177]. Nock instead sees "a long gradual transformation" between Augustus and Constantine. He notes a structural difference:

"in Christianity initiates were not, as in the Oriental mystery-religions other than Mithraism, an inner circle" [Nock, #60218, "Conclusion"].

	Civic paganism	Mysteries	Neoplatonism	Christianity
Core act	Public sacrifice	Secret initiation	Contemplation; theurgy	Baptism, creed
Membership	Citizens of a place	Inner circle of initiates	Educated elite	All the baptised (Nock)
Politics	One with the city/state	Tolerated	Julian's creed, 361-363	State religion under Theodosius
Fate	Sacrifice banned 341-392	Eleusis ended 396; Isis temples closed 527-528	Athenian Neoplatonism in decline by the late 5th c. (Jones)	Victorious

Key points

- Nock, citing Dodds, traces Plotinus to Ammonius Saccas and Moderatus. Greenwood names Gallienus as his patron, and Porphyry records the Platonopolis plan.
- Porphyry's *Isagoge* founded Latin logic through Boethius. His *Against the Christians* was the "second alarm signal" after Celsus.
- Greene calls the line from Plotinus and Porphyry through Iamblichus to the later Neoplatonists "hieratic" Platonism. Myers says Plotinus and Porphyry thought theurgy dangerous for most people.
- *De Mysteriis* separates theurgy from goetic magic, and modern scholars disagree over "high" and "low" theurgy.
- Julian, baptised and educated in both traditions, restored the temples and sacrifice (Lemerle). Jones calls the reign an interlude, and Koster calls Julian a solar and Mithraic devotee.
- Jones documents the laws, Theophilus' destruction of the Serapeum and Cyril's "large part" in Hypatia's lynching. Lash calls the same events genocide.

- Babuș dates the closure of the Isis and Amon temples to 527-528, the end of the Egyptian cults treated in Chapter 43. Heisman reads the outcome as Jewish "God memes" conquering Rome.

Part VI.

Early Christianity and the Empire

Chapter 48.

The Quest for the Historical Jesus: Sources, Methods and the Mythicist Challenge

No figure in the religious history of the West has been studied as intensely as Jesus of Nazareth, and no figure has given rise to so many incompatible portraits. The library holds the whole range of them. At one end are critical-historical reconstructions built on source criticism and oral-tradition theory. Next to them stand evangelical defences of the gospels' reliability. Further out are mythicist arguments that no historical Jesus lay behind the story at all, a thesis that the Roman imperial court invented him, a sociobiological reading of Jesus as a man caught between Judaism and Rome, and Mehran Keshe's reading of Jesus as a soul-teacher whose story was later reshaped by Rome. This chapter sets out the evidence each camp uses and how each weighs it. As James D. G. Dunn himself remarks, the external evidence "provide[s] very little hard information", so the debate is decided mostly by method [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, §7.1].

The three quests as Dunn tells them

Dunn arranges the modern history of research under three headings in Part One of *Jesus Remembered*: "The Flight from Dogma" (ch. 4), "The Flight from History" (ch. 5) and "History, Hermeneutics and Faith" (ch. 6) [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, Contents]. The flight from dogma runs from Reimarus through D. F. Strauss to the nineteenth-century liberal "lives of Jesus". In that phase Jesus became "a teacher of timeless morality … more the first Christian than the Christ — a flight from the Christ of dogma" [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, ch. 4]. Dunn insists on the weight of Strauss, citing Schweitzer's verdict that those who think Strauss "can be easily dismissed simply demonstrate that they have never

read him with care". He also quotes Strauss's definition of myth as "not the conscious and intentional invention of an individual but a production of the common consciousness of a people or a religious circle" [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, ch. 4, §4.2]. Dunn then describes the decades after 1914 as an "hiatus or diversion" dominated by Barth's "dogmatic christological perspective" and Bultmann's "equally dogmatic kerygmatic perspective". Bultmann's form criticism held that "many sayings … originated in the church", which is why Dunn calls this phase the flight from history [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, ch. 4–5]. The "Third Quest" took Jesus' Jewishness as its starting point. The *Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies* names E. P. Sanders as its emblem: *Jesus and Judaism* (1985), *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah* (1990) and *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (1993), with "sociological questioning and a better understanding of Judaism … most evident in the historical Jesus research of our third period" [Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies, #363277]. Dunn's own starting point is the same: a picture of Jesus "should and must begin from the fact that he was a first-century Jew", and "his execution on the charge of being a messianic pretender ('king of the Jews') is generally reckoned to be part of the bedrock data" [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, ch. 5]. Dunn also warns that the neo-Liberal questers are repeating the nineteenth century's hope that a "historical Jesus, untrammelled by what late-twentieth-century sensibilities regard as unacceptable dogmas" waits to be found behind the Synoptics [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, ch. 4].

The non-Christian testimony

Dunn reviews the external sources briefly. Josephus' *Antiquities* (written in the 90s) mentions Jesus twice. The first passage "has clearly been subject to Christian redaction, but there is a broad consensus that Josephus wrote something like the following":

> "At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man. For he was a doer of startling deeds, a teacher of people who received the truth with pleasure … And when Pilate, because of an accusation made by the leading men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had loved him previously did not cease to do so" (Ant. 18.63–64). [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, §7.1]

Dunn notes that the phrases "a wise man" and "a doer of startling deeds" are characteristic of Josephus and "improbably Christian". The second passage, on the stoning of James, "the brother of Jesus who is called Messiah" (Ant. 20.200), is one that "few have doubted … came from Josephus' pen". Tacitus (*Annals*

15.44), describing Nero's scapegoats after the fire of 64, writes that "their name comes from Christ, who, during the reign of Tiberius, had been executed by the procurator Pontius Pilate". Dunn argues that the formulation "has no distinctive Christian features". Suetonius' "Chrestus" (Claudius 25.4) is a confused echo, and b. Sanhedrin 43a's "Yeshu … hanged on the eve of Passover" as a magician is a possible rabbinic memory [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, §7.1]. Pliny the Younger's letter to Trajan is the third classical witness. The library's reference shelf treats it as a separate article [Wikipedia: Pliny the Younger on Christians], and Kieren Barry cites it as "one of the very few surviving independent contemporaneous sources", in which the governor of Bithynia found only "a degenerate sort of cult carried to extravagant lengths" [Barry, The Greek Qabalah, #64708, ch. 10].

Josh McDowell, writing as an apologist, uses the same passages in his Romanian-language *El a umblat printre noi.* He lists Thallus, Phlegon, Josephus, Pliny the Younger, Tacitus, Hadrian, Suetonius and Lucian of Samosata as secular witnesses. He quotes R. T. France's point that "wise man" is not typically Christian but is Josephus' term for Solomon and Daniel. He also answers G. A. Wells, who "wrote three books with a similar conclusion: *The Jesus of the Early Christians* (1971), *Did Jesus Exist?* (1975) and *The Historical Evidence for Jesus* (1982)", noting that Wells was rebutted by Ian Wilson [McDowell, El a umblat printre noi, #42107]. Dunn treats Wells as running "a long-running but lone campaign", and says such references matter "if only because about once every generation someone reruns the thesis that Jesus never existed" [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, §7.1 n. 6].

Sources and the model of "Jesus remembered"

Dunn accepts the Liberal-era two-source hypothesis: Markan priority, with "some two hundred verses in Matthew and Luke" pointing to a shared sayings source, Q [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, ch. 4]. He is more cautious about Kloppenborg's stratification of Q and Koester's elevation of non-canonical gospels. He reports that some date the Gospel of Thomas to the first century and posit a "trajectory" from Q to Thomas, but that early dating of Thomas is "actually the lynchpin for most of the argument" [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, ch. 4 n. 165; §7]. His own thesis (ch. 8) is that the tradition began with "the various encounters between Jesus and those who by virtue of these encounters became disciples". It was then carried as oral tradition that kept a stable core while varying in performance, so the gospels preserve Jesus *as*

remembered rather than a reconstructable "Jesus behind" them [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, ch. 6]. Part Three applies this model. It treats the mission as "Beginning from the Baptism of John". It argues for a Kingdom both "to come" (§12.4) and "has come" (§12.5), with a "solving the riddle" section (§12.6). It discusses Messiah, Son of God and Son of Man (chs. 15–16), and asks "Why Was Jesus Executed?" (§17.2). It ends with "The Empty Tomb Tradition" and "Appearance Traditions" (§§18.2–18.3), asking "how and why belief in Jesus' resurrection began" [Dunn, Jesus Remembered, #62259, Contents].

Lydia McGrew pushes further toward reliability, rejecting the treatment of John as "the red-headed stepchild of Gospels scholarship". She argues that her evidence "significantly shifts the burden of proof in favor of John" and hopes readers will wonder "why one would not take John to be fully historical". She invokes Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1) for John's composition at Ephesus [McGrew, The Eye of the Beholder, #70156, chs. I, III and n. 117].

The mythicist and Roman-invention theses

Acharya S states flatly: "The 'gospel' story of Jesus is not a factual portrayal of a historical 'master' who walked the earth 2,000 years ago. It is not a true story." She quotes Albert Churchward, "The canonical gospels can be shown to be a collection of sayings from the Egyptian Mythos and Eschatology", and Joseph Wheless, "The gospels are all priestly forgeries over a century after their pretended dates". She sets out lists of parallels: Horus called "the KRST, or Anointed One"; Krishna's story "nearly identically" parallel to Jesus'; and the "sun of God" born of the Virgin at the winter solstice, "the Light of the World" [Acharya S, The Origins of Christianity and the Quest for the Historical Jesus Christ, #38018]. Joseph Atwill argues instead that "the Gospels were not written by the followers of a Jewish Messiah but by the intellectual circle surrounding the three Flavian emperors". He claims that Josephus, who "wrote War of the Jews while living in the Flavian court", built typological parallels in which Jesus' ministry is the "type" of Titus' campaign through Judea. On this reading the Flavians "did not intend to have sophisticated people like themselves take their invention, Christianity, seriously" [Atwill, Caesar's Messiah, #63252, Introduction, chs. 3, 11]. Baigent and Leigh add that "reputable scholars before Allegro had questioned, and doubted, the existence of an historical Jesus". They also say Wilson and Allegro "challenged the team's laboured attempts to distance the Qumran community from so-called 'early Christianity' " [Baigent & Leigh, The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception, #71853, ch. 4].

Heisman: Jesus between Rome and Judaism

Mitchell Heisman accepts Crossan's frame of Jesus and Paul "within Judaism within the Roman Empire", "the absolutely necessary matrix", and then asks "where does Jesus fit into this historical matrix?" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, part 129]. His answer rests on his hypothesis that Jesus was conceived when a Roman soldier raped Mary during Varus' punitive campaign in Galilee, and that Joseph was a stepfather. He reasons from studies of stepparent abuse, and from Mark calling Jesus simply "Mary's son" (Mark 6:3) [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp. 397–399]. He writes: "If Jesus was half-Jewish and half-Roman, then his biological family was … a war zone", and "Jesus was the boundary between Rome and Israel". From this he derives "love your enemy" as the inversion of kin selection, and calls the "son of God" title an identification with "both the Jewish and the Roman strains of his identity simultaneously" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp. 405, 438]. He traces Christianity's break from Judaism to the dispute "within Judaism that immediately preceded the life of Jesus" between Shammai, " 'right-of-center' or conservative", and Hillel, " 'left-of-center' or liberal-like". He sets "the very different ways of Bar Kokhba and Jesus" on either side of that divide [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, part 137].

Keshe: crucifixion, transmutation and Roman revision

Keshe treats the cross as ordinary Roman practice: "cross wasn't something just for Jesus, it was a normal way of punishment by the Romans". He claims Jesus "knew his destiny" and used the Soul of Physicality to "transmute" so as to evade Roman recognition and leave with his family, citing "Jewish historians who wrote about Jesus at time he" lived rather than later Christian accounts [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 488, #378200, sections 9–10]. In the KSW 428 Easter excerpt he states: "Christ as a man went on the cross, then on the cross he separated the D of P … into dimension of the Soul", and "The body of Christ never went missing" [Keshe, Resurrection Part 1 (428 KSW), #378484]. In KSW 612 (2025) he calls the crucifixion a punishment for "his adulterous life". He says the "three days, and the ascension" were "added to, by … the rulers of Rome, to bring it to Mithraism", and that one must "read … the life of Mitra and Zoroaster" to understand the resurrection [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612, #378324].

Comparison of methods

Camp	Main evidence	How it weighs evidence
Dunn / Third Quest	Synoptics, Q, Josephus, Paul's letters	Characteristic features of oral tradition; Jewish context; "bedrock" facts such as the crucifixion
Evangelical (McGrew, McDowell)	Four gospels incl. John; secular testimonia; patristic tradition	Presumption of reliability; burden of proof on sceptics
Mythicist (Acharya S, Churchward)	Egyptian, Greek, Indian myths; astrotheology	Comparative mythology: parallel = derivation
Roman invention (Atwill)	Josephus' *War*, gospels	Typological parallels read as deliberate design
Qumran thesis (Baigent & Leigh)	Dead Sea Scrolls	Suppression of evidence alleged
Heisman	Gospels via Crossan; kin-selection theory	Sociobiological inference from family and ethnicity
Keshe	Teaching revealed in workshops	Soul-science; scripture altered by rulers

Key points

- Dunn divides modern research into a flight from dogma (Reimarus, Strauss, the liberal lives), a flight from history (Bultmann) and a Jewish-context Third Quest, of which the Oxford Handbook makes Sanders' *Jesus and Judaism* (1985) the emblem.
- Dunn and the consensus he reports accept a Josephan core of Ant. 18.63–64 and the authenticity of Ant. 20.200; Tacitus' Annals 15.44 is judged free of Christian features.
- Dunn's "Jesus remembered" model replaces the search for a Jesus behind the gospels with the impact Jesus made on disciples, carried as oral tradition.
- McGrew and McDowell defend gospel reliability, including John, against Wells and other sceptics.
- Acharya S calls the gospel story "not a true story" but a solar and Egyptian mythos. Atwill attributes the gospels to the Flavian court.

- Heisman reads Jesus as half-Jewish and half-Roman, a boundary between two polarised worlds, and traces the break from Judaism back to Hillel versus Shammai.
- Keshe reads the crucifixion as a routine Roman punishment, the resurrection as soul-transmutation, and the three-day narrative as a Roman addition to align Christianity with Mithraism.

Chapter 49.

James, Peter and the Jerusalem Community: Jewish Christians and the Ebionites

The first followers of Jesus after his death did not see themselves as founders of a new religion. They formed a group in Jerusalem that kept the Temple, the Torah and the hope of Israel's restoration. Peter led it at first, then James, "the brother of the Lord". Its history runs from Pentecost to the catastrophe of 66–70 CE. After that, its Torah-observant heirs, the Nazarenes and Ebionites, were pushed to the edges of a church that had become predominantly gentile. The library's main reconstruction is James D. G. Dunn's. Set against it is the Qumran-James thesis of Robert Eisenman, taken up by Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, in which the Dead Sea Scrolls preserve the voice of James's community and its quarrel with Paul.

A messianic sect in Jerusalem

Dunn opens Part Seven of *Beginning from Jerusalem* with the question "One Community or Several?" (§22.1). He then treats the period "Between Easter and Pentecost" and Pentecost itself (§§22.2–22.3), and the social and religious character, leadership and beliefs of the earliest community (§§23.1–23.5) [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, Contents]. His summary (§23.6) is "a Messianic Sect". It was a sect "in the sense used by Luke and Josephus (*hairesis*)", which "like Pharisees and Sadducees … functioned within the parent body of Second Temple Judaism, within which Jesus had also functioned". It was a faction "in disagreement with other factions, but not in denial of their status as also part of Judaism" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §23.6]. He adds that it can also be described as "a renewal or revivalist movement within late Second Temple Judaism". He notes that "most of the features, indeed, can be paralleled

with the Qumran sect", including a "Teacher of Righteousness" with "a quasi-messianic" role [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §23.6]. The broader puzzle he sets himself is "how a Jewish sect became a Gentile religion" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §20.3].

Economic sharing marked the group. Acts reports that "all who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:44–45). It adds that "none of them ever claimed any possession as his own" (4:32). Roman Montero gathers the commentary on these verses, including the view that "Luke may well be idealizing the situation" and the Greek proverb "Among friends everything is common". He follows the "informal communism" into later Christian precepts by which the Christian "should not consider his possessions to be his own" [Montero, All Things in Common, #74555, chs. 1 and 10]. Dunn connects the crisis in Acts 6 directly to this practice: "the seven chosen to deal with the crisis over distribution from the common fund may already have been their de facto leaders" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §24.6].

Hellenists, Stephen and the first persecution

Luke introduces "a complaint from the Hellenists against the Hebrews, to the effect that their widows were being neglected in the daily (provision of) aid" (Acts 6.1). Dunn calls this "one of the most intriguing phases of earliest Christianity" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §24.1]. His chapter 24 moves through "Who Were the Hellenists?", "The Seven", Stephen and his speech, then asks "The First Persecution — against Whom Was It Directed?". It ends with the mission of Philip and "The Breakthrough at Antioch" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, Contents]. Luke says that after Stephen's execution "everyone was scattered ... except the apostles" (Acts 8.1). Dunn finds this implausible as it stands, and his reconstruction runs as follows. The Greek-speaking believers "presumably operated only in Greek". Among them there was "a marked reaction against the Temple", articulated "most forceably by Stephen". The "Hebrews" did not share it, so "a marked divide, even gulf" opened. Hence "when the persecution followed, it was primarily directed against the Greek-speaking followers of Stephen and not against the new sect as a whole". The apostles, "seen to live in continuing attachment to the Temple", were not targeted. Jerusalem afterwards "became the bastion of conservative opinion and practice within the new sect (Gal. 2.12; Acts 21.20)" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §24.6]. The scattered Hellenists became the first missionaries. Philip went to Samaria and

baptised the first gentile convert, and others reached Antioch [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §§24.7–24.8].

Peter's own mission is treated in chapter 26: "Mission to 'the Circumcision' ", Caesarea, "The Conversion of Peter", the acceptance of Cornelius, and "Anxious Times under Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12)". Dunn reports the common deduction that Agrippa's persecution "marked the end of the leadership of the twelve and the transition to James and the elders" (following Bauckham) [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, ch. 26 and n. 205].

James the Just and the mother church

Eusebius presents James as the first bishop. Dunn's third volume quotes Eusebius' statement that James "had been 'the first elected to the throne of the bishopric of the church in Jerusalem' (HE 2.1.2)". Dunn reads this as typical of the "triumphalist view of Christianity's beginnings", in which later church structures are projected back onto the first generation [Dunn, Neither Jew nor Greek, #64136, ch. 38]. In Acts, James speaks for the "myriads" of Jewish believers "all zealous for the law" (Acts 21.20). Dunn suggests that "many (?) Christians" in Jerusalem may at first have supported the revolt of 66, given that Luke has James call them "zealots of the law" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §§29.1, 36.3].

Josephus records the death of James in 62. Ananus, the new high priest, used the gap between the procurators Festus and Albinus: "Ananus convened a sanhedrin of judges and brought before it the brother of Jesus, the so-called Christ, James by name, and certain others", and had them stoned for transgressing the law [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §36.2, citing Ant. 20.197–203]. Those who protested were "strict in reference to the laws", which Dunn reads as Pharisees. Ananus was deposed after three months. Dunn concludes that the action was "rooted in … a deeply felt factional dispute", a "pre-emptive strike against a hated rival". He finds this more plausible than a quarrel over Roman rule, and calls it "something of the 'kangaroo court' or 'show trial' ". Hegesippus' longer account (via Eusebius HE 2.23) has James thrown from the Temple pinnacle, stoned and clubbed by a fuller. In it James declares, "Why do you ask me concerning the Son of Man? He is sitting in heaven on the right hand of the great power". Dunn notes the account is "crafted on the template of the Gospel tradition" but confirms the stoning and that "the cause … was his preaching of Jesus" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §36.2]. One pseudo-Clementine

version even has Paul throw James down the stairs (Recog. 1.70.7) [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §36.2 n. 69].

After James, Symeon, "another brother" or cousin of Jesus, is said to have succeeded him, the succession "passing horizontally (to brothers) rather than vertically, as in the caliphate tradition". The only tradition about the war is the "flight to Pella". It says the Jerusalem believers crossed the Jordan to that Decapolis city early in the revolt, and it survives in Eusebius HE 3.5.3 and three passages of Epiphanius. Lüdemann and Verheyden doubt the tradition, while Koester and Wehnert defend it [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §36.3].

Nazarenes and Ebionites

Later heresiologists describe the Torah-keeping heirs. Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* I.26) says the Ebionites "use the Gospel according to Matthew only, and repudiate the Apostle Paul, maintaining that he was an apostate from the law ... they practise circumcision ... and are so Judaic in their style of life, that they even adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God". The reference shelf summarises the patristic picture as an "adoptionist" Christology. In it Jesus was "a righteous human being who ... was adopted by God at his baptism", most Ebionites rejected the virgin birth, and the Nazarenes accepted it. The same article notes the scholarly debate over whether these beliefs "preserve ... traditions resembling those of the early Jerusalem church under the leadership of James" [Wikipedia: Ebionites]. Dunn's third volume collects the patristic notices, Irenaeus on the Ebionites' sole use of Matthew and Eusebius on the "Gospel according to the Hebrews", in its chapter on "Jewish Christianity" ("The Enigma of James"; "What Happened to the Jerusalem Church?") [Dunn, Neither Jew nor Greek, #64136, chs. 40, 45]. Carl Jung adds a point from the history of ideas: "the doctrine of the two antithetical sons of God originated with the Jewish Christians living in Palestine" [Jung, Aion (CW 9.2), #59850].

Samuele Bacchiocchi argues that Sabbath practice persisted. He points to Matthew's "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath" (Matt. 24:20), which some read as reflecting a Jewish-Christian community that "had not yet abandoned its observance". He argues that Sunday was not an apostolic Jerusalem institution, since the New Testament texts usually cited come from Greece and Asia Minor. In his view "the abandonment of the Sabbath and the adoption of Sunday ... are the result of an interplay of Christian, Jewish and

pagan religious factors" [Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath To Sunday, #63620, Preface, chs. 2, 5].

The Qumran-James thesis

Eisenman and Wise argue that the scrolls belong to a messianic, Torah-zealous movement they call "the Jerusalem Community of James the Just, called in sources 'the brother of Jesus' ". They claim "it is impossible to distinguish ideas and terminology associated with the Jerusalem Community of James the Just from materials found in this corpus" [Eisenman & Wise, The Dead Sea Scrolls Uncovered, #74356]. The Oxford Handbook calls Eisenman's *James the Brother of Jesus* (1997) "eccentric but remarkable", a book that "provoked several more conventional accounts of this key figure" [Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies, #363277]. Baigent and Leigh build their book on this reading. They say that "at the centre of the puzzle" lay "a hitherto unknown connection between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the elusive figure of St James, Jesus' brother", and they place his dispute with Paul at the heart of it. They read the *Habakkuk Commentary* story of members who, "under the iniquitous instigation of … 'the Liar', secede … and cease to adhere to the Law" against "the Teacher of Righteousness" as that dispute. They report that Edmund Wilson, John Allegro and Geza Vermes "condemned the international team for secrecy, for procrastination and delay in releasing Qumran material". The consensus, in their account, dated the texts to Maccabean times, with the Wicked Priest identified as "Jonathan Maccabaeus" [Baigent & Leigh, The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception, #71853, Preface, chs. 4, 9, 10]. Dunn, by contrast, uses Qumran as a parallel sect, not as the Jerusalem church itself [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §23.6].

Keshe: one religious line

Keshe places the episode inside a longer continuity: "Let me explain something to what we call, line of religions in Middle East … with Judaism, Christianity, and being Muslim". He says the "Middle East is one extension of how Moses received the message", that "one has taken something from the other one, and extended it to suit. We see this in Islam clearly", and that "the abuse came after the Prophet" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 433, #378145].

Question	Dunn	Eisenman / Baigent & Leigh	Heresiologists (via Irenaeus)	Keshe
Nature of first community	Messianic sect within Judaism	Zealot-messianic Qumran-type movement of James	Precursor of "Judaizing" heresy	Extension of one Mosaic line
James	Leader; killed 62 in factional strike	The "Teacher of Righteousness"	First bishop (Eusebius)	—
Paul	Sharp disagreements, later reconciled	The "Liar"	Ebionites call him apostate	—
After 70	Pella tradition; Symeon	Suppressed by later orthodoxy	Ebionites, Nazarenes as heretics	Abuse "came after the Prophet"

Key points

- Dunn defines the earliest Jerusalem believers as "a Messianic Sect", a *hairesis* within Second Temple Judaism comparable to the Pharisees and to Qumran.
- In Dunn's reconstruction the first persecution targeted Stephen's anti-Temple Hellenists, not the Temple-loyal apostles. Jerusalem then became the conservative centre.
- Acts portrays a common purse; Montero follows the "informal communism" into later Christian ethics while noting Luke may idealise.
- Josephus dates James' stoning by Ananus to 62. Dunn reads it as factional, and Hegesippus' martyrdom account is modelled on Jesus' passion.
- Ebionites, as the Fathers describe them, kept circumcision and Torah, used Matthew only, held an adoptionist Christology and rejected Paul as an apostate.
- Bacchiocchi treats Matt. 24:20 as evidence of continued Sabbath observance and attributes Sunday worship to a later mix of factors.

- Eisenman and Baigent & Leigh identify the scrolls' Teacher and Liar with James and Paul. The Oxford Handbook calls Eisenman's work "eccentric but remarkable".

Chapter 50.

Paul and the Gentile Mission: The "Second Founder" of Christianity

If the Jerusalem community of James was a messianic sect inside Judaism, Paul of Tarsus is the figure most often credited, or blamed, with turning it into a universal religion. He was a zealous Pharisee who persecuted the new sect, then became its most energetic missionary to non-Jews. He wrote the earliest surviving Christian documents, and he died in Rome under Nero. Wilhelm Wrede called him "the second founder of Christianity", and meant it as disparagement. Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer used the same title as acknowledgement [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §29.1 n. 8]. This chapter follows James D. G. Dunn's reconstruction of Paul's life and mission and sets beside it the readings that make Paul the real architect of Christianity: Hergenhahn's Paul as the meeting point of Judaism and Greek thought, Ehrman's thesis of forged Pauline letters, Baigent and Leigh's suspicion of Paul as a Roman agent, and Mitchell Heisman's view of Pauline universalism as the vehicle by which Jewish "God memes" conquered Rome.

The persecutor and the Damascus experience

Dunn's chapter 25 ("The Emergence of Paul") covers "The Early Life and Education of Saul", " 'The Persecutor' (Gal. 1.23)", " 'Approaching Damascus, about Noon' " and "The Origin of Paul's Gospel" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, Contents]. Paul's own self-descriptions are the anchor: "circumcised the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as to the law a Pharisee, as to zeal a persecutor of the church" (Phil. 3.5–6). He also writes that "in excessive measure I persecuted the church of God

and tried to destroy it, and … progressed in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries … being exceedingly zealous for my ancestral traditions" (Gal. 1.13–14) [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §29.2]. Dunn argues that "Judaism" here means the zealous Pharisaic defence of Israel's distinctives, and not Jewish identity as such. On this reading Paul left "Judaism" in that sense without ceasing to call himself an Israelite (Rom. 11.1) [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §29.2a–b]. Dunn holds that Saul directed his persecution chiefly against diaspora Hellenists: "a diaspora Saul directed his main zeal against other diaspora Jews" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §24.6]. The popular summary in *Hidden Religion* gives the traditional version: Paul "converted from Judaism to Christianity during a trip from Jerusalem to Damascus (changing his name from Saul to Paul in the process)" and is "credited with playing the most vital role in the development of Christianity after Jesus's death" [Main & Issitt, Hidden Religion, #66220, ch. 33]. B. R. Hergenhahn, writing a history of psychology, treats Paul (c. 10–64 CE) as the place where the "many influences converging on early Christianity" meet. In his account Paul was "the first to claim and preach that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah" after a vision on the Damascus road, and he sets this against the Greek philosophical and Jewish influences on the Roman world [Hergenhahn, An Introduction to the History of Psychology, #30761, ch. 3].

Chronology and the Aegean mission

Dunn builds the chronology on a few firm points. They are the crucifixion, "probably 30, but possibly 33"; Paul's own intervals of three years and then fourteen years (Gal. 1.18; 2.1), "a firm total of 15–16 years"; and "the firmest of all the data", the proconsulship of Gallio in Corinth, "most likely 51–52", known from a Delphi inscription. That dating places Paul's eighteen months in Corinth "as 49–51 or 50–52". Further anchors are the escape from Damascus under the ethnarch of Aretas IV (2 Cor. 11.32–33), the two-to-three years in Ephesus, the Caesarean custody under Felix and Festus, and the two years in Rome [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §28.1]. Dunn rejects the conventional "three missionary journeys". After the break at Antioch, Paul "in effect lost (or disowned or was disowned by) what had been his base", and he worked from Corinth and Ephesus in "Paul's Aegean mission" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §29.1]. Chapters 31–33 follow it: Thessalonica, the "Confrontation in Athens", the founding of the church in Corinth, the Thessalonian letters and Galatians; then Ephesus, four letters to Corinth and Romans; and "The Collection" for Jerusalem [Dunn,

Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, Contents]. Dunn ranks "the eight or so years of the Aegean mission" with Jesus' own mission and the first Jerusalem years "as the most crucial for Christianity's existence and enduring character". In his view, that is what makes the title "second founder" appropriate [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §29.1].

Crisis over circumcision, the Council and Antioch

Chapter 27, "Crisis and Confrontation", covers the mission from Antioch, "The Crisis", "The Council in Jerusalem", "Confrontation — the Incident at Antioch" and "The Truth of the Gospel" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, Contents]. On Dunn's reckoning of 15–16 years from conversion, the Council falls in the late 40s. There the Jerusalem pillars accepted a circumcision-free mission to gentiles (Gal. 2.6–9). The rupture came at Antioch. When "men from James" arrived, Peter "began to separate himself" (*aphōrizen*) from the gentile believers. Barnabas followed him, and Paul "denounced him to his face" (Gal. 2.11–14). Dunn links the verb to Hebrew *parash*, the root of "Pharisee", and to Qumran's separation for purity. He argues that the issue "is not circumcision but purity", that is, table-fellowship and pressure on gentiles "to judaize" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §27.4 and n. 258]. Because Paul failed to persuade Antioch, his mission went on "independently of Jerusalem and Antioch" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §29.1].

Paul's churches

Dunn asks whether Paul's house churches looked to outsiders like "An Association or a Religious Cult?" (§30.3). Greco-Roman associations, he notes, had typically 30–40 members. They centred on shared meals, existed "typically for the non-elite (the urban poor, slaves, freedmen)", and had patrons. No association "lacked a religious dimension", and all were "thoroughly integrated" into the imperial cult [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §30.3]. The Christian assemblies took over the form, the household meal and the patron, while refusing the imperial rites. Dunn's sections on social composition, organisation, meetings and "boundaries" (§§30.4–30.7) develop this tension [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, Contents].

Arrest, Rome and death

Chapter 34, "The Passion of Paul", covers the arrest in Jerusalem while Paul was delivering the collection, the trials, the voyage to Rome, Philippians, Philemon and Colossians. It ends by asking "When Did Paul Die?" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, Contents]. Bacchiocchi notes that Paul brought "alms and offerings" (Acts 24:17) partly "to draw the Jewish and Gentile wings of the Church closer together", together with a public show of loyalty to the law [Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath To Sunday, #63620, ch. 5]. Dunn concludes that Luke ends Acts with Paul preaching in Roman custody (c. 60–62) because "Luke indeed knew all too well that the trial of Paul ... had gone badly for Paul and that he had been summarily executed, immediately or a little later". He notes McKechnie's observation that Nero's rulings on Judean embassies consistently favoured the Jerusalem priesthood [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §34.7 and n. 405].

Disputed letters and slavery

Dunn treats the Pastoral Epistles as "most probably ... letters written in the Spirit of Paul some twenty or thirty years later", which may still incorporate genuine material [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §34.7]. Bart Ehrman is blunter. His chapter "Forgeries in the Name of Paul" argues that the personal notices in 2 Timothy "serve ... to convince readers that this really is written by Paul, even though it is not". His index files Ephesians, Colossians and the "deutero-Pauline letters" under "Pauline forgeries". He notes the irony that 2 Thessalonians warns readers not to be misled by a letter "as if by us" (2:2), and he rejects the scholarly euphemism that "this kind of pseudonymity should not be labeled as 'forgery' " [Ehrman, Forged, #63605, chs. 3–4, index].

Philemon tests Paul's ethics. Norman Geisler, writing as an evangelical, says one reason for the letter was "to state the Christian view on slavery". He insists: "Slavery is unethical and unbiblical, and neither Paul's actions nor his writings approve of this debasing form of treatment ... Paul neither commends nor condones it; rather he undermines it and condemns it implicitly" [Geisler, A Popular Survey of the New Testament, #65488, "Philemon"]. Dunn reads the household rules of Colossians differently. They assume "the centrality and dominance of the paterfamilias" and command "slaves, obey in everything". Their purpose was

partly to "reassure any visitors to (or informers within) the Colossian congregation that the Christians were good citizens", even as they set master and slave under "the one Lord" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §34.6].

Paul as subversive: Heisman, Baigent and Leigh, Keshe

Heisman reads Paul's universalism sociobiologically. He quotes Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female". He observes that Paul's mission targeted "those culturally between Jews and pagans", the God-fearers, who "reflected Jesus himself as the living border between Jew and gentile". He concludes: "Just as Roman conquerors penetrated the territorial-sociobiological boundaries of the ancient Jewish state, the Jewish-based God memes of Christianity penetrated the ancient Roman world" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp. 441–442]. He adds that "the internationalism of Christianity laid the common ground for a world that has a place for the nationalism of the Jews". He also argues that Roman altruism, which "made their empire one of the most effective political forces the world has ever known", became "absolutely deadly" when Christian love loosed it from its kin-selective bounds [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, part 169]. Baigent and Leigh go further. Their final chapter, "Paul — Roman Agent or Informer?", treats Acts as "a kind of picaresque novel" in which "everything is focused on, and restricted to, St Paul". Following Eisenman, it reads Paul against the scrolls' "Liar", who leads members to "cease to adhere to the Law" [Baigent & Leigh, The Dead Sea Scrolls Deception, #71853, ch. 16]. Keshe speaks of messengers in general. He says he has "always respected the prophets", but "the followers have done exactly what the Messengers have done", turning the soul's message into physical law and control: Moses "transferred it into the physical tablets, which was not the condition" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 205, #377848].

Reading	Paul's role	Key evidence
Dunn	"Second founder": the Aegean mission and letters turned a sect into a gentile religion	Galatians, Acts, Gallio inscription
Hergenhahn	Meeting point of Jewish messianism and Greco-Roman thought	Damascus vision, intellectual context

Reading	Paul's role	Key evidence
Ehrman	Real author of seven letters, with others forged in his name	Pastorals, 2 Thess., Eph., Col.
Baigent & Leigh	The scrolls' "Liar", possibly a Roman informer	Qumran pesharim, Acts
Heisman	Carrier of Jewish "God memes" into Rome	Gal. 3:28, kin-selection theory
Geisler	Implicit abolitionist	Philemon

Key points

- Paul described himself as a zealous Pharisee and persecutor (Gal. 1.13–14; Phil. 3.5–6). Dunn holds that his zeal targeted the Hellenist believers.
- Dunn's chronology rests on a crucifixion c. 30, Paul's 3 + 14 years, and Gallio's proconsulship (51–52), which places Paul in Corinth c. 49–51.
- At Antioch the conflict was over purity and table-fellowship, not circumcision. Paul's defeat there made his Aegean mission independent.
- Dunn sees the Aegean mission and its letters as the basis for calling Paul "the second founder of Christianity", a title first used by Wrede as a criticism.
- Dunn infers from Luke's silence that Paul was executed in Rome after c. 62. He treats the Pastorals as written in Paul's spirit a generation later, while Ehrman calls them and other letters forgeries.
- On Philemon and the household codes, Geisler sees an implicit condemnation of slavery and Dunn a reassurance of civic conformity.
- Heisman treats Pauline universalism as the means by which Jewish "God memes" penetrated Rome. Baigent and Leigh suspect Paul of Roman agency, and Keshe sees institutions as compromising the messengers.

Chapter 51.

Gospels, Gnostics and Marcion: The Making of the Canon

The New Testament did not arrive as a finished book. For roughly three centuries after Jesus' death, Christian communities read, copied, revised and argued over a large and growing body of writings: the four gospels that later became canonical, sayings collections such as Thomas, infancy narratives, revelation dialogues and the letters of Paul. Marcion produced an edited version of some of these, and others were forged in the names of apostles. Two questions run through the sources in the library: when and why did a fixed list of authoritative books emerge, and was the "orthodoxy" that drew up the list there from the beginning, or did it win a contest among rival Christianities? This chapter sets out the evidence and the opposed readings: Bauer, Pagels and Ehrman on one side, Köstenberger, Kruger and the evangelical authors Garlow and Jones on the other, with the esoteric critique of Blavatsky and Ellerbe alongside.

The Four Gospels: Authorship, Dating and Irenaeus

The church tradition ties the four gospels to apostles or their companions. Critical scholarship separates the anonymous texts from the names attached to them later. Bart Ehrman puts the critical position bluntly: "Matthew probably did not write Matthew, for example, or John, John". He adds the qualification that "neither book actually claims to be written by a person named Matthew or John". He separates such later misattribution from outright forgery, where "an author lied about who he was" [Ehrman, Forged, #63605, Introduction "Facing the Truth"]. The reference shelf gives the conventional critical date of Matthew as c. 80-90 CE [Wikipedia: Gospel of Matthew].

The person most responsible for binding the four together was Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 180). Pagels reconstructs his reasoning. As a boy he had lived in the household of Polycarp of Smyrna, who claimed to have heard "John, the disciple of

the Lord". Irenaeus was therefore "convinced that this disciple wrote the Gospel of John" and "was among the first to champion this gospel and link it forever to Mark, Matthew, and Luke". He declared that "only Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John collectively—and only these gospels exclusively—constitute the whole gospel, which he called the 'four formed gospel' " [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch.3].

Irenaeus' John is also a weapon against heresy. Pagels relays the story, told by Irenaeus on Polycarp's authority, that John went to the public baths at Ephesus, saw Cerinthus there, and "ran out of the bath house without bathing, exclaiming, 'Let us flee, lest the bath house fall down; because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is inside' " [Pagels, #63510, ch.3].

Marcion of Sinope: Two Gods and a Short Canon

Marcion is the pivot of the canon debate. Köstenberger and Kruger summarise his teaching: Marcionism "originated with Marcion of Sinope around AD 144. Marcion taught that Jesus was the Savior sent by God and that Paul was his chief apostle. However, Marcion rejected the Old Testament because he viewed the vindictive God of the Old Testament and the loving God of the New Testament as irreconcilable" [Köstenberger & Kruger, The Heresy of Orthodoxy, #72499, Part 1, n.5]. Garlow and Jones describe his Bible: it "consisted of the Gospel of Luke and ten of the Pauline epistles, which had however been 'cleansed' of any Old Testament influence" [Garlow & Jones, Codul spart al lui da Vinci, #15634, section "Marcion: răgetul șoarecelui"; trans. from Romanian].

Marcion's gospel survives only through his enemies. Gathercole explains that "these church fathers, in their zeal to expose Marcion as a false teacher, explain extensively what Marcion omitted from the Gospel narrative". He reconstructs it as "an abridged version of Luke's Gospel", printed with Luke's chapter and verse numbers, and notes that Marcion "also produced an edition of Paul's epistles, in which some of the apostle's letters are substantially abbreviated" [Gathercole, The Apocryphal Gospels, #69973, no. 10 "Marcion's Gospel"].

The disputed question is whether Marcion created the idea of a canon or reacted against one that already existed. Köstenberger and Kruger state the alternatives: "Marcion formed his canon either in reaction to an already established standardized collection in the early church or he pioneered the idea himself". They argue for the former [Köstenberger & Kruger, #72499, Part 2]. Garlow and Jones turn the point against *The Da Vinci Code*: "Marcion himself had already raised the

problem of the canon a hundred and fifty years before Constantine". This, they say, confirms that "in the second half of the second century there already circulated a canon largely identical with that of today's New Testament" [Garlow & Jones, #15634, "Crezul Niceean"].

The Fathers' hostility was personal. Irenaeus records that when Marcion met Polycarp and asked, "Do you recognize me?", the bishop replied, "Yes, I recognize you—firstborn of Satan!" [Irenaeus, AH 3.3.4, as quoted in Pagels, #63510, ch.3]. Tertullian, as Garlow and Jones quote him, called Marcion "the Pontic mouse who… gnawed the Gospels" [Garlow & Jones, #15634, citing Tertullian, Against Marcion].

Gnostic Gospels and the Nag Hammadi Discovery

James M. Robinson, who later served as permanent secretary of the international committee that published the facsimile edition, devotes a whole volume to the discovery and to the "monopoly" over access that followed. He records Jean Doresse's field inquiry: the find was made "around 1945, at the foot of a mountain of Upper Egypt, the Djebel et-Târif, a hundred kilometers north of Luxor, on the right bank of the Nile, near the hamlet of Hamra-Doum… near the ancient sites of Phbôou and Khénoboskion", places tied to early Pachomian monasticism. He also discusses archival letters of abbots of the Pachomian order that passed "through the same canals to reach the same European repositories" as the nearby Dishnā Papers, judging an independent origin "theoretically possible, but hardly probable" [Robinson, The Nag Hammadi Story, Vol. 1, #80600, ch.1-3].

For Pagels the Gospel of Thomas preserves a form of Christianity that the canon excluded. Thomas's Jesus, she writes, "does not tell us what to believe but challenges us to discover what lies hidden within ourselves", as in the saying: "If you bring forth what is within you, what you bring forth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring forth will destroy you" [Pagels, #63510, "Thomas"]. She sets this against the Gospel of John, which proclaims Jesus the "only begotten son of God", while Thomas encourages disciples "to recognize themselves, as well as Jesus, as 'children of God' ". It was the second vision, she argues, that was "suppressed" [Pagels, #63510, ch.3].

Pagels then links the canon to the burial of the codices. In 367 Athanasius of Alexandria, "an admirer of Irenaeus", issued his Easter (Festal) Letter. In it he offered "the earliest known list of the twenty-seven books he calls the 'books of the New Testament' ". He called on Christians to "cleanse the church from

every defilement" and to reject "the apocryphal books", which were "filled with myths, empty, and polluted". Pagels proposes: "It is likely that one or more of the monks who heard his letter read at their monastery near the town of Nag Hammadi decided to defy Athanasius's order and removed more than fifty books from the monastery library, hid them in a jar to preserve them, and buried them near the cliff where Muhammad Ali would find them sixteen hundred years later" [Pagels, #63510, ch.5 "Constantine and the Catholic Church"]. She frames this as a likelihood, not a documented fact.

The Muratorian Fragment, a Latin list of accepted books, is the other main witness to an early canon. Pagels notes that it is "a source taken by Harnack and others to be from the late second century", which implies that the dating is disputed [Pagels, #63510, notes to ch.1]. Köstenberger and Kruger engage the revisionist late dating (Hahneman) through Ferguson's review [Köstenberger & Kruger, #72499, Part 2, notes].

The Bauer Thesis and its Critics

The scholarly framework for "lost Christianities" goes back to Walter Bauer's *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (German 1934). Köstenberger and Kruger summarise it. Bauer examined four centres, Asia Minor, Egypt, Edessa and Rome. In Egypt he found "the early presence of Gnostic Christians" and "no representative of truly orthodox Christianity… until Demetrius of Alexandria (AD 189-231)". In Edessa he argued that "the teaching of Marcion constituted the earliest form of Christianity". Rome, he claimed, "imposed its version of orthodox Christian teaching onto the rest of Christendom", "expunging the record of deviant forms of belief". In each centre, on Bauer's view, "heresy preceded orthodoxy" [Köstenberger & Kruger, #72499, Part 1 "The Bauer Thesis"].

Its heirs, as they trace them, include Bultmann ("in the beginning, faith is the term which distinguishes the Christian Congregation… not orthodoxy"), Koester and Robinson's "trajectories", Dunn, and Pagels' *Beyond Belief* [Köstenberger & Kruger, #72499, Part 1].

Their rebuttal makes several points. Edessa, Bauer's main case, has "extremely limited" literary data, which requires "the historian to fill many historical gaps with conjecture". The episcopal office Bauer credited to Roman power was already defended by Ignatius, "who was not from Rome", so Rome "may not have given birth to orthodoxy but simply replicated what Rome had already inherited". And any version of the faith calling the Old Testament God "a 'demiurge'—as in

the case of the heretic Marcion—would have been deemed unorthodox" from the outset by the apostolic writings themselves. They cite a judgment "diametrically opposed to the Bauer thesis: 'While Walter Bauer believed he could detect a movement from diversity to unity within the early church, the first Christians rather developed from unity to diversity' " [Köstenberger & Kruger, #72499, Part 1 and Part 2]. On the gospels specifically they conclude that "no apocryphal gospel was ever a serious contender for a spot in the New Testament canon" [Köstenberger & Kruger, #72499, Part 2].

Apocrypha and Forgery

Gathercole's collection shows how varied the excluded material is. It includes infancy gospels (the Protevangelium of James, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas), ministry gospels (Thomas, the Diatessaron, Marcion's gospel), Jewish-Christian gospels, and passion gospels (Peter, Nicodemus). He judges that some later texts use the label "Gospel" as "little more than an attempt to confer authority on the text" [Gathercole, #69973, Contents and Part IV]. H.T. Andrews, writing earlier, notes that the Gospel of Nicodemus "contains two documents of very different character and origin: (1) the Acts of Pilate; (2) the Descent of Jesus into the Underworld" [Andrews, Apocryphal Books of the Old and New Testament, #68300].

Ehrman's *Forged* goes further. Because Christianity, unlike pagan cults, was "exclusivistic" and "rooted in truth claims", it needed apostolic authority, and "gospels were in circulation that claimed to be written by Jesus's disciples Peter, Philip, and Mary and his brothers Thomas and James". The view that ancient pseudonymous writing "was not thought to be lying" is, he says, "flat-out wrong": "Ancient authors who talked about this practice… said that it was both lying and deceitful". He holds that some forgeries entered the New Testament itself, including letters in the names of Paul, Peter, James and Jude [Ehrman, #63605, Introduction; ch.2-3]. Irenaeus made the same accusation from the other side, charging that heretics "introduce an indescribable number of secret and illegitimate writings, which they themselves have forged" [Pagels, #63510, ch.3].

Esoteric and Critical Readings

Helen Ellerbe reads the episcopal programme as the "seeds of tyranny". Ignatius "believed that the rankings of bishop, priest and deacon mirrored the heavenly hierarchy", and Irenaeus insisted that outside the one church "there is no salvation". Some Gnostics, by contrast, held that "truth and Gnosis… was found, not by looking to the Church, but by looking within oneself" [Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, #6699, ch.1 "Seeds of Tyranny", drawing on Pagels]. H.P. Blavatsky claims that the apostles "had received a 'secret doctrine' from Jesus". She cites Jerome, who she says "confessed it in an unguarded moment" about the Hebrew "genuine Gospel of Matthew", and she accuses Irenaeus and Theodoret of misrepresenting the Gnostic distinction between the unrevealed Logos and the Christos [Blavatsky, Isis Unveiled, #39673].

Position	Main source	Earliest authoritative core	Role of Marcion	Gnostic texts
Bauer thesis	Bauer, via Köstenberger & Kruger	None fixed; Rome imposed it later	Earliest Christianity at Edessa	Early, sometimes prior
Revelation-suppressed	Pagels	Four gospels, by Irenaeus c.180	Rival to be expelled	Seekers of direct revelation, buried after 367
Forgery	Ehrman	Contested; some NT books pseude-pigraphal	Not central	Many forged in apostles' names
Conservative	Köstenberger & Kruger; Garlow & Jones	Four gospels and Paul widely accepted by c.180	Reacted to an existing collection	Never serious contenders
Esoteric	Blavatsky; Ellerbe	Secret doctrine predates canon	Not central	Suppressed gnosis

Key points

- Irenaeus (c. 180) fixed the "four formed gospel" and championed John, partly on the strength of his link to Polycarp [Pagels, #63510].
- Marcion (c. 144) rejected the Old Testament God and used an abridged Luke plus ten Pauline letters. Whether he pioneered a canon or reacted to one is disputed [Köstenberger & Kruger, #72499; Gathercole, #69973].
- Polycarp reportedly called Marcion "firstborn of Satan" (Irenaeus AH 3.3.4); Tertullian called him "the Pontic mouse" [Pagels, #63510; Garlow & Jones, #15634].
- Athanasius' Festal Letter of 367 gives the earliest known 27-book list. Pagels suggests it prompted the Nag Hammadi burial; Robinson documents the 1945 find and its Pachomian setting [Pagels, #63510; Robinson, #80600].
- Bauer argued that heresy preceded orthodoxy in Edessa and Egypt. Köstenberger and Kruger reply that the evidence is thin and that core beliefs show "unity to diversity" [#72499].
- Ehrman holds that ancient writers themselves condemned writing in another's name as lying, and that some New Testament books are forgeries [#63605].
- Ellerbe and Blavatsky read the episcopal canon as a suppression of inner gnosis and of a secret apostolic doctrine [#6699; #39673].

Chapter 52.

Persecution and Martyrdom: From Nero to Diocletian

Between the fire of Rome in 64 and the Edict of Serdica in 311, the Roman state and the Christian communities went through cycles of indifference, local violence, legal procedure and, at three points, empire-wide coercion. How this history is told has a politics of its own. The church's account is of an unbroken line of tyrant-emperors and countless martyrs, and it became the foundation of Christian identity and of the cult of saints. A revisionist line that runs from the seventeenth-century treatise *De paucitate martyrum* through Gibbon to Catherine Nixey holds that the persecutions were brief, the deaths few and the martyr literature largely fiction. This chapter sets out the events and then both readings, together with the eastern view from the Persian church and the political-philosophical reading of Mitchell Heisman.

Nero, the Fire of 64 and the Apostles

Tacitus is the foundational non-Christian source. Kerrigan quotes him: Nero "fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace… Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired". He also gives Suetonius' charge that Nero himself had the city fired to clear ground for his Golden House [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131, ch.1 "Fire and Sword"]. Dunn reproduces the same Tacitean passage, including the "pernicious superstition" (*exitiabilis superstitio*) that broke out "not merely in Judea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself", in his section 35.2 "Persecution under Nero" [Dunn, Beginning from Jerusalem, #63287, §35.2]. Nixey adds Tacitus' detail that the formal charge was not arson but "hatred of humankind". She also notes that Tacitus' mention of

Christus "executed by the governor Pontius Pilatus" is "the sole mention of this event in a non-Christian source from this period" [Nixey, The Darkening Age, #70864, ch.4].

Tradition places the deaths of Peter and Paul in this context. Kerrigan summarises it: Paul, a citizen, was beheaded; Peter was crucified "upside-down, it's said, at his own request", and "a great basilica was later raised up above his grave" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch.1]. Dunn treats the historical questions in §35.3 "The Martyrdom of Peter" and §34.7 "When Did Paul Die?" [Dunn, #63287]. The anonymous popular history *Vatican Secret Archives* opens its account of the archives with the same story: "The first great persecution of Christians broke out during Nero's reign… Nero, wanting to allay suspicion that he had Rome set on fire, blamed the Christians". The printed text gives the year as "44", where the fire is otherwise dated 64, and the same chapter places Diocletian's persecution "at the beginning of the 5th century" [Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch.1].

Apocalyptic writing turned Nero into the type of the Antichrist. Negru quotes the Ascension of Isaiah, in which Beliar descends "in the form of a man, a lawless king, the slayer of his mother: who himself (even) this king will persecute the plant which the Twelve Apostles of the Beloved have planted". He shows how later Fathers kept the identification: Augustine reports "many… who think that Domitius Nero was the Antichrist", and Chrysostom read 2 Thessalonians the same way [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, Part II "Christian Apocalyptic"]. Kerrigan notes the gematria by which "for the name Nero, the figures came to 666" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch.1 sidebar "Getting Nero's Number"].

The Persian church remembered Nero in the same terms. The Chronicle of Arbela, the history of the church of Adiabene, states: "Now the first who persecuted the Christians was Nero the Wicked, who not only personally tortured them, but also wanted to show that the Christians were the cause of all evil" [Chronicle of Arbela, #55002]. It goes on to describe persecution under Sasanian kings, including "two wicked kings, Yazdgird [I, 399-420] and Bahram [V, 420-438]". Its editor notes that Shapur II doubled the taxes on Christians to pay for his wars against Rome, and that "the persecutions resumed" when they objected [Chronicle of Arbela, #55002, text and editor's n.205].

Law and Procedure: Pliny and Trajan

The first Roman administrative record of Christians is Pliny's Letter 10.96 from Bithynia (c. 110-112). Nixey reads it as a document about public order, not re-

ligion. Pliny was reacting to anonymous denunciations and local discontent, since "the preservation of order is his primary duty". He confessed: "I have never been present at an examination of Christians… I do not know the nature of the extent of the punishments usually meted out to them" [Nixey, #70864, ch.5 "These Deranged Men"]. Pagels gives the harsher passages. His soldiers "tortured two Christian women, both slaves", who revealed that the group "met regularly before dawn on a certain day to sing a hymn to Christ as to a god", eating only "ordinary, harmless food". Yet Pliny wrote: "I ordered them to be taken away and executed; for, whatever they admit to, I am convinced that their stubbornness and unshakable obstinacy should not go unpunished" [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch.3]. The reference shelf summarises the outcome: Pliny gave the accused "multiple chances" and executed those who refused three times. Trajan's reply made being known as a "Christian" "sufficient for judicial action", but it also shows that "Christians were not sought out or tracked down by imperial orders". As Timothy Barnes puts it there, persecution before Decius was "local, sporadic, almost random" [Wikipedia: Pliny the Younger on Christians].

Arthur Darby Nock characterises Pliny as "a man of gentle piety" who reported with satisfaction that people were "again thronging to the Bithynian temples" [Nock, The Roman Army and the Roman Religious Year, #60166]. The Seventh-day Adventist scholar Samuele Bacchiocchi studies the same letter for a different reason. He examines whether Pliny's "*stato die*" ("a fixed day") must mean a weekly Sunday. He suggests that because Christians in the province were being "denounced, processed and condemned", they may have varied "the day and place of their gathering" to avoid suspicion [Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath to Sunday, #63620, ch.4].

Under Marcus Aurelius local violence intensified. Pagels relates the burning of the eighty-six-year-old Polycarp at Smyrna, who answered the crowd's cry "Away with the atheists!" with the same words. She also describes the pogrom at Lyons and Vienne (177), where Christians were barred from baths and markets and then "hounded and attacked openly… assaulted, beaten, and stoned", and where the governor asked the emperor whether citizens should die in the arena or by beheading [Pagels, #63510, ch.3]. Tertullian, writing c. 190, gives the pagan charges: "a sacred ritual in which we kill a little child and eat it; in which, after the feast, we practice incest". He also gives the defiant reply: "the blood of Christians is seed!" [Pagels, #63510, ch.3]. Kerrigan adds Minucius Felix's catalogue of rumours, including infant blood rites and worship of "the head of an ass". He links the first of these to the later blood libel against Jews [Kerrigan, #71131, ch.1 sidebar "Blood Sacrifice"].

Decius, Valerian and the Army

The third century brought the first general measures. Nixey describes Decius' edict of 250 as "requiring everyone in the empire to sacrifice". Its intent was "to ensure loyalty", and it "almost certainly had not been aimed at" Christians and lasted little more than a year. Christians "were given repeated opportunities to comply and pre-announced dates gave ample opportunities to flee" [Nixey, #70864, ch.4-5]. The reference shelf concurs that under Decius and Valerian "there is no evidence that these edicts were specifically intended to attack Christianity" [Wikipedia: Diocletianic Persecution]. Those who sacrificed, the *lapsi*, were readmitted only after penance [Kerrigan, #71131, ch.1 "Unwilling Apostates"].

Valerian's edict was aimed at the clergy and church property. The same book says that in 258, "as the state treasury was empty, the emperor decided to eliminate the leaders of the Church and seize her assets". Pope Sixtus II and his deacons were killed, and Lawrence, keeper of "the papal library and archives", died with them [Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch.1]. Kerrigan records the tradition of Lawrence on the grill ("Turn me over, I'm done on this side") [Kerrigan, #71131, ch.1].

The army was a front line in these conflicts. Nock observes "that from the beginning of the third century many Christians found service in the army compatible with their beliefs", and that "Diocletian and his associates used the dismissal of Christians from the army, as from office, as a penal measure". Diocletian, he writes, "was passionately Roman in feeling", and the titles Jovius and Herculius put the tetrarchs "under the protection of old deities of the eternal city" [Nock, #60166, §iv "Pagans and Christians in the Roman Army"]. Nock is sceptical of some military martyr acts. Of the Acta S. Dasii he writes that "the saint's existence is not doubted, but I cannot believe that human sacrifice at the Kronia was permitted in a Roman camp" [Nock, #60166, n.].

The Great Persecution, 303-311

The reference shelf summarises the sequence. In his first fifteen years Diocletian "purged the army of Christians, condemned Manicheans to death, and surrounded himself with public opponents of Christianity". Galerius pressed for a general persecution in the winter of 302. After the oracle at Didyma was consulted, persecution began on 23 February 303. A series of edicts followed, and

later ones targeted the clergy and "demanded universal sacrifice". Enforcement was "weakest in Gaul and Britain", where Constantius applied only the first edict. Galerius ended the persecution in the East with the Edict of Serdica in 311, Maximinus resumed it, and it ended with the Edict of Milan in 313 [Wikipedia: Diocletianic Persecution].

Kerrigan gives the political motive. "The Emperor Diocletian was tolerant by nature", but with the empire "coming under strain" from financial mismanagement it "made sense… to underline the 'Romanness' of the Roman world by reaffirming its cultural values". Quoting Eusebius, he says officials were "to tear down the churches to their foundations and destroy the sacred scriptures by fire". He continues: "Contemporary sources claim that 10,000 martyrs were crucified side by side on the first day. And while this is surely an exaggeration, there's little doubt that many thousands must have died" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch.1 "The Great Persecution"]. Samuel Dill, writing in 1899, judged that "the persecution of Diocletian revealed the inextinguishable force of the Christian faith" [Dill, Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire, #60233, Book I].

How Many Martyrs? The Two Narratives

Nixey's chapter "On the Small Number of Martyrs" is the library's fullest revisionist statement. Her claim is direct: "Christian literature would go on to portray Roman emperors… as demonically possessed servants of Satan who hungered insatiably for Christian blood. It is a very potent picture. But it is not true." She counts "fewer than thirteen" years of imperially ordered persecution in three centuries and adds: "For two and a half centuries the Roman imperial government left Christianity alone". She cites Origen's admission that martyrs were few and that Christians had died only "occasionally", and the seventeenth-century paper "De paucitate martyrum". She quotes Gibbon's estimate of an "annual consumption" of martyrs of no more than 150 a year in years of persecution. She accepts that the Great Persecution "was responsible for around half of all early Christian martyrdoms" and that "while it was going on, it was terrible", but she holds that "fewer than ten martyrdom tales from the early Church can be considered reliable" [Nixey, #70864, ch.4]. She also records that the Church placed Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* on the Index Librorum Prohibitorum [Nixey, #70864, ch.3].

She further stresses voluntary martyrdom. Christians presented themselves for death, and the proconsul Arrius Antoninus told one such crowd: "If you want to

die you have cliffs you can jump off and nooses to hang yourself with". Antony went to Alexandria in 311 "burning with a desire for martyrdom" and was ignored by the judge [Nixey, #70864, ch.5]. Guiley's *Encyclopedia of Saints* bears out the uncertainty of many cult figures. Of Agatha (d. c. 250) it says that "none of the legendary details of her life or death can be authenticated", and of Agnes (d. c. 304) that "the circumstances of her martyrdom are not documented" [Guiley, The Encyclopedia of Saints, #87523, "Agatha"; "Agnes of Rome"].

Question	Traditional narrative	Revisionist narrative
Who persecuted?	A line of emperors from Nero to Diocletian (Arbela; Vatican; Kerrigan's list incl. Domitian, Trajan, Severus, Decius)	Nero, Decius, Valerian, Diocletian; otherwise local and sporadic (Nixey)
Motive	Satanic hatred of the faith	Public order, loyalty, finances (Nixey; Kerrigan; Nock)
Scale	"10,000 crucified on the first day" (sources cited by Kerrigan)	c.150 a year at most (Gibbon); few reliable acts (Nixey)
Martyr acts	Historical witness	Mostly later fiction; voluntary martyrdom common
Result	Faith proved "inextinguishable" (Dill)	Persecution "inconsequential" for the spread of the religion (Nixey)

The Political Meaning of Martyrdom

Mitchell Heisman treats the contest in terms of values, not body counts. He argues that Roman virtue rested on kin-based self-sacrifice: "Romans loved their extended families enough to risk their lives in mortal combat", and "the virtue of duty that made the Roman way possible required that Romans sacrifice much of their individual interest to the good of their empire". The Christian command "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" universalised and inverted that ethic. The library's section summary of his argument puts it this way: "Roman virtue sustained empire but Christian memes, spread by Paul as

'Minister of Propaganda,' weakened that empire from within" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section summary]. On this view a martyr dying without resistance attacks the martial premise of Roman order.

Key points

- Tacitus is the core source for Nero's punishment of Christians after the fire of 64, on a charge of "hatred of humankind" [Kerrigan, #71131; Nixey, #70864; Dunn, #63287].
- The Ascension of Isaiah made Nero the human form of Beliar, and the Persian Chronicle of Arbela calls him "Nero the Wicked", the first persecutor [Negru, #62383; Chronicle of Arbela, #55002].
- Pliny's letter (c. 112) shows a procedure of accusation, a test by sacrifice and execution for "obstinacy". Bacchiocchi reads its "fixed day" for the history of Sunday worship [Pagels, #63510; Bacchiocchi, #63620].
- Decius (250) required universal sacrifice and Valerian (257-258) struck at clergy and property. Diocletian purged the army before the general persecution of 303 [Nock, #60166; Vatican Secret Archives, #68123; Wikipedia: Diocletianic Persecution].
- Kerrigan calls Diocletian "tolerant by nature" yet responsible for "many thousands" of deaths. Nixey, following Gibbon, argues that the numbers were small and the martyr literature largely legend [#71131; #70864].
- The cult of saints rests partly on figures whose acts, Guiley notes, "cannot be authenticated" [#87523].
- Heisman reads Christian non-resistance as a value revolution against Rome's kin-based martial virtue [#38252].

Chapter 53.

Apologists and Church Fathers: Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen and the Pagan Critics

While magistrates questioned Christians and mobs attacked them, a small number of educated converts took the faith's case to the empire in writing. In the second and third centuries the "apologists" and the first great Fathers argued that Christianity was the true philosophy. They argued that the pagan gods were demons, that heresy was a corruption of apostolic truth, and that their scriptures could be read with the tools of Greek scholarship. Pagan intellectuals answered with polemics of their own. This chapter follows that exchange: Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement and Origen on one side, Celsus and Porphyry on the other. It also covers two claims that run under the debate. One is the Fathers' own admission that Christian rites resembled the Mithraic mysteries. The other is the argument of modern comparativists, among them Mehran Keshe, that the resemblance was no accident.

Justin Martyr: Logos, Demons and "Mimicry"

Justin (100-165 in Armstrong's dates, who calls him "Justin of Caesarea") is usually said to have been born at Neapolis (Nablus) in Samaria. He addressed his First Apology to Antoninus Pius c. 150; the Dialogue with Trypho "is generally supposed to be later" [Geden, Select Passages Illustrating Mithraism, #38272, notes on Justin; Armstrong, A History of God, #68999]. Pagels describes him teaching "Christian philosophy" to students in his Roman apartment "above the baths of Timothy", and his beheading with those students after they refused to sacrifice [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch.3]. Karen Armstrong is cool about his intellect: "Justin was neither a profound nor a brilliant thinker". She sees his

importance in his attempt to show pagans that their religion was "not a destructive breach with tradition" [Armstrong, #68999].

Justin's most quoted passages concern Mithras. Geden translates them:

> "Accordingly in the mysteries of Mithra also we have heard that evil spirits practise mimicry. For at the initiatory rites bread and a cup of water are set out accompanied by certain formulae, as you know or may ascertain." (Apol. I.66)

> "When in the tradition of the Mithraic mysteries they relate that Mithra was born of a rock, and name the place where his followers receive initiation a cave, do I not know that they are perverting the saying of Daniel that 'a stone was hewn without hands from a great mountain'?" (Dial. 70)

Geden sums up: "Justin argues that the Mithraic rites are a parody of the Christian" [Geden, #38272, "Justin Martyr"]. The logic matters. Justin does not deny the resemblance. He explains it as demonic foresight.

His demonology came from Jewish apocalyptic. Annette Yoshiko Reed shows that Justin used the Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1-36). He followed the Enochic accusation that the angel Asael brought weapons, jewellery and cosmetics, and asserted that the fallen angels sowed "murders, wars, adulteries, intemperate deeds, and all wickedness". In his *Apologies*, she writes, "demons trick pagans into worshipping idols, enslave them by means of magic and dream-visions" [Reed, Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity, #66169]. Reed calls this "a radical indictment of Greco-Roman culture". She adds that, set beside his treatment of Judaism, Justin's "genealogy of pagan error" is in a sense "sympathetic", because it puts the blame on angels, not on human beings [Reed, #66169]. Samuel Dill traces the philosophical side of the same idea to Plutarch, whose theory of bad daemons explained "the grossness of myth and ritual". He records "the triumphant use made of the theory by the Christian Apologists" [Dill, Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, #60232, contents of the chapter on Plutarch's daemonology].

Justin also reports on how Christians lived. Montero quotes his description of converts: "we who valued above all things the acquisition of wealth and possessions, now bring what we have" into common use. Montero argues that what Justin and Tertullian describe was a "robust, formal welfare system" funded by voluntary giving and built into the liturgy [Montero, All Things in Common, #74555, ch.10].

Irenaeus: Succession, Rule of Faith and the "Universal" Church

Irenaeus of Lyons (*Against Heresies*, c. 180) turned apologetic into a system of church authority. Pagels presents him as Polycarp's pupil, who hoped that scattered groups "would come to see themselves as members of a single church they called catholic, which means 'universal' ". He defined true teaching by succession from the apostles through bishops, and fixed the four-gospel rule (see Chapter 51) [Pagels, #63510, ch.3]. Ehrman sets out the logic and its weakness. Leaders "appointed by the apostles could pass along their teachings", but "as churches multiplied, each of them could no longer claim to have as its leader someone who had known an apostle", and rival leaders claimed the same apostolic truths [Ehrman, Forged, #63605, Introduction]. Helen Ellerbe treats the result as the first stage of a coercive institution. Irenaeus "insisted there could be only one church, and outside that church 'there is no salvation' " [Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, #6699, ch.1].

Irenaeus also took part in disputes inside the church. Pagels notes that he carried a letter to Bishop Eleutherus of Rome about the "new prophecy" of Montanus, a movement "dividing Christians throughout Asia Minor as well as Rome" [Pagels, #63510, ch.3].

Tertullian: The Latin Polemicist

Tertullian of Carthage (born c. 150 to pagan parents), in Geden's description, "found in Christianity the satisfaction and assurance which the philosophy and practice of his day failed to give" [Geden, #38272, notes on Tertullian]. His *Apology* reports the pagan accusations of child-eating and incest. In it he boasts that "the more we are mown down by you, the more we multiply; the blood of Christians is seed!" [Pagels, #63510, ch.3]. He is also the most detailed patristic witness to Mithraic ritual:

> "For to him when he is initiated in a cavern… a crown is offered on a naked sword, as if in parody of martyrdom… declaring that Mithra is his crown… We may recognise the craft of the devil, who counterfeits divine things." (De Corona 15)

> "The devil… with idolatrous mysteries endeavours to imitate the realities of the divine sacraments. Some he himself sprinkles… he promises forgiveness of sins

> through baptism; and... marks his own soldiers with the sign of Mithra on their foreheads, commemorates an offering of bread, introduces a mock resurrection, and with the sword opens the way to the crown. Moreover has he not forbidden a second marriage to the supreme priest? He maintains also his virgins and his celibates." (De Praescr. 40) [Geden, #38272, "Tertullian"]

Tertullian also used Enoch. Reed notes his appeal to the "scripture of Enoch" (*De cultu feminarum*), which shows that "some Christians fervently" defended its authority [Reed, #66169]. R.H. Charles' introduction gathers the patristic evidence and records that the book "is quoted as a genuine production of Enoch by St. Jude, and as Scripture by St. Barnabas" [Charles, The Book of Enoch, #38260, Introduction]. Tertullian's rigorism extended to the army. Nock sets the "intransigent attitude" of *De Idololatria* 19 against the many third-century Christians who served [Nock, The Roman Army and the Roman Religious Year, #60166, n.147]. Montero cites his *Apology* on the common chest: no "buying and selling of any sort in the things of God", with the common fund paying for burials [Montero, #74555, ch.10].

Alexandria: Clement and Origen

Armstrong places Clement of Alexandria and Origen in a Platonist line. "Neither Origen nor Clement believed that God had created the world out of nothing (ex nihilo), which would later become orthodox Christian doctrine." Origen, "as a Platonist", held to "the kinship between God and the soul", a knowledge of the divine that "could be 'recollected' ". He developed "a symbolic method of reading the Bible" [Armstrong, #68999]. Havelock Ellis singles out Clement as "the most genuinely Greek of all the Fathers", who "protested... against that prudery which, as the sun of the classic world set, had begun to overshadow life". Ellis contrasts him with Augustine, "another North African, but of Roman Carthage and not of Greek Alexandria", for whom "sin was hereditary" and had "its special seat" in sexuality. In Ellis's view Augustine's answer unfortunately prevailed [Ellis, Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Vol. 6, #32934, Part III].

Origen's scholarship changed the Christian book. Grafton and Williams make the Hexapla, his parallel-column edition of the Old Testament, and the library at Caesarea the centre of their study. They write that "the background to much of our story is the city of Caesarea, the Palestinian port where Origen, Pamphilus, and Eusebius all found homes". Eusebius' description of the Hexapla, the earliest surviving one, "can probably be trusted", because "he saw and used the original

Hexapla in the library created by his mentor Pamphilus" [Grafton & Williams, Christianity and the Transformation of the Book, #86907, Introduction; ch.2; ch.4 "Eusebius at Caesarea"]. Origen was more cautious about Enoch than Tertullian. Reed shows that in *Against Celsus* (c. 248) he expressed "an even more negative view of Enochic literature". He did so because Celsus was using the angelic-descent myth against the uniqueness of the Incarnation [Reed, #66169].

The Pagan Critics: Celsus and Porphyry

Celsus' *True Word*, written, Pagels says, about thirty years after Justin's death, survives only in Origen's long quotations [Pagels, #63510, ch.3]. Nixey observes: "No books of Celsus have survived the centuries untouched, true – but Origen's attack has and it quoted Celsus at length" [Nixey, The Darkening Age, #70864, ch.3 "Wisdom is Foolishness"]. Celsus called the Virgin Birth nonsense (a Roman soldier had made Mary pregnant), the resurrection of the body "simply the hope of worms", and the Flood a "debased" version of the classical myth. He regarded Jesus as a "sorcerer" like the market-place wonder-workers who "drive daemons out of men and blow away diseases". He also argued, as a relativist, that every nation "thinks its way of doing things is 'by far the best' " [Nixey, #70864, ch.3]. Geden preserves his description of the Mithraic "ascending road with seven gates" of lead, tin, bronze, iron, alloy, silver and gold. It is the fullest ancient account of Mithraic planetary soteriology, transmitted by Origen while he mocked it [Geden, #38272, "Origen", citing Contra Celsum].

Porphyry's later attack ran to "at least fifteen books". It was "highly erudite" and asked: "what has become of men who lived in the many centuries before Christ came?" Nixey stresses that his works "were deemed so powerful and frightening that they were completely eradicated", beginning with an attack by Constantine [Nixey, #70864, ch.3]. In her account Christian thinkers came to frame the whole confrontation as a "battleground of demons" (her ch.2), with the gods of the classical world recast as devils [Nixey, #70864, ch.2-3].

Mithras and Christianity: The Comparative Claims

The patristic texts establish one point that no party disputes: Justin and Tertullian saw in Mithraism a bread rite, a water rite, a forehead seal, a cave-birth, celi-

bates and a "mock resurrection". They called these diabolical imitations [Geden, #38272]. Interpreters disagree about the direction of borrowing.

C.J. Koster argues for continuity. "Many scholars have pointed out how the Sun-worshipping Mithraists, the Sun-worshipping Manicheans and the Christians were all syncretized and reconciled when Constantine led the takeover by Christianity, even if it meant the latter's surrender of most vital Scriptural truths, especially its Hebrew roots" [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909]. Jan Irvin and Andrew Rutajit's *Astrotheology & Shamanism*, subtitled *Christianity's Pagan Roots*, reads the gospel figures as solar and stellar allegory and ties them to entheogenic cults, explicitly building on Allegro [Irvin & Rutajit, Astrotheology & Shamanism, #86204, ch.3 "Astrotheology"; Part II].

Mehran Keshe gives the most specific historical narrative in the library's KSW transcripts. In Workshop 386 (24 June 2021) he states that Roman soldiers on the Persian frontier found "no temples with statues". The followers of "Mithraism at that time, the powers of Mitra" taught them that "you can carry that… within you, which is God", and "that was a revolution". Soldiers who had served in Palestine "were involved in the crucifixion of Christ. They came back, they could put a man to it. Now they had a figure", and so "they created what we see as a cross, what we see as a sign of Rome". Keshe claims the Vatican was built as "a compromise position… over the temple of Mitra, which was in the center of Rome. St. Peters Basilica is actually a temple of Mitra". He also links "12 days of Christmas, 12 days of Mitra". He says the Eucharistic wine replaced a Mithraic energising "sap from a tree": "this is my body, my blood… It never existed, Christ never touched such a thing" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 386, #378098, "Origins of Christianity, Vatican Construction"]. In Workshop 360 he dates Christ's birth to 21 December, "the birthday of Mitra" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072].

Feature	Patristic report (Justin, Tertullian)	Patristic explanation	Modern comparativist reading
Bread and cup	"bread and a cup of water… with certain formulae"	Demons' mimicry	Source of the Eucharist (Keshe: Mithraic "sap" became wine)
Washing/baptism	"initiation is by means of baptismal water"; "forgiveness of sins"	Devil "counterfeits divine things"	Shared mystery-cult pattern (Koster)

Feature	Patristic report (Justin, Tertullian)	Patristic explanation	Modern comparativist reading
Forehead sign, soldiers	"marks his own soldiers with the sign of Mithra"	Parody	Roman soldier cult as vehicle (Keshe)
Rock-birth, cave	Mithra "born of a rock"; cave initiation	Perversion of Daniel/Isaiah	Solar/astral allegory (Irvin & Rutajit)
Celibates, "mock resurrection"	"his virgins and his celibates"	Imitation	Syncretism under Constantine (Koster)

Key points

- Justin Martyr (c. 100-165; First Apology c. 150) called Christianity the true philosophy and pagan gods demons, drawing on the Book of the Watchers; Armstrong judges him "neither a profound nor a brilliant thinker" [Reed, #66169; Armstrong, #68999].
- Justin and Tertullian describe Mithraic bread-and-cup rites, baptism, forehead seals and a "mock resurrection", and explain them as diabolical mimicry [Geden, #38272].
- Irenaeus built authority on apostolic succession and the "universal" church; Ellerbe reads this as the start of exclusion ("no salvation" outside) [Pagels, #63510; Ellerbe, #6699].
- Tertullian defended Enoch's authority, opposed military service and attested a communal chest; Origen doubted Enoch and answered Celsus [Reed, #66169; Nock, #60166; Montero, #74555].
- Origen's Hexapla and the Caesarea library of Pamphilus and Eusebius changed Christian scholarship and the form of the book [Grafton & Williams, #86907].
- Celsus and Porphyry mounted learned attacks; Porphyry's books were "completely eradicated" after Constantine [Nixey, #70864].
- Koster, Irvin and Rutajit, and Keshe argue that Christian rites and sites continue Mithraic and solar religion; Keshe claims St Peter's stands on a temple of Mitra [#86909; #86204; #378098].

Chapter 54.

Constantine: Vision, Edict and the Imperial Church

Between the battle at the Milvian Bridge on 28 October 312 and his death in May 337, Constantine moved Christianity from a persecuted minority cult to the patronised religion of the emperor. The sources for this change are uneven. The fullest is Eusebius of Caesarea's *Life of Constantine*, a work of praise written after the emperor's death; the library holds a Romanian translation of it (*Viața lui Constantin cel Mare*), and its key passages are quoted below as the reference shelf and Jones give them [Eusebiu de Cezareea, Viața lui Constantin cel Mare, #47354; Wikipedia: Constantine the Great and Christianity]. Against Eusebius stand pagan historians such as Zosimus, modern critical historians such as Karlheinz Deschner, Protestant restorationist critics such as Viola and Barna, Sabbatarian authors such as Bacchiocchi and Koster, and the esoteric and conspiracy shelf, including Mehran Keshe. This chapter sets out what each group says. Throughout, the question is how imperial power and the new religion shaped each other.

The sources and the vision of 312

Christopher P. Jones begins with a warning about the evidence: "The early career of Constantine is known only from sources written after his conversion in 312. Whether written by pagans or Christians, they are inevitably colored by the author's own beliefs and situation" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2 "Constantine"]. Jones summarises the military background. Galerius' deathbed edict of 311 ended the Diocletianic persecution. War broke out with Maxentius in summer 312. Constantine pushed the enemy back to the Tiber at the Milvian Bridge, where "the battle then became a rout, Maxentius was drowned, and Constantine entered the city as sole ruler of the West" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2].

Two contemporaries report the conversion, and their accounts differ. Lactantius, writing in 313-315, says only that Constantine was told in a dream to mark the heavenly sign of God on his soldiers' shields, "by means of a letter X turned sideways, with the top of its head bent around," and so "he marked Christ on their shields" (*De Mortibus Persecutorum* 44.5-6) [Wikipedia: Constantine the Great and Christianity]. Eusebius' later *Life* adds a daytime vision seen by the whole army: "he saw with his own eyes up in the sky and resting over the sun, a cross-shaped trophy formed from light, and a text attached to it which said, 'By this conquer' " (*Vita Constantini* 1.28.2), followed by a dream in which Christ told him to copy the sign (1.29). Eusebius also describes the labarum he was later shown: a gilded pole with a crossbar, topped by the chi-rho monogram and carrying portraits of the emperor and his sons (1.31) [Eusebiu de Cezareea, Viața lui Constantin cel Mare, #47354; Wikipedia: Constantine the Great and Christianity]. The reference article points out that Eusebius does not mention the vision in his *Church History* of c. 313, and that he heard the story from Constantine "long after it had happened" [Wikipedia: Constantine the Great and Christianity]. Jones judges that Eusebius' version, "written much later than the event, sounds like defensive panegyric" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2].

Jones adds an earlier event that complicates the story. In 310 a Gallic panegyrist described a vision of Apollo, accompanied by Victory, at the shrine of Grannus, probably at Grand. In the same year Constantine began to show Sol on his coins. "Since Apollo was often identified with the sun-god, the emperor may have begun to see himself as Apollo's representative or reincarnation upon earth." Jones also notes that the assimilation of the sun to the Christian God later made it "a convenient vehicle for bridging the gap between pagan and Christian" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2]. He offers a political reading of the 312 conversion as well. Sassanian Persia had a unifying state cult of Ahura Mazda, while Rome had none. "Part of the impulse for the emperor's conversion to Christianity may have come from the supreme God of the Persians" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2].

The "Edict of Milan" and the patronage of the clergy

According to Jones, the so-called Edict of Milan was in fact a document issued by Licinius in 313 after the two emperors met. It "went beyond the edict of the dying Galerius and granted full freedom of religion to all, with special privileges extended to the Christians" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2].

The reference shelf quotes its central formula: "that it was proper that the Christians and all others should have liberty to follow that mode of religion which to each of them appeared best." It notes that the edict restored confiscated church property, unlike Galerius' edict of 311, and that it did not make Christianity the state religion, which came only in 380 [Wikipedia: Constantine the Great and Christianity]. Hergenhahn's textbook summary is shorter: in 313 Constantine "signed the edict of Milan making Christianity a tolerated religion"; the edict "did reduce much social turmoil and significantly increased Constantine's power"; and "Constantine was only baptized a Christian on his deathbed in 337" [Hergenhahn, Introduction to the History of Psychology, #30733, "Constantine and the Rise of Christianity"].

Deschner reads the same text against the later record. He quotes the edict's promise that everyone should be free "to choose a deity according to his will and to worship it, … so that it should not appear that any cult or religion has been slighted by us." He then argues that "two decades of Christian hierarchs infected Constantine," until pagans became for him "impious men" and their religion "a pernicious error" [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1, "Konstantins Kampf gegen Juden, 'Ketzer', Heiden"].

The first test of the new partnership came from Africa. Jones describes the Donatist schism as a quarrel between rigorists led by Donatus and clergy accused of having been too compliant under Diocletian [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2]. Deschner gives the details. The Donatists appealed to the emperor and lost at Rome in 313 and at Arles in 314. Constantine then confiscated their churches, exiled their leaders and sent troops "who killed men and women," so that "even before the pagans were massacred, there came the first persecution of Christians conducted in the name of the Church." In 321 he gave up, released the exiles and admitted his failure. Deschner stresses that the Donatists rejected "the Constantinian alliance of throne and altar" and called the Roman church the *civitas diaboli* [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1, "Konstantins Kampf gegen Juden, 'Ketzer', Heiden"]. Deschner also quotes Constantine's letter to Arius and Alexander: "I knew that if I could establish unity among all the servants of God according to my wish, the interest of the state too could enjoy its fruits" [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1].

Sunday, Sol Invictus and the borrowed liturgy

In 321 Constantine made Sunday a legal day of rest. Koster, a Sabbatarian, insists that the law honoured the sun and not Christ: "His edict in the year 321 legislated the 'venerable day of the Sun' to be a rest-day. This rest was commanded in honor of the Sun, and not in honor of Messiah." He adds that Constantine called the sun-deity "Unconquered Sun, my companion" [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909]. Viola and Barna agree: "It appears that Constantine's intention in doing this was to honor the god Mithras, the Unconquered Sun" [Viola & Barna, Pagan Christianity?, #66661, ch. 2 "The Church Building"]. Bacchiocchi, writing as a historian of the change from Saturday to Sunday, takes a longer view. He argues that the "day of the Sun," together with certain Christian theological motives, led most Christians to abandon the Sabbath for Sunday, and he traces sun-worship and the planetary week back before AD 150, well before Constantine's law [Bacchiocchi, From Sabbath To Sunday, #63620, ch. "Sun-Worship and the Origin of Sunday"].

Viola and Barna call Constantine the "Father of the Church Building." They argue that he "never abandoned sun worship" and kept the sun on his coins. They say he set up a statue of the sun god bearing his own image in Constantinople, kept the title Pontifex Maximus, and "almost to his dying day … 'still functioned as the high priest of paganism.' " They describe his churches as copies of the Roman basilica, with a raised platform for the clergy, a screen separating clergy from laity, and the bishop's *cathedra* in place of the magistrate's seat. In their account he also brought imperial court ceremony into worship: candles and incense carried before the clergy as before the emperor, Roman official dress as clerical vestments, and processional music. "Under Constantine, tax exempt status was granted for all church property" [Viola & Barna, Pagan Christianity?, #66661, ch. 2]. Jones confirms the Pontifex Maximus point. Constantine held the office, "as did all his successors down to Gratian in the 380s." In the 330s he also allowed Hispellum to build a temple to his own Flavian house, provided it was not "polluted with the deceits of any infectious superstition" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2].

Helena, the holy places and the family murders

Viola and Barna describe Helena's pilgrimage to Palestine in 326. In 327 she is said to have found the cross and nails of the crucifixion, and they say Constantine

promoted the idea that fragments of the cross had spiritual powers. After this the imperial building programme followed: St Peter's on the Vatican, St Paul's Outside the Walls, the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Nativity, "nine churches in Rome and many others in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Constantinople" [Viola & Barna, Pagan Christianity?, #66661, ch. 2]. The Spencers' encyclopedia repeats the legend in a harder form. Helena, after converting, searched for the True Cross, "torturing a Jew named Judas" to learn where it was, on a site where a temple of Venus had been built over the tomb [Spencer & Spencer, The Encyclopedia of the World's Mystical and Sacred Sites, #87500, Middle East: Jerusalem]. Jones notes that Eusebius presents the destruction of the Aphrodite temple over the Holy Sepulchre as a matter of location, not a general campaign [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2].

Deschner's chapter "A Christian family life" sets these works beside the dynastic killings, and quotes Catholic historians who praised the emperor's "Christian family life" (Franzen). In Deschner's list, the "son of St. Helena" had his father-in-law Maximian hanged at Marseille in 310. He had his brothers-in-law Licinius and Bassianus strangled, and Licinius' son Licinianus flogged and killed at Carthage in 336. In 326, "a few months after the Council of Nicaea," he had his own son Crispus killed, "probably poisoned," along with "numerous friends" (Eutropius). Last of all, his wife Fausta, suspected of adultery with Crispus "but hardly convicted," was suffocated in the bath [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1, "Ein christliches Familienleben und die Verschärfung des Strafrechts"]. Deschner adds Zosimus' report that Rome rejected Constantine so widely after these deaths that he decided to build another residence. He also lists the harsher penalties of Constantinian law: molten lead poured into the mouths of complicit nurses in abduction cases, and the revived "sack" penalty for parricides [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1]. Viola and Barna mention the executions of the eldest son, a nephew and a brother-in-law more briefly, remarking that they "do not strengthen the case for his conversion" [Viola & Barna, Pagan Christianity?, #66661, ch. 2].

Constantinople, the temples and the deathbed baptism

Constantinople was dedicated on 11 May 330. Viola and Barna say it was adorned with "treasures taken from heathen temples" [Viola & Barna, Pagan Christianity?, #66661, ch. 2]. Deschner names the treasures: the Samian Hera,

the Athena Lindia, the Aphrodite of Knidos and the Delphic tripods. He quotes Jerome's complaint that the city was built "with the plunder of almost all other cities," and reports that a statue of Apollo was given a cross-bearing orb and recast as Constantine. In his account, after 324 sacrifice, oracles and new cult statues were banned in the East. The temples at Aegeae, Aphaca, Heliopolis and Mamre were demolished or closed, and the gold went "into the empty coffers of the Church" [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1, "Konstantins Kampf gegen Juden, 'Ketzer', Heiden"].

Jones answers this directly in his chapter "After Constantine: Indifference and Intolerance." The legal codes "contain no law of Constantine directed against paganism, though several that reinforce Christianity." Eusebius' list of destroyed shrines is short, and each case had a particular reason. Asclepius, as a healing god, "might seem a rival to the true Savior". Heliopolis "remained a center of pagan cult until the late sixth century." Constantine continued to favour educated pagans: the Eleusinian torchbearer Nicagoras thanked "the most pious emperor Constantine" in a graffito in the royal tombs at Thebes in 326 [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, chs. 2-3]. Jones concludes that Constantine's policy was "a mixture of toleration and intolerance, severity and indifference." It is "a distortion of perspective," he writes, "to imagine that the persistence of paganism was high among" the emperor's concerns [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3]. Eusebius records Constantine's own description of himself as "perhaps a bishop appointed by God over those outside" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 1].

He was baptised only at the end of his life, in 337. The reference shelf records that the baptism was performed "by the Arian bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia" [Wikipedia: Constantine the Great and Christianity]. Viola and Barna add that the Senate declared him divine after his death, as it had done for earlier emperors [Viola & Barna, Pagan Christianity?, #66661, ch. 2].

The Donation of Constantine and the alternative readings

In the eighth century a document appeared in which Constantine supposedly handed Rome and the West to Pope Sylvester. The *Encyclopedia of Barbarian Europe* calls it "one of the most important and well-known forgeries of the early Middle Ages." It says its date and purpose "remain unclear," and that it borrows

the legend of Sylvester curing Constantine's leprosy. It also notes that the Donation had "perhaps even greater influence on political and religious affairs after its composition sometime in the eighth century" than at first [Encyclopedia of Barbarian Europe, #4637, "Donation of Constantine"]. The reference shelf adds the details: it was probably composed in the 8th century; it misdates Constantine's consulship; it was included in the Pseudo-Isidorean decretals; and Lorenzo Valla exposed it on philological grounds in 1439-1440 [Wikipedia: Donation of Constantine]. Avro Manhattan, a critic of the papacy, says that Pope Hadrian I presented Charlemagne with a copy in 774 and calls it "another papal forgery." By its clauses, he argues, "the pope became legally the successor of Constantine" and "the absolute head of all Christendom" [Manhattan, The Vatican Billions, #64831, ch. 36]. The conspiracy compilation *Alien World Order* quotes the Donation's grant of "imperial power, and dignity of glory" to the see of Peter. It calls the victory at the Milvian Bridge "the official beginning of Christianity in the West," and claims, citing Gardner, that Constantine, as a Roman emperor traditionally "considered a god," took that mantle for himself [Alien World Order, #67997, ch. 7].

Mehran Keshe goes further. In Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612 he says the cross "was something physical, punishment for act," a Roman penalty set up "all the way from Rome to Palestine" so that people would not forget their allegiance. He claims that "the three days, and the ascension, and the rest of it, is what was added to, by ... the rulers of Rome, to bring it to Mithraism," and that the story was "patched together" with the emperors' religion [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612, #378324]. In the same workshop's summary he calls religious tithing "tax by Man - not God" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612, #378324]. In Workshop 386 he claims that St Peter's was built "over the temple of Mitra, which was in the center of Rome," and that "Peters Basilica is actually a temple of Mitra" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 386, #378098]. Vermaseren, the archaeologist, documents real Mithraea under Roman churches, the most important being at Santa Prisca, with others such as San Clemente [Vermaseren, Mithras, the Secret God, #38300]. Vermaseren's evidence concerns those churches; the identification of the Vatican basilica itself with a Mithraeum is Keshe's.

Reading	Main proponent(s)	Key evidence cited
Providential conversion	Eusebius	Vision "By this conquer," labarum, church building

Reading	Main proponent(s)	Key evidence cited
Gradual, ambiguous conversion	Jones	310 Apollo vision, Sol coins, Pontifex Maximus, no anti-pagan law
Political alliance with violence	Deschner	Donatist repression, family murders, temple plunder
Pagan "corruption" of worship	Viola & Barna; Koster; Bacchiocchi	Basilica, vestments, incense, Sunday law of 321
Mithraic re-engineering	Keshe	Resurrection "patched" to Mithraism; Vatican on a Mithra temple
Conspiracy/forgery	Alien World Order; Manhattan	Milvian Bridge as start; Donation as papal forgery

Key points

- Every source for Constantine's early career dates from after 312. Jones regards Eusebius' vision story, told decades later, as "defensive panegyric," while Lactantius records only a dream and a sign on the shields.
- The 313 "Edict of Milan" was issued by Licinius. It granted freedom of religion to all, restored church property, and did not make Christianity the state religion.
- Constantine kept the office of Pontifex Maximus, put Sol on his coins, and in 321 decreed Sunday rest on the "venerable day of the Sun." Koster, Viola and Barna read this as sun-worship; Bacchiocchi dates the Sunday shift earlier.
- Deschner treats Constantine as the start of the church's alliance with state violence: troops against the Donatists, the killing of Crispus and Fausta, temple plunder, harsher penal law.
- Jones answers that no anti-pagan law of Constantine survives, that temple destructions were few and had particular reasons, and that pagan cult continued.
- The Donation of Constantine is an 8th-century forgery exposed by Valla in 1439-1440. Papal critics such as Manhattan treat it as the legal basis of papal temporal power.

- Keshe claims the crucifixion-resurrection story was reshaped by Roman rulers to fit Mithraism and that St Peter's stands on a Mithra temple. These are his own claims, set beside Vermaseren's documented Mithraea under Roman churches.

Chapter 55.

Nicaea and the Arian Controversy: Defining God by Council

The first great doctrinal war of the imperial church began as a quarrel among the clergy of Alexandria. It was taken up by an emperor who called it a trifle, and it was settled, in the short term, by a formula he pressed on the bishops. The question was whether the Son of God is God in the same sense as the Father or a creature, however exalted. For six decades after 325 the answer changed with the emperor. Nicene bishops were exiled under Arian rulers. A pagan emperor recalled them and exiled them again. Theodosius finally imposed the creed in 381, while the Goths carried the losing side into the barbarian West. This chapter follows the theology, the politics and the afterlife of the dispute through the library's historians, critics and fringe chronologists.

Arius, Alexander and the theology of creation ex nihilo

Karen Armstrong describes the excitement of the years around 320: "Sailors and travellers were singing versions of popular ditties that proclaimed that the Father alone was true God, inaccessible and unique, but that the Son was neither coeternal nor uncreated" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999, "Trinity: The Christian God"]. She stresses that "when the conflict broke out there was no officially orthodox position and it was by no means certain why or even whether Arius was wrong." Arius held that the Logos "was not God by nature" but "had been promoted by God to divine status," created directly by God while all other things were created through him [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999]. In her account both sides shared a new premise: "Arius, Alexander and Athanasius

… had come to believe a doctrine that would have startled any Platonist: they considered that God had created the world out of nothing." The disagreement was where to place Christ in relation to that gulf: "Arius and Athanasius put him on opposite sides of the gulf: Athanasius in the divine world and Arius in the created order" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999]. Athanasius' answer was soteriological: "If the Logos himself were a vulnerable creature, he would not be able to save mankind from extinction" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999]. In *The Case for God* Armstrong adds that "Like Arius, Athanasius had accepted the new doctrine of creation ex nihilo, but he argued that Arius did not understand its full implications"; for Athanasius, "Creation ex nihilo tore the universe away from God" [Armstrong, The Case for God, #66157].

Elaine Pagels dates the outbreak to "around 318." Alexander heard that "a popular Libyan priest named Arius, was preaching that the Word of God, while divine, was not divine in the same way as God the Father," and called an Egyptian council to excommunicate him. Bishops in Syria, Palestine and Asia Minor then held councils of their own that declared Arius "entirely orthodox" [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch. 5 "Constantine and the Catholic Church"]. Deschner, writing as a hostile critic, describes Arius (c. 260-336) as the parish priest of Baukalis, "the most respected church of the city," with a following of young women and dock workers. He quotes Alexander's attack on Arius' supporters among the "younger womenfolk, who swarm about all the streets without discipline or decency." He argues that the patriarchal see's struggle against the privileges of its own presbyters shaped the excommunication of Arius by a synod of about a hundred bishops [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1, "Nicht Kampf um den Glauben: um die Macht"]. Morris Bierbrier's dictionary gives a different summary of Arianism, as the doctrine "that Christ had only one nature—human." It records that Athanasius "forced him to leave the city" and that "Arius died in Constantinople in 336" [Bierbrier, Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, #366518, "Arius"].

The council of 325: emperor, creed, Easter and canons

The reference shelf states the outline. Constantine convened the council, and it met "from May until the end of July 325." Its results were the Christological settlement, the first form of the Nicene Creed, "uniform observance of the

date of Easter," and early canon law. It also dealt with the Melitian schism, begun when Melitius of Lycopolis took over ordinations during the persecution [Wikipedia: First Council of Nicaea]. The figure of 318 bishops, traditionally accepted, matches the 318 men of Abraham's household in Genesis, while the signature lists contain 200-220 names [Wikipedia: First Council of Nicaea]. Pagels gives the emperor's stated reason for the site: he invited the bishops to Nicaea "because of the excellent temperature of the air," in "the early days of June 325" [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch. 5]. Deschner dates the opening to 20 May [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1, "Das Konzil von Nicaea"]. The sources therefore differ by a few weeks.

On the creed, Pagels reports that the majority confessed Christ as "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God," "begotten, not made." Alexander's party had agreed in advance on the explosive phrase "of one being with" the Father. Opponents objected that it "occurs neither in the Scriptures nor in Christian tradition," but "Constantine, perhaps frustrated by so much time spent wrangling over a phrase, urged the bishops to include it." All signed except Arius, some priests and two Libyan bishops [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch. 5]. Pagels also cautions that "more careful historical investigation has shown that he not only allowed but expected the bishops themselves to arbitrate disputes" [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch. 5].

Deschner rejects that caution. He argues that Constantine "decided" the sessions and "imposed" the decisive formula, the *homoousios*. He points out that the term had been condemned as "heretical" by the eastern synod of Antioch in 268, that it came from Gnostic theology, and that "not the slightest of it stood in the Bible." He calls the result, after Johannes Haller, more properly "the Constantinian" creed: "the work of a layman who was not even baptised." He notes that a year before the council Constantine had written through Hosius that the quarrel was "only a trifle" [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1, "Das Konzil von Nicaea"]. He also quotes Eusebius' picture of the emperor arriving "like an angel of God from heaven," with bodyguards "with sharp swords drawn" around the bishops. Finally he cites the church historian Socrates: "Since the emperors began to be Christians, the affairs of the Church have depended on them, and the greatest councils were and are held at their pleasure" [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1].

Burning the books

According to Deschner, the Arian creed read at the council was "snatched from its speaker and torn to pieces" before it had been read out (Theodoret). Arius and his two loyal bishops were exiled to Gaul, and the burning of his books was ordered, with "the death penalty threatened for possessing them" [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1, "Das Konzil von Nicaea"]. Catherine Nixey's illustration list includes a 9th-century Italian manuscript showing "Emperor Constantine and the Council of Nicaea with the burning of Arian books illustrated below." She cites Luciano Canfora's judgment that "the burning of books was part of the advent and imposition of Christianity" [Nixey, The Darkening Age, #70864, list of illustrations; ch. 6]. She also says that "there is little evidence that Christians intentionally destroyed entire libraries"; in her account the damage Christianity did to books "was achieved by subtler" means [Nixey, The Darkening Age, #70864, ch. 11 "To Cleanse the Error of Demons"].

Pagels traces the same logic into the canon. In his Easter Letter of 367 Athanasius gave "the earliest known list of the twenty-seven books" of the New Testament and called on Christians to reject "the apocryphal books," which were "filled with myths, empty, and polluted." She suggests that monks near Nag Hammadi defied the order and buried "more than fifty books" in a jar, where they were found sixteen centuries later [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch. 5].

Athanasius and the reversals, 328-381

Athanasius had been Alexander's "personal secretary at the Council of Nicaea," was "elected bishop in 328," and spent his tenure in conflict with the Meletians and pro-Arian bishops. The *Encyclopedia of World History* says he "went into exile five times for his indefatigable defense of Nicaea" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Athanasius"]. Bierbrier dates his succession to 326 and lists the exiles as 334-337, 340-345 and 356-361, with brief exiles in 363 and 365 [Bierbrier, Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, #366518, "Athanasius"]. Deschner gives 8 June 328. He adds that, although Athanasius was said to be unanimously elected, "of 54 Egyptian bishops only seven" actually consecrated him, and those seven had broken their oath [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1, "Charakter und Taktik eines Kirchenlehrers"].

Pagels follows the reversals. Constantine first supported Athanasius, then "took the side of his opponents" and confirmed his deposition. Athanasius returned after Constantine's death and was deposed again. Gregory of Cappadocia and later another Cappadocian held the see. After "his third successful rival … was lynched in 361," Athanasius regained his position [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch. 5]. Jones names the political forces. Constantius II, "a convinced Arian," persecuted Athanasius. When Julian came to power and the Alexandrians lynched Bishop George, Julian "failed to issue any punishment, and allowed Athanasius to return from exile" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3]. Deschner records that Constantius grew so tired of argument over Christ's "essence" that he "finally forbade it." Theologians of the time compared the fighting to "a sea battle in fog," in which friend and foe could no longer be told apart [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1].

Pagels reports Erik Peterson's political reading. If the Father corresponds to the emperor and the Son to the bishops, Athanasius' equality of Son and Father "implies that the bishops' authority is equal to that of the emperor." Arius' subordination of the Son, by contrast, suited churches that "accept imperial power over church affairs" [Pagels, Beyond Belief, #63510, ch. 5]. Deschner quotes Goethe on the same theme: the doctrine of Christ's divinity decreed at Nicaea was "very conducive to despotism, indeed a necessity" [Deschner, Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums, #38038, Bd. 1].

Julian the Apostate and the pagan interlude, 361-363

Jones describes Julian as raised a Christian and "under the spell of Neoplatonism." In his attempt to restore paganism and create "a pagan church patterned after the Christian one," he was "more fanatical than most of the Christian emperors, with the possible exceptions of Theodosius I and Justinian." Jones calls the reign "an interlude, of greater importance in historiography than in history" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3]. Koster, writing as a Sabbatarian, emphasises Julian's solar religion: he "reverted back to the former, older frank Sun-worship, calling himself a 'follower of King Sun,' being a devotee of Mithras" [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909]. The Christian reply lasted long after him. Jones notes that among Cyril of Alexandria's surviving works is "a ten-book refutation of the diatribe Against the Galileans that the emperor Julian had written some eighty years before" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425].

Constantinople 381 and the Arian Goths

Jones writes that only when "the 'Trinitarian' Theodosius I had succeeded to power in 379 and had convened a second ecumenical council at Constantinople in 381 was Arianism officially condemned" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2]. The reference shelf adds that this council "confirmed the Nicene Creed, expanding the doctrine thereof to produce the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed." Its main addition concerned the divinity of the Holy Spirit, which the Macedonians (Pneumatomachians) denied. It met while the capital itself was "solidly Arian" [Wikipedia: First Council of Constantinople].

The defeated doctrine survived outside the empire. Jones writes that "through the activity of an Arian missionary, Ulfilas, the Goths and other German federations had begun to adopt it already in the reign of Constantine." A Christian heresy thus "had the effect of reinforcing political and military divisions," and Arianism "survived, especially among Germans, well into the sixth century" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 2]. James C. Russell calls the process by which most Germanic peoples became Arian "an enigma." He discusses "the role of Arian Christianity in enhancing a sense of identity and solidarity among the Arian Germanic peoples." He also cites Burns' suggestion that early Ostrogothic conversion under the Huns may have been "a statement of political independence" [Russell, The Germanization of Early Medieval Christianity, #67570, ch. 7].

Fringe readings: redating Nicaea, and the Islamic consequence

Fomenko and Nosovskiy deny that the council took place in the fourth century at all. Their "Statement 1" holds that the council which set the Paschalia "could not have occurred earlier than 784 A.D." Under the conventional date, they argue, Christian Easter would have coincided with the Jewish full-moon Passover "eight (!) times—in 316, 319, 323, 343, 347, 367, 374, 394," and in 326, "a year after the Council," it would have fallen two days before it. Such a picture is, in their words, "so fantastic that there are severe doubts about its credibility" [Fomenko & Nosovskiy, History: Fiction or Science?, #62243, Chron. 7, "The Scaligerian dating of the Council of Nicaea is contradictory to Paschalia"]. Their

summary dates the Paschalia to no earlier than the second half of the 8th century. They identify the first Great Indiction as the year 877, and read the "First and Second Ecumenical Council" under Basil I as the real Nicaea, "Constantine the Great (a.k.a. Basil I the Macedonian)." In the full new chronology, they place the canonisation "in the era of the XI-XIV centuries" [Fomenko & Nosovskiy, History: Fiction or Science?, #62243, Chron. 7, sections 1.17-1.18].

Dan Desmarques draws a theological consequence rather than a chronological one: "The fundamental problem that emerged from the council of Nicaea is that, as soon you separate Christ from God, you are essentially labeling him just another prophet, as what the Islamic" tradition does [Desmarques, Christ Cult Codex, #67424, ch. 25 "Christians and Luciferians"]. The link between the Arian position and the Qur'anic Jesus is taken up in Part 7.

Question	Arius	Athanasius / Nicaea	Critics' gloss
Is the Son eternal?	"There was a time when He was not" (Jones)	Eternally begotten, "not made"	Formula "imposed" by emperor (Deschner)
Is the Son creature or God?	Exalted creature, promoted to divinity	*Homoousios*, "of one being"	Term non-biblical, condemned in 268 (Deschner)
Salvation	Christ as model to emulate	Only God can deify: "The Word became human that we might become divine" (Athanasius, quoted by Armstrong, *The Case for God*)	Equality of Son mirrors bishops' claim against emperors (Peterson via Pagels)
Political afterlife	Constantius II, Valens, Goths	Theodosius I, 381	Paschalia "not earlier than 784" (Fomenko)

Key points

- Armstrong argues that Arius, Alexander and Athanasius all accepted creation ex nihilo. They differed on which side of the gulf between God and creation to place Christ.
- Constantine convened Nicaea (May-July 325, at imperial expense). Pagels reports he chose it for "the excellent temperature of the air." It produced the *homoousios* creed, a uniform Easter, and canons including rulings on the Melitians.
- Pagels allows that the bishops had real room to decide. Deschner holds that the emperor imposed a non-biblical formula and ordered Arius' books burned under threat of death.
- Athanasius (bishop 328, or 326 per Bierbrier) was exiled five times. Julian let him return in 361, and Bierbrier records further brief exiles in 363 and 365.
- Julian's pagan restoration (361-363) was, for Jones, an interlude. Koster stresses that Julian called himself a "follower of King Sun" and was devoted to Mithras.
- Theodosius' council of 381 condemned Arianism and expanded the creed. Through Ulfilas, Arianism became a marker of Gothic and Germanic identity into the sixth century (Jones; Russell).
- Fomenko and Nosovskiy redate the Paschalia, and so Nicaea, to no earlier than 784. Desmarques sees the separation of Christ from God as making him "just another prophet," as in Islam.

Chapter 56.

Theodosius and the Christian State: Edicts, Temples, Hypatia and the End of Paganism

Constantine had made Christianity the emperor's religion. Theodosius I (379-395) made it the religion every subject was required to profess. Within about fifteen years came an edict defining orthodoxy for "all the various nations" of the empire, laws forbidding sacrifice even at the household altar, and a bishop who barred an emperor from communion. In the same period the greatest temple of Alexandria was destroyed, and the last pagan usurper was defeated on the Frigidus. A generation later a mob of churchmen killed the philosopher Hypatia. The sources disagree about what all this meant. Catherine Nixey reads the period as the deliberate destruction of classical civilisation. Christopher P. Jones and Samuel Dill emphasise how stubbornly paganism survived the laws. Frank O'Collins sets the events out as an indictment. Keshe offers a modern reading of the church as a power of money and state. This chapter sets these readings side by side.

The Edict of Thessalonica and the legal definition of orthodoxy

On 27 February 380 Theodosius, with Gratian and Valentinian II, issued the edict *Cunctos populos*, addressed to the people of Constantinople. The reference shelf calls it the act that "made Nicene Christianity the state church of the Roman Empire" [Wikipedia: Edict of Thessalonica]. Its text reads: "It is our desire that all the various nations which are subject to our Clemency and Moderation, should continue to profess that religion which was delivered to the Romans by the divine Apostle Peter … and which is now professed by the Pontiff Damasus and by

Peter, Bishop of Alexandria." Those who follow it are "to embrace the name of Catholic Christians," while the others, "since, in our judgment they are foolish madmen," "shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give to their conventicles the name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of the divine condemnation and in the second the punishment of our authority" (*Codex Theodosianus* xvi.1.2). The edict came after Theodosius had been baptised during a severe illness at Thessalonica. It was later placed in Book XVI of the Theodosian Code, and the reference shelf calls it "the first known secular law which includes in its preamble a clear definition of what a Christian Roman ruler considers as religious orthodoxy" [Wikipedia: Edict of Thessalonica]. McCabe's nineteenth-century world history describes the same turn from Egypt's point of view: "In A.D. 379 the Emperor Theodosius I. made an earnest effort to root it [paganism] out. He issued a decree that the whole body of his subjects ..." [McCabe, The Pictorial History of the World, #66127, "Egypt from the Roman Conquest"].

Jones calls the accession of Theodosius "a turning point in the legislative history of Christianity, and a visible hardening of imperial attitudes toward paganism." A law of 381 banned divinatory sacrifice, which "tended to outlaw sacrifice even in private." In 385 the prefect Cynegius began "a campaign of destruction against rural shrines and against temples located in cities," which provoked Libanius' speech *For the Temples* [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3 "After Constantine: Indifference and Intolerance"].

The laws of 391-392

Jones quotes the law of 391: "Let no-one pollute himself with sacrifices, let no-one slaughter an innocent victim, let no-one approach shrines, visit temples, or revere images made by human hand." It was the first law to forbid administrators of every rank to enter a temple for worship [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3]. Samuel Dill, writing in 1899, explains how far the law of 392 went. It "forbids absolutely the offering of sacrifices, and even the visiting of temples," and "the most private worship of the household gods, by incense, lights, or garlands, is interdicted." He calls it "of the most sweeping and uncompromising character," intended "for the whole Roman world" [Dill, Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire, #60233, Book I ch. 2, "Anti-pagan laws of Theodosius"]. Higgins notes an effect at Olympia: "In 391 CE, Theodosius I closed the temples of the sanctuary, which led to a steep decline in the prestige of the games" [Higgins, The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, #64793].

Frank O'Collins' *Almanac of Evil* presents the same legislation as a charge sheet. Its entry for 391-399 lists "Offences causing major property damage" and says that "upon the order of Christian Emperor Theodosius … all pagan temples across the Roman Empire must be closed" [O'Collins, The Almanac of Evil, #76627, ch. 4]. In the same style O'Collins accuses Pope Innocent I of ordering "the systematic extermination of the Donatists" in 409-428 [O'Collins, The Almanac of Evil, #76627].

Jones and Dill both question how well the laws were enforced. Jones quotes a western bishop: "good emperors promulgate laws in behalf of religion, but their agents do not enforce them properly." He adds that "the comparative rarity of laws specifically directed against pagans … is a sign that paganism was not uppermost in the mind of most imperial legislators" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3]. Dill records that "in the very year when the first of these laws was published, a votary of Mithra within the walls of Rome received 'the new birth to eternal life' through the cleansing rites of the Taurobolium." He also observes that laws were sometimes addressed to pagan officials, such as the law of 391 sent to Flavianus, "the man who, within three years, was to be a leader in the great pagan reaction" [Dill, Roman Society, #60233, Book I ch. 2]. Jones also points out that Theodosius himself ordered a temple in Osrhoene to remain open, with its statues valued "more for the value of their art than for their divine nature" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3].

Ambrose, the Altar of Victory and the penance of an emperor

According to Dill, the removal of the statue and altar of Victory from the Senate-house under Gratian was "the most serious assault on the old religion." For "twelve generations of senators" their sittings had been opened with sacrifice at that altar [Dill, Roman Society, #60233, Book I ch. 2]. In 384 Symmachus pleaded for its restoration in a speech that Dill calls "the last formal and public protest of the proscribed faith": "Each nation has its own gods and peculiar rites. The Great Mystery cannot be approached by one avenue alone … A religion should be judged by its utility to the men who hold it." Ambrose defeated the petition. When Symmachus tried again in 391, "Theodosius was thoroughly mastered by the powerful will of S. Ambrose, and the chief of the pagan party was hurried from the imperial presence, and set down at the hundredth milestone from Milan" [Dill, Roman Society, #60233, Book I ch. 2].

Dill describes Ambrose as "the man who confronted fearlessly the Arianism of Justina, and who forced Theodosius to do penance for the massacre of Thessalonica" [Dill, Roman Society, #60233]. The reference shelf gives the episode, c. 390. After the general Butheric was lynched in a riot at the circus, Theodosius authorised his Gothic soldiers to punish the city, and many citizens were killed in the hippodrome. Ambrose wrote that the emperor must show repentance and would be "forbidden from receiving the Eucharist until he had done so," and Theodosius complied. The article also notes that there are "no contemporaneous accounts," that the fifth-century church historians "contradict one another," and that pagan historians do not mention the massacre at all [Wikipedia: Massacre of Thessalonica]. The episode set a lasting precedent for church and state: a bishop disciplined an emperor publicly.

The Serapeum, the monks and the war on temples

The Serapeum of Alexandria was destroyed under Bishop Theophilus. Jones dates it to the reign of Theodosius, "aided by the governor" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3]. Nixey places the fall in 392, and describes the scene at the colossal statue: "rumour had it that if Serapis was harmed then the sky would fall in. Theophilus ordered a soldier to take his axe and hit it." She adds that Theophilus, "flushed by his success," went on "to demolish numerous shrines in Egypt." On the library she writes: "The tens of thousands of books, the remnants of the greatest library in the world, were all lost, never to reappear. Perhaps they were burned" [Nixey, The Darkening Age, #70864, ch. 6 "The Most Magnificent Building in the World"]. The *Encyclopedia of World History* states that "in the fourth century not only were pagan temples destroyed, but libraries were also closed down under the orders of Theophilus, the bishop of Alexandria" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Alexandria"]. Jones adds that Theophilus built a martyr's shrine to John the Baptist and a church named for the emperor Arcadius within the temple enclosure [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425].

Nixey's prologue opens with Palmyra c. 385 and the epigraph from St Shenoute: "There is no crime for those who have Christ." She describes "marauding bands of bearded, black-robed zealots" [Nixey, The Darkening Age, #70864, Prologue]. In her chapter "How to Destroy a Demon" she names Marcellus as "the first of the bishops to put the edict in force," and records that the 1965 *Penguin Dictionary of Saints* noted "with little more than amused indulgence" that Martin of Tours "was not averse to the forcible destruction of heathen shrines" [Nixey,

The Darkening Age, #70864, chs. 7-8]. Jones quotes the pagan Eunapius on the monks brought into the Serapeum: "human beings in appearance, but swinish in their way of life … for everyone in those days who wore a black robe had tyrannical power" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3]. Drawing on Besa's *Life*, Jones describes Shenoute of Atripe (active c. 430-460) and his monks breaking into the house of the landowner Gesios, smashing statues and posting a notice of his "disgrace and infamy." Shenoute was charged by the "priests of idolatry" before the governor at Antinoe and acquitted. In Jones' account, Shenoute was angered not only by Gesios' paganism but by his exploitation of the poor [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 10 "The East"]. Dill notes a counter-current: the edict of 399 forbidding destruction of artworks in Spain and Gaul, and Arcadius' prohibition of "the tumultuous gatherings, headed by monks, which wrought such deplorable havoc in the East" [Dill, Roman Society, #60233, Book I ch. 2].

Eugenius and the Frigidus: the last pagan stand

After Valentinian II was murdered, Arbogastes raised Eugenius, "a Christian in name … a Hellenist in culture." At the urging of Virius Nicomachus Flavianus, the altar of Victory was restored and the state again paid for pagan rites. Dill writes that both sides sought oracles: Theodosius consulted a holy man in the Thebaid, while an oracle circulated predicting "the final overthrow of the Christian faith in the very year of the impending struggle." The usurpers boasted that "they would return to stable their horses in the Christian basilica." Then "within a few days these hopes were crushed in the battle on the Frigidus" (394), and Flavianus killed himself [Dill, Roman Society, #60233, Book I ch. 2, "Usurpation of Eugenius"]. Dill adds that Serena, wife of Stilicho, took the necklace from the statue of the Great Mother "in the presence of the last Vestal Virgin". He also writes that the Senate remained "obstinately attached" to the old faith [Dill, Roman Society, #60233].

Hypatia, 415

Jones explains Hypatia's death through the politics of Alexandria. Cyril, Theophilus' nephew, quarrelled with the governor Orestes, who "hated the power of the bishops of Alexandria because they appropriated much of the power of those appointed to rule by the emperor." A rumour spread that

Hypatia was turning Orestes against the bishop, and "hot-tempered men" led by a minor cleric named Peter attacked her. Quoting Socrates: "They dragged her to the church called the Caesarion, and stripping off her clothing killed her with scraps of pottery, and after tearing her limb from limb brought the limbs to the so-called Cinaron and destroyed them by fire." Jones identifies the attackers as *parabalanoi*, "Christian toughs usually employed in the care of the dangerously ill," and says that Cyril "took a large part in the notorious lynching" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3]. In Nixey's account, Cyril assembled "a mob of the parabalani." The killers, "under the guidance of a Church magistrate called Peter ... ripped the clothes from her body then, using broken pieces of pottery as blades, flayed her skin from her flesh," and burned what was left of "the 'luminous child of reason' " [Nixey, The Darkening Age, #70864, ch. 9]. Nixey also stresses that Hypatia was non-partisan and that Orestes himself was a Christian [Nixey, The Darkening Age, #70864, ch. 9]. McCabe's chapter heading "Cyril—Murder of Hypatia" shows that the episode was already standard in popular world history in the nineteenth century [McCabe, The Pictorial History of the World, #66127].

Did paganism die? Did Christianity kill Rome?

Jones' conclusion, "The Persistence of Paganism," questions the idea of destruction. Gibbon titled his twenty-eighth chapter "The Final Destruction of Paganism." Jones answers that "paganism was indestructible, in that it had never really existed except as an entity in the eyes of its opponents." Worshippers of the old gods survived "in fringe regions such as Osrhoene, southern Egypt, and Sardinia." The political effect of Constantine's conversion, he argues, "was to nationalize Christianity—not to compel conversion or to execute or exile nonbelievers" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 11]. He nonetheless records persecution "at the local level, the action of ordained clergy or monks," made possible by "an atmosphere of impunity" under devout emperors such as Theodosius [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 3].

Tainter summarises Gibbon's list of causes for the Roman collapse: "relaxation of military discipline, Christianity, ignorance of dangers, bad emperors," while noting that Gibbon above all "indicted poor leadership" [Tainter, The Collapse of Complex Societies, #64889, ch. 4]. Jim Penman's *Biohistory* gives a biological variant. He argues that Christianity's sexual restraints ought to have raised the temperament factor he calls "C," but "not only did Christianity fail to raise C in the Roman Empire, it could not even halt the decline" [Penman, Biohistory,

#63863]. Dill describes the theological argument that came with the barbarian invasions: a "melancholy strife of sophistry, as to the efficacy of the old gods or the new to protect and prosper their worshippers, which was only closed by the genius of S. Augustine." Pagans complained that Radagaisus' army had its gods while "the sons of old Rome were deprived of the help of their ancient deities" [Dill, Roman Society, #60233, Book I ch. 2]. The sack of Rome by Alaric in 410 sharpened this argument, and it led to Augustine's *City of God* (begun 413), which O'Collins lists in his almanac for that year [O'Collins, The Almanac of Evil, #76627].

For a modern comparison, Keshe describes the Roman church as a financial and political actor rather than a spiritual house. In Knowledge Seekers Workshop 422 he calls it a "House of God" that "never looses in the world of religion, because it is a house of money, not God." He also claims, about the war in Ukraine, that "Vatican has already paid for it" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 422, #378134, "Vatican Financial Control"]. Keshe thus carries into the present the theme this chapter traces, a church fused with money and the state.

Event	Date	Hostile reading	Moderating reading
Edict of Thessalonica	27 Feb 380	Dissenters "foolish madmen" to be punished	First legal definition of orthodoxy (reference shelf)
Laws against sacrifice	391-392	All temples closed (O'Collins)	Poorly enforced; Taurobolium in Rome in 391 (Dill; Jones)
Serapeum destroyed	391/392	Library lost, "perhaps … burned" (Nixey)	Local episcopal action aided by governor (Jones)
Frigidus	394	—	Last pagan stand; Senate still pagan (Dill)
Hypatia killed	415	Cyril's mob (Nixey)	Feud between bishop and governor (Jones)

Key points

- The Edict of Thessalonica (27 February 380, with Gratian and Valentinian II) made Nicene Christianity the state religion and branded dissenters "foolish madmen" liable to punishment. It entered Book XVI of the Theodosian Code.
- The laws of 391-392 banned sacrifice, temple visits and even private household worship. Dill and Jones document widespread non-enforcement and continuing pagan rites, including a Mithraic Taurobolium in Rome in 391.
- Ambrose defeated Symmachus over the Altar of Victory and made Theodosius do public penance after the Thessalonica massacre (c. 390). The reference shelf notes that the sources for the massacre are late and contradictory.
- Theophilus destroyed the Serapeum (391 or 392; the sources differ by a year) and, per the *Encyclopedia of World History*, closed libraries. Monks such as Shenoute led local campaigns against temples and idols.
- The defeat of Eugenius at the Frigidus (394) ended the last pagan political reaction, though the Senate stayed largely pagan.
- Hypatia was murdered in 415 by *parabalani* under the cleric Peter, amid Cyril's feud with Orestes (Jones; Nixey).
- Jones argues that paganism was "nationalized" out of public life rather than destroyed. Gibbon, as Tainter summarises him, counted Christianity among the causes of Rome's fall, and Penman says it "could not even halt the decline." The debate over the sack of Rome in 410 led to Augustine.

Chapter 57.

Christological Councils and the Oriental Churches: Ephesus, Chalcedon and the Great Schisms of the East

Once Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) had settled that the Son is fully God, the fifth century faced the next question: how do the divine and the human belong together in the one Christ? The quarrel began over a title of Mary. Within a generation it had split Eastern Christianity into three communions that still exist: the Chalcedonian imperial church, the "miaphysite" churches of Egypt, Syria, Armenia and Ethiopia, and the Church of the East in Sasanian Persia, which its opponents called "Nestorian". The library's sources do not treat this as a matter of doctrine alone. They describe imperial women, rival patriarchates, mob action, Persian taxation and, in the end, Arab conquest. This chapter follows them in that order.

The Theotokos quarrel: Nestorius against Cyril

According to McGuckin, the Syrian monk Nestorius became archbishop of Constantinople in 428 and began a campaign of "reform" against heretics. His opponents thought it violent and rash. Arians burned their last church rather than surrender it, and Novatians and surviving Apollinarians were persecuted. Nestorius came to see anyone who used the title *Theotokos* ("God-bearer") as a heretic, identifying it with late sectarian Apollinarian usage [McGuckin, Semnele Imparatiei. Antologie, #16120, "Termenul de Theotokos în cadrul controversei de la Efes"]. In his view Mary could be called only "mother of the man Jesus" (*Anthropotokos*) or, better, "mother of Christ" (*Christotokos*). His chaplain Athanasius

preached in Advent 428 that "no one should call Mary Theotokos, for she is only a human being, from whom God could not be born". Nestorius then called the title outright pagan and described Christ as the "instrument" and "garment" of God [McGuckin, #16120]. Proclus answered with his famous homily in defence of the Theotokos, and Nestorius had to sit and listen to it in his own cathedral [McGuckin, #16120].

Cyril of Alexandria, kept informed by his agents in the capital, made the matter a "scandalum oecumenicum". McGuckin sums up the exchange as a duel of slogans. To "Mary cannot strictly (*akribos*) be called Mother of God", Cyril replied: "If Mary is not strictly the Mother of God, then the one born of her is not strictly God" [McGuckin, #16120]. Cyril's positive formula, *mia physis tou theou logou sesarkomene*, "one incarnate nature of God the Word", later became the charter of the miaphysite churches. The reference shelf records that scholars dispute whether the phrase began with Apollinaris, and that McGuckin reads Cyril's *physis* as "a rough semantic equivalent to hypostasis" [Wikipedia: Miaphysitism].

McGuckin gives the title a long history. A liturgical hymn on the Rylands papyrus 470, from the later third century, already invokes the Theotokos ("Beneath your protection we take refuge, Theotokos…"). Origen, Pierius, Peter and Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus all used the term. McGuckin calls it "an ancient Alexandrian theologoumenon" which in Syria had become tied to Apollinarian "mixis" theology. That association, in his reading, explains why the Syrian Nestorius misjudged it [McGuckin, #16120, "Originile termenului Theotokos"].

Pulcheria, the court and the fall of Nestorius

Both McGuckin and the Lightmans make the empress Pulcheria, elder sister of Theodosius II, central to the outcome. The Lightmans record that in 413, at fourteen, she "assumed control", publicly dedicated herself and her sisters Arcadia and Marina to virginity, and became Augusta and regent in July 414. The sisters "fervently believed that Mary was Mother of God (Theotokos) and rejected any suggestion that diminished her status to Mother of Christ (Christotokos)" [Lightman, A to Z of Ancient Greek and Roman Women, #68226, "Arcadia"; "Pulcheria, Aelia"]. In the Lightmans' telling, Nestorius barred Pulcheria from taking communion in the sanctuary of the Great Church. When she cited her virginity

pledged to Mary, the Mother of God, "he replied that women only gave birth to evil and Satan" [Lightman, #68226, "Pulcheria, Aelia"].

McGuckin adds further offences. Nestorius removed from the altar a costly golden vestment Pulcheria had made from her imperial robe. He questioned her claim to consecrated virginity. He restricted monks from wandering the streets, and he banned the evening charitable gatherings of the college of virgins and deaconesses over which she presided. Aristocratic women in her circle, Droseria and Marcella, acted as Cyril's confidantes at court and were later paid 50 pounds of gold by him. McGuckin concludes: "It would not be wrong to say that the fall of Nestorius is owed to this group of aristocratic women around Pulcheria." He suggests they probably arranged for the council to move from the capital to Ephesus, already a pilgrimage centre of the Virgin and hard for Nestorius's Syrian allies to reach [McGuckin, #16120, "Nestorie şi împărăteasa Pulcheria"]. He cites his own article "Nestorius and the Political Factions of 5th Century Byzantium: Factors in his Downfall" (Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library) and his *St. Cyril of Alexandria and the Christological Controversy* (Brill, 1994). He also points readers to the revisionist literature: the article "Nestorius was Orthodox" (*Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16, 1962, 119–140) and G. Bebis, "The Apology of Nestorius. A New Evaluation" (*Studia Patristica* 11, 1972) [McGuckin, Semnele Împărăţiei vol.1, #16119].

McGuckin also reads the Theotokos as a missionary strategy. In Egypt, Isis bore the titles "Mother of God" and "Great Virgin", and at Ephesus the cults of the Great Mother, Artemis and Isis had merged. On this view, Cyril's insistence on the title was a way to "replace the old religion by borrowing its positive elements." He notes that after the vote of 431, women carrying torches, which recall Isiac processions, escorted the "orthodox bishops" home with perfumed water. He calls this "a Christianisation of Hellenism", not a Hellenisation of Christianity [McGuckin, #16120, "Titlul de Theotokos şi strategia misionară a lui Chiril"].

Ephesus 431, the "Robber Council" 449, Chalcedon 451

The sources agree on the sequence and differ on emphasis. McGuckin notes that Cyril presided at Ephesus in 431 with Pope Celestine's mandate to obtain Nestorius's retraction or deposition. Cyril's Twelve Anathemas were judged too offensive "even by Fathers who favoured the council" [McGuckin, #16120]. The

Lightmans write that Memnon of Ephesus and Cyril "organized mobs that intimidated the supporters of Nestorius". Late-arriving Nestorian bishops then deposed Cyril and Memnon in a counter-council. Street protests in Constantinople led Theodosius, "undoubtedly with advice from Pulcheria", to depose Nestorius [Lightman, #68226, "Pulcheria, Aelia"].

The Lightmans then trace a compromise of 443, which affirmed the Theotokos, and its unravelling. Dioscorus of Alexandria backed the monk Eutyches, godson of the eunuch Chrysaphius, after a Constantinopolitan synod in 448 excommunicated him. At the second council of Ephesus in August 449, Eutyches was reinstated "under pressure from the emperor", and Flavian and Eusebius of Dorylaeum were deposed. Leo of Rome and the Western court appealed to Pulcheria. After Chrysaphius fell and Theodosius died in July 450, Pulcheria and Aspar made Marcian emperor. She married him in "an unconsummated marriage". The council near Chalcedon (8 October–1 November 451) deposed Dioscorus and adopted Leo's definition of two natures "each nature preserved in union in Christ". It affirmed the Theotokos "under pressure from Pulcheria and Marcian" and raised Constantinople to the level of Rome over Leo's objections. The bishops acclaimed her as a new Helena [Lightman, #68226, "Pulcheria, Aelia"]. The Lightmans' verdict: "With the Chalcedon compromise, orthodoxy was defined, but not everywhere accepted." Monks rioted in Palestine in 452, and Eudocia sheltered them [Lightman, #68226, Introduction; "Pulcheria, Aelia"]. McGuckin adds that the Constantinople council of 553 was a "desperate attempt", made "too late", to make Cyril's theology the standard for both Chalcedonians and miaphysites [McGuckin, #16120].

Council	Date	Presiding force (per sources)	Outcome
Ephesus I	431	Cyril, with Celestine's mandate; Memnon	Nestorius deposed; Theotokos affirmed
Ephesus II ("Robber")	449	Dioscorus, under Theodosius II	Eutyches restored; Flavian deposed
Chalcedon	451	Pulcheria and Marcian; Leo's Tome	Two natures in one hypostasis; Dioscorus deposed; Constantinople raised

Constantinople II	553	Justinian	Three Chapters condemned; Cyril reaffirmed

The Church of the East: from Chalcedon-friendly to "Nestorian"

Philip Wood's study of the *Chronicle of Seert* (catalogued in the library under the title *Drama of the Divine Economy*) shows that "Nestorian" identity came later and was not uniform. Barhadbeshabba's history treats Nestorius as an Antiochene martyr and "spiritual athlete". It directs its polemic against "the Egyptians", not against the Roman world [Wood, The Chronicle of Seert, #55093, "Dyophysite History of Barhadbeshaba"]. Under the catholicos Ishoʿyahb I, close ties with the emperor Maurice, who was then persecuting miaphysites at Harran and Edessa, produced a *positive* image of Chalcedon in the East [Wood, #55093, "Chalcedon in the Church of the East"].

The Nisibene theologians built the opposite, anti-Chalcedonian tradition. Paul of Nisibis argued before Justinian in 562 that "the two natures cannot exist in a single hypostasis". Babai the Great (d. 628) asserted two *qnome* in Christ. Wood records that in 612, when miaphysites had influence at the Persian court, their opponents were "labelled for the first time 'Nestorians' ". When Ishoʿyahb II took communion with Heraclius in 630, Barsauma of Susa protested: "there is a chasm between us and the Greeks that has its origin at the council of Chalcedon". Ishoʿyahb himself called Chalcedon "neither orthodox nor heretical" [Wood, #55093, "The Anti-Chalcedon Tradition"]. The synod of Giwargis I (680) defended "Nestorius and Theodore". By the ninth century pseudo-George of Arbela and Shahdost of Tirhan used "Nestorian" as a term of pride [Wood, #55093, "A Nestorian Church"]. Wood also stresses the Sasanian setting. Shapur II persecuted the church after the catholicos Symeon refused to collect a wartime poll tax from Christians [Wood, #55093].

The Britannica gives the older, simpler account. Eastern Syria clung "to the teaching and person of Nestorius", and "Nestorian, or, as it was termed, Chaldaic Christianity" was "separated from the West" and "directed its energies towards the East". The Persian church was "definitely Nestorian" from the patriarch Babaeus (498–503). It reached the St Thomas Christians of India, Merv, Herat and Samarkand, and China, as the Si-ngan-fu inscription (before 781) shows.

Nestorian physicians and philosophers became "the teachers of the great Arabian natural philosophers" [Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th ed., vol. VI, #70744, "Church History: The Nestorian and the Monophysite Churches"]. The *Encyclopedia of Missions* (1904/1910) likewise records that the Nestorians, "driven from the Roman dominions", lodged in Persia in the fifth century and sent missions to Arabia, India, Ceylon and China. It adds that the patriarch Timothy (778–820) sent missionaries to China and India [The Encyclopedia of Missions, #64675, "Geography"].

Syriac origins: Edessa and Adiabene

The Syriac churches tell their own founding stories. Cureton's *Ancient Syriac Documents* preserves the Abgar legend, with Abgar Ukkama's letter to Jesus and Jesus's reply: "Blessed is he that hath believed in me, not having seen me", together with the promise that the city "shall be blessed, and the enemy shall not prevail against it for ever". The texts appeal to "the Book of Records which is at Edessa" [Cureton, Ancient Syriac Documents, #55005, "Letter of Abgar"; "Doctrine of Addai"]. The *Chronicle of Arbela*, a list of the bishops of Adiabene, says that the first of them "was Mar Peqida, whom Apostle Addai himself had ordained". It also reports that Mar Hibai taught "in the schools of Orhai" [Edessa] [Chronicle of Arbela, #55002].

Armenia, Egypt and the bridge to Islam

According to the *Encyclopedia of World History*, the traditions of the women missionaries and martyrs Rhipsime and Gaiane "are among the earliest accounts of the conversion of Armenia", and Tertullian (c. 200) mentions Christians in Armenia [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204]. The *Encyclopedia of Missions* calls Armenia "the first nation, as such, to embrace Christianity" [#64675, "Geography"]. Kouymjian's study of Lazar P'arpets'i dates the end of the Arsacid (Arshakuni) dynasty to about 428 and the deaths of Sahak and Mesrop to 438/9. In other words, the line ended in the same year Nestorius took office. His bibliography lists a study of *The Relations of the Armenian Church with Syrian Churches* (Ejmiatsin, 1908) [Kouymjian, Studies in Classical Armenian Literature, #60390].

For Egypt, Reid records Coptic self-understanding plainly: "Copts traced their church back to Mark and had practically invented Christian monasticism" [Reid, Whose Pharaohs?, #366549, ch. 1]. The Britannica calls Egypt "the home of Monophysitism", which Jacob Baradaeus (d. 578) saved in Syria. It says the Arab conquest (641) "put an end to the oppression of the native Christians by the Greek minority". It also gives a demographic estimate: six million Copts at the conquest, about one hundred thousand in 1820 [Britannica, #70744]. The *Encyclopedia of Missions* is harsher: "In Egypt and Nubia the monophysite Christians for the most part turned traitors, caring less for orthodoxy from Constantinople than fancied protection from Medina" [#64675, "Geography: The Feudal Church"]. The two sources thus describe the same transfer of allegiance in opposite terms, as liberation in one and as betrayal in the other. That transfer is where Part 7 begins.

Key points

- McGuckin traces *Theotokos* to third-century Egyptian liturgy (Rylands papyrus 470). Nestorius (428) rejected it as Apollinarian or pagan, while Cyril answered with "one incarnate nature of God the Word" [#16120; Wikipedia: Miaphysitism].
- McGuckin and the Lightmans make Pulcheria and her circle of consecrated aristocratic women decisive in Nestorius's fall [#16120; #68226]. McGuckin also cites the revisionist case "Nestorius was Orthodox" [#16119].
- McGuckin reads Cyril's promotion of the Theotokos as missionary replacement of the Isis and Great Mother cults [#16120].
- Ephesus 431 (Cyril presiding, mobs per the Lightmans) was followed by Ephesus 449 (Eutyches restored) and Chalcedon 451 (two natures; Constantinople raised). In the Lightmans' words, "orthodoxy was defined, but not everywhere accepted" [#68226].
- Wood shows that "Nestorian" was first a hostile label (612). It became a self-designation by the ninth century, and earlier Persian catholicoi had viewed Chalcedon favourably [#55093].
- The Britannica describes "Chaldaic Christianity" turning east to Persia, India, Central Asia and China [#70744], and the *Encyclopedia of Missions* records the Nestorians' missionary march east [#64675].

- Syriac Christianity grounds itself in the Abgar–Addai legend [#55005] and the Adiabene episcopal list [#55002]. Armenian tradition looks to Rhipsime and Gaiane [#5204].
- On the Arab conquest of Egypt, the Britannica speaks of an end to Greek "oppression", while the *Encyclopedia of Missions* says the monophysites "turned traitors" for "fancied protection from Medina" [#70744; #64675].

Part VII.

Christianity: Schisms, Reform and Divisions

Chapter 58.

Two Romes: Papal Primacy, Byzantine Caesaropapism and the Schism of 1054

The break between Latin and Greek Christendom is usually dated to one summer day in 1054, when papal legates laid a bull of excommunication on the altar of Hagia Sophia. The sources in the library agree that the date stands for a much longer process. They disagree, often sharply, about who caused it and what it meant. Three Romanian-language accounts form the core of this chapter, and each argues a side. The Greek-Catholic historian Clemente Plaianu writes in defence of Roman primacy. The Orthodox traditionalists Archimandrite Philarete, Bishop Photios and Father Patric reject the post-Carolingian papacy outright. Emanoil Babuş gives an academic Orthodox survey of Byzantium. Paul Lemerle's history of Byzantium, Wladimir Guettée's nineteenth-century polemic and Anna Grzymała-Busse's political-science study fill in the background. Throughout, the quarrel over doctrine and ritual cannot be separated from the politics of empire: the founding of a second capital, Norman expansion in southern Italy, the Seljuk advance and, at the end, the crusaders' sack of Constantinople in 1204.

The New Rome and the canons that raised it

Plaianu begins his second chapter, "Cezaropapismul. Fatalul destin al istoriei" (Caesaropapism: the fatal destiny of history), with the empire's administrative map. In 292 Diocletian divided the empire into four prefectures (Italy, Gaul, Illyricum and the Orient). On 11 May 330 Constantine raised the Greek colony of Byzantion to the rank of imperial capital under the name Constantinople [Plaianu, Catolicism si ortodoxie romaneasca, #21843, "Capitolul II"]. Plaianu argues that the church's ranking of sees then began to follow the empire's ranking of cities. Canon 3 of the Council of Constantinople (381) decreed that "the bishop

of Constantinople shall have precedence after the bishop of Rome, because it is New Rome". Canon 28 of Chalcedon (451) reaffirmed this, gave the archbishop of Constantinople the right to ordain the metropolitans of Pontus, Asia and Thrace, and granted the see "honour equal to Old Rome… being reckoned in second place". Plaianu treats canon 28 as the seed of the dispute: "This canon generated interminable controversies, down to our own days, between the two patriarchal sees" [Plaianu, #21843, "Capitolul II"]. He notes that the pope's protests against it "remained without result". He also argues that the canon put Constantinople after Rome and so did not limit the rights of the Apostolic See, and that it was the Byzantines, "who intervene through the emperors everywhere", who read it otherwise.

According to Plaianu, the Byzantine claim rested on two premises: that the church must be subordinate to the state, so that a city's rank in the church follows its rank in the state; and that Rome's primacy came "not from divine right but only from the quality of capital" of its city. If both premises held, two capitals meant two primacies [Plaianu, #21843, "Capitolul IV"]. He rejects the second premise as "the total negation of papal primacy as an institution of divine right".

Caesaropapism: indictment and defence

Plaianu's fourth chapter names three main causes of the schism: caesaropapism, the ambition of the patriarchs of Constantinople, and ethnic antagonism between Greeks and Latins. He adds that the theological arguments served "more to justify the rupture than to provoke it" [Plaianu, #21843, "Capitolul IV"]. On caesaropapism he is blunt. It "showed its fangs" already in the fourth century through Constantine himself: "He wanted to be head of the Christian Church, just as, in paganism, the emperor was the supreme head of the cult, *pontifex maximus*." Constantine called himself "bishop of those outside", and courtier bishops hailed the basileus as "equal to the apostles… priest and king". Quoting a French Catholic source, Plaianu writes that the emperor "convokes, presides over, directs and confirms synods" and controls episcopal elections so tightly that they become "a simple formality". He also claims that nearly all the great heresies between 325 and 787 were "patronised, supported, sometimes even invented by emperors". Of the sixty patriarchs of Constantinople between the two councils of Nicaea, he says 27 were "notorious heretics", and in 506 years the two churches were in open rupture for 248 [Plaianu, #21843, "Capitolul IV"].

Babuş describes the same institutions in very different terms. He writes of "the originality and profundity of the solution brought by Byzantium to the problem of the relationship between Church and State". In that solution the earthly empire was seen as the image of the Kingdom of God and the emperor as God's lieutenant, with church and state completing and interpenetrating each other [Babuş, Aspecte ale istoriei si spiritualitatii Bizantului, #13066, part 59]. As Rome grew distant and the eastern provinces were lost, the patriarch of Constantinople became the empire's leading hierarch and "gradually acquired the title of ecumenical", while "the emperor, whose power was of divine origin, intervened officially" in the life of the church [Babuş, #13066, part 265]. Babuş also records the limits the church set. In matters of dogma it condemned all imperial interference, and Theodore the Studite held that church affairs belong to priests and profane affairs to the emperor [Babuş, #13066, part 281]. In footnotes Babuş points readers to the French literature on Byzantine political ideology: Bardy, Ahrweiler, Clévenot and Setton [Babuş, #13066, notes].

Question	Plaianu (Greek-Catholic)	Babuş (academic Orthodox)	Philarete, Photios, Patric (Orthodox-traditionalist)
Basis of Roman primacy	Divine right, as successor of Peter	Not argued as divine right; primacy treated historically	"Imperial and ecclesiastical right, not divine right"
Role of the emperor	Caesaropapism, a determining cause of the schism	An "original and profound solution"; emperor of divine origin	The legitimate Roman emperor, whose authority Charlemagne usurped
Meaning of 1054	Culmination of Cerularius's planned rupture	Political considerations decisive after 1025	Only the "burial authorisation" of an earlier break
Decisive later events	Crusades widened the gulf	Lyon and Florence "completed" the schism	Frankish papacy replaced the Orthodox one

Justinian and the Illyrian question

Justinian appears in all three accounts. Lemerle writes that Justinian's " 'Roman' conception of the Empire" and his western policy "naturally pushed" him to-

ward agreement with the papacy. Already at Justin's accession in 518, under Justinian's influence, the emperor "made peace with Rome and put an end to the schism of Acacius, accepting the conditions formulated by the pope" [Lemerle, Istoria Bizantului, #19180, "Politica religioasă"]. Babuş adds that by trying to keep the Monophysite East, Constantinople had "lost the Orthodox West", and that the Acacian schism was one of the disagreements that eventually led to the final separation [Babuş, #13066].

Plaianu uses Justinian as evidence of Rome's old jurisdiction over the Latin-speaking Danube lands. In 533 Justinian adopted Pope Hormisdas's formula and repeated in his code and novels that "the bishop of Rome is the head of all the Churches" [Plaianu, #21843, "Capitolul IV"]. By Novel XI of 14 April 535 he founded the archbishopric of Iustiniana Prima at his birthplace, Tauresium, with authority over Dacia Mediterranea, Dacia Ripensis, Moesia Prima, Dardania and part of Pannonia Secunda, including points north of the Danube. Quoting Dimitrie Onciul, Plaianu stresses that this archbishopric was "Latin and subordinate to Rome". He argues that Byzantine jurisdiction over Illyricum came only through imperial acts: Theodosius II's edict of 14 July 421 and Leo III the Isaurian's transfer of 733, which in Plaianu's words "had no canonical sanction" [Plaianu, #21843, "Capitolul II"]. For Plaianu, the later slavonisation of Romanian church life through Bulgarian mediation was "the fatal destiny of history".

Photius, Cerularius and 1054

Babuş places the decisive turn after the patriarch Photius: "After Photius there followed a new period of separation. This time political considerations were decisive." The death of Basil II in 1025 began "a profound decadence of the Byzantine Empire", and in the midst of the internal crisis the threat of the Seljuk Turks "took on worrying proportions" [Babuş, #13066, part 227]. He describes how the Normans, who reached southern Italy in 1012 and refused to serve as Byzantine mercenaries, became a "formidable adversary" of the empire [Babuş, #13066, part 231].

Plaianu tells the events from the Roman side, and his portrait of the patriarch is hostile. Michael I Cerularius (1043–1058) was "ambitious, energetic and authoritarian, but full, beyond measure, of love of self and of his Greek nation". Plaianu says Photius had fought on doctrine (the Filioque), while Cerularius moved the fight to liturgy and discipline, which was "more suited to impress the common

people". The occasion, as Plaianu presents it, was the synods of Siponto (1050–1053), which placed Byzantine-rite dioceses in southern Italy under the Latin archbishopric of Benevento. "In collaboration with Bishop Leo of Ohrid and the Constantinopolitan monk Niketas Pectoratus (Stethatos), docile instruments of the patriarch", Cerularius accused the Latins of judaising: they used unleavened bread (azymes) in the Eucharist, fasted on Saturdays, ate strangled meat, did not sing Alleluia in Lent and forbade clerical marriage. "In 1053 he closed the Latin churches of Constantinople" and anathematised those who refused the Greek rite as "azymites" [Plaianu, #21843, "Capitolul IV"]. Pope Leo IX replied with the letter *In terra pax hominibus* of 2 September 1053, which ignored "the petty accusations of the Greeks" and set out the primacy of the Roman church. "Insincere and cunning, the patriarch pretended at first to yield," Plaianu writes.

Plaianu continues the narrative. The emperor Constantine IX Monomachos needed church unity for political reasons, and at his request the pope sent Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida and Archbishop Peter of Amalfi in January 1054. Plaianu calls them persons "not very happily chosen", given the cardinal's "violent temperament". Leo IX died on 19 April 1054, which ended the legates' mandate. They nevertheless laid the bull on the altar of Hagia Sophia on Saturday, 16 July 1054. A synod of 24 July, attended by twelve metropolitans and two archbishops, answered with an anathema against the legates and the Roman church [Plaianu, #21843, "Capitolul IV"]. Plaianu admits that the legates "exceeded their attributions". The neutral reference account agrees on the main points. It records the closure of the Latin churches in 1053 as "the first action that led to a formal schism", says the legation was also seeking imperial help against the Norman conquest of southern Italy, and states that the validity of the legates' act "is doubtful because Pope Leo had died" [Wikipedia: East–West Schism]. The anathemas were lifted in 1965 by Paul VI and Athenagoras I, which the article calls "merely a gesture of goodwill" [Wikipedia: East–West Schism]. Kerrigan's popular account says the differences ranged "from the distribution of divinity among the 'Holy Trinity' and the right of the clergy to marry, to (quite seriously) the pros and cons of leavened" bread, and follows them to the legate's bull against "Michael Kerullarios" [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131, "The East-West Schism"].

The Orthodox counter-thesis: a schism made in the West

Philarete, Photios and Patric wrote against the 1992 Catholic Catechism, drawing on lectures given in Paris in 1983. They reject the framing of the schism as a quarrel between Greeks and Latins. In their view, the Roman population of the West lost its independence and "a new ecclesial structure, totally foreign to the old one and bearing all the characteristics of feudalism, replaces the Orthodox papacy of Romanity, the papacy of a Leo I, Gregory I, Martin I, Agatho, Hadrian I and John VIII. The incident of 1054 at Constantinople, which gives its name to the 'schism' itself, is nothing but the burial authorisation" [Philarete, Photios & Patric, Noul catehism catolic contra credinței Sfinților Părinți, #18909, part 15]. They locate the decisive act in the year 800. Leo III resisted on doctrine but allowed Charlemagne "a decisive victory on the political plane" by crowning him "Emperor of the Romans", which in effect let him usurp the Constantinopolitan emperor's legitimate rule over the Romance peoples of the West [#18909, part 10]. They criticise Western historians for psychologising the event, for example Olivier Clément's portrait of Cerularius as "an abrupt spirit" [#18909, part 7], and for confusing "Byzantines", "Greeks" and "Easterners" when describing an empire that called itself Roman. On primacy they are explicit: "This primacy was of imperial and ecclesiastical right and not of divine right, and it did not imply universal power over the Church" [#18909].

Guettée, a nineteenth-century French convert to Orthodoxy translated into Romanian, puts the anti-papal argument in ecclesiological terms. He defines the catholic church as the one that "preserves the revealed doctrine in its entirety (*per totum cath'olon*)", with Christ as its only head. A note in the Romanian edition sums up his charge: "the papists replaced the Head of the Church, Christ, with the pope and transformed the Roman Catholic Church from the Church of Christ into the church of the pope" [Guettée, Papalitatea eretica, #24205].

From words to permanent conflict: Lyon, Florence, 1204

Babuş argues that the attempts at reunion made the break worse: "The attempts at union that followed (Lyon, Ferrara-Florence) completed the schism, opening a true chasm between the two Churches. From the cessation of official relations

and a dispute over words, the schism became a state of permanent confessional conflict." Meanwhile new differences were added to the old: "the teaching on purgatory, indulgences, the solemn proclamation of primacy" [Babuş, #13066, part 229]. On the eve of the Ottoman conquest, Babuş says, the Byzantines faced a hard choice: accept Latin conditions to save the empire, at the risk of dissolving into a Christianity that had become foreign to them, or keep their spiritual tradition and give up hope of preserving the state [Babuş, #13066, part 291].

Plaianu also sees the crusades as the event that deepened the separation: "instead of contributing to rapprochement between Orient and Occident, they widened the gulf" [Plaianu, #21843, "Capitolul V"]. The collective French volume *Cruciadele* gives the chronology of the turning point. In 1202 the crusaders contracted with Venice for a fleet in exchange for helping to besiege Zara, and Alexios (IV) Angelos asked for their help to restore his father Isaac II. In April 1204 the crusaders took Constantinople and a Latin empire replaced the Byzantine one [Balard et al., Cruciadele, #17927, chronology]. The neutral reference account says the schism "culminated" in that sack and the imposition of Latin patriarchs [Wikipedia: East–West Schism]. Chapter 60 gives the full account.

Grzymała-Busse describes the political divergence that followed: "After centuries of control by temporal rulers, the Church asserted its autonomy in the 1050s. The eastern and western churches split in 1054, and the history of Byzantium diverged from that of Rome." The western church then went through centralising reforms under an elected pope [Grzymała-Busse, Sacred Foundations, #62062]. Her argument that this reformed papacy gave European states their institutional models is the subject of Chapter 59.

Key points

- Constantinople was founded as capital on 11 May 330. Canon 3 of Constantinople (381) and canon 28 of Chalcedon (451) raised its see to second place with "honour equal to Old Rome"; Plaianu treats canon 28 as the start of an interminable controversy.
- Plaianu (Greek-Catholic) names caesaropapism, patriarchal ambition and Greek-Latin hostility as the three causes of the schism, and says Constantine "wanted to be head of the Christian Church". Babuş (Orthodox) describes the same system as an "original and profound solution" with an emperor of divine origin.

- Justinian ended the Acacian schism on papal terms (518), called the bishop of Rome "head of all the Churches" (533) and founded Iustiniana Prima (535), which Plaianu cites as a Latin archbishopric subordinate to Rome.
- Babuş holds that after Photius, political factors decided the break: decline after Basil II (1025), the Seljuk threat and the Normans in Italy.
- Plaianu's narrative of 1053–1054: Leo of Ohrid and Niketas Stethatos attack the azymes, Saturday fasting, strangled meat and celibacy; the Latin churches are closed; *In terra pax hominibus* (2 September 1053); the bull of 16 July 1054, laid by legates whose mandate had lapsed. He portrays Cerularius as "insincere and cunning".
- Philarete, Photios and Patric see 1054 as only the "burial authorisation" of an Orthodox Roman papacy displaced by a feudal Frankish one, and call Rome's primacy imperial-ecclesiastical, not divine.
- Babuş argues that Lyon and Ferrara-Florence "completed" the schism and that purgatory, indulgences and primacy became new grounds of division; the sack of 1204 made the break visible on the ground.

Chapter 59.

The Papal Monarchy: From Canossa to Avignon, the Western Schism and the Borgias

Between the Gregorian reform of the 1070s and the Renaissance, the Roman see turned from a client of emperors into a sovereign power. It deposed kings, ran a continental legal system, held territory and raised armies. The library's sources read this change in two main ways. In *Sacred Foundations*, the political scientist Anna Grzymała-Busse argues that the medieval papacy's rivalry with monarchs, and its legal and administrative inventions, gave European states their templates for sovereignty, representation and the rule of law. A second group of works tells the same centuries as a history of scandal and greed: Michael Kerrigan's *Dark History of the Catholic Church*, Brenda Ralph Lewis's *Dark History of the Popes* and Avro Manhattan's openly anti-Catholic *The Vatican Billions*. Charles Freeman's intellectual history, the *Encyclopedia of World History* and the illustrated *Vatican Secret Archives* add narrative and chronology. *Vatican Secret Archives* is written from inside the Vatican archive tradition and keeps that institutional viewpoint.

Gregory VII and the claim without limits

Grzymała-Busse places the turning point in the 1050s, when the church, "after centuries of control by temporal rulers", asserted its autonomy, and the western church centralised under an elected pope [Grzymała-Busse, Sacred Foundations, #62062]. Its programme was summed up in one document: "In 1075, Gregory drew up the Dictatus Papae, a collection of twenty-seven papal privileges and

prerogatives, including the exclusive right of the pope to use imperial insignia and the insistence that princes kiss the feet of the pope, and the pope's alone... The Dictatus declared that there were no limits to papal authority, either within or beyond the" church [Grzymała-Busse, #62062]. Freeman also stresses how new the claim was: "Nothing, however, could have prepared western Europe for the astonishing Dictatus Papae of 1075 issued by Hildebrand, now Pope Gregory VII (1073–85)". He adds that Gregory, like his sixth-century namesake, believed "the Last Judgement at hand" and was alarmed by simony: "I find hardly any bishops who conform" to the canons [Freeman, The Reopening of the Western Mind, #64786].

Freeman also credits Gregory with a doctrine that the crusades would later put into practice: "One of the papal policies that Gregory VII had developed further was the right of Christians to use warfare in the cause of their religion." He adds: "Of course, in line with Gregory's insistence on papal absolutism it was left to the papacy to decide what was a suitable war or not" [Freeman, #64786]. Chapter 60 traces how this idea became the crusade.

The Investiture Conflict, Canossa and Worms

"The Investiture Conflict began after Gregory VII prohibited lay investiture in 1075 as part of his broader reform program," Grzymała-Busse writes. It "first pitted Pope Gregory VII against Henry IV (r. 1054–1105)" and lasted "from 1075 to 1122". At its core were "the mutually constituted powers of popes and German emperors". Before the reform, popes had delegated worldly rule to emperors and relied on imperial protection, which limited their authority over their own clergy [Grzymała-Busse, #62062]. The neutral reference account dates the open break to 1076 and Henry IV's excommunication, and ends it with the Concordat of Worms (1122) between Callixtus II and Henry V. Under the concordat bishops swore fealty to the monarch, who held authority "by the lance", while the church kept the right to invest them with ring and staff [Wikipedia: Investiture Controversy].

The editors of a Romanian edition of Anselm of Canterbury give a concise chronology. In 1073 Gregory VII was elected, and his pontificate aimed "exclusively" at freeing the church from lay authority. In 1077 the conflict "reached its apogee: through the penance at Canossa the king obtained the lifting of the excommunication only, then, through unfounded claims, to reopen the conflict with the papacy". Gregory VII died "in exile, at Salerno", in 1085 [Anselm

de Canterbury, De ce s-a făcut Dumnezeu om, #75060, editors' chronology]. *Vatican Secret Archives* marks the two endpoints with captions: "CANOSSA CASTLE, where Henry IV humbled himself before Pope Gregory VII", and "CONCORDAT OF WORMS, 1122, ended the Investiture Controversy". It notes that the dispute "did not end until 1122, when Pope Callixtus II and Emperor Henry V signed the Concordat of Worms" [Vatican Secret Archives, #68123].

In Grzymała-Busse's reading, the conflict's main legacy was legal. Law replaced theology as the justification for each side's position, popes had superior documentation and expertise, and secular rulers responded by hiring legal experts of their own. Frederick I Barbarossa, for example, used legal argument to claim superiority [Grzymała-Busse, #62062]. She notes that the papal curia was the first to make "the written word the central medium for conducting business" when formal expression otherwise took the form of symbolic action [#62062]. She also shows how much the papacy depended on alliances. "Urban II (r. 1088–99) and Pascal II (r. 1099–1118), threatened with schisms, found it expedient to favor the Normans: when Roger I conquered Sicily, Urban recognized him" [#62062].

Avignon: the papacy in France

The quarrel between Boniface VIII and Philip IV of France ended the papacy's independence for seventy years. Grzymała-Busse writes that the dispute used "far greater complexity and maturity of concepts" than the earlier imperial conflict, since Gregory VII had not yet used the notion of *plenitudo potestatis* [#62062]. The *Encyclopedia of World History* records that "Pope Clement V, heavily influenced by King Philip IV, moves the papacy to Avignon, France". It defines the "Avignonese papacy" as the reign of eight popes who ruled from Avignon until 1378 in a fortified palace "and lived in luxury". It adds that, because the move was forced, the period "is also called the Avignonese Captivity, or Exile" [Social, Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Avignonese papacy"].

Kerrigan gives the political background. Nicholas IV was drawn into Colonna and Angevin politics. Celestine V abdicated after five months in 1295, was hunted down by his successor and died in prison. The kidnapping attempt of 1303, the "Outrage" organised by Sciarra Colonna and Guillaume de Nogaret, preceded Boniface's death. Clement V, formerly Archbishop of Bordeaux, "never so much as visited Rome", transferred the papal seat to Avignon in 1309 and created nineteen French cardinals [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131, ch. 4]. Two errors in the library edition should be noted: it calls Boniface

VIII "Boniface III", and in the same chapter it dates Charlemagne's coronation to 774. Kerrigan quotes Petrarch's attack on Avignon as "the false guilt-laden Babylon, the forge of lies, the horrible prison, the hell on Earth". He also reports, as a rumour of the time, that Gregory XI "was widely believed to have been Clement VI's son" [#71131, ch. 4].

On the return to Rome, Kerrigan offers a political explanation: "the return to Rome when it came was not to be dictated by religious reasons but by the Church's mounting fear that it might lose its lands in Italy. Instability in the country encouraged Pope Gregory XI to intervene before one of the warring aristocrats decided to help himself to the Papal States – those territories supposedly gifted to the Church under the 'Donation of Constantine' " [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 4]. Gregory went to Rome in 1377 and died there in 1378. Under pressure from the Roman crowd, the cardinals elected the Italian Urban VI.

The Western Schism

Kerrigan writes that Urban VI's zeal as a reformer alienated the cardinals, and that "Charles V accordingly endowed his own 'Pope', Clement VII… this new 'Western Schism' carved western Christendom in two." The Council of Pisa (1408) "made matters even worse – for a time the Church boasted not just two Popes but three" – until Martin V was recognised in 1417 [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 4]. The encyclopedia describes the effect: "The following 40 years were characterized by almost constant warfare between pope and anti-pope, in which the Papal States were the chief playground. The schism left no one sitting on the fence. Having unparalleled impact on political allegiances, it reshaped European geopolitics, changing cultural boundaries and paving the way for the upcoming Reformation" [Social, #5204, "Avignonese papacy"]. It lists the Roman line as Urban VI, Boniface IX, Innocent VII and Gregory XII, and the Avignon line as Clement VII and Benedict XIII.

The sources do not agree on the dates. *Vatican Secret Archives* states that "the Western Schism (1387–1417) began shortly after the return of the papacy to the Eternal City" and was "ended by the Council of Constance", which elected Martin V [Vatican Secret Archives, #68123]. Grzymała-Busse, the encyclopedia's own chronology and the usual reckoning all date the start to 1378. The 1387 figure is probably a transposition. Grzymała-Busse's edition contains a slip of its own: it attributes the 1376 return to "Gregory IX" rather than Gregory XI [#62062].

Source	Start of the Western Schism	End	Who created the rival line
Grzymała-Busse, #62062	1378	1417	Rival "ecclesiastical factions", each with secular sponsors
Encyclopedia of World History, #5204	1378 (end of Avignon)	c. 40 years later	Pope versus anti-pope
Kerrigan, #71131	1378	1417 (Constance; Benedict XIII holding out until 1422)	Charles V of France
Vatican Secret Archives, #68123	1387	1417 (Constance)	Not specified

Kerrigan adds the human cost: with two or three popes each appointing bishops and excommunicating the others, believers could not know whether their marriages, baptisms and burials were valid [#71131, ch. 4]. He also reports that the last Avignon claimant, Benedict XIII (Pedro de Luna), tried to bolster his legitimacy through mass conversion of Spain's Jews. When this failed he banned the Talmud, closed synagogues and outlawed trade between Jews and Gentiles; these measures were rescinded in 1418 [#71131, ch. 4]. Kerrigan quotes Edward Gibbon on the deposed anti-pope John XXIII: "The most scandalous charges were suppressed; the Vicar of Christ was only accused of piracy, murder, rape, sodomy and incest."

Grzymała-Busse draws a political conclusion: "The Great Schism showed popes to be petty politicians vying for power, rather than men of God." It "further empowered secular rulers. Kings negotiated with popes and councils, sent representatives, and concluded treaties". They gained control over church hierarchy and property in their realms, and the English Parliament restricted appeals and payments to Rome [Grzymała-Busse, #62062]. Her wider argument, developed in her chapter on parliaments, is that conciliar practice, in which councils of representatives judged rival popes, became a model for representative government.

The Renaissance popes and the families

Lewis describes the Renaissance papacy as a prize contested among dynasties: "Several rich and famous families, including the Medici, the Barberini, the Orsini and the della Rovere, provided the Church with popes from their own ranks, but the most notorious of them all were the Borgias" [Lewis, Dark History of the Popes, #62536]. She narrates the 1492 conclave in detail. Rodrigo Borgia "swamped the cardinals with offers he was sure they would find impossible to refuse", including bishoprics, lands, abbeys, castles, governorships, church offices, gold and jewels. "The biggest bribe of all" went to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, who was offered Borgia's own office of Vice-Chancellor and the palace now called Palazzo Sforza Cesarini. Lewis concludes: "Cheating on a truly shameless scale had, of course, taken place but the cardinals who fell for the Borgia bribes were giving nothing away and the new pope had himself been very careful to leave behind no proof" [Lewis, #62536]. Once in office, Alexander VI surrounded himself with relatives, "the only people he could really trust" [#62536].

Kerrigan's account is similar. Callixtus III, the first Borgia pope (1455–58), "had actually conducted himself fairly blamelessly". Innocent VIII had two acknowledged sons; the diarist Infessura reports him cancelling an edict against clerical concubinage and counting 6,800 prostitutes in Rome. Kerrigan calls Alexander VI "a one-man argument for Reformation" [Kerrigan, #71131, "Borgia Beginnings"]. Freeman records how much papal influence had fallen by the early seventeenth century. "In a confrontation between Pope Paul V and Venice in 1606 over the extent of papal prerogatives in the city, the local clergy, led by the theologian and ardently republican statesman Paolo Sarpi, took the side of Venice. Among the clergy only the Jesuits supported the pope" [Freeman, #64786].

The economics of salvation and the licence to conquer

Freeman describes the change in indulgences: "Indulgences originally involved some form of onerous act, such as a pilgrimage, but later they could be bought for cash, the scandal that gave rise to Martin Luther's protest" [Freeman, #64786]. Manhattan builds a broader thesis on this. His first chapter, "The historical genesis of the Vatican's accumulation of wealth", argues that "the splitting of Christianity" was "accelerated by its policy of acquisition of temporal riches" [Manhattan, The Vatican Billions, #64831, ch. 1]. On indulgences and relics

he writes: "more often than not, they served their purpose in the mobilization, control and use of the vast masses of men, armies and nations, none of which might otherwise have been mobilized with such ease and fluidity by successive popes. In the struggles of the papacy with the temporal powers… they played a paramount role", putting "men, riches and armies at will into the hands of the popes" [Manhattan, #64831]. He claims that Alexander VI authorised his penitentiaries to commute pilgrimage days for a quarter of the expense saved [Manhattan, #64831]. Grzymała-Busse reaches a related but more measured conclusion: papal fiscal "avarice, even if necessary, cost the church moral authority", which produced "a lurching spiral" of declining revenues and authority [#62062].

The papal monarchy's claim to dispose of the world reached overseas. Kerrigan writes that the Church's role in the Atlantic slave trade "was strictly secondary" but that it freely gave "permission", "most notably in Pope Nicholas V's bull or pronouncement Dum Diversas". He quotes it as granting the kings of Spain and Portugal "full and unhindered licence to attack, seek out, take captive and make conquest of the Saracens and Pagans, as well as any other infidels and foes of Christ, wherever they may be found… and to take them into perpetual slavery" [Kerrigan, #71131, "Mixed Signals on Slavery"]. He describes the Church's position on slavery as "veering back and forth between unreflecting acceptance and bland discouragement", with a consensus that enslavement could be justified if it brought a pagan into contact with the faith [Kerrigan, #71131, "Mixed Signals on Slavery"]. These grants link the papal politics of this chapter to the colonial expansion treated later in the study.

Key points

- Gregory VII's Dictatus Papae (1075) listed 27 papal prerogatives, including the sole use of imperial insignia and princes kissing only the pope's feet. Grzymała-Busse reads it as a claim of authority without limits; Freeman credits Gregory with the papal right to decide which wars were holy.
- The Investiture Conflict ran from the 1075 ban on lay investiture, through Canossa (1077) and Gregory's death in exile at Salerno (1085), to the Concordat of Worms (1122). Grzymała-Busse holds that it moved disputes from theology to law.
- Urban II, threatened with schism, recognised the Norman Roger I in Sicily.

- Clement V moved the papacy to Avignon under Philip IV. Kerrigan attributes Gregory XI's return to fear of losing the Papal States, the lands supposedly granted by the Donation of Constantine.
- The Western Schism produced rival lines in Rome and Avignon (and a third at Pisa) and, in the encyclopedia's words, forty years "characterized by almost constant warfare between pope and anti-pope", which paved the way for the Reformation. *Vatican Secret Archives* dates it 1387–1417; the other sources say 1378.
- Grzymała-Busse: the schism showed popes as "petty politicians vying for power, rather than men of God" and strengthened kings and representative institutions.
- Lewis describes the 1492 Borgia election as won by "cheating on a truly shameless scale". Freeman records that only the Jesuits backed Paul V against Venice in 1606.
- Freeman traces indulgences from penance to cash. Manhattan argues that wealth and indulgences split Christendom and mobilised armies for the popes. Kerrigan cites Dum Diversas as a papal licence to conquer and enslave.

Chapter 60.

Holy War: The Crusades from Clermont to the Sack of Constantinople

The crusade was born where the two lines of the previous chapters met. A Byzantine emperor asked the West for help against the Seljuks, and a reforming papacy had recently claimed the right to decide which wars were holy. The movement that followed lasted two centuries. It created Latin states in Syria and Palestine and new military-religious orders. It ended its first great phase not at Jerusalem but in the sack of Christian Constantinople in 1204. The library holds several readings of these events. The collective French volume *Cruciadele* (Balard, Delort, Kaplan and others) gives a demographic and social explanation. Simon Sebag Montefiore's biography of Jerusalem tells the story from the city's point of view. Cătălin Negru's history of the apocalypse stresses popular eschatology. Michael Kerrigan and Helen Ellerbe give critical "dark history" accounts. This chapter sets them side by side.

The appeal and the sermon

Negru gives the immediate cause: "The immediate cause of the First Crusade was the call for help of the Byzantine emperor Alexios I to Pope Urban II at the Council of Piacenza in 1095. The answer was beyond expectations: instead of a couple thousand organized knights, Jerusalem became the destination of a veritable migration of over 40,000 crusaders" [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, Part II]. Negru stresses that people understood the expedition in very different ways. "For some, including the pope, the crusade was a purely experimental military expedition, a gamble that could bring riches and political power. For others, gullible or religious fanatics, the crusade had a cosmic dimension", tied to the end-time gathering of nations [#62383, Part II].

Montefiore credits the crusade to one man: "The crusade had been the idea of a single man. On 27 November 1095, Pope Urban II addressed a crowd of nobles and common people at Clermont, to demand the conquest of Jerusalem and the liberation of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre." In his account Urban saw his life's mission as restoring "the power and reputation of the Catholic Church": "He invented a new theory of holy war that would revive Christianity and the papacy, promising the remission of sins in exchange for the purifying liquidation of the infidels. It was an absolution without precedent, which gave birth to a Christian version of the Muslim jihad" [Montefiore, Ierusalim. Biografia unui oraş, #21867, "Papa Urban al II-lea: Aşa vrea Dumnezeu"]. The crowd answered "Deus le volt! God wills it!" Montefiore estimates that eighty thousand people became crusaders. He rejects the modern view, which he links to Hollywood and to reactions after the 2003 Iraq war, that the expeditions were only "a means of enrichment through atrocities". In his view, "most of these warrior pilgrims were believers come to seek salvation on the ramparts of Jerusalem" [#21867].

The reference shelf records that the Council of Clermont (17–27 November 1095) dealt mostly with Cluniac reform and the Truce of God, and that Urban was responding to envoys Alexios I had sent to Piacenza. Five versions of the speech survive and "vary widely in their details". The account of Fulcher of Chartres, who was present, is generally considered the most reliable. Urban's own letter of December 1095 speaks of "a barbaric fury" laying waste the eastern churches and names Adhemar of Le Puy as leader [Wikipedia: Council of Clermont].

Freeman places the ideological groundwork earlier. Gregory VII had developed "the right of Christians to use warfare in the cause of their religion", and "it was left to the papacy to decide what was a suitable war or not" [Freeman, The Reopening of the Western Mind, #64786]. Ellerbe stresses the papacy's institutional gain. In the caption to her illustration of Urban preaching she writes: "While the ostensible purpose of the crusades was to rescue the holy land from the infidel, the crusades also helped unify Europeans under the banner of Christianity and avert criticism from the papacy" [Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, #6699, ch. 5, ill. 5.3].

The social engine: knights, peasants and frontiers

Robert Delort's introduction to *Cruciadele* places the movement "in the demographic and social context of the Christian West of the eleventh century". After the invasions of Saracens, Normans and Hungarians ended, the population grew:

from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, he writes, England's population tripled. Peasants were trying to escape their burdens. Knightly families could barely support too many sons on land divided ever more finely, and younger sons were left "no other choice than the Church or the profession of arms". The crusades offered these "fighters without occupation" a chance at land and booty. Their departure may also have helped the Truce of God hold at home [Balard et al., Cruciadele, #17927, "Introducere"]. Delort also gives a military reason for Western success. The heavily armoured knight, set in a high saddle and charging on a strong horse, was "too little vulnerable to traditional weapons", rarely killed and usually ransomed. The cost of re-equipping him fell on the peasants, who "came to wish, and probably to hope for, the young knight's departure without return" [#17927, "Introducere"].

Delort describes the crusade to the east as one of several fronts. Germans fought pagans on the eastern frontier and Spaniards on the southern one. Burgundians, Aquitanians and Toulousains crossed the Pyrenees to begin the Reconquista. An Aquitanian army, "encouraged by the pope", took Barbastro in 1064, and Castile recovered Toledo in 1085. In Sicily the Norman conquest began in 1060 under Roger, brother of Robert Guiscard, and by 1091 had expelled the Saracens and cleared the straits for Genoese and Pisan fleets. The Normans then looked east. Bohemond of Taranto seemed ready to march on Constantinople in 1085, and "among Western knights the idea circulated that the Greeks are rich, cunning and cowardly in battle" [#17927, "Introducere"]. Byzantium, weakened since Manzikert (1071), had to rely on Western mercenaries. Delort's direct causes are "in essence religious and psychosocial": pilgrimage as penance, intensified around the year 1000 by a "millenarian" fear of the end of the world [#17927, "Introducere"].

The march and the massacres

Kerrigan's chapter "Sacred Slaughter: The Crusades" begins with the pogroms. Quoting the chronicler Albert of Aix: "This slaughter of Jews was done first by citizens of Cologne… they destroyed the houses and synagogues of the Jews and divided among themselves a very large amount of money." Further massacres followed at Neuss, Speyer, Mainz and Worms, where over 800 Jews were killed [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131, ch. 3]. Kerrigan writes that Godfrey of Bouillon vowed not to set out until he had "avenged the blood of the crucified one with Jewish blood". Montefiore likewise records that the first

wave forced thousands of Jews to convert or killed them [#21867]. Kerrigan reports that Alexios I was "appalled" at the People's Crusade and shipped it across the Bosporus, where Kilij Arslan destroyed it. In Kerrigan's figures, of 100,000 who set out on the main expedition, 40,000 reached Antioch. That city fell on 3 June 1098, and "thousands of its inhabitants were slaughtered", many of them Christians. At Ma'arra, Christian chroniclers such as Fulcher of Chartres and Radulph of Caen reported cannibalism: "many on our side, driven mad by the pains of starvation, cut chunks of meat from the buttocks of Saracen corpses" [#71131, ch. 3].

Jerusalem, July 1099

Cruciadele prints a crusader's letter describing the final days: "On Wednesday and Thursday we struck hard at the city from all sides, but before rushing it and taking it, the bishops and priests, preaching, urged the people first to make, for the glory of God, a procession around the walls of Jerusalem, accompanied by prayers, alms and fasting. On Friday, at daybreak, we all rushed upon the city" [Balard et al., #17927]. The volume notes that the chroniclers attributed the "relatively easy" capture to the barefoot procession and compared it to the Israelites' circuit of Jericho, presenting the crusaders as "a new chosen people" [#17927, ch. 8]. Montefiore gives the details: a procession on 8 July, the assault on Friday 15 July, Godfrey's siege tower reaching the wall at midday, and Tancred's men pursuing the population onto the Temple Mount. He quotes Raymond of Aguilers: "In the streets you saw only heaps of heads, hands and severed feet", and blood in the Temple "up to the knees". He then gives a figure of "ten thousand people, including numerous priests and ascetics" in his account of the slaughter [#21867, "Tancred: carnaj pe Muntele Templului"]. Kerrigan dates the breach to 13 July and quotes William of Tyre ("No one had ever heard of such a bloodbath among Pagan peoples") and Fulcher ("our feet stained to our ankles in the blood of the slain… neither women nor children were spared") [#71131, ch. 3]. *Cruciadele*'s chronology and Montefiore both give 15 July for the capture [#17927, chronology].

The military orders

The conquest was followed by four crusader states: Jerusalem, Antioch, Edessa and Tripoli. The new orders of armed monks guarded them. Greer writes: "The

Order of Knights Templar, a great European order of knighthood, was not a secret society. Founded in 1118 by nine crusading knights, it became rich and influential. By the fourteenth century, its wealth had made it a tempting prize for greedy monarchs, and the defeat of the Christian side in the Crusades deprived the Knights Templar of its official reason for existence" [Greer, The Conspiracy Book, #88023]. Kerrigan explains how the Templars became a banking institution. Named after their house on the Temple Mount ("in fact a corner of the confiscated Al-Aqsa Mosque"), they protected pilgrims and developed a form of banking so that travellers need not carry gold. The resulting fortune "attract[ed] envious glances from Europe's monarchies" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 4]. The order's later legend began early. Gittins records the popular claim that "4 July was chosen as Independence Day to mark the date that the Knights Templar were driven from Jerusalem by Muslim armies"; the year is garbled in the library copy [Gittins, Secrets of the Lost Symbol, #62988]. The order's suppression is left to Chapter 62 and its esoteric afterlife to Part 11.

Diminishing returns and new targets

Kerrigan summarises the later expeditions. Zengi retook Edessa in 1144, which prompted the failed Second Crusade (1145–49) preached by Bernard of Clairvaux, who "personally interven[ed] to try to prevent several German pogroms". Saladin retook Jerusalem in 1187. In the Third Crusade, after taking Acre in 1191, Richard I had 2,700 Muslim prisoners put to death [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 3]. Crusading also spread to other fronts. In the Baltic, the official start was Celestine III's call of 1195, although Alexander III's bull *Non parum animus noster* (1171) had already authorised war against the Estonians. The Teutonic Order "spearheaded these incursions and profited immensely" [Wikipedia: Northern Crusades]. In 1209 Innocent III proclaimed a crusade against the Cathars of southern France [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 3]; Chapter 61 treats it in detail. Chapter 59 showed how later papal bulls extended the crusading licence to conquest overseas.

The Fourth Crusade and the sack of 1204

Cruciadele's chronology gives the sequence. "1202: The crusaders treat with the Venetians: they obtain a fleet in exchange for the promise to take part in the siege of Zara. Alexios (IV) Angelos asks the crusaders' help to restore his

father Isaac II to the throne of Constantinople." In 1204 "Isaac II is dethroned again. The crusaders take possession of Constantinople (April). A Latin empire replaces the Byzantine one. Venice founds its own eastern empire" [Balard et al., #17927, chronology]. Michel Kaplan's chapter "Devastarea Constantinopolului" begins: "On 12 April 1204, a Monday, after four days of assault, the crusaders enter Constantinople… amid a fire that destroys more than half the buildings, the victorious army sets out on a pillage and atrocities that far exceed those committed by Saladin in 1187 when he conquered Jerusalem" [#17927, ch. 18]. Kaplan explains the violence partly by the long wait between Zara and the first capture of the city in July 1203. He also sees in it "a profound enmity accumulated over many years", and treats the religious differences invoked to excite the crowds as "in fact a pretext and an excuse" [#17927, ch. 18]. Elsewhere the volume concludes that the eastern Christians, spared the Turkish threat for a moment, were "struck by the conquest and devastation of Constantinople (1204)", and that hatred "was born in [their] souls" [Balard et al., #17927].

Kerrigan quotes Niketas Choniates on the profanation of Hagia Sophia: the altar "broken up into bits and shared out among the soldiers", mules led into the sanctuary, and "a certain harlot" seated "in the seat of the Patriarch, singing obscenely" [Kerrigan, #71131, "A Crusade against Christians"]. Kerrigan's two accounts of the motive do not quite agree. In one, the crusaders, short of funds, diverted "to shake down the Emperor Alexius III". In the other, the pretext was the ousting of Isaac II by his brother [#71131, ch. 3; "A Crusade against Christians"]. Babuş and Plaianu, read in Chapter 58, both treat these events as the point after which the schism of 1054 became a lived reality.

Reading	Main cause of the crusades	View of 1099	Source
Social-demographic	Population growth, surplus knights, pilgrimage piety, millenarian fear	A procession and assault read biblically by chroniclers	Balard et al., #17927
City biography	Urban II's personal project of papal restoration; sincere piety of most crusaders	Massacre; Montefiore cites a figure of ten thousand	Montefiore, #21867
Apocalyptic	Popular eschatology alongside papal calculation	Not the focus; stresses mass migration	Negru, #62383

Reading	Main cause of the crusades	View of 1099	Source
Critical "dark history"	Papal power, plunder, scapegoating of Jews	"Senseless spree of killing"	Kerrigan, #71131; Ellerbe, #6699
Ideological precondition	Gregory VII's doctrine of papally sanctioned war	—	Freeman, #64786

Key points

- The immediate cause was Alexios I's appeal at Piacenza (1095). Negru says the response was "beyond expectations": a migration of over 40,000 instead of a few thousand knights.
- Montefiore calls the crusade "the idea of a single man". At Clermont on 27 November 1095 Urban II "invented a new theory of holy war" that offered remission of sins and, in Montefiore's phrase, created "a Christian version of the Muslim jihad".
- Delort (*Cruciadele*) explains the movement through population growth, surplus younger sons, peasant burdens, the superiority of the armoured knight and parallel wars in Spain and Sicily.
- The sources agree that the capture of Jerusalem in July 1099 ended in a massacre. They date it to 15 July (Balard, Montefiore) or 13 July (Kerrigan), and Montefiore cites a figure of ten thousand.
- Greer describes the Templars (1118, nine knights) as "not a secret society" whose wealth later tempted monarchs. Gittins records the Masonic-popular 4 July legend.
- Crusading extended to the Baltic (1171/1195) and to the Cathars (1209), and later, through papal bulls, to colonial conquest.
- The Fourth Crusade's deal with Venice, the siege of Zara (1202) and the cause of Alexios IV led to the sack of 12 April 1204. Kaplan judges its atrocities worse than Saladin's in 1187, and the sources treat it as what poisoned East–West relations.

Chapter 61.

The Dualist Dissent: Paulicians, Bogomils and Cathars

Between the eighth and the fourteenth centuries the eastern and western churches faced a run of movements that taught that the visible world was the work of an evil or lesser power, not of the good God. The Byzantine and Latin authorities called them all "Manichaeans" and treated them as the most dangerous of heresies. The library's sources follow these movements as a chain: the Paulicians of Armenia and Asia Minor, the Bogomils of Bulgaria, Byzantium and Bosnia, and the Cathars of Languedoc and Lombardy. They disagree about how far the links in that chain were real. This chapter sets out the chain, the doctrine the Cathars held as reconstructed by Andrew Phillip Smith, Ioan Petru Culianu's structural analysis, the Romanian folk-literature evidence studied by Nicolae Cartojan, and the war that destroyed Catharism in southern France, with the very different death tolls and verdicts the sources give.

The Paulicians: a warrior dualism on the Byzantine frontier

Smith dates the first Paulician religious leader to the seventh century: Constantine of Mananalis, who took the title *didaskalos*. Smith follows Yuri Stoyanov in giving him more weight than Peter of Sicily's story of a Manichaean woman, Callinice, whose two sons spread her faith in eastern Anatolia. Smith calls that story "the frayed and slender thread that connects the Manichaeans to the Cathars" [Smith, The Lost Teachings of the Cathars, #64742, ch. 10 "The Paulicians"]. Smith says the Paulicians believed in two principles, good and evil, "or light and night". They held the devil to be the demiurge and denied that Jesus had a material body; Mary was "merely a conduit". They rejected marriage, the Mosaic law, the Old Testament, transubstantiation, baptism and the cross. They

also rejected Peter as a false apostle, and Smith sees a possible Marcionite inheritance in their reduced canon [Smith, #64742, ch. 10]. "Unusually for Gnostics," he writes, "the Paulicians were warriors"; during the First Crusade Paulician soldiers fought on the side of Islam, and crusaders on their way east burned a Paulician town in Macedonia [Smith, #64742, ch. 10].

Culianu gives the Byzantine side of the story in detail. The Paulicians were persecuted from the reign of the Empress Irene (797-802) to that of the Emperor Theophilus (829-842), and Culianu notes that "a reliable source" gives the year of one leader's death as 835. After terrorist actions at Neocaesarea brought persecution on them, the Paulicians fled into Muslim territory, to the emir of Melitene, "who gives them the village of Argaoun". After that, Culianu writes, the joint raids of Paulicians and Muslims became still more powerful [Culianu, Gnozele dualiste ale Occidentului, #44080, "Fragmente", Paulicians]. Smith adds that the Paulicians allied with the Iconoclasts while Iconoclasm had imperial support, and were persecuted again when the Iconoclasts lost influence. He also records that the empire resettled some of them in Philippopolis in Thrace in 757, to repopulate a city emptied by plague [Smith, #64742, ch. 10]. This transfer to the Balkans is the point at which the eastern dualism meets the Slavic world.

Bogomil: the priest, the protest and Satanail

The Bulgarian movement takes its name from a priest called Bogomil. Lucian Blaga's editorial gloss on the character BOGUMIL in *Meșterul Manole* sums up the Romanian scholarly view of him. He was the "presumed founder of a Christian sect that appeared in Bulgaria at the beginning of the tenth century as a protest against the feudalisation of the country". His teaching spread "under the name of Bogomilism in Serbia, Byzantium, Bosnia etc." His followers "believed in a dualism of good and evil, according to which Satanail created the world in its materiality, while God gave it the spirit, so that both principles are embodied in man". The gloss adds that the sect's ritual and church structure were very simple and widespread among the peasant masses, and that in Romania its influence shows in folklore [Blaga, Meșterul Manole, #19717, note "BOGUMIL"]. In the play itself Blaga's Bogumil asks: "And what if in eternity the good God and the fierce Satanail are brothers?" [Blaga, #19717, "Manole"].

Smith notes that the name means "friend" or "beloved of God", so it may have been a title rather than a personal name. He describes three Bogomil classes (Perfects or *theotokoi*, Believers and Listeners) and a two-stage initiation in which the

Gospel of John was laid on the candidate's head. After it the Perfect was bound to celibacy, to avoid all food "which derived from intercourse", and to fast. In the Bogomil myth the angel Satanel rebels, loses the divine suffix *-el* and becomes Satan, who is identified with the God of the Old Testament; "both Jesus and the devil are considered, by some of the Bogomils, to be sons of God and therefore brothers" [Smith, #64742, ch. 10 "The Bogomil connection"]. Smith cites the priest Cosmas, author of the earliest extensive account of the Bogomils, for the polemical claim that they spat and turned away from children of baptismal age. He notes that such polemic is hard to verify [Smith, #64742, ch. 10].

Repression in Byzantium and the Balkan afterlife

Cartojan writes that the heresy was growing in the Balkans in the twelfth century, "when the Orthodox Church opens the struggle against it": "in the year 1111 Alexios Komnenos begins the extermination of Bogomilism in the Byzantine empire by burning at the stake, in the hippodrome of Constantinople, the leader of the sect, the physician Basil, and his 12 apostles." Cartojan then follows the heresy into Serbia, which it had entered early [Cartojan, Cărțile populare în literatura românească, vol. I, #46475, Bogomil chapter]. The sources give different dates. Smith tells the story through Anna Komnene's tradition: Alexios and his brother Isaac pretended interest and had Basil's teaching taken down by a stenographer hidden behind a curtain. The theologian Euthymius Zigabenus then interrogated him, "a foreshadowing of the Inquisition", and Basil, refusing to recant, "was burnt in around 1100" [Smith, #64742, ch. 10]. The reference shelf dates Basil's death to "c. 1111 or c. 1118" [Wikipedia: Basil the Physician]. Cartojan's year is therefore one of several in circulation. According to Smith, the Bulgarian tsar anathematised and expelled the Bogomils in 1360 under Orthodox pressure, and Bogomilism collapsed with the Bulgarian Empire, although "the very last Bogomils are said to have been recorded in Bosnia in 1867" [Smith, #64742, ch. 10].

Cartojan's main concern is the Bogomil *apocrypha*, the popular books long credited to the sect. He reports that B. P. Hasdeu classed a group of Slavonic texts as "Bogomil texts". He then sets against this the objections of Prohaska, who argued that "the whole spirit of this sect" was against such fables. Cartojan adds that the apocrypha attributed to the Bogomils contain ideas that "come into evident contradiction with the fundamental dogmas of Bogomil beliefs", and that

"even the Bulgarian scholars have now abandoned the old point of view" [Cartojan, #46475, vol. I, Bogomil chapter]. The Romanian folk literature thus keeps dualist motifs, but whether the sect wrote it is disputed.

The road west: Philippopolis, crusaders and a bishop

Smith regards the Bogomil-Cathar link as "solid ground". Both groups used only the Lord's Prayer, rejected the cross, marriage and meat, called themselves Good Christians, allegorised the New Testament and used the Bogomil *Secret Supper* (*Interrogatio Iohannis*). Both also held Enoch to be a prophet of Satan [Smith, #64742, ch. 10]. He cites Anselm of Alessandria's account of how the heresy came west: Frenchmen who had gone to Constantinople "intending to conquer the land" met merchants who had brought Bogomilism back from Bulgaria, "and the French took the heresy, along with a bishop, back to the Languedoc with them". In Philippopolis, Smith adds, "Paulicians and Bogomils existed in the same city"; Anna Komnene claimed in 1114 that all its inhabitants were heretics [Smith, #64742, ch. 10 "Melting pots of ideas"]. In 1167 a Bogomil bishop, Papa Nicetas, came to Saint-Félix in Languedoc and reorganised the Cathar bishoprics, renewing an *ordo* that had been corrupted by a bishop who broke his vows [Smith, #64742, ch. 1]. Smith also records evidence that complicates this account: the earliest Cathars appear in the Rhineland and northern France, and those at Cologne already had a bishop [Smith, #64742, ch. 10].

Culianu's typology and the "enigma of Catharism"

Culianu groups these movements under a single structural heading, "the dualisms of the West", which directly or indirectly affected the religious and social history of the West. He separates their doctrine of "antecedent sin" from the Augustinian doctrine of original sin [Culianu, #44080, "Fragmente", §4]. On the Bosnian question he writes: "If the Bosnians had been radicals in the twelfth century, the enigma of Catharism would have been solved. Since this is not the case, the enigma will continue to exist." He divides the Cathars into two groups: "one which is purely and simply Bogomil, and another which preaches a radical dualism of intellectual origin, arising from a combination of late Origenism and Manichaeism, in unequal proportions (Manichaeism is present only in the doctrine of the two kingdoms)" [Culianu, #44080, "Fragmente", Bosnians and Cathars]. Culianu therefore does not trace a single line of descent. He sees a

mitigated dualism of Bogomil type alongside an absolute dualism rebuilt from learned sources.

Movement	Region and period	Creator of matter	Rite / organisation	Fate (per sources)
Paulicians	Armenia, Asia Minor, then Thrace; 7th-9th c.	Devil as demiurge (Smith)	Didaskaloi; no baptism, no cross	Persecuted 797-842; flight to Melitene (Culianu)
Bogomils	Bulgaria, Byzantium, Serbia, Bosnia; 10th-15th c.	Satanail (Blaga; Smith)	Three classes; two-stage initiation	Basil burned c. 1100/1111 (Smith; Cartojan); expelled 1360
Cathars	Languedoc, Lombardy, Rhineland; 12th-14th c.	Lesser god or Rex Mundi; mitigated or radical (Culianu)	Consolamentum; Perfects and Believers	Crusade 1209-1229; Inquisition; Montségur

Cathar teaching from the inside

Smith opens his book with an apocryphal saying of Jesus: "The world is a bridge. Pass over it, but build no house upon it." He notes that logion 42 of the Gospel of Thomas echoes it, "Become passers-by", and comments: "If the world is a bridge, then the Cathars crossed over it leaving very little behind" [Smith, #64742, Foreword]. According to Smith, the people of Languedoc said of the Perfects, "They save souls, they do not eat meat, they do not touch women" [Smith, #64742, ch. 1]. He gives the opening of the consolamentum: "Bless us; have mercy upon us. Amen. Let it be done unto us according to Thy word. May the Father, the son, and the Holy Spirit forgive all your sins." This was said three times, followed by the Lord's Prayer and the prologue of John [Smith, #64742, ch. 6]. The reference shelf adds that the consolamentum was usually received near death and was sometimes followed by the *endura* fast. It reports the church's charge that recovering recipients were smothered, and notes that there is "little evidence that it was common practice" [Wikipedia: Albigensian Crusade].

The Vatican-sourced volume presents the same doctrine as socially destructive, following the Italian historian Rino Cammilleri. It derives Catharism from "the

Armenian Paulicians and Bulgarian Bogomils". It states that Cathars held procreation "the gravest sin" and "permitted any form of intercourse, even the most perverse, so long as it was not fecund", that the endura was "suicide by starvation", that "mothers were reported to have starved their children to death", and that doctors were seen "as enemies of the human race" [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 4 "Paradoxes of the Inquisition"]. On this reading, "the Inquisition was established to combat such heresy in a peaceful and orderly manner", and, following Cammilleri, "kings and princes fought against the Cathars before the Inquisition was established" [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 4]. Tricia McCannon, writing from an esoteric-feminist position, credits the Cathars with a lasting popular effect. She argues that a "growing suspicion among the populace that the myths about the Garden of Eden, the fall of humankind, original sin, and the virgin birth were untrue" "may have been sparked by the teachings of the Cathars, whose name means 'the pure ones' ", who, "like the Gnostics", believed this world was ruled by a lesser power [McCannon, Return of the Divine Sophia, #62332, ch. 23].

From mission to crusade: Castelnau, Innocent III and Béziers

Smith describes the attempt at persuasion that came before the war. Bernard of Clairvaux preached in Languedoc in 1145 and read "the little foxes" of the Song of Songs as the Cathars. Dominic Guzmán, travelling with Bishop Diego of Osma from 1207, went barefoot and begged in order "to out-Cathar the Cathars" [Smith, #64742, ch. 1 "The Dominicans and the road to crusade"]. On 13 January 1208 the legate Peter of Castelnau was murdered beside the Rhône. "Innocent III was convinced that Raymond VI of Toulouse was behind the killing", and on 10 March 1208 he called for a crusade against Christians "in the heart of Christendom" [Smith, #64742, ch. 1]. The Vatican volume states without qualification that Castelnau "was murdered due to the influence of Count Raymond VI of Toulouse", that the crusade was named "for the city of Albi, the center of Catharism", and that it lasted "two decades (1209-1229), ending in victory for the Christians" [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 4]. The reference shelf records the opposing contemporary view: William of Tudela blamed "an evil-hearted squire hoping to win the Count's approval" [Wikipedia: Albigensian Crusade]. Brenda Ralph Lewis writes that Innocent "lost patience with the diplomatic approach". She describes Raymond as seeing in the crusade "a chance to convince the Pope of his Catholic credentials", and he did submit to being

scourged on 18 June 1209 [Lewis, Dark History of the Popes, #62536, "Genocide: The Cathars, Part I"; Smith, #64742, ch. 1].

Béziers fell on 22 July 1209, the feast of Mary Magdalene. Helen Ellerbe writes that when the legate Arnaud was asked how to tell Catholic from Cathar, "he replied, 'Kill them all, for God knows his own!' " She adds that "not a child was spared" and quotes a historian: "even the dead were not safe from dishonor, and the worst humiliations were heaped upon women". By her account the papal legates reported 20,000 dead and other chroniclers 60,000 to 100,000, and "the Albigensian crusade killed an estimated one million people, not only Cathars but much of the population of southern France" [Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, #6699, ch. 5, nn. 77-79]. Smith counts 222 Cathars in a town of over 10,000, says Amaury was only "reputed" to have spoken the words, and estimates the toll at "possibly around 15,000" [Smith, #64742, ch. 1 "The butchering of Béziers"]. The reference shelf quotes the legates' letter ("almost 20,000 people"), cites Strayer's doubt that Amalric said the phrase, and gives an overall figure of "at least 200,000 Cathars killed". It also notes that some scholars, including Raphael Lemkin, consider the crusade a genocide [Wikipedia: Albigensian Crusade]. Lewis's chapter title, "Genocide: The Cathars", takes the same position [Lewis, #62536].

Esoteric readings and the end of organised Catharism

The conspiracy literature links the dualists to the Templars. Nesta Webster writes that "the Dualist doctrines attributed to the Templars were not, however, confined to this Order in Europe, but had been… those professed by the Bogomils and also by the Luciferians". She describes the Luciferians as worshipping Lucifer as creator of the material world [Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, Part I]. Smith records the Templars' sheltering of Cathars in Languedoc, Cathar burials on Templar ground, and the Cathar family of Grand Master Bertrand de Blancfort [Smith, #64742, ch. 1 "Crush the Templars"]. Grail, Priory of Sion and Merovingian theories built on these links are taken up in Part 11.

The military phase ended with the Treaty of Paris in 1229 [Wikipedia: Albigensian Crusade]. Lewis records that Raymond VII was publicly whipped in penance on the day it was signed, as his father had been at the crusade's start [Lewis, #62536, "Genocide: The Cathars, Part I"]. The last organised stronghold, Montségur, fell after a siege. The Vatican volume dates its capitulation to 1242,

while the reference shelf and Smith's chapter "Thermopylae of the Gnostic Spirit" date it to 1244, Smith records the surrender on 2 March 1244, and on 16 March "225 Perfects were burnt to death on a pyre" at the foot of the rock [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 4; Wikipedia: Albigensian Crusade; Smith, #64742, ch. 8 "A murderous pyre"]. What remained of Catharism was then left to the Inquisition, the subject of the next chapter.

Key points

- Smith and Culianu trace a dualist chain from the Paulicians (persecuted 797-842; flight to the emir of Melitene and the village of Argaoun) through the Bogomils to the Cathars. Culianu leaves the "enigma of Catharism" unsolved.
- Blaga presents Bogomilism as a tenth-century Bulgarian protest against feudalisation, in which Satanail made the material world and God gave the spirit.
- The sources date Basil the Physician's burning differently: Cartojan gives 1111, Smith c. 1100, and the reference shelf c. 1111 or c. 1118. Cartojan reports the scholarly retreat from crediting the Bogomils with the apocrypha.
- Smith documents the transmission west through Philippopolis, crusaders bringing back "the heresy, along with a bishop", and Nicetas at Saint-Félix (1167).
- Culianu divides the Cathars into a Bogomil (mitigated) group and a radical dualism derived from late Origenism and Manichaeism.
- The Béziers toll ranges from c. 15,000 (Smith) through 20,000 (the legates) to 60,000-100,000 (chroniclers cited by Ellerbe). For the whole crusade, Ellerbe gives one million and the reference shelf at least 200,000 Cathars.
- The Vatican-sourced volume calls the crusade a victory and the Inquisition a "peaceful and orderly" remedy, while Lewis and Lemkin speak of genocide.
- Webster's claim that Templar dualism was Bogomil doctrine opens the esoteric reading developed in Part 11.

Chapter 62.

Enforcing Orthodoxy: The Inquisitions and the Trial of the Templars

The end of the Cathars (Chapter 61) left the Latin Church with a permanent machinery for detecting heresy. For nearly five centuries that machinery took several forms: the medieval papal Inquisition after 1231, the Spanish Inquisition set up at the request of the Catholic Monarchs from 1478, and the Roman Holy Office of the Counter-Reformation, which tried Giordano Bruno and Galileo. Few subjects divide the library's sources more sharply. Natale Benazzi and Matteo D'Amico reconstruct the great trials from the documents while rejecting the Enlightenment's "black legend". The Vatican-sourced *Vatican Secret Archives* presents the Inquisition as a rational and comparatively lenient court. Helen Ellerbe, Michael Kerrigan and M. Donnelly describe a system of terror built on torture. The trial of the Knights Templar (1307-1314) is the central case study: an inquisition driven by a king. The Order's alleged secret doctrines are left to Part 11.

From inquiry to tribunal: origins and procedure

Benazzi and D'Amico argue that we should speak of "Inquisitions" rather than "the Inquisition", because the Spanish *Suprema* "meant something completely different from the Roman Holy Office". They date its first definite form to 1180-1231, "in the setting of the struggle against the Cathar heresy" [Benazzi & D'Amico, Cartea neagră a Inchiziției, #18380, Introducere, "Motivele şi momentele apariţiei Inchiziţiei"]. Donnelly stresses that the word "simply means an official, judiciary inquiry". He notes that "as late as 1139 the only punishment sanctioned by the

Church for such activities was excommunication" and quotes Bernard of Clairvaux: "Faith is to be produced by persuasion, not imposed by force." In Donnelly's account Innocent III began in 1198 to equate heresy with treason, and in 1229 Gregory IX proposed a body of monks learned in heresy, the *Inquisitores haereticae pravitatis*. At first they had "no authority" to inflict physical harm; obstinate or relapsed heretics, "something less than 10 per cent", were handed to the secular arm [Donnelly, The Big Book of Pain, #33280, "The Origins and Early Practices of the Inquisition"]. Lewis writes that the Inquisition "introduced by Pope Gregory IX in 1231 was designed to fight all heresy... but its first target" was the Cathars, and that Gregory "appointed the Dominican friars as chief investigators of heresy" [Lewis, Dark History of the Popes, #62536, "Genocide: The Cathars, Part II"]. Ellerbe adds that in 1231 the Inquisition became a tribunal "independent of bishops and prelates", answerable only to the pope, and that its law replaced "innocent until proven guilty" with "guilty until proven innocent" [Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, #6699, ch. 6].

Benazzi and D'Amico define the inquisitorial method as resting on suspicion and a presumption of guilt. "The soul must be laid bare to be completely transparent during the trial; it must be 'taken apart' piece by piece, reassembled and broken again, until the orthodoxy is certain." In this strategy abjuration is "the highest summit": "the person investigated testifies against himself to everything the accuser wishes to hear" [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380, Galileo chapters]. They print Torquemada's instructions, including: "Art. 15. If there is a discrepancy between what the investigated person says and the testimony of the witnesses, the investigated person shall be tortured. If someone confesses under torture, after three days he must reconfirm the confession. If he does not reconfirm it, the torture shall be resumed." Article 16 kept the witnesses' names secret [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380, Spanish section]. Donnelly describes the *garrucha*: the victim's hands were tied behind the back and the body hoisted on a pulley "as their shoulder joints were slowly dislocated", then dropped, and the procedure was repeated "with a heavy stone tied to the prisoner's feet". He also describes the water funnel, the "Spanish Chair" and five fixed stages, from the threat of torture to its repetition "until he or she either talked or died" [Donnelly, #33280, "Inquisition Torture Practices"]. Kerrigan quotes William Lithgow's 1620 ordeal at Málaga, "above sixty different tortures of the most hellish nature". He argues that "torture wasn't an abuse of inquisitorial procedure, it was its very basis", explicitly approved by Innocent IV in 1252 [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131, ch. 6 "Enforcing Orthodoxy: The Inquisition"].

The Spanish Inquisition and the conversos

Benazzi and D'Amico trace the Spanish "hunt" to one case: "the burning at the stake of two converts in 1477 at Llerena". The Dominican Alonso de Hojeda, prior of the Seville convent, then led an investigation which found "that almost all the converted Jews continued to practise Judaism in secret". "Ferdinand seizes the occasion and immediately requests the introduction of the Inquisition." On 6 February 1481 "the first *auto da fé* takes place, with all the obligatory pomp, in which six converts are led to the stake". They also note the popular name for converts, *marrani*, "pigs" [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380, Spanish section]. In February 1482 a papal letter confirmed seven inquisitors, all Dominicans, among them Tomás de Torquemada. The authors say a "good" inquisitor was "above all a 'good' man of State" [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380]. Donnelly gives 1478 as the year Ferdinand and Isabella asked Sixtus IV for their own Inquisition. He names Torquemada as its head and lists among its targets conversos, moriscos, unconverted Jews and Moors, Freemasons and "Protestants". He also quotes Sixtus IV's protest that "many true and faithful Christians" had been tortured "because of the testimony of enemies, rivals, slaves" [Donnelly, #33280]. Kerrigan writes that crypto-Jews and crypto-Muslims "undoubtedly did exist", but that many sincere Christians of Jewish or Muslim descent "never could find full acceptance" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 6].

The Vatican volume answers with the figures of the 1998-2004 research in the opened archives. It says that "between 1478 and 1834 the Spanish Inquisition conducted about 130,000 heresy trials", that "exactly 1.8 percent of the accused were condemned to death" and 1.7 percent in absentia, and that the Portuguese Inquisition, with 5.1 percent, was harsher. It calls the Spanish tribunal "a state institution, never a Church one", whose sentences several popes protested [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 4 "The Spanish Inquisition"].

The witch hunts as an extension

Ellerbe treats the witch hunts as the Inquisition's widest application. In 1484 Innocent VIII's bull *Summis desiderantes* authorised the inquisitors Kramer and Sprenger "to systematize the persecution of witches", and their *Malleus Maleficarum* followed two years later. She quotes the chronicler of Trier, via Barbara Walker, that in 1586 "the entire female population of two villages was wiped out by the inquisitors, except for only two women" [Ellerbe, #6699, chs. 7-8 "The

Witch Hunts"]. Kerrigan quotes the Dominican authors, "All witchcraft stems from fleshly lust, which in women is insatiable", and calls it "a tragic irony" that the reformers, having discarded so much Catholic doctrine, "should have held on to *Malleus Maleficarum*" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 10 "The Devil's Century"]. Donnelly follows the panics through the Thirty Years War to England's last witchcraft execution in 1716 [Donnelly, #33280]. The Vatican volume reverses the blame. Citing Brian Levack, it says about 300,000 women died as witches in sixteenth-century Europe, "almost two hundred thousand" in Protestant Germany and "seventy thousand" in Protestant England. Citing Agostino Borromeo, it gives fifty-nine for Spain, thirty-six for Italy and four for Portugal, and it reports that an assembly of inquisitors at Granada in 1526 declared flying witches "an impossibility" [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 4].

The Roman Inquisition: Bruno and Galileo

Benazzi and D'Amico reconstruct Giordano Bruno's last night. At two in the morning of 16-17 February 1600 the Confraternity of San Giovanni Decollato received the order to prepare for the execution of an "impenitent" heretic. Bruno, dressed in the *sanbenito*, was led to Campo dei Fiori. His accuser of 1593, the Capuchin Celestino da Verona, had himself been burned there on 16 September 1599 [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380, "Rugul fratelui Giordano"]. On Galileo, the authors analyse the denunciation by the Dominican Lorini. They note that he "does not speak about Galileo, but always about *galileisti*", attacking a school rather than a man. They print the abjuration signed "in Rome, in the convent della Minerva, on 22 June 1633": "I, Galileo Galilei, have abjured, sworn, promised and bound myself" [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380, Galileo chapters]. Calvin's burning of Servetus in Geneva (1553) belongs to the same pattern on the Protestant side. The Vatican volume uses it, together with a figure of five hundred dead in Calvin's Geneva, to argue that Protestant persecution is "passed over" [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 4]. The Servetus case is treated in a later chapter.

The church's own reappraisal opens Benazzi and D'Amico's book. On 10 November 1979, at the Einstein centenary, John Paul II said that Galileo "had, unfortunately, much to suffer from men and representatives of the Church" and asked for "honest recognition of injustices, from whichever side they come". The resulting commission ended its work on 31 October 1992, and the authors describe this as "the beginning of a road" towards reviewing "the case of the Inquisition" [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380, Introducere, "Biserica îşi revizuieşte trecutul"]. Ellerbe

opens with a 1994 confidential letter from the same pope to the cardinals, later leaked: "How can one remain silent about the many forms of violence perpetrated in the name of the faith—wars of religion, tribunals of the Inquisition and other forms of violations of the rights of persons?" [Ellerbe, #6699, Preface].

The Templars: a royal inquisition

The Vatican volume sets the Templar case within Philip IV's finances. Philip, a "despot on the throne of France", was compared by Bishop Bernard Saisset "to an owl". "From the very beginning of his reign, his eyes were fixed on Aquitaine and Flanders", and "constant wars swallowed up a great deal of money". The volume lists what followed: debased coinage, the clash with Boniface VIII, Nogaret's attack at Anagni (1303), the arrest and expulsion of about 100,000 Jews in 1306, and the plunder of the Lombard bankers in 1309. Citing Barbara Frale, it says de Molay refused the king a loan and opposed his leadership of a crusade. On 14 September 1307 sealed orders were sent out, and "on October 13, at dawn" the knights were seized across France [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 1 "Trial of the Knights Templar"]. Milan Város describes the evening before. On Thursday 12 October 1307 Nogaret was courteous to de Molay at the funeral of Catherine of Valois, and while the dignitaries rested in the Temple, "in the castles of France the sealed envelopes with the strictly secret order were being opened" [Varoš, Soarta comorilor de aur, #18139, "Procesul şi sentinţa"]. Sanford Holst calls his chapter "A River of Gold and Friday the 13th". He argues that large sums were never left in the Templar vaults but were sent east along a "river of gold", and that de Molay had "vigorously defended the Templars' right to remain independent of the Hospitallers" at Poitiers [Holst, Sworn in Secret, #50535, ch. 10].

Tim Wallace-Murphy and Marilyn Hopkins write that "King Philippe le Bel was scrupulous in his actions, and extremely careful to explain that he was only acting at the request of Guillaume de Paris, the chief Inquisitor of France, a deputy of the pope and the king's confessor". Given the king's hold over Clement V, "it is obvious that Philippe was the prime mover in the whole affair". De Molay, they say, had prepared his case against amalgamation with the Hospitallers on grounds of service and of divine vocation [Wallace-Murphy & Hopkins, Custodians of Truth, #70623, ch. 14]. These authors' Rex Deus theses are treated in Part 11.

Charges, confessions and suppression

On 14 October 1307 Nogaret told Sorbonne masters at Notre-Dame that the Templars were guilty "of denying Christ, profaning the cross, worshipping a deity with a human head, desecrating the Mass, and practicing homosexuality". The charges grew from seven to "over seventy", and "136" of 140 brothers arrested in France confessed. Frale, quoted in the Vatican volume, explains the spitting and denial as an initiation rite meant to prepare recruits for Saracen captivity, and suggests that the "head" may have been the Shroud of Turin [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 1]. The volume follows the case through Clement V's bull *Pastoralis praeeminentiae* (22 November 1307) and the mass retractions. It then cites the Chinon Parchment found by Frale in 2001, in which the cardinals "did not find the accused guilty of heresy" and absolved them. Philip pressed the pope with the threat of a schism and with the burning of fifty-four retracting Templars on 12 May 1310. On 3 April 1312, at Vienne, *Vox in excelso* dissolved the Order "but did not condemn it". On 18 March 1314 de Molay and Geoffroi de Charney retracted their confessions and were burned that same day on the Île-des-Javiaux [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 1]. Donnelly quotes Clement's letter forcing Edward II to permit torture: "no state can override Canon Law, Our Law" [Donnelly, #33280]. Kerrigan puts the figure at "15,000 priests" arrested and says Philip "won twice over", cancelling his debts and taking the Templars' wealth [Kerrigan, #71131, Avignon papacy section]. Város concludes that "no one managed to take possession" of the treasure, not even Philip IV [Varoš, #18139, "Procesul templierilor"]. Nesta Webster, by contrast, holds that the dualist doctrines "attributed to the Templars" were those "professed by the Bogomils" [Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, Part I].

Question	Vatican Secret Archives (#68123)	Benazzi & D'Amico (#18380)	Ellerbe / Kerrigan / Donnelly
Nature of the Inquisition	"Peaceful and orderly"; rationalised justice	Plural "Inquisitions"; real harshness, but not the "legend"	Terror; presumption of guilt
Torture	Under 10% of trials (Borromeo); one method	Codified (Torquemada Art. 15)	The "very basis" of procedure (Kerrigan)
Death rate	~2% overall; 1.8% in Spain	Reconstructs individual burnings	Mass burnings; witch "holocaust" (Ellerbe)

Question	Vatican Secret Archives (#68123)	Benazzi & D'Amico (#18380)	Ellerbe / Kerrigan / Donnelly
Templars	King's plot; Chinon absolution	—	Plunder by Philip (Kerrigan)

Contrasting judgements

The Vatican volume sums up its case with the caption that the Inquisition "was established to combat such heresy in a peaceful and orderly manner". It cites Marian Małowist ("an attempt to rationalize the judicial process") and Jean and Guy Testas ("the most objective institution of its time"), and it credits Gregory IX with defence counsel and access to the files. It reports Jean Dumont's finding of torture in "twelve" of some two thousand Valencia trials and in "one case out of the 636" at Toulouse between 1309 and 1323 [Unknown, Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 4]. Benazzi and D'Amico place the "black legend" in the Enlightenment's political struggle. They ask readers to "overcome the myth of its cruelty, without denying the real harshness that characterised it" [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380, Introducere, "Dincolo de legendă"]. Kerrigan grants that the Leyenda Negra was propaganda but replies that "the Inquisition existed every bit as surely as the GULAG did". He cites the itemised invoices sent to families for "interrogation, imprisonment, transportation and execution costs" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 6]. Ellerbe quotes an inquisitor: "the main purpose of the trial and execution is not to save the soul of the accused but to achieve the public good and put fear into others" [Ellerbe, #6699, ch. 6].

Key points

- The sources date the Inquisition's formation to 1180-1231 against the Cathars. Gregory IX (1229 according to Donnelly, 1231 according to Lewis and Ellerbe) gave it to the Dominicans, and Innocent IV formally approved torture in 1252 (Kerrigan).
- Benazzi and D'Amico describe a method aimed at laying the soul bare, with abjuration as its culmination, and print Torquemada's rule that unconfirmed confessions bring renewed torture.

- The Spanish Inquisition grew out of Llerena (1477), Hojeda's Seville inquiry and Ferdinand's request, and held its first auto-da-fé on 6 February 1481 (six converts burned).
- The figures are disputed. The Vatican volume gives 130,000 Spanish trials with 1.8 percent executed and blames the witch deaths mainly on Protestant lands. Ellerbe and Kerrigan stress the Inquisition's role in the witch hunts and the *Malleus*.
- Bruno was burned at Campo dei Fiori in February 1600, and Galileo abjured on 22 June 1633. John Paul II reopened the Galileo case in 1979 (commission closed 1992) and asked in 1994 how one could "remain silent" about the tribunals.
- The Templar arrests (sealed orders opened on the evening of 12 October, seizures on 13 October 1307) served Philip IV's finances. Wallace-Murphy and Hopkins call Philip, not the Inquisitor Guillaume de Paris, "the prime mover".
- The Chinon Parchment records absolution, and *Vox in excelso* (1312) dissolved the Order without condemning it. De Molay was burned on 18 March 1314 after retracting.
- Royal plunder (Kerrigan, the Vatican volume), the lost treasure (Varoš) and Bogomil dualism (Webster) remain competing explanations of the Templar case.

Chapter 63.

Morning Stars of Dissent: Wycliffe, the Lollards, Hus and the Council of Constance

Between the Black Death and the printing press, two university reformers raised most of the objections that Martin Luther would bring against Rome a century later. John Wycliffe of Oxford and Jan Hus of Prague attacked clerical wealth, the claims of the papacy and the priesthood's monopoly on scripture. The Council of Constance (1414-1418) ended the Western Schism and in the same years condemned both men. The library's sources read this episode in several ways: as a chapter in the history of censorship (Fellion and Inglis), as a consequence of the plague (Kennedy, Byrne), as the start of the intellectual revival of the West (Freeman), as a political miscalculation (Kerrigan), as a step in the making of representative institutions (Grzymała-Busse), and as a providential prologue to the Protestant Reformation (Ellen G. White). This chapter follows all of these readings.

The plague and the crisis of clerical authority

Jonathan Kennedy places Wycliffe directly in the aftermath of the Black Death. "When more than half of your friends, family and neighbors die suddenly and painfully in quick succession", he writes, people naturally ask how best to secure salvation. In his account the Church "failed to satisfy the spiritual needs of the population" but "succeeded in making a profit off believers' existential angst", promoting the sale of indulgences "from the 1350s, on papal orders" [Kennedy, Pathogenesis, #62044, ch. 4 "Medieval Plagues"]. J. Byrne describes the first official responses: civic Masses, processions, relics and images "thought to be useful in quelling the divine rage". He also describes a rupture of clerical mediation. The bishop of Bath and Wells "famously allowed those in his diocese to confess

their sins ‘to any lay person, even to a woman if a man’ ” could not be found. Byrne treats the flight of clergy, some “out of greed”, as a recurring theme of the plague sources and cites William Dene of Rochester [Byrne, Daily Life during the Black Death, #37134, “Religious Responses and Clergy Roles During the Plague”]. The reference shelf records that the plague, which reached England in 1348, made “a deep and abiding impression” on Wycliffe. He saw it as “an indictment of an unworthy clergy”, whose replacements were in his view “uneducated or generally disreputable” [Wikipedia: John Wycliffe].

Wycliffe’s programme

The reference shelf summarises Wycliffe’s theory of dominion: “the church was not allowed to own property or have ecclesiastic courts, and men in mortal sin were not entitled to exercise authority in the church or state, nor to own property”; he “insisted on the radical poverty of all clergy” [Wikipedia: John Wycliffe]. Kennedy gives the programme in pastoral terms. Wycliffe attacked parish priests “who had no time for preaching the gospel” and popes who claimed to be God’s representatives. He found “no justification in the scriptures” for Mass attendance, penance, prayer to saints or indulgences, and held that “the clergy were not required to mediate laypeople’s relationship with God”, the Bible being “the only reliable guide” and to be read “in the vernacular” [Kennedy, #62044, ch. 4]. Fellion and Inglis add his denial of transubstantiation, which made his teaching “still more dangerous”. They record the 1381 Oxford ban on two of his theses, his withdrawal to Lutterworth, and his escape from personal condemnation “until his death in 1384” [Fellion & Inglis, Censored, #63326, “Wycliffite Bible” chapter]. Kennedy points to the political protection he received: “the English political elite… saw him as a useful tool in their struggle with the Roman Church over power and money” [Kennedy, #62044, ch. 4].

Charles Freeman describes the programme Hus inherited from Wycliffe as “a purer church, centred on direct devotion to Christ and free of the corruptions of wealth and lax morality” [Freeman, The Reopening of the Western Mind, #64786, Hus passage]. He places it in a longer quarrel over church property going back to the Gregorian reform and the Donation of Constantine, in which “the clergy had emerged as a celibate caste who had access to immense wealth” [Freeman, #64786].

The English Bible and the Lollard networks

Fellion and Inglis present Lollardy as a case of censorship centred on a book. They describe the English translation of the Vulgate as "a team effort, probably involving Wyclif himself and some of his Oxford associates". It had a literal Early Version from the early 1380s and a more natural Later Version copied from about 1390, and "the translations themselves were orthodox and true to the Vulgate text". The Later Version's Genesis opens: "In the bigynnyng God made of nou3t heuene and erthe" [Fellion & Inglis, #63326, "Wycliffite Bible" chapter]. The reference shelf notes that recent scholarship has "minimised the extent" of Wycliffe's personal involvement [Wikipedia: John Wycliffe]. Kennedy dates the first Middle English translation to 1382 and gives Wycliffe "a prominent role" in it [Kennedy, #62044, ch. 4].

The movement spread below the universities. "Networks of Wycliffites (or 'Lollards') formed, in households and villages, around those who could read portions of the Bible aloud or who had learned passages by rote." They met for preaching and, "in the scholar Margaret Aston's words, 'underground reading parties'—outdoors, in churches where priests were sympathetic, in taverns, and in private houses. There were wandering preachers, books and editions, and schools" [Fellion & Inglis, #63326, "Wycliffite Bible" chapter]. Women read and preached as well, and the *Twelve Conclusions of the Lollards*, nailed to the door of Westminster Hall in 1395, claimed that "every true man and woman in God's law [may] make the sacrament of the bread without any such miracle". The opposition was openly elitist. The chronicler Henry Knighton complained that "the pearl of the gospel is scattered abroad and trodden underfoot by swine", and Thomas Hoccleve told women to spin yarn, "for your wit | Is al to feeble to despute of it!" [Fellion & Inglis, #63326, "Wycliffite Bible" chapter]. The authors also record that one leader of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, John Ball, "was described as a follower of Wyclif". Some contemporaries therefore read Lollardy as a political as well as a religious threat [Fellion & Inglis, #63326, "Wycliffite Bible" chapter].

Kennedy adds a literary witness. Chaucer's Parson "is the only religious figure in *The Canterbury Tales* who is portrayed in a positive light, and he appears to be a Lollard", described as "poor in wealth, perhaps, but rich in thought and holy works". Chaucer's venal Pardoner, by contrast, sells absolution with fake relics, among them "a sheep's shoulder bone" [Kennedy, #62044, ch. 4].

The machinery of suppression

Fellion and Inglis set out the escalation in stages. The Blackfriars Council of 1382, called by Archbishop William Courtenay, condemned Wycliffite propositions, and suspensions, imprisonments and excommunications followed at Oxford. Boniface IX's mandate of 1395 called for action against the sect. The statute *De heretico comburendo* of 1401 prescribed burning for heretics who refused to abjure or who relapsed. Archbishop Thomas Arundel's *Constitutions* of 1409 followed, which Nicholas Watson calls "one of the most draconian pieces of censorship in English history". They banned unlicensed preaching, required monthly orthodoxy checks at Oxford, and "prohibited all translations of scripture from Wyclif's time or later, except those that were allowed by special permission". By 1411 an Oxford committee had found "267 heresies and errors" and Wycliffe's works were burned at Carfax. After a 1412 prohibition by the antipope John XXIII they were burned again at St Paul's in 1413 [Fellion & Inglis, #63326, "Wycliffite Bible" chapter]. Executions continued long after Constance. John Claydon, an illiterate skinner who had Lollard books read to him, was condemned in 1415. Joan Boughton, over eighty, was burned in 1494 saying "all the fyre in London shuld not hurt hyr"; her followers gathered her ashes [Fellion & Inglis, #63326, "Wycliffite Bible" chapter].

Jan Hus in Prague

Freeman writes that Hus "was dean of the faculty of philosophy at the new Prague university and later, 1412, its rector". He describes him as "energetic and deeply committed to his cause" and "set on church reform", with "Wyclif's works" providing "the inspiration for his own programme" [Freeman, #64786]. The reference shelf gives an earlier chronology: dean in 1401, rector "a year later", preacher at the Bethlehem Chapel from 1402. It also records that Hus translated Wycliffe's *Trialogus* into Czech after the 1403 ban, attacked the antipope John XXIII's sale of indulgences, and was excommunicated and exiled [Wikipedia: Jan Hus]. Ellen G. White's Adventist history opens its chapter "Huss and Jerome" by noting that the Gospel had been planted in Bohemia in the ninth century, "the Bible had been translated and divine services were held in the language of the people". In her account Hus travelled to Constance amid crowds who "thronged to meet him", trusting the emperor's safe-conduct [White, Tragedia Veacurilor vol. 1, #13034, ch. 6 "Huss şi Ieronim"].

Constance: schism, conciliarism and the stake

The Council of Constance did several things at once. It deposed the antipope John XXIII; Kerrigan quotes Gibbon that "the Vicar of Christ was only accused of piracy, murder, rape, sodomy and incest". It ended the Western Schism in 1417 by removing Benedict XIII, who refused to accept the verdict [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131, ch. 4]. Anna Grzymała-Busse places its political meaning in the conciliar claim: "The Council of Constance (1414–8) affirmed conciliarism, or the primacy of councils over popes, even if at the Council of Basel (1431–49), the papacy defeated it" [Grzymała-Busse, Sacred Foundations, #62062]. Her broader argument is that church institutions supplied templates for representation and sovereignty that secular states later adopted.

The same council condemned the reformers. Fellion and Inglis: "he and the Bohemian reformer Jan Hus were formally declared heretics. Hus was burned alive and Wyclif's bones were burned, as were, once more, his books" [Fellion & Inglis, #63326, "Wycliffite Bible" chapter]. Kennedy gives the sequence more exactly. "In 1415, three decades after Wycliffe's death, the Council of Constance declared him a heretic", ordering his writings destroyed and his remains removed from consecrated ground; "the latter order wasn't carried out until 1428, when Wycliffe's body was exhumed and burned" and the ashes cast into the river. He quotes a seventeenth-century writer: "This brook conveyed them into the Avon; Avon to the Severn; Severn to the narrow seas; they into the main Ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe were the emblem of his doctrine" [Kennedy, #62044, ch. 4]. Hus was burned on 6 July 1415 [Wikipedia: Jan Hus]. White writes that his ashes and the earth beneath them were thrown into the Rhine, and that "the violation of the safe-conduct had raised a storm of indignation". She says this was why the council at first tried to make Hus's companion Jerome recant rather than burn him. Jerome later went to the same place "singing on the way, his face lit with joy and peace" [White, #13034, ch. 6]. The reference shelf dates Jerome's death at Constance to 30 May 1416 [Wikipedia: Jerome of Prague].

From condemnation to revolt, and the confessional reading

Kerrigan judges the policy a failure: "The execution of Jan Hus in 1415 was intended to make an example of the Czech reformer. It did, but it was an example of the wrong kind." Today, he writes, Hus's teachings "are seen as paving the

way for Luther and the Reformation" [Kerrigan, #71131, "Hussite Hostilities"]. The reference shelf records the result: the Hussites refused another Catholic king and "defeated five consecutive papal crusades between 1420 and 1431". Bohemia and Moravia remained majority Hussite until the Battle of the White Mountain (1620) [Wikipedia: Jan Hus]. A theological verdict thus produced a national and military rising.

The "morning star" image has two sources. Kennedy asks why Wycliffe "is only known as the 'Morning Star of the Reformation', whereas Luther is portrayed as its father, mother and midwife", since Luther's key arguments "had been raised by Wycliffe 150 years earlier in the wake of the Black Death". His answer is the printing press, itself in his view a labour-saving response to plague depopulation: 300,000 Luther pamphlets had been printed by 1521 [Kennedy, #62044, ch. 4]. White states the confessional version: "In the fourteenth century there arose in England the 'morning star of the Reformation', John Wycliffe, who was the herald of reform not only for England but for all Christendom" [White, #13034]. Freeman warns against the "persistent myth" that the Reformation was simply "a moment of liberation from superstition and the corruption of the Catholic Church" [Freeman, #64786].

	John Wycliffe	Jan Hus
Base	Oxford; Lutterworth (Fellion & Inglis)	Prague university; Bethlehem Chapel (Freeman; Wikipedia)
Core claims	Dominion, clerical poverty, scripture alone, against transubstantiation (Kennedy; Wikipedia)	Purer church free of wealth, against indulgences (Freeman; Wikipedia)
Vehicle	Vernacular Bible; Lollard reading networks	Czech preaching; translation of *Trialogus*
Protection	English political elite (Kennedy)	Sigismund's safe-conduct, broken (White)
Fate	Died 1384; condemned 1415; exhumed and burned 1428	Burned 6 July 1415
Aftermath	*De heretico comburendo*, Arundel's *Constitutions*	Hussite Wars 1420-1431

Key points

- Kennedy and Byrne root late-medieval dissent in the Black Death: clerical deaths and flight, lay confession, and the indulgence trade.
- Wycliffe taught dominion by grace, clerical poverty, scripture as sole guide and the denial of transubstantiation. The English elite protected him (Kennedy), and he died uncondemned in 1384.
- Fellion and Inglis treat Lollardy as a censorship case: household "underground reading parties" (Aston), then Blackfriars (1382), *De heretico comburendo* (1401) and Arundel's *Constitutions* (1409).
- Chaucer's Parson appears to be a Lollard, the only positively drawn cleric in the *Tales* (Kennedy).
- The sources date Hus's offices differently: Freeman has him rector in 1412, the reference shelf dean in 1401 and rector a year later. All agree that Wycliffe inspired his programme.
- Constance affirmed conciliarism (Grzymała-Busse), ended the Western Schism and burned Hus (1415) and Jerome (1416). Wycliffe's remains were burned in 1428 (Kennedy).
- Kerrigan calls Hus's execution "an example of the wrong kind" that led to the Hussite Wars and five defeated crusades.
- The "morning star" label is used historically by Kennedy and providentially by White's Adventist narrative. Freeman cautions against the liberation myth of the Reformation.

Chapter 64.

Luther: Indulgences, the Ninety-Five Theses and the Princes' Reformation

Few figures on the library's shelves are drawn in such opposite colours as Martin Luther. To the 1911 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* he is the professor whose Theses struck "sledge-hammer blows" at the worst abuse of his age. To Monsignor Patrick O'Hare, writing in 1916 under the imprimatur of Cardinal Farley, he is a man whose real character lies hidden behind a "Luther of fiction". Karen Armstrong sees a pioneer of modernity, Helen Ellerbe an intolerant authoritarian, and Mitchell Heisman the founder of an aristocratic German Protestantism. This chapter sets these portraits beside the reference shelf's chronology, from the indulgence campaign to *cuius regio, eius religio*.

The indulgence trade and the "monopoly" of the Church

The editors of the *Encyclopedia of World History* introduce their reprint of the Theses with a structural point: "At this time in history, there was only one church in Europe, which amounted to a monopoly." Anyone who wished to be forgiven "had to be absolved by the church" [Social, Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Martin Luther: The Ninety-five Theses, Date: October 31, 1517"]. Charles Freeman describes how the practice changed over time: "Indulgences originally involved some form of onerous act, such as a pilgrimage, but later they could be bought for cash, the scandal that gave rise to Martin Luther's protest" [Freeman, The Reopening of the Western Mind, #64786].

The reference shelf supplies the occasion. In 1515 Leo X granted a plenary indulgence to finance St Peter's in Rome, valid for almost any sin. Johann Tet-

zel preached it in 1517 near Wittenberg, where sales were banned, and Luther was alarmed when parishioners returned claiming they no longer needed to repent. The saying "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs" had already been censured by Paris theologians. Rulers, the article adds, disliked indulgence money leaving their lands [Wikipedia: Ninety-five Theses].

Avro Manhattan, whose *Vatican Billions* is a sustained indictment of papal wealth, treats the explosion as overdue. Many "marvelled that the explosion had not occurred much earlier. The phenomenon of Martin Luther, consequently, was not unexpected" [Manhattan, The Vatican Billions, #64831, ch. 36]. For William Bernstein, "Luther was simply the right man at the right time in the right place", since the printing press had cut the cost of a pamphlet "by a factor of approximately thirty" [Bernstein, The Delusions of Crowds, #73904, ch. 1].

31 October 1517: two readings of the Theses

The *Britannica* of 1911 gives the classic Protestant-liberal description:

> "The theses were singularly unlike what might have been expected from a professor of theology. They made no attempt at theological definition, no pretence at logical arrangement; they were anything but a brief programme of reformation. They were simply ninety-five sledge-hammer blows directed against the most flagrant ecclesiastical abuse of the age. They were addressed to the 'common' man..." [Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th ed., vol. XVII, #72810, "Luther"].

The text itself, as reprinted in the *Encyclopedia of World History*, is more measured than the image of hammer-blows suggests. Thesis 24 holds that "the greater part of the people are deceived by that indiscriminate and highsounding promise of release from penalty". Thesis 25 says that the pope's power over purgatory is "just like the power which any bishop or curate has... within his own diocese" [Social, Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, Theses 24-25]. The reference article adds that the Theses were propositions for an academic disputation that apparently never took place, and that on 31 October Luther sent them with a letter to Archbishop Albert of Mainz. Melanchthon was the first to mention the famous posting on the church door, and his account conflicts with Luther's own statements; a posting, if any, may date from mid-November [Wikipedia: Ninety-five Theses].

O'Hare answers the *Britannica* line by quoting Lindsay, "the non-Catholic writer", who called the Theses "the ninety-five sledge-hammer strokes delivered at the grossest ecclesiastical abuse of the age". O'Hare's reply is that they "terrified nobody. They only emphasized the boldness and rashness of their author in abandoning teachings he once firmly held" [O'Hare, The Facts about Luther, #50994, p. 78, "Luther and Indulgences"]. This is the core of the Catholic case: the Theses were not a protest against abuse within an accepted doctrine but, in practice, a renunciation of a doctrine Luther had once held. O'Hare argues that a sermon Luther preached at the Castle Church, in which he denounced "not only Tetzel, but the formalism" of the practice, shows that "this was in reality his doctrinal position at the time" [O'Hare, #50994, p. 76].

"Two Luthers": the Catholic counter-portrait

The preface to O'Hare's book, written by the Church historian Peter Guilday, sets out its method. It quotes an older tract by "a Prelate of the Church" to the effect that there are "two Luthers—the Luther of panegyric, of romance, and fiction, and the Luther of history and fact." The second is found "above all from his private letters, of which former devotees of Luther would only publish what they thought to his credit, garbling or suppressing the rest" [O'Hare, #50994, Preface]. Guilday argues that scholarship since the Weimar Edition (begun 1883) has destroyed the heroic image: the "Protestant Rebellion" "did not fashion a separation of secular from ecclesiastical power" and "did not establish liberty of conscience" [O'Hare, #50994, Preface].

Worms, Augsburg and the princes

The political sequence is set out on the reference shelf. In June 1520 Leo X's bull *Exsurge Domine* condemned 41 propositions drawn from Luther's writings, and Luther was excommunicated in January 1521. Frederick III, Elector of Saxony, secured him a safe-conduct to the Diet of Worms, mindful of Jan Hus's fate at Constance in 1415. Before the Emperor Charles V on 17-18 April 1521, Luther acknowledged his books, among them *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, and refused to recant. The Edict of Worms condemned him as "a notorious heretic" [Wikipedia: Diet of Worms]. Freeman notes that Frederick "remained a Catholic, at least until his deathbed" and protected Luther out of a sense of duty as his ruler [Freeman, #64786, note].

Bernstein stresses what this protection cost: "To accomplish his reformation, Luther needed the support of the aristocracy, and so he rigorously confined his dissent to the theological and eschewed the political," citing 1 Peter 2:13, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 1]. Heisman draws a political sociology from the same alliance. In the *Address to the Nobility of the German Nation* (1520), "the nobles were representatives of the German nation in contradistinction to Rome. For Anglo-Saxon Puritans, the Norman-based nobility overthrown in 1649 were" foreign [Heisman, suicide note, #38252, part 673]. On this reading Luther made German Protestantism compatible with aristocracy, while English Puritanism, facing a nobility it saw as foreign and Rome-like, became democratic [Heisman, #38252, part 673; study-guide summary, section 99]. Heisman places this inside his broader thesis that Christianity carries "the foundationally anti-kin selective values of Jesus" and "helped oppose the nepotistic values that one would normally predict on the basis of kin selection" [Heisman, #38252, part 201].

At the Diet of Augsburg on 25 June 1530 the Lutheran princes and free cities presented the Augsburg Confession, drafted by Melanchthon. Luther, still an outlaw under the Edict of Worms, stayed behind at Coburg [Wikipedia: Augsburg Confession]. The Peace of Augsburg of 25 September 1555 then wrote the princely settlement into imperial law: *cuius regio, eius religio* let each ruler choose Lutheranism or Catholicism for his territory. Calvinism had no legal standing until Westphalia [Wikipedia: Peace of Augsburg].

The Peasants' War and the charge that "the civil powers obeyed Luther"

Bernstein dates the start of the rising to 1523-24 in Swabia and says that some 100,000 poorly armed rebels were slaughtered in 1524-25. Of the Twelve Articles of Memmingen (March 1525) only the first was theological; the rest demanded the abolition of serfdom, lower rents and the return of common lands. In Bernstein's judgement, "Thomas Müntzer's apocalyptic theology was merely tacked onto what had initially been a largely secular populist uprising, with disastrous results" [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 1]. Freeman states the reformer's position flatly: "Martin Luther condemned, rather than sided with, the peasant revolts of his day" [Freeman, #64786].

O'Hare makes this the heaviest Catholic charge. He quotes Luther: "Like the mules... who will not move unless you perpetually whip them with rods, so the

civil powers must drive the common people, whip, choke, hang, burn, behead and torture them" [O'Hare, #50994, p. 240]. He reports that Müntzer, at his last breath, "accused Luther, whose fanatical teachings he unfortunately imbibed and advocated, of having been the cause of all his misfortunes," and concludes: "The civil powers obeyed Luther. They wielded the sword" [O'Hare, #50994, p. 240]. Ellerbe makes a similar point in a single sentence: in 1525 Luther "supported the merciless suppression of the Peasants' War, a rebellion that his own spirit of independence from the Roman Church had helped to ignite" [Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, #6699, ch. 7, n. 11].

Jews, Anabaptists, women, and two modern re-readings

Ellerbe groups Luther's harshest views together. "Although Luther could find no scriptural warrant for exterminating Jews, he believed that they should be enslaved or thrown out of Christian lands and that their ghettos and synagogues should be burned" [Ellerbe, #6699, ch. 7, n. 12]. "He thought that the rebellious Anabaptists should be killed and even publicly affirmed a 1531 edict by Wittenberg theologians sanctioning their execution" [Ellerbe, #6699, ch. 7, n. 13].

Armstrong places Luther at the start of modernity rather than in the dock. "In Luther's writings, God had begun to retreat from the physical world, which now had no religious significance at all. Luther also secularized politics." She presents the reformers as men who made "one of the earliest of the declarations of independence that would punctuate Western history", and holds that "the secularization of politics began as a new way of being religious" [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064]. Guilday's preface to O'Hare directly denies that the Reformation brought about any separation of secular and ecclesiastical power, so here the two sources contradict each other.

Benedict XVI's last writings give the modern Catholic re-reading. His interlocutor recalls Ratzinger's comment on the 1999 Catholic-Lutheran Joint Declaration on Justification, which noted a "difference of mentality": "Luther's religious experience was dominated by terror before the wrath of God, a feeling quite alien to modern men, who instead sense the absence of God" [Benedict XVI, What Is Christianity, #73099, part 63]. Benedict sums up the theological gap in this way: "According to Luther… the saving gift of Jesus consists in our being justified *sola fide*—by faith alone," whereas "The early Church never thought of this relation as a contrast between justification by works and justification by faith alone"

[Benedict XVI, #73099]. He calls the unresolved Reformation question about the priesthood "a wound that silently continues to make itself felt" [Benedict XVI, #73099, part 71].

Issue	Britannica 1911 (Protestant-liberal)	O'Hare 1916 (Catholic polemic)	Modern readings
The Theses	"Sledge-hammer blows" at abuse, for the "common man"	"Terrified nobody"; a renunciation of his own former doctrine	Academic propositions; the posting itself disputed (Wikipedia)
Motive	"The most flagrant ecclesiastical abuse of the age"	Rashness, doctrinal novelty	Cash-for-pardon scandal (Freeman); papal wealth (Manhattan)
Peasants' War	—	"The civil powers obeyed Luther"	Luther condemned the revolts (Freeman); Müntzer "tacked on" (Bernstein)
Politics	—	No separation of powers resulted	Luther "secularized politics" (Armstrong); aristocratic Protestantism (Heisman)
Doctrine	—	—	*Sola fide* versus the early Church's synthesis (Benedict XVI)

Key points

- The *Encyclopedia of World History* frames the indulgence crisis as the product of a church "monopoly" over absolution. Freeman traces the shift from onerous penitential acts to cash payment.
- The 1911 *Britannica* calls the Theses "ninety-five sledge-hammer blows" addressed to the "common man". O'Hare quotes Lindsay's version of the phrase and replies that they "terrified nobody".

- The Theses were academic propositions sent to Albert of Mainz on 31 October 1517; the church-door posting is disputed (reference shelf).
- O'Hare's preface (by Guilday) argues for "two Luthers", the fictional and the historical, the latter recovered from private letters that devotees "garbled or suppressed".
- The princes made the Reformation politically possible: Frederick of Saxony at Worms (1521), the Augsburg Confession (1530) and *cuius regio, eius religio* (1555).
- Freeman and Bernstein say Luther condemned the peasant revolts. O'Hare and Ellerbe say he incited their bloody suppression, and Ellerbe records his calls to enslave or expel Jews and to execute Anabaptists.
- Armstrong reads Luther as secularising politics "as a new way of being religious". Heisman sees his appeal to the German nobility as the root of an aristocratic German Protestantism opposed to democratic English Puritanism.
- Benedict XVI's late writings, recalling his comment on the 1999 Joint Declaration, describe Luther's religious experience as dominated by terror before divine wrath, alien to modern man's sense of God's absence, and contrast *sola fide* with the early Church's view.

Chapter 65.

Zurich, Geneva and the Radicals: Zwingli, Calvin, Servetus and the Anabaptists

The Lutheran settlement described in the previous chapter was only one current of the Reformation. Two others ran beside it. The Reformed churches of the Swiss city-republics, led first by Zwingli in Zurich and then by Calvin in Geneva, carried the attack on Rome further in doctrine and discipline. The "Radical Reformation" rejected infant baptism and in some forms rejected property, magistracy and the existing order of the world. The library's sources range from neutral chronology to William Bernstein's mass-psychology narrative, a reception essay on Müntzer, Benazzi and D'Amico's reconstruction of the Servetus trial, and the Hunt-White quarrel over Calvinism.

Zurich: Zwingli, Grebel and the first rebaptisms

Huldrych Zwingli (1484-1531) became people's priest at the Grossmünster in Zurich in 1519. He attacked the Lenten fast in 1522, replaced the Mass with a new communion liturgy in 1525, and "clashed with the Anabaptists, which resulted in their persecution". Historians, the reference article notes, still debate whether he made Zurich a theocracy [Wikipedia: Huldrych Zwingli]. The *Encyclopedia of World History* gives the decisive moment: "In January 1525, Zwingli and Grebel held a disputation in Zürich to debate Baptism, with Zwingli prevailing," and "In the coming years, many Anabaptists were executed as heretics for their beliefs." In 1527 the Swiss Brethren met at Schleitheim and adopted the Schleitheim Confession [Social, Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Anabaptism"].

Bernstein tells the same story from the side of the dissenters. Zwingli won the council disputations, but his opponent Conrad Grebel, a merchant, "opposed infant baptism—'child washing,' as his theological descendants would later disparage it." After the disputation Grebel rebaptised George Blaurock, and the two began baptising other adults. Zwingli at first said that little separated him from Grebel except "unimportant outward things, such as these, whether infants or adults should be baptized and whether a Christian may be a magistrate" [Bernstein, The Delusions of Crowds, #73904, ch. 2]. Felix Manz, co-founder of the Swiss Brethren, was executed at Zurich in 1527 [Wikipedia: Felix Manz].

Müntzer: fanatic or theologian?

The *Encyclopedia of World History* links the two radical milieux: "The men from Zwickau were connected to a former resident of Zwickau, Thomas Müntzer, a key figure in the Peasants' War of 1524–25" [Social, Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Anabaptism"]. Bernstein records that Luther recommended Müntzer for a post at Zwickau in 1520; there Müntzer called Catholic clergy "monstrosities" and "flesh-tearing harpies" and preached "that salvation could be had with direct communication with God, independent of scripture". He may have come under the influence of the "Zwickau prophets", laymen who believed in "the importance of dreams and the irrelevance of holy writ for salvation" [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 1].

The turning point was the Allstedt sermon of 1524 before Duke Johann of Saxony, on Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2. According to Bernstein, Müntzer told the duke that the Church of Rome and its noble supporters had taken the place of Daniel's doomed kingdom. He "declared himself the new Daniel, and that his followers, 'the elect,'... were present not merely to observe, but to actively bring it about" [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 1]. At Frankenhausen on 14 May 1525, where he promised to catch bullets "in the sleeve of his coat", some six thousand rebels died, and Müntzer was captured and beheaded [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 1].

The essay on Müntzer in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception* reads the same sermon differently. Müntzer argued that Paul's description of rulers "not bearing the sword in vain, for they are the servants of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer" (Romans 13) "should be interpreted as an obligation to root out the wicked who are opposed to the ways of 'the New Daniel,' " and he refused to let princes plead that judgment belonged to God alone. His order of knowledge

was "first experience, then Scripture". It acknowledges that "Muentzer's reputation is that of the dangerous fanatic whose resorting to violence drew upon himself and his companions a horrible retribution," but adds that his "extraordinary theology, with its subtle interplay between personal transformation and identification with the suffering of Christ on the one hand and the outer transformation in the world on the other," is now "more widely recognized" [Collins & Flint (eds.), The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception, #79961, reception essay on Müntzer].

Münster, 1534-1535: the New Jerusalem

Bernstein's chapter "Believers and Rogues" is the library's fullest account of Münster. He presents it as "one of history's most tumultuous mass delusions" and draws on two eyewitnesses, the Catholic Hermann von Kerssenbrock and the Anabaptist convert Heinrich Gresbeck [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 2]. Two "fuses" met there. One was Melchior Hoffman's apocalyptic Anabaptism in the Low Countries, which dated the End to 1533. The other was the preaching of Bernard Rothmann, who passed from Lutheranism to Anabaptism. Rothmann's pamphlets were printed with the money of the cloth merchant Bernard Knipperdolling, and they condemned private property: "God had made all things common, as today we can still enjoy air, fire, rain, and the sun in common, and whatever else some thieving man cannot grasp for himself" [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 2].

In the Low Countries the baker Jan Matthys, who styled himself Enoch, rebaptised Jan Bockelson of Leiden. Matthys arrived in Münster on 9 February 1534. After winning the council election of 23 February, the Anabaptists offered non-members rebaptism or expulsion, forbade private property and burned debt ledgers and books, "Luther's along with Aquinas's". Matthys rode out at Easter 1534 and was killed and dismembered by the besiegers. Bockelson took his widow, Diewer, and his place [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 2]. "In July, Bockelson declared all previous marriages invalid and ordered all adults to remarry. Women now outnumbered men by almost three to one… and so the Anabaptists encouraged polygamy." Gresbeck recorded the slogan "The more wives they had, the better Christians they were." Resisting wives were imprisoned and "not a few" beheaded. When about 120 men rose against the marriage law, Bockelson had 47 of them killed [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 2].

After a second siege assault failed, a lame goldsmith-prophet, Jan Dusentschuer, announced that God had anointed Bockelson king. Bockelson abolished the council, dressed in velvet and gold, and after a staged mock exodus on 31 October 1534 sent 27 "messengers" to nearby towns, and all but one were executed. The survivor, Heinrich Graess, changed sides and left the town a letter: "All the business that's now being conducted in Münster is a fraud... it's clearly contrary to God and His Holy Word" [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 2]. The city starved. On the night of 22 June 1535 Gresbeck and "Little Hans of Longstreet" let the besiegers in, and about six hundred residents were killed. On 22 January 1536 Bockelson, Knipperdolling and Krechtinck were torn with glowing tongs and hung in iron cages from St Lambert's tower. Adult baptism, Bernstein concludes, survives "mainly among the Amish and Mennonites, both quiet and peaceable sects" [Bernstein, #73904, ch. 2].

Geneva: Calvin, the Anabaptists and predestination

Ellerbe quotes Calvin on the "eternal principle, by which [God] has determined what He will do with each man. For He does not create them equal, but appoints some to eternal life, and others to eternal damnation." She describes his Geneva as "a powerfully repressive, police-state theocracy... perhaps best remembered for burning the well-known physician, Michael Servetus" [Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, #6699, ch. 7, n. 14]. Dave Hunt, a non-Calvinist evangelical, attacks Calvin over baptism. He writes that "Calvin trusted in his baptism as proof that he was one of the elect" and quotes the *Institutes* against the Anabaptists: "Such in the present day are our Catabaptists, who deny that we are duly baptised, because we were baptised in the Papacy by wicked men and idolaters; hence they furiously insist on anabaptism" [Hunt & White, Debating Calvinism, #74605, Part II, ch. 8]. Calvin, Hunt adds, rejected "the Anabaptists he banished from Geneva", and Calvinists and Lutherans "joined Rome in persecuting, burning, and drowning them" [Hunt & White, #74605, Part II, ch. 8]. He also quotes Calvin's defence of Geneva: "Nothing is done here by the rashness of man, but all in obedience to the authority of God".

The book is a formal debate on the five points of Calvinism, the TULIP scheme of total depravity ("man's inability"), unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints, and each chapter has a response, a defence and final remarks [Hunt & White, #74605, contents]. James White, defending the Reformed position, replies that he has presented "a positive, exegetically based position, while Mr. Hunt has focused upon negatively attacking

Calvin and 'Calvinism' without providing any kind of substantive defense of the position he assumes to be true," and calls for a return to the text: "To the word and to the testimony (Isaiah 8:20)!" [Hunt & White, #74605, Part II, White's response].

Servetus, 1553

Hunt states that infant baptism "was one of the two charges for which Michael Servetus (prosecuted by Calvin the lawyer) was burned at the stake," and that "Calvin accused Servetus of 'specious arguments' against infant baptism" [Hunt & White, #74605, Part II, ch. 8]. Benazzi and D'Amico's Romanian-translated *Black Book of the Inquisition* reconstructs the case in detail. After his arrest and escape at Vienne, Servetus lived "for months, as a fugitive, a life full of hardship: he had lost all his goods; he had to hide". He then made for "Geneva, dominated by the severe figure of Calvin" (*dominată de figura severă a lui Calvin*). He was recognised there on 13 August; on 17 August Calvin personally took on the accusation before the Council, which framed the trial around 38 propositions extracted from his works [Benazzi & D'Amico, Cartea neagră a Inchiziției, #18380, Servetus chapter]. The authors weigh why he chose "the most dangerous place for him". One explanation links the journey to the struggle between Calvin and the party of the so-called "liberals". They prefer "a last hypothesis, the most fascinating but also the most plausible: Servetus goes to Geneva fully aware that he is heading toward his martyrdom," a descent into "a modern Jerusalem" where he knew death awaited him [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380, Servetus chapter]. The sentence quoted from Calvin's works condemned him to "burn together with your books until you become ashes" [Benazzi & D'Amico, #18380, citing Calvin, *Opera* VIII, 829]. He died at Geneva on 27 October 1553 [Wikipedia: Michael Servetus].

	Zurich (Zwingli)	Geneva (Calvin)	Radicals (Müntzer, Münster)
Polity	City council republic	City republic, Consistory	Prophetic rule; Bockelson's "kingdom"
Baptism	Infant, defended in 1525 disputation	Infant; "Catabaptists" banished	Adult (re)baptism

	Zurich (Zwingli)	Geneva (Calvin)	Radicals (Müntzer, Münster)
Magistracy	Godly council	"Obedience to the authority of God"	Rulers must "root out the wicked" (Müntzer); council abolished (Münster)
Property	Respected	Respected	"God had made all things common" (Rothmann)
Fate of dissent	Anabaptists executed	Servetus burned 1553	Frankenhausen 1525; Münster 1535

Politics: city-republics, Kappel, and Locke's Calvinism

The Reformed movement belonged to self-governing cities, not to princes. Zwingli built an alliance of Reformed cantons that split the Confederation along religious lines. After a war was narrowly avoided in 1529, the alliance imposed a food blockade on the Catholic cantons in 1531, and they attacked while Zurich was unprepared. Zwingli died on the battlefield at Kappel on 11 October 1531 [Wikipedia: Huldrych Zwingli]. Heisman traces the longer political inheritance of Calvinism. John Locke, "often... considered the single most important political philosopher behind the ideas of the American Revolution," was "raised as a Puritan and his father served against the Royalists in the English Civil War". Heisman adds that "The Cambridge Professor of Political Theory John Dunn concluded that he was a basically a Calvinist" [Heisman, suicide note, #38252, part 569]. In Heisman's reading this links Geneva to liberal political theory, a line taken up in Chapter 66.

Key points

- The *Encyclopedia of World History* records the January 1525 Zurich disputation, which Zwingli won against Grebel, the later execution of many Anabaptists as heretics, and the Schleitheim Confession of 1527.

- Müntzer's Allstedt sermon (1524) on Daniel 2 cast him as "the new Daniel". Bernstein sees apocalyptic delusion ending at Frankenhausen, while the Daniel reception essay credits his "extraordinary theology" and reads Romans 13 as his mandate to "root out the wicked".
- Bernstein's Münster narrative covers Rothmann's communism of goods, financed by Knipperdolling, the Matthys-Bockelson succession, the July 1534 polygamy decree, Dusentschuer's anointing of a king, Graess's "fraud" letter and the city's fall in June 1535.
- Hunt quotes Calvin against the "Catabaptists", says he banished Anabaptists from Geneva and relied on his infant baptism as proof of election. White answers that Hunt attacks Calvin's person rather than the exegesis.
- Benazzi and D'Amico judge that Servetus most plausibly went to Geneva knowingly toward martyrdom. Calvin personally led the accusation, and Servetus was burned on 27 October 1553.
- The Reformed Reformation was a movement of city-republics; Zwingli died at Kappel in 1531 in a confessional war between cantons.
- Heisman, citing John Dunn, calls Locke "basically a Calvinist" and so links Geneva's theology to Anglo-American liberalism.

Chapter 66.

Crown, Conscience and the Sword: the English Reformation, the Wars of Religion and the Puritan Revolution

Within a generation of Luther, the Reformation had become a matter of state policy and of war. Kings decided the confession of their realms, confiscated church property, and fought one another and their own subjects for faith and for power together. This chapter follows that fusion of confession and sovereignty through four episodes: Henry VIII's break with Rome, the French Wars of Religion and the St Bartholomew's Day massacre, the Thirty Years' War and Westphalia, and the English Puritan revolution and Restoration. The sources include partisans of every side: William Cobbett (radical Catholic sympathiser), Ralph Woodrow (Protestant polemicist) and Eric Jon Phelps (conspiracist anti-Jesuit), beside Michael Kerrigan's survey, the reference shelf, and the modern readings of Mitchell Heisman and Mehran Keshe.

Henry VIII: supremacy, dissolution and the "plunder of the poor"

The *Encyclopedia of World History* gives the bare sequence. After Rome refused the annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon and excommunicated him for marrying Anne Boleyn, Henry broke with Rome in 1534 and "has the parliament pass the Act of Supremacy, which states that the king is the supreme

head of the English Church, and he is the one to appoint all clergy" [Social, Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "1534 England Breaks with Church in Rome"]. In Kerrigan's account Henry's "Church of England" remained "Catholic in everything but its fealty to Rome", and the Dissolution of the Monasteries, begun in 1536, served the king's two priorities, "the centralization of his rule and the satisfaction of his ongoing need for funds". Kerrigan counts some 60 Catholic martyrs under Henry and more than 20 people burned for Protestant preaching. [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131, ch. 8].

William Cobbett's *History of the Protestant Reformation* (1824-27) is far harsher. Its summary verdict reads: "the thing called the 'Reformation' was engendered in lust, and brought forth in hypocrisy and perfidy, and cherished and fed by plunder, devastation, and by rivers of innocent English and Irish blood" [Cobbett, A History of the Protestant Reformation in England and Ireland, #38623]. For Cobbett the first act suppressing the monasteries was "in reality, for robbing the proprietors of estates and also the poor and the stranger", carried out by "the remorseless tyrant Henry VIII". Papal power, he argues, had checked kings: without it "every king might have been a Nero, if he would. We shall soon see a worse than Nero in Henry VIII." [Cobbett, #38623]. The preface to the library's edition takes up the social argument. It calls the seizure of the guilds' property "a grave injustice" whose deliberateness "few writers have yet realised", and says the poor lost "even their share" in the endowments of colleges and halls "chiefly intended for the poorer portions of the population" [Cobbett, #38623, Preface].

Cobbett's chapter on the supremacy lists among its contents the "Death of Sir Thomas More and Bishop Fisher" and "Horrible murders of Catholics". He calls More's execution a murder that "gave a shock to all Europe" and says Fisher was "equally eminent in point of learning, piety, and integrity" [Cobbett, #38623]. Kerrigan supplies the other side of More's record. More was canonised and died a martyr in 1535, "But he wasn't to be mourned by England's Protestants, of whom he'd proven a cruel persecutor" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 8].

M. Donnelly's history of punishment places the Henrician state within penal history. Henry VIII denied "benefit of clergy" to those accused of murder on a public highway or in church, and then extended the exclusion to "all murder, piracy, rape, abduction and sacril[ege]", which made the accused liable to death [Donnelly, The Big Book of Pain, #33280, "Church Authority and Punitive Measures (1509-1534)"]. "When an army of somewhere between 50,000 and 75,000 common people rose in revolt against the dissolution of the monasteries, Henry became convinced that the Roman Church was out to" get him. He concluded that "the only way to get to the bottom of it was to torture the truth out

of everyone who even looked like they might be a closet Catholic or a private Protestant" [Donnelly, #33280, "Henry VIII's Paranoia and Torture"]. Steven Sora's *Rosicrucian America* gives an esoteric reading of the reign ("Occult England: Henry VIII takes on the Church"), taken up in Part 11 [Sora, Rosicrucian America, #64376].

France: the wedding of 1572 and St Bartholomew's Day

The reference shelf frames the French Wars of Religion as a series of civil wars between Catholics and Huguenots from 1562 to 1598, with "between two and four million" deaths from violence, famine and disease. They ended when Henry of Navarre, a convert to Catholicism in 1593, issued the Edict of Nantes in 1598 [Wikipedia: French Wars of Religion]. Kerrigan argues that the contest between the houses of Guise and Bourbon "was clearly as much a dynastic as it was a religious one". He describes the occasion of the massacre: "The marriage of Henri III of Navarre to Charles IX's sister, Marguerite of Valois, in 1572 was meant to bring the two religious camps together: Henri was a Huguenot, Marguerite a Catholic." The Duke of Guise "was positively enraged". Admiral de Coligny, whom Guise blamed for his father's assassination, was shot at, and then killed in his house by Guise and his men. "In the three days that followed, Catholic mobs ran amok in a spree of slaughter that eventually left over 30,000 dead" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 8, "The St Bartholomew's Day Massacre"]. McCabe's *Pictorial History of the World* gives the sequence: "Marriage of Henry of Navarre to Marguerite of Valois—Massacre of St. Bartholomew—The Civil War Renewed—Siege of Rochelle—Death of Charles IX.—Henry III" [McCabe, The Pictorial History of the World, #66127].

The Protestant polemicist Ralph Woodrow gives a much smaller death toll and stresses the papal reaction:

> "Ten thousand Huguenots (French Protestants) were killed in the bloody massacre in Paris on 'St Bartholomew's day', 1572. The French king went to Mass to give solemn thanks that so many heretics had been killed. The papal court received the news with great joy, and Pope Gregory XIII, in a grand procession, went to the church of St Louis to give thanks!" He adds that the pope ordered the mint to strike a commemorative medal [Woodrow, Religia tainică a Babilonului, #20525, translated from the Romanian].

Helen Ellerbe also gives 10,000 and quotes Gregory XIII to Charles IX: "We rejoice with you that with the help of God you have relieved the world of these wretched heretics" [Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, #6699, ch. 7, n. 1]. The sources therefore range from 10,000 (Woodrow, Ellerbe) to over 30,000 (Kerrigan). Kerrigan concludes that the massacre "hardened attitudes": in Britain "Protestantism and patriotism went together" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 8].

The Thirty Years' War and Westphalia

Adrian Niculescu's Romanian university course on modern political history explains the slow Catholic counter-attack in political terms. "Catholicism's response to the Reformation was surprisingly slow." The papacy was badly weakened, and "a council that would have mediated between Catholics and the reformed would have taken from Charles V the pretext for continuing the struggle against the German princes," so the Emperor temporised. [Niculescu, Istoria Politică Modernă și Contemporană, #9439, translated]. Kerrigan describes how the settlement of 1555 broke down in 1618 into "a real meat-grinder of a conflict", fought by mercenary armies "having no local loyalties". At Magdeburg some 25,000 people were slaughtered, and "more than a fifth of Germany's population was killed". The churches' direct responsibility "in what was essentially a war between rulers" is, he writes, "debatable" [Kerrigan, #71131, ch. 8].

Eric Jon Phelps's *Vatican Assassins* gives a conspiracist account. His chapter "The Jesuits – 1618-1648, The Thirty Years' War" presents the war as a Jesuit project. It opens with a sermon he attributes to German Jesuits of 1610: "Why do we hesitate, then, in commencing to eradicate and root out heresy, root and branch, and especially this Calvinistic abomination? Kill them, then, the hounds, strike them down" [Phelps, Vatican Assassins, #87949, ch. 7]. He quotes a historian on "a desolating war of thirty years, which, from the interior of Bohemia to the mouth of Scheldt, and from the banks of the Po to the coasts of the Baltic, devastated whole countries". He argues that "the Jesuits became masters of Germany through their agent and tool, Emperor Ferdinand II," who was "as clay in the hands of his confessor-advisor", the Jesuit Martin Becan and later the Jesuit William Lamormaini [Phelps, #87949, ch. 7, pp. 139-141]. This is Phelps's interpretation, and the other sources here do not share it. The reference shelf records the outcome. The treaties of Osnabrück and Münster (October 1648) ended a war that killed "between 4.5 and 8 million people". The Peace of Prague (1635) had

already ended most of its religious aspects. Westphalia is often taken as the origin of "Westphalian sovereignty", though some historians dispute that reading [Wikipedia: Peace of Westphalia].

Puritans, Parliament and the Restoration

Bernstein describes the English Civil War as a conflict that "mainly revolved around fiscal issues", with Charles I's support for a High Anglicanism that "struck dissenters as near-Catholic". It produced the Levellers and the apocalyptic Fifth Monarchists [Bernstein, The Delusions of Crowds, #73904, ch. 2]. Heisman reads it as an ethnic conflict, asking how the abolition of the House of Lords can be explained if the "Puritan Revolution" was only about "the behavior of one tyrannical king", and calls this "the central question" of the war [Heisman, suicide note, #38252, part 329]. For Heisman, Anglo-Saxon Puritans saw "the Norman-based nobility overthrown in 1649" as foreign, unlike Luther's German nobles [Heisman, #38252, part 673]. "Liberalism, then, represents the assimilation of these major internal social fault lines; the internalization of what are normally considered external national borders" [Heisman, #38252, part 537]. Locke, "raised as a Puritan", whose father "served against the Royalists", is in Heisman's account the bridge from this conflict to modern liberal theory [Heisman, #38252, part 569].

The Restoration reversed the direction of enforcement. Martensen's history of early neurology describes how, after the Act of Uniformity, Gilbert Sheldon, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1663, enforced Anglican orthodoxy by "demanding strict adherence to the liturgy" and suppressing dissenting sects. High-Church piety aimed to establish "an episcopally controlled piety excluding dissent" [Martensen, The Brain Takes Shape, #33312, "Sheldon's Control and Intellectual Networks"; "High-Church Millenarianism"].

Episode	Confessional label	Political driver named by the sources	Death toll as given
Henrician Reformation (1534-)	Royal supremacy	Centralisation and revenue (Kerrigan); plunder (Cobbett)	c. 60 Catholic and 20+ Protestant executions (Kerrigan)

Episode	Confessional label	Political driver named by the sources	Death toll as given
St Bartholomew (1572)	Catholic versus Huguenot	Guise-Bourbon dynastic rivalry (Kerrigan)	10,000 (Woodrow, Ellerbe); over 30,000 (Kerrigan)
French Wars (1562-98)	Same	Noble factions, foreign backers	2-4 million (Wikipedia)
Thirty Years' War (1618-48)	Catholic League versus Protestant Union	War between rulers (Kerrigan); Jesuit plot (Phelps)	4.5-8 million (Wikipedia); over a fifth of Germany (Kerrigan)
English Civil War (1642-51)	Puritan versus High Anglican	Fiscal (Bernstein); Saxon against Norman (Heisman)	Not given in these sources

A modern reverberation: Keshe on the Vatican and the Church of England

Mehran Keshe, in the 422nd Knowledge Seekers Workshop of 3 March 2022, a week after the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, treats the Church as a business: "You have to understand Church business is a financial business, has nothing to do with religion. It has to make profit." He presents the Henrician break as a struggle that has continued into the present. Keshe claims (KSW 422, #378134) that the Vatican "warred with England for 300 years, they won the Church of England, the Queen is a servant of the Vatican at the moment". He also claims that "The British Monarchy took revenge on loosing the Church of England to Vatican, by taking 140 billion dollars of gold from the vaults of Libya" into the Bank of Scotland, and that because Britain would not share the gold, "that's why they got kicked out of the EU (through Brexit). You don't pay, we kick you out" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 422, #378134, transcript at c. 1:54-2:04]. He adds that "House of God, never looses in the world of religion, because it is a house of money, not God" [Keshe, #378134]. These are Keshe's claims as transcribed. No other source in this chapter supports them.

Key points

- The *Encyclopedia of World History* dates England's break to the Act of Supremacy of 1534. Kerrigan describes Henry's church as "Catholic in everything but its fealty to Rome" and explains the 1536 Dissolution by centralisation and the king's need for funds.
- Cobbett's verdict is that the Reformation was "engendered in lust, and brought forth in hypocrisy and perfidy". He reads the Dissolution as robbing "the poor and the stranger", and his edition's preface calls the seizure of guild property a deliberate injustice to the poor.
- More and Fisher are martyrs to Cobbett. Kerrigan adds that More had been "a cruel persecutor" of Protestants. Donnelly records Henry's use of torture against suspected dissenters.
- Death tolls for St Bartholomew's Day (1572) range from 10,000 (Woodrow, Ellerbe) to over 30,000 (Kerrigan). Woodrow and Ellerbe stress Gregory XIII's thanksgiving and his letter to Charles IX.
- Kerrigan and Niculescu treat the wars of religion as largely dynastic and political. Phelps casts the Thirty Years' War as a Jesuit war against the "Calvinistic abomination".
- Westphalia (1648) closed a war of 4.5 to 8 million dead and is traditionally, though disputedly, taken as the origin of the sovereign-state system.
- Heisman reads the Puritan revolution as Saxon against Norman and liberalism as "the internalization of… external national borders". Martensen describes Sheldon's Restoration enforcement of uniformity.
- Keshe claims that the Henrician rivalry continues today, linking the Church of England, the seizure of Libyan gold and Brexit to Vatican finance.

Chapter 67.

From Trent to Vatican II: Counter-Reformation, the Jesuits and Modern Catholicism

Between the opening of the Council of Trent in 1545 and the close of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, the Roman Catholic Church defined itself twice: first against the Protestant Reformation, then against, or towards, the modern world. The Society of Jesus, approved in 1540, sits at the centre of both stories. In the library it is also the most mythologised religious order. The scholarly shelf (Young, Freeman, Kerrigan, Glendon, Benedict XVI) and a large conspiracist shelf (Phelps, *The Black Pope*, *The Secret Terrorist*, the *Monita Secreta*, Hendrie, Pinay, Zagami) describe the same events in very different terms. This chapter reports both, with attribution, and ends with Keshe's challenge to Catholic doctrine itself.

Trent and the Catholic Response

Francis Young warns against treating Trent as the whole Counter-Reformation: "although the Council of Trent (1545–63) was central to the Counter-Reformation, the Counter-Reformation began before Trent and continued after the Council" [Young, A History of Exorcism in Catholic Christianity, #62758, "Exorcism in Counter-Reformation Europe"]. In his account the period "saw the consolidation and clarification of Catholic practices rather than unqualified" innovation. Exorcism is his example: the rite's modern diagnostic criteria and safeguards "lie in the early modern period", and the Church was divided over it again in the twentieth century "by interpretation of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65)" [Young, #62758, "The Catholic Response"; "Introduction"]. Young therefore treats Trent and Vatican II as two linked moments of Catholic self-definition, not as a simple before and after.

The council's cultural reach shows in art. A survey of Western art records that Michelangelo's nudes in the Sistine *Last Judgment* were "considered obscene by the Council of Trent", and "the nudes' genitalia were painted over with folds of drapery" [Unknown, Art That Changed the World, #67387]. A history of erotic art cites the same overpainting as proof that the line between art and pornography "depends on contemporary attitudes" [Döpp & Thomas, 1000 Erotic Works of Genius, #86280].

Loyola, Laynez and the Society of Jesus

The reference shelf gives the neutral biography. Diego Laynez (1512–1565) was "a Spanish Jesuit priest and theologian, a New Christian (of converted Jewish descent), and the second Superior General of the Society of Jesus" after Ignatius of Loyola. He was one of the first companions at Montmartre and served as "a papal theologian during each of the three periods of the Council of Trent". He was granted three hours to speak in debate where others had one, and his speech of 26 October 1546 against Seripando's "double justice" was entered into the council's Acta [Wikipedia: Diego Laynez].

The anti-Jesuit literature takes this record further. Eric Jon Phelps writes that "the Council of Trent was dominated by Diego Laynez, a Jew by race and destined to be the Second Jesuit General (1558-1565)", and that Trent condemned the Reformers' doctrines, "including Freedom of Conscience" [Phelps, Vatican Assassins, #87949, ch. 1, "#23 The Jesuit General's Council of Trent, 1545-1563"]. Phelps calls the order "the Gestapo of the Vatican" [Phelps, #87949]. Edward Hendrie turns the New Christian ancestry into a theory: "Crypto-Jew James Lainez … was the most influential member of the Council of Trent", he "succeeded crypto-Jew Ignatius Loyola", and "the Jesuit order is a crypto-Jewish priesthood" [Hendrie, Solving the Mystery of Babylon the Great, #67001, ch. 28 "Coded Language"]. The documented fact is Laynez's *converso* descent, which the encyclopedia records. "Crypto-Jew", the claim about Loyola and the "priesthood" thesis are Hendrie's own.

The Black Pope states the order's purpose: "The purpose of the Jesuit Order, formally established by the Pope in 1540, is to destroy the Protestant Reformation." It quotes Nicolini of Rome: "The Jesuits, by their very calling, by the very essence of their institution, are bound to seek, by every means, right or wrong, the destruction of Protestantism" [Unknown, The Black Pope, #71464, "Their Purpose

and Oath"]. The same pamphlet claims that "millions of 'heretics' had been 'extirpated' pursuant to the Jesuit Oath and the Council of Trent" [#71464].

The Secret Instructions, Suppression and Restoration

The core text of the anti-Jesuit tradition is the *Monita Secreta*. The library holds an 1860 edition, which says it revises "a translation published in London in the year 1723 by John Walthoe" and prints with it "the four vows of the Jesuits, the oath of secrecy of 1680, and Tetzel's indulgence" [Anonymous, The Secret Instructions of the Jesuits, #71935]. *The Black Pope* treats the text as genuine, a guidebook "disclosed to the world twice: once in the 1600s and once in the 1800s" [#71464]. The reference shelf gives the opposing view. Scholars attribute the *Monita* to Jerome Zahorowski, a Pole "expelled for disciplinary matters in 1613", and date its first printing to Kraków (1614/1615). Writers who called it a hoax include Bishop Lipski of Cracow (1616) and Bernhard Duhr, and also enemies of the Jesuits such as Pascal and Döllinger [Wikipedia: Monita Secreta]. On the reference shelf's account, then, doubts about the text were voiced by the order's opponents as well as its defenders.

Its political history is better documented. Freeman records that in Paul V's quarrel with Venice in 1606, the local clergy led by Paolo Sarpi sided with the Republic, and "among the clergy only the Jesuits supported the pope". He presents this as an episode in which the papacy had "lost much of their influence within Europe" [Freeman, The Reopening of the Western Mind, #64786]. The Catholic monarchies later expelled the order: Portugal in 1759 and France in 1764, events Phelps connects with the Paraguay Reductions [Phelps, #87949, ch. 1]. Clement XIV's brief *Dominus ac Redemptor* (21 July 1773) suppressed the Society, and Pius VII restored it in 1814 [Wikipedia: Dominus ac Redemptor]. *The Secret Terrorist* reads the suppression as proof that the order had become "so formidable to the world, threatening the entire subversion of all social order, that even the Pope … was compelled to dissolve them" (its editor's note: "[Pope Clement suppressed the Jesuit Order in 1773.]"). It then argues that the Congress of Vienna (1815) and the congresses that followed united "the European monarchs and the Jesuit Order" against the American republics [Unknown, The Secret Terrorist, #79644, ch. 1]. That thesis is advanced by the book and its quoted nineteenth-century sources (Senator Owen, Montholon); the reference shelf's account of the suppression and restoration does not make it.

Missions, Pius IX and the Twentieth-Century Papacy

Kerrigan's *Dark History* covers the missionary side. Christ's command "Go and teach all nations" was "a sacred trust – and a charter for paternalism and oppression" [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131, ch. 9 "Missions and Massacres"]. He describes St Francis Xavier, "a protégé of Ignatius Loyola", and the Goa Inquisition, which was not wound up until 1812. He also gives the conquistadors' own figures for the dead at Cholula (30,000) and Tenochtitlán (some 200,000) [#71131, ch. 9].

In the nineteenth century, Kerrigan writes, Pius IX's "Syllabus of Errors", "an index of ills in the modern world", "included free speech and religious toleration". It was part of an "intellectual retreat he'd been making since the 1860s" as nationalism and middle-class liberalism advanced even in Catholic countries [#71131]. On the twentieth century, Kerrigan says the 1933 Concordat was negotiated by Eugenio Pacelli, "a conservative through and through". He adds that as Pius XII Pacelli steered the Church through the war, "wrecking its moral reputation, many have suggested", and he calls the label "Hitler's Pope" a characterisation, "caricaturing, even" [#71131]. The opposite case is made in *Disinformation*, attributed to the former Romanian intelligence chief Pacepa. It cites Lapide's finding that "Pius XII had saved half a million Jews from the Nazis" and describes a Soviet-bloc operation to smear him [Unknown, Disinformation, #76607].

Avro Manhattan reads the period through money. His chapter titles include "The Vatican Invests Millions in War Industries – Transfers Most of Them to the U.S.A." He argues that the Lateran millions of 1929–30 were invested in Fascist industry so that they "should become the best guarantors of her support for Fascism" [Manhattan, The Vatican Billions, #64831, chs. 19, 36].

Vatican II Read Three Ways

Aggiornamento. The Council met from 11 October 1962 to 8 December 1965 under John XXIII and Paul VI. It produced sixteen documents, including the four constitutions *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Lumen gentium*, *Dei verbum* and *Gaudium et spes* [Wikipedia: Second Vatican Council]. Mary Ann Glendon, a former US ambassador to the Holy See, writes that "the council fathers, recognizing that the modern world presented Christianity with formidable new complexities, committed the Church to a process that Pope John XXIII had called aggiornamento". She stresses that the Council "made clear that it was

up to lay men and women, not the clergy, to imbue political" and secular life, the "hour of the laity" [Glendon, In the Courts of Three Popes, #72280, Part III, Epilogue]. John Paul II's *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* "emphasized the link between the Jubilee and the Second Vatican Council", and his closing letter for the Jubilee insisted that the Council texts "need to be read correctly … within the Church's Tradition" [#72280, Part I]. Benedict XVI gives the insider's correction:

> "In the years following the Second Vatican Council, I became conscious once again of the priority of God and of the Divine Liturgy. The misunderstanding of the liturgical reform that spread widely in the Catholic Church led to an increasing prominence of the aspect of instruction and of one's own activity and creativity. The doings of men almost made us forget the presence of God." [Benedict XVI, What Is Christianity, #73099]

Betrayal. *Diabolical* calls Vatican II the start of "a liberalizing movement" whose results "have been a disaster: an implosion of discipline and the corruption of the liturgy". It claims that the "KGB-created Christian Peace Conference" pushed Latin American bishops towards Marxist liberation theology at the 1968 conference in Colombia, and that "Team Francis" (O'Connor, Kasper, Danneels, Lehmann) made an electoral pact "explicitly forbidden by the apostolic constitution" [Unknown, Diabolical, #71209]. Leo Zagami writes: "New Mass, a new religion … Gregorian chant and Mozart were kicked to the curb and replaced with insipid hymns" [Zagami, Confessions of an Illuminati, #367409]. The Romanian Orthodox pamphlet *Romano-Catolicii în spatele propriilor declarații* criticises the 1964 schema on the Jews, attributing it to Augustin Bea and Abraham J. Heschel, and condemns John Paul II's interreligious gestures [Unknown, Romano-Catolicii în spatele propriilor declarații, #20228]. Maurice Pinay's *The Plot against the Church*, summarised in Romanian, says it was completed in August 1962 and distributed to the Council fathers. Its purpose was to warn them that "communism, freemasonry and the Jews" intended to force a declaration that the Jews were not guilty of deicide and even to control "future papal elections". The Romanian editors admit they "could not verify the accuracy of the quotations" [Pinay, Complotul împotriva Bisericii, #17760]. It is reported here because it circulated among the Council fathers during the conciliar debates.

Money and power. Paul L. Williams describes Vatican finance, the Mafia and the IOR. He says of one pontiff: "He decided alone, as if the Second Vatican Council had never taken place", and he describes conclave efforts to elect a pope "who would permit the Vatican to return to business as usual" [Williams, The Vatican Exposed, #67453]. David Yallop's inquiry into John Paul I's death covers

the same ground [Yallop, In God's Name, #61893]. Keshe goes further: he says that "Church business is a financial business, has nothing to do with religion", that "when you create a war, it is a long term investment", and that in Ukraine the "Vatican has already paid for it" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 422, #378134].

Keshe's Challenge to Catholic Doctrine

In KSW 486 (18 May 2023) Keshe attacks the dogma of the Ascension. The workshop index reads: "Ascension of Christ … made up by clergy", "where is heaven – all of us ascend", "Heaven means freedom from P[hysicality]", and "at death STM [Soul of the Man] takes position according to the strength gathered while alive". It also says the "clergy made new terminology to gain reputation – created fallacies". Keshe's Christology is: "Jesus is the man and Christ is the Soul of the Creator within the man" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 486, #378198]. Trent fixed salvation in the sacramental economy and Vatican II recast the Church as the people of God. Keshe sets both aside: in his teaching each soul rises by knowledge and conduct, with no need for intermediaries.

Reading	Main sources	Trent and the Jesuits	Vatican II
Scholarly / Catholic	Young, Freeman, Glendon, Benedict XVI	Consolidation; papal loyalists	Aggiornamento; laity; liturgy misread
Anti-Jesuit Protestant	Phelps, *Black Pope*, *Secret Terrorist*	Engine for destroying Protestantism	Continuation of Jesuit power
Traditionalist / Orthodox	*Diabolical*, Zagami, *Romano-Catolicii*, Pinay	(Defended)	Betrayal, infiltration
Financial	Manhattan, Williams, Yallop, Keshe	—	Business as usual; wars as investment

Key points

- Young: the Counter-Reformation began before Trent (1545–63), continued after it, and consolidated rather than invented Catholic practice.
- The reference shelf records Laynez's New Christian descent and his large role at Trent. "Crypto-Jew" and "crypto-Jewish priesthood" are Hendrie's claims, and "dominated" Trent is Phelps's.
- Scholars attribute the *Monita Secreta* to the expelled Jesuit Zahorowski, and enemies of the order such as Pascal and Döllinger also called it a hoax. The anti-Jesuit shelf treats it as authentic.
- The documented Jesuit political record includes Venice in 1606, expulsions from Catholic kingdoms (1759, 1764), suppression in 1773 and restoration in 1814.
- Kerrigan and Pacepa's *Disinformation* disagree over Pius XII. Manhattan claims Vatican investment in Fascist and war industries.
- Vatican II (1962–65) is aggiornamento and the "hour of the laity" for Glendon. Benedict XVI regrets a post-conciliar misreading of the liturgy. Traditionalist and Orthodox critics, and Pinay's tract on "communism, freemasonry and the Jews", call it betrayal or infiltration.
- Keshe calls heaven and the Ascension clerical constructs and separates Jesus (the man) from Christ (the Soul of the Creator within).

Chapter 68.

The Third Rome and the Orthodox East: Russia, the Old Believers and the Romanian Case

When Constantinople fell in 1453, the Orthodox world lost the imperial centre it had had for a thousand years. Moscow claimed the succession. The following centuries saw a church bound closely to the throne, a schism over ritual, a Petrine bureaucracy, Soviet persecution, and communist regimes that used the church as an instrument. Romania is this chapter's case study because the library holds an unusually dense and partisan shelf on it: Greek-Catholic histories, anti-communist martyrologies, a defensive memorial volume for Patriarch Teoctist, a critical biography of Arsenie Boca, and Wurmbrand's Protestant testimony. The chapter ends with the present-day "war of churches" narratives about Ukraine, Keshe's among them.

Moscow, the "Third Rome"

Ian Grey records how the idea was put into words. "Soon Russians were proclaiming Moscow as the center of Orthodox Christianity, the successor to Constantinople, and the 'third Rome'." The monk Philotheus of a Pskov monastery wrote to Vasily III that the Russian ruler "is on earth the sole Emperor [Tsar] of the Christians, the leader of the Apostolic Church which stands no longer in Rome or in Constantinople" [Grey, The Romanovs, #64788]. Grey judges the political effect harshly: "The Orthodox Church, and especially the idea of Moscow as the heir of Constantinople, the third and perfect Rome, had made them arrogant and complacent" [Grey, #64788]. He also describes a Muscovite society

that "centered on the tsar", whose people "could conceive of no rights or interests apart from those of the tsar". In that setting the church's claim to universality and the dynasty's claim to rule supported each other [Grey, #64788].

Nikon and the Raskol

The great schism was over ritual. Angela Charlton puts it this way: "Russian Orthodoxy is among the world's most ritual-oriented religions, yet almost since its birth more than 1,000 years ago, believers have differed over which rituals are more spiritually 'correct' ". In the 1600s the patriarch's reforms forced the issue [Charlton, Moscow & St. Petersburg, #363221, box "Old Believers"]. The *Encyclopedia of Russian History* records the church council's decisions to "standardize religious books, rituals, and icon painting". It calls Archpriest Avvakum "a founding father of the movement known in English as Old Belief", which "assumed a coherent shape and a growing following from the beginning of the eighteenth century". In Avvakum's own lifetime the quarrel had been "a relatively esoteric dispute" among clerical and lay elites [Millar (ed.), Encyclopedia of Russian History, #6957, "Avvakum"; "Old Believers"].

Nikon fell over a matter of power, not doctrine. In 1658, offended by an insult at court, he withdrew to the Voskresensky Monastery, "declaring that he was no longer patriarch". He expected Tsar Alexei to beg him to return. When Alexei did nothing, "Nikon next declared that he was still Russian patriarch, but not in Moscow" [Grey, #64788]. The reforms survived; the reformer did not. The Old Believers survived as well. Charlton describes the Nikolsky Old Believers' Commune in eastern Moscow, whose Gothic-style church was "commissioned in 1790". Its sponsors, the Ryabushinsky and Morozov merchant dynasties, "spent fortunes acquiring the religious art—dating from before the Schism—displayed in the church" [Charlton, #363221].

Synod, Empire and Dissent

Peter I set up the Most Holy Governing Synod on 25 January 1721 and abolished the patriarchate. The Synod was "composed partly of ecclesiastical persons, partly of laymen appointed by the Tsar". It lasted until 1917, when the patriarchate was restored under Tikhon. The reference article notes that Peter also taxed beards, "which were common among the Old Believers" [Wikipedia: Most

Holy Synod]. The synodal church became a department of state, and it used state-style sanctions against its most famous critic. Rosamund Bartlett writes that, "finally exasperated by Tolstoy's blistering satire of a mass" in *Resurrection*, the church excommunicated him in 1901. The first official meeting between the church and the Tolstoy estate took place only in 2006, "105 years after the event" [Bartlett, Tolstoy: A Russian Life, #68122]. Bartlett adds a remark on Russian religiosity: "Until the nineteenth century the icon had fulfilled the role of theology in the Russian Orthodox Church" [#68122].

Soviet Persecution and the Church as Instrument

Richard Wurmbrand, a Romanian Lutheran pastor who spent fourteen years in communist prisons, says the "official" church of collaborators began right after the Revolution with the "Active Church" led "by a bishop named Sergiu". He quotes one of its collaborators as saying that "Marxism is a gospel written in atheist letters", and adds: "We had a Sergiu in every country" [Wurmbrand, Strigătul Bisericii Prigonite, #20685, §116]. He also describes infiltration running both ways. In the former Soviet Union "not only did the secret police infiltrate the church, but the Underground Church infiltrated the police", and in Romania a few Christians joined the Securitate "to be able to inform" those under threat [#20685, §38]. His biographical note records that his release was bought for $10,000, and that in May 1966 he testified about his treatment before the Internal Security Subcommittee of the US Senate [#20685, "Despre autor"].

The Romanian Background: Union and Counter-Claim

The Greek-Catholic case starts from ethnogenesis. Prunduș and Plaianu open with the thesis that "the Romanian people was born Christian", joining Daco-Latinity and Christianity under a Roman stamp. They argue that the early Latin Christianity of Illyricum contradicts the view that Romanians were from the start under "the legitimate jurisdiction of Greek Constantinople" [Prunduș & Plaianu, Catolicism și ortodoxie românească, #21843, Introduction, ch. 1]. They document Leopold I's diplomas of 1692 and 1699. The latter rejected claims "that

Romanians are forced into union" [#21843, ch. 9 "Unirea cu Roma"]. The reference shelf dates the Union to the Synod of Alba Iulia in 1698, with official organisation under Clement XI in 1716. It also records that in 1930 Greek-Catholics made up 31.1% of the population of historic Transylvania, against 27.8% Orthodox [Wikipedia RO: Biserica Română Unită cu Roma, Greco-Catolică].

The Orthodox pamphlet *Romano-Catolicii în spatele propriilor declarații* tells the opposite story. In its account the first united bishop, Atanasie Anghel, trained at a Calvinist seminary and "won with large sums of money the goodwill of the governor of Transylvania". The promises made to the Uniates "collapsed", and Catholic proselytism is presented as one method of extending Rome's domination, alongside the crusade of 1204 [Unknown, Romano-Catolicii în spatele propriilor declarații, #20228].

1948: Hossu, Marina and the Suppression

Cicerone Ioniţoiu's martyrology states the anti-communist charge plainly:

> "When the Communist Party had programmed the death of Nicodim, the Greek-Catholic bishop Iuliu Hossu was summoned and offered the post of Patriarch of Romania (January 1948). After his refusal, Gheorghiu-Dej, at Moscow's indication, followed his criminal plan, sacrificing Nicodim and Mihălcescu and installing his house man—Marina (Justinian)—as patriarch." [Ioniţoiu, Genocidul din România, #11500, "Asaltul comunist împotriva Bisericii greco-catolice"]

Ioniţoiu places this within the second Cominform meeting's tasks: breaking Catholic ties with the Vatican, abolishing the Eastern-rite (Greek-Catholic) churches, and subordinating the Orthodox to the state "through terror and blackmail". He lists the outcome: the Greek-Catholic Church dissolved in 1948, the Roman-Catholic Church obstructed "with the arrest of all bishops", schools and monasteries secularised, "about 4,000 priests and monks" arrested, and a spy trial staged on 10 September 1951 [#11500]. The Romanian Wikipedia biography of Justinian Marina (1901–1977, patriarch 1948–1977) confirms one key link. It says his rise was due to his having hidden Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej in his parish house at Râmnicu Vâlcea after Dej's escape from Târgu Jiu in 1944, and it quotes Ion Gh. Maurer calling him a priest "who was, himself, the communists' man" [Wikipedia RO: Justinian Marina]. The encyclopedia does not confirm Ioniţoiu's claim that Nicodim was murdered. It does record the end of the Greek-Catholic Church: banned "at Stalin's order" by Decree 358 of 1 December 1948, its property largely handed to the Orthodox Church, its bishops

dead in prison, and its legality restored by Decree-Law no. 9 of 31 December 1989. John Paul II honoured Hossu's grave in 1999, and Francis beatified the seven martyr bishops at Blaj in 2019 [Wikipedia RO: Biserica Română Unită cu Roma, Greco-Catolică]. The historian Camil Mureșanu cautions that the circumstances of the October–December 1948 suppression "are not yet fully elucidated" and will be clarified only if state documents are released [Mureșanu, În templul lui Janus, #11084].

Defences of the Hierarchy, and the Boca Case

The memorial volume for Patriarch Teoctist rejects the charge of collaboration. Its contributors say: "The Securitate collaborated with the Church and not the other way round!" They cite the communists' own estimate from 1946 that "half of Romania was in the Legionary Movement", adding that "priests and monks were in the Legionary Movement in an even higher proportion". They dismiss the Tismăneanu Commission report as "this embarrassing report" [Al Cincilea Patriarh (memorial vol.), Prea Fericitul Teoctist…, #9494, part 51]. The volume also gives Teoctist's own self-examination: "I did not have strength and courage. That is how I believed it was good: to be submissive and humble" [#9494, part 64].

Tatiana Niculescu's biography of Arsenie Boca, based on archives, shows the Orthodox side of 1948 from the inside. Metropolitan Nicolae Bălan held that, since the Romanian provinces formed one state and one people, they "should have a single Church, the Orthodox one". The new power in Romania could be "useful to the plans of assimilating the Greek-Catholics in the name of the Church's ethnicity". In autumn 1948, Interior Minister Teohari Georgescu, the new patriarch and Bălan organised at Cluj "a so-called synod" of Greek-Catholic clerics who "unanimously" asked to join Orthodoxy [Niculescu, Ei mă consideră făcător de minuni, #73613]. Boca reported to the patriarch on the progress of "his mission regarding the Greek-Catholics", and he clashed with the Bishop of Oradea, who tacitly encouraged them. Bălan also distributed American Church World Service aid. After Boca's imprisonment at Oradea he returned to Prislop and resumed restoring the monastery, while "rumours continue to circulate about his supposed magical powers", healings, visions and prophecies [#73613]. Niculescu adds that he was defrocked in 1955 and later sentenced to forced labour for "abuse of office" [#73613].

Present-Day Geopolitics: the "War of Churches"

The Keshe document *Vatican: Why Wars Never End – Ukraine, War of Churches* is an excerpt from KSW 421–422 with time codes. It warns that the "summary has not been checked by KF". It claims that "the Pope was lusting after the gold in the Russian Orthodox Church, which has more wealth than the Catholic Church". It says that when Keshe saw the photograph of the Pope at the Russian embassy in Rome on 23 February 2022, "I knew that it was a war between the two Churches", and that by the visit the Pope "accepted the defeat of the Vatican" and agreed "to underwrite all the damages and costs of the war". The same document claims the Vatican carried out a "corporate takeover" of the Church of England, says that "the war you see today in Ukraine, really goes back to the wars between different divisions of Christianity", and claims the Vatican collaborates financially with "the Rothschild's family", adding: "This is not conspiracy theory, but a deeper understanding of actual events taking place" [Keshe, Vatican: Why Wars Never End, #378512].

Avro Manhattan made a structurally similar claim about the 1920s. His chapter "The Catholic Church Welcomes the Rise of Bolshevism" summarises: "Secret negotiations with Lenin. She plans to replace the Orthodox Church, and prepares to administer the latter's wealth — Failure of the Vatican-Kremlin deal". He says papal commissions entered Bolshevik Russia "disguised as famine-relief missions" [Manhattan, The Vatican Billions, #64831, ch. 16]. A third text circulates in Romanian Orthodox circles, the anonymous *Super-Memorandum*. It alleges a secret agreement signed at Strasbourg on 25–29 June 2014 among the EU, Greece, the Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Orthodox churches, Russia and Cyprus, to bring in a syncretic "Masonic world super-religion" between 2016 and 2020 [Unknown, Super-Memorandumul, #48878]. It is reported here as a text circulating in those circles; no other work in the library documents the agreement it describes.

Thesis	Source	Main actor	Evidence offered
Moscow as Third Rome	Philotheus via Grey	Tsar	Letter to Vasily III
Communist capture of Romanian Orthodoxy	Ioniţoiu	Gheorghiu-Dej, Moscow	Hossu offer, Marina's installation

Thesis	Source	Main actor	Evidence offered
Church used the Securitate	Teoctist memorial vol.	Patriarchate	Legionary share; Tismăneanu report rejected
Orthodox absorption of Uniates	Niculescu	Bălan, Boca	Cluj "synod", Securitate archives
Vatican seeks Orthodox wealth	Manhattan; Keshe	Vatican	Lenin talks; Pope's embassy visit

Key points

- Philotheus of Pskov called the Muscovite ruler "the sole Emperor of the Christians". Grey judges that the Third Rome idea made Russians "arrogant and complacent".
- The raskol was a dispute over "correct" ritual. Nikon said he was still patriarch "but not in Moscow". The Old Believers kept pre-schism icons with merchant patronage (Ryabushinsky, Morozov).
- Peter's Synod (1721–1917) replaced the patriarchate. The synodal church excommunicated Tolstoy in 1901.
- Ioniţoiu claims Hossu was offered the patriarchate in January 1948 and that Marina was installed as Dej's man. Wikipedia RO confirms that Marina had sheltered Dej and records Decree 358/1948 and the bishops' deaths in prison.
- The Teoctist volume counter-claims that "the Securitate collaborated with the Church". Niculescu documents Bălan's and Boca's role in absorbing the Greek-Catholics.
- Wurmbrand testifies to mutual infiltration of church and police, to a $10,000 ransom and to his 1966 Senate testimony.
- Manhattan (1920s) and Keshe (2022) both say the Vatican seeks the Orthodox Church's wealth. Keshe calls Ukraine a "war between the two Churches", in an excerpt the Keshe Foundation itself has not checked.

Chapter 69.

Fire in the Heart: Pietists, Methodists, the Great Awakenings, Pentecostalism and the Prosperity Gospel

The magisterial Reformation put Scripture and doctrine in place of priest and sacrament. A second Protestant current then put experience in the place of doctrine. It runs from Puritanism and continental Pietism through Wesley's and Whitefield's revivals and the American Awakenings to the Holiness movement and Azusa Street. That "religion of the heart" became the fastest-growing form of Christianity in the twentieth century, a major force in American electoral politics, and, in its prosperity-gospel form, a television industry with scandals of its own. This chapter keeps three kinds of source apart: the movement's own voices (Whitefield, Wesley as quoted by the Adventist Ellen G. White), scholarly and journalistic analysts (Armstrong, Willis, Heisman), and modern evangelical critics of their own tradition (Viola and Barna).

Puritan and Pietist Roots

The reference shelf summarises the line of descent. The First Great Awakening, "sometimes called the Great Awakening or the Evangelical Revival", swept Britain and its thirteen colonies "in the 1730s and 1740s". It built "on the foundations of older traditions — Puritanism, Pietism, and Presbyterianism". Its leaders, Whitefield, Wesley and Jonathan Edwards, taught that conversion "had to be a 'new birth' experienced in the heart". The article also records division: opponents "accused the revivals of fostering disorder and fanaticism", Congregational

and Presbyterian churches split in America, and Methodist and Baptist churches grew stronger [Wikipedia: First Great Awakening].

Frank Viola and George Barna trace how this movement reshaped Protestant worship. In their account the Sunday order of service evolved from Gregory's Mass through "Luther, Calvin, the Puritans, the Free Church tradition, the Methodists, the Frontier-Revivalists, and the Pentecostals". The Methodists "spiced up the pastor's Sunday morning pre-sermon prayer", gave birth with the frontier revivalists to "the 'altar call' ", and "were the forerunners of the Pentecostals". Citing Horton Davies, they note that evening prayer was old in Catholicism, but "the Methodists are noted for bringing into the Protestant faith the Sunday" evening service. Whitefield and Wesley are "credited with being the first to employ music to induce conviction" [Viola & Barna, Pagan Christianity?, #66661, ch. 3, nn. 337, 344]. Their thesis, that most church practice has no New Testament basis, is itself a house-church argument from inside evangelicalism.

Mitchell Heisman reads Puritanism politically. For him "a long-term consequence of the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 was a nepotistic 'class' system imposed over the defeated Anglo-Saxons". The Puritan Revolution was therefore "the Anglo-Saxon self-conquest", and "the revolutionary abolition of the House of Lords" "could be considered the central question, and not a peripheral question, of the English Civil War" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "The Puritans: The Anglo-Saxon Self-Conquest"]. On this reading the Puritan religion of conscience was also a revolt against an aristocracy, and he treats its egalitarian abstractions, "justice, democracy, and equality", as the core of an Anglo-Jewish "convergence of abstract principle" [#38252].

Wesley and Whitefield

Ellen G. White, co-founder of Seventh-day Adventism, tells Wesley's conversion as the climax of a struggle. Through "years of exhausting and comfortless struggle, years of harsh self-denial, reproof and humiliation", Wesley sought God. When he found him, he discovered that the grace "he had laboured to earn through prayers and fasts, through works of charity and self-denial, was a gift, 'without money and without price' " [White, Tragedia Veacurilor vol. 1, #13034]. She quotes his defence against critics who called the revivalists' teachings "false, mistaken and fanatical; that they are new and unheard of; that they are Quakerism, fanaticism, papism". Wesley replied that every branch of the teaching was

"the plain doctrine of Scripture interpreted by" the Church of England [#13034]. White writes as an Adventist and places Wesley in her providential history of the Reformation.

The evangelical reference work *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions* gives the doctrinal link to later movements: "John Wesley (1701–93), the father of Methodism, had laid the foundation for Holiness theology in the eighteenth century when he taught that sanctification (holiness) is a necessary" stage after conversion. "For Wesley, the evidence of such holiness is the perfected or holy life that he believed could be attained by a Christian before death" [Mather, Nichols & Schmidt, Encyclopedic Dictionary, #65667]. Its authors also describe the split, from the Enlightenment onward, "between church dogma and an academic theology" that adjusted itself to "the philosophies and 'pop' cultures of the day". That split drew the lines "between mainline liberalism and conservative" Protestantism [#65667].

The Romanian edition of Whitefield's sermons, introduced by J. C. Ryle, records that "John Wesley did not agree with Whitefield on several theological questions". This was the Calvinist–Arminian divide. Ryle says Whitefield "distanced himself from these two extremist conceptions". His "great principles of faith" were the new birth, "justification by faith in Christ" and "the final perseverance of the saints, not on the basis of the power of one's own will" [Whitefield, Predici alese, #45610, Ryle's introduction]. Whitefield himself defended predestination: "If God may justly impute Adam's sin to all and afterwards leave all to perish, then He may legitimately leave some to perish". He attacked universal salvation as a doctrine that "keeps the soul in its state of laziness and drowsiness" [#45610].

	Wesley	Whitefield
Theology	Arminian; entire sanctification	Calvinist; election, perseverance
Organisation	Methodist societies (Methodism)	Itinerant field preacher, no denomination
Legacy	Holiness movement, then Pentecostalism	Calvinistic Methodism; American Awakening
Source in library	White (#13034), *Encyclopedic Dictionary* (#65667)	Ryle / sermons (#45610)

Awakenings and the Pentecostal Explosion

Karen Armstrong treats revival as a recurring form, a popular "Awakening" that rises from the margins when modernity leaves people behind. She describes the Azusa Street revival of 1906 this way:

> "Crowds of African Americans and disadvantaged whites poured into his next service in such huge numbers that they had to move to an old warehouse in Azusa Street. Within four years, there were hundreds of Pentecostal groups all over the United States and the movement had spread to fifty countries. This first Pentecostal upsurge was yet another of the popular Awakenings…" [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064]

She interprets it as expressing "a strongly felt need for the spiritual, which is so often either excluded or marginalized in a secularist society", among people "who have not been major beneficiaries of modernity". She links this to Susan Sontag's "perennial discontent with language", which made glossolalia a protest against rationalised speech [#53064]. Jim Willis, writing on American cults, describes the same revival: led by William Seymour, it "took the country by storm, featuring worshippers speaking in tongues, people being 'slain in the Spirit' while fainting dead away into the arms of a waiting" helper [Willis, American Cults, #63203, "Offshoots: Breaking Away from Traditional Religions"]. The reference shelf adds the chronology. In 1900 "Charles Parham, an American evangelist and faith healer, began teaching that speaking in tongues was the Biblical evidence of Spirit baptism". Seymour, "a Wesleyan-Holiness preacher", taught it as "the third work of grace". Today the movement comprises "over 700 Christian denominations" and "over 279 million classical Pentecostals worldwide", with a charismatic extension into Protestant and Catholic churches since the 1960s [Wikipedia: Pentecostalism].

The library also holds the practice itself. *Divine Healing Made Simple* teaches that healing "relies on a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit rather than specific rituals like speaking in tongues or water baptism". It advises would-be healers to find candidates "in everyday settings like restaurants or shopping areas" and argues "against begging God for healing". The author recalls asking after a "no healing vacation": "If I laid hands on someone, would they actually be healed?" [Unknown, Divine Healing Made Simple, #76760].

Fundamentalism, "Evangelical" and the Vote

Armstrong describes a retreat followed by a return. "After the Scopes trial", in 1925, "Protestant fundamentalists retreated from the public arena and withdrew to their own churches" and built "their own defensive counterculture". After the trial "their views became more extreme. They felt embittered and nursed a deep grievance". They would "eventually launch a counteroffensive against the modernity that had defeated them" [Armstrong, #53064]. Willis tells how the label changed: "It was Harold Ockenga, pastor of Park Street Church in Boston, who coined the term 'Evangelical' ". When *Christianity Today* and "the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association followed suit, the term 'Evangelical' stuck" [Willis, #63203].

The counter-offensive turned electoral. Willis quotes Jerry Falwell: "We need to get these people saved, baptized, and registered to vote!" He records that the movement's impact "was almost immediate" and that it "deserted Democrat Jimmy Carter, an Evangelical Baptist Sunday school teacher, in favor of Republican Ronald Reagan in the presidential election in 1980" [Willis, #63203]. In Willis's account religion here worked as a voting bloc, not through a fellow-believer in office: the evangelical president lost the evangelical vote.

The Prosperity Gospel and the Line Between Sect and Cult

Willis's case study of televangelism begins in April 1977, when "Jim Bakker, a minister associated with the Assemblies of God", went on live television to dedicate his ministry's new headquarters. "Bakker preached what came to be known as the 'prosperity gospel' ", and Willis cites the verses it relied on: Ecclesiastes 11, "Cast your bread upon the waters", and Luke 6, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down" [Willis, #63203, "Jim Bakker, The PTL Club, and the Return of Jesus"]. "There was grit in the machine of the prosperity gospel." When Falwell took over the PTL organisation he called it "one of the major miracle ministries of this century". When he left, he called it "a scab and cancer on the face of Christianity". Willis asks whether PTL was "a cult" or "simply the horrible result of too much power, wealth, and fame" [#63203].

He asks the same question more sharply about Jim Jones, who became "infamous throughout the world on November 18, 1978". Jones was "a charismatic

preacher, in both the theological and popular senses of the word". His backers included Orval Lee Jaggers, an editor of William Branham's publications, who wrote about the zodiac and UFOs, doctrines that "became part of the Peoples Temple dogmas" [#63203]. Willis's verdict on the arc reads: "step by inevitable step, slowly but surely, a well-meaning minister from a respected Protestant denomination walked willingly and surely into pathological narcissism" [#63203]. Willis places Pentecostal healing revivalism, the prosperity gospel and Peoples Temple in one chapter of "offshoots". His grouping implies that, in these cases, the line between charismatic sect and destructive cult is drawn by leadership and money more than by doctrine. The cults Part takes up this line again.

Key points

- The Evangelical Revival (1730s–40s) grew out of Puritanism, Pietism and Presbyterianism and made the "new birth" "experienced in the heart" central. It split American Congregationalists and Presbyterians.
- Viola and Barna credit the Methodists with the Protestant Sunday evening service (citing Horton Davies) and the altar call, and call them "forerunners of the Pentecostals".
- Heisman reads the Puritan Revolution as an "Anglo-Saxon self-conquest" against a Norman class system, with the abolition of the House of Lords as its central question.
- Wesley (1701–93) found grace to be "without money and without price" (White) and founded Holiness theology through his doctrine of sanctification. Whitefield, per Ryle, stood on the Calvinist side: new birth, justification by faith, perseverance.
- Armstrong calls Azusa Street (1906) "another of the popular Awakenings": within four years there were hundreds of US groups and the movement had reached fifty countries. Today there are about 279 million classical Pentecostals.
- After Scopes (1925), fundamentalists withdrew into a counterculture and then returned. Ockenga coined "Evangelical", and Falwell's slogan "saved, baptized, and registered to vote" helped move the vote from Carter to Reagan in 1980.
- Willis's cases (Bakker's PTL prosperity gospel, Jones's slide into "pathological narcissism") raise the question of where sect ends and cult begins.

Part VIII.

Islam: Revelation, Empire and Divisions

Chapter 70.

Before the Prophet: Arabia between Iran and Byzantium

Islam did not arise in a vacuum. In the early seventh century Arabia lay between two exhausted empires, Sasanian Iran and Byzantium, each with an imperial church and each watching an apocalyptic horizon. Inside Arabia, a commercial boom at Mecca had strained the old tribal ethic, and the Kaaba gathered the gods of many tribes under the guardianship of one, the Quraysh. This chapter sets out that double world. Mainstream scholarship (Armstrong, Duchesne-Guillemin, Shaked, Crone, Hoyland) is placed beside the library's non-mainstream readings (Joseph, Tellinger, Keshe), and each is labelled as such.

Mecca, the Quraysh and the crisis of muruwah

Karen Armstrong opens her history in Ramadan 610, when "an Arab businessman had an experience that changed the history of the world". Every year Muhammad retired to a cave on Mount Hira, "where he prayed, fasted and gave alms to the poor", troubled by "a crisis in Arab society": the Quraysh "had become rich by trading", and "in the aggressive stampede for wealth some of the old tribal values had been lost". There was "spiritual restlessness" throughout the peninsula, and Jews and Christians "often taunted the Arabs for being left out of the divine plan" [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Prophet (570-632)"].

In *A History of God* Armstrong names the ethic under strain: *muruwah*, an ideology that "fulfilled many of the functions of religion". It demanded courage, endurance and "absolute dedication to the tribe"; the chief "shared its wealth and possessions equally", and the vendetta was "the only way of ensuring a modicum of social security in a region where there was no central authority". The Arabs "had no notion of an afterlife" and held that *dahr*, time or fate, was

supreme. By the sixth century muruwah "was no longer able to answer the conditions of modernity", and the *jahiliyyah* shows "widespread dissatisfaction and spiritual restlessness". Muhammad saw the Quraysh "making a new religion out of money" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999, ch. 5 "Unity: The God of Islam"]. Armstrong also stresses that Yemen "had become a mere province of Persia" and that the Bedouin knew "both the Persians and the Byzantines had used the religions of Judaism and Christianity to promote their imperial designs in the region" [Armstrong, #68999, ch. 5]. In her account, religion and empire were already a single instrument.

The Kaaba, its gods and the hanifs

The Kaaba was "the most important centre of worship in Arabia" and "extremely ancient even in Muhammad's time". Pilgrims circled it seven times and kissed the Black Stone, "probably a meteorite", and the ban on violence in the sanctuary was "a key factor in the commercial success of the Quraysh". "Officially, the shrine was dedicated to Hubal, a Nabatean deity, and there were 360 idols arranged around the Kabah, probably representing the days of the year", yet by Muhammad's day it was venerated as the shrine of Allah, and Christian Arabs of the north made the hajj alongside pagans [Armstrong, #53062, "The Prophet"]. The Quran would ask Arabs to abandon "Manat, al-Lat and al-Uzzah" [Armstrong, #53062]. The reference shelf adds that Arabian polytheism "was not a single organized religion, but a range of local and regional cults". Christian (mostly Miaphysite) and Jewish communities were substantial, and Persian rule aided "a limited spread of Zoroastrianism", with "tentative evidence" of Manichaeism or Mazdakism [Wikipedia: Religion in pre-Islamic Arabia].

Monotheist seekers existed. Armstrong cites Ibn Ishaq for four Qurayshis who sought the *hanifiyyah*, "the true religion of Abraham", among them Waraqa ibn Nawfal and Zayd ibn Amr, who prayed by the Kaaba: "O God, if I knew how you wish to be worshipped I would so worship you; but I do not know." Some scholars call the sect "a pious fiction"; Armstrong judges that "it must have some factual basis" [Armstrong, #68999, ch. 5; Wikipedia: Monotheism in pre-Islamic Arabia].

The non-mainstream authors read the shrine differently. Lawrence E. Joseph says that occupiers set their idols in the Kaaba until "someone had the brilliant idea of renting space in the shrine" to pilgrims. "Thus, a millennium before the appearance of Islam and four centuries before that of Christianity, Mecca

became a centre of trade and pilgrimage", and "360 idols" eventually gathered there [Joseph, Apocalipsa 2012: ce va fi după?, #16861, section 149; translated]. That chronology is Joseph's own; the academic sources cited in this chapter do not give it. Michael Tellinger writes that the bedouin "were not excessively pious" but had to appease "spirits and demons", and that "they were strongly influenced by the 'astral religion' of the ancient Semitic people", which led them to recognise star-linked deities. The Meccans worshipped beside Allah the so-called "daughters of Allah" [Tellinger, Sclavii zeilor vol. 2, #17919, ch. 1; translated]. In his Anunnaki framework these are traces of "gods from the sky"; the thesis is Tellinger's.

Sasanian Iran: state church, esotericism and Mihr

East of Arabia stood an empire with a state religion. Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin writes that "according to the Denkart and other Pahlavi sources, the founder of the Sassanian dynasty, Artaxšēr [Ardashir], was also the founder of Mazdean orthodoxy", and quotes Zaehner: "the Sassanian kings saw in Zoroastrianism the only answer to the rising dogmatisms of both Christianity and Manichaeanism" [Duchesne-Guillemin, The Religion of Ancient Iran, #38271].

Shaul Shaked's collected studies are arranged in two parts, "Sasanian Zoroastrianism" and "From Iran to Islam", the latter including "notes on some themes in transmission" [Shaked, From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam, #60406, Contents]. In "Esoteric trends in Zoroastrianism" he finds a restricted priestly layer: Zand exegesis was "the speciality of ērbads", and texts speak of the Creator's "secret things". He is cautious, however: any esoteric element "we cannot assume … to affect the open character of the religion as such" [Shaked, #60406, art. I, pp. 178, 205-209]. In "Mihr the judge" he gathers Pahlavi passages in which "the function of Mihr is to perform the judgement of the world in truth" (Bundahišn). He sets beside them Eznik's myth in which Ohrmazd and Ahreman create the Sun, Mihr, "in default of another judge", and traces such arbiters into the Arabic accounts of the Zurvaniyya by Shahrastani and ʿAbd al-Jabbar [Shaked, #60406, art. IV]. Mithra thus survived Sasanian orthodoxy as cosmic judge and reached Islamic-era writers. That transmission is a theme of later chapters.

Kavad, Mazdak and religious revolt

Patricia Crone notes that Mazdak "is generally believed to have been a communist active in the time of Kavad (488-96, 498-531)", whose movement "plunged the Sasanid empire into chaos" until Khusrau Anoshirvan killed him and his followers. The sixth-century witnesses (Joshua the Stylite, Procopius, Agathias) place Kavad's "communist phase" in his first reign and give it as the reason for his deposition, but none names Mazdak, whereas "practically all the Muslim sources" make Mazdak its moving force. Against Gaube's suggestion that Mazdak was invented as a scapegoat, Crone separates the two. Kavad's heresy derived from an earlier Zaradusht; Mazdak "only made his appearance after this phase" and raised a peasant revolt of "the poor, base, weak, and ignoble plebs", who "would break into a man's home and take his dwelling, his wives and his property". She suggests the revolt "was triggered by a fiscal reform", the shift to fixed cash taxes [Crone, Kavād's Heresy and Mazdak's Revolt, #55004, pp. 21-23 and sections II-III]. Egalitarian doctrine, peasant mobilisation and royal repression form a pattern that recurs in the Iranian "heresies" under Islam.

Exhausted empires and the apocalyptic mood

Navid Fozi summarises the Sasanian collapse. The empire was weakened by quarrels over "the succession to the throne" and by "the exhaustive wars with Byzantium". "As a result of the concentration of Iranian military forces on the frontiers, the Arabs did not find massive fortifications in the central part of the Empire", and historians also blame "the overly confident Iranian Army and its disparaging image of the once-scattered Bedouin Arab" [Fozi, Reclaiming the Faravahar, #54976, ch. 1]. Modern Zoroastrians still commemorate the dead of "the Arab barbaric attack", in a mobed's words [Fozi, #54976, chs. 1-2].

Robert Hoyland frames the period through apocalyptic expectation: "already in the late sixth century there were many convinced 'that the end of the present world is already near' ", and such speculation "was rife among all the communities of the Middle East", fitting political events "into a transcendent scheme of meaning". Christians would read Arab rule as testing before a "final peace"; Zoroastrians as "the age of adversity which closed the millennium of Zoroaster", awaiting Wahram Warjawand "coming from India with an army and one thousand elephants" [Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others Saw It, #55061, ch. 1 "Apocalypticism", pp. 26-31]. It was not the plagues of the 540s, he notes, but "the

Arabs' active assertion of Islam" that unleashed a flood of apocalypses [Hoyland, #55061, p. 31].

Keshe's reading: Zoroastrianism as the original religion

In Knowledge Seekers Workshop 437 (16 June 2022), Mehran Tavakoli Keshe was asked how Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Zoroastrianism differ. He answered: "Zoroastrianism is the original religion it came through Mithraism. The Jewish and Christianity, which is Jewish religion with the twist of … love in it. And Islam is a copy of the same. Muhammad learned from the Jews … Jews learned from Zoroastrians and Mithraism and created the Jewish religion." He separates Mithra from religion ("Mitra is not a prophet, Mitra is the life of the Creator") and recalls Iranian schools where "by law, one hour of religion" was taught with classes split: "The Muslims go and are taught by a Mullah. The Zoroastrians by their religious leader." He urges his listeners to read "the true history - not history made by religions to rule" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 437, #378149, Q&A "Mitra is love of Creator" and "Find the true history"]. His view of Zoroastrian antiquity and influence broadly matches Duchesne-Guillemin and Shaked. It departs from them in deriving Zoroastrianism *from* Mithraism, where they treat Mihr as a deity within Zoroastrianism; Keshe cites no texts for the derivation. In the same workshop he adds that "Muhammad never allowed the Arabs to cross Iranian borders" and that "when he died for the wealth of Iran, they invaded Iran, to take the wealth" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 437, #378149].

Theme	Mainstream sources	Non-mainstream sources
Kaaba cult	Ancient Hubal shrine; 360 idols "probably representing the days of the year" (Armstrong)	Rented shrine-space; pilgrimage centre a millennium before Islam (Joseph)
Bedouin belief	Muruwah, dahr, local cults (Armstrong; Wikipedia)	Semitic "astral religion" of sky-gods (Tellinger)
Iranian religion	State orthodoxy against Christian and Manichaean dogma (Duchesne-Guillemin); Mihr as judge (Shaked)	Zoroastrianism original, "through Mithraism" (Keshe)

Theme	Mainstream sources	Non-mainstream sources
Social revolt	Kavad's heresy and Mazdak's revolt as separate phenomena (Crone)	—
Fall of Iran	Byzantine wars, frontier deployment, over-confidence (Fozi)	Arabs invaded for Iran's wealth after Muhammad's death (Keshe, KSW 437, #378149)

Key points

- Armstrong places Muhammad's Hira retreats against a Meccan crisis: commercial wealth eroding muruwah, and a sense that Arabs had no prophet or scripture of their own.
- The Kaaba was Hubal's shrine with some 360 idols; al-Lat, al-Uzza and Manat were popular; Jews, Christians, hanifs and Zoroastrian influence were present.
- Joseph (Mecca as a rented pilgrimage centre a millennium before Islam) and Tellinger (Semitic "astral religion") offer non-mainstream readings.
- Duchesne-Guillemin, citing the Denkard and Zaehner, makes Ardashir founder of Mazdean orthodoxy against Christian and Manichaean dogma.
- Shaked finds an esoteric priestly layer and Mihr as cosmic judge in Sasanian Zoroastrianism, and traces themes "from Iran to Islam".
- Crone separates Kavad's communist heresy from Mazdak's later, fiscally triggered peasant revolt, a precedent for later Iranian revolts.
- Fozi attributes Iran's fall to succession quarrels, the Byzantine wars and an over-confident army; Hoyland documents an apocalyptic mood across all communities.
- Keshe teaches that Zoroastrianism came "through Mithraism" and that the Abrahamic faiths learned from it; he presents it as his teaching and cites no texts for it.

Chapter 71.

Muhammad: Revelation in Mecca, State in Medina (570-632)

The prophet who began as a "warner" to his own tribe died as the head of a confederacy covering almost all of Arabia. The library tells his story in sharply different registers: Karen Armstrong's sympathetic history, Deepak Chopra's novel, A. Helwa's devotion, the criticism of Christopher Hitchens and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the account of Nabeel Qureshi (raised Ahmadi, later Christian), and the non-Muslim witnesses collected by Robert Hoyland. They share a basic chronology and one structural fact: in Muhammad, religious and political authority were joined from the start.

The night of Hira (610)

Armstrong dates the first revelation to "the seventeenth night of Ramadan" 610, when Muhammad "felt himself enveloped by a devastating divine presence" and an angel commanded: " 'Recite!' (*iqra!*)". He protested that he was "no kahin, one of the ecstatic soothsayers of Arabia"; after a third crushing embrace "the first words of a new scripture" came [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999, ch. 5 "Unity: The God of Islam"]. The library's Romanian Quran renders them (Sura 96): "Citeşte! În numele Domnului tău, care a făcut, / A făcut pe om din sînge închegat" ("Recite! In the name of your Lord, who made, made man from a clot of blood") [Coranul, #40773, Sura XCVI].

Armstrong records the aftermath frankly: "Muhammad came to himself in terror and revulsion, horrified to think that he might have become a mere disreputable kahin whom people consulted if one of their camels went missing". Fearing he was *majnun* (jinn-possessed), "he no longer wished to live" and resolved "to

fling himself from the summit", until a vision of Gabriel "with feet astride the horizon" stopped him. He crawled to Khadija crying "Cover me! cover me!"; she reassured him, and her Christian cousin Waraqa ibn Nawfal declared it a revelation from the God of Moses [Armstrong, #68999, ch. 5]. He confided in them alone for two years and began preaching in 612. The first converts included Ali, Abu Bakr and "the young merchant Uthman ibn Affan", many of them "from the poorer clans" [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Prophet (570-632)"].

The early life as literary portrait

For the early years the library holds Chopra's *Muhammad: A Story of the Last Prophet*, which its author labels: "this is a novel, not an official biography. A few events are told out of order. Characters drop in and out of sight as needed" [Chopra, Muhammad, #46422, Author's Note]. Through invented narrators (Abdul Muttalib, the hermit Bahira, the wet nurse Halimah, Waraqah) he portrays the orphan, a Mecca that "owed its prosperity to the caravan trade", Abraha of Yemen's envy of "the Kaaba and the wealth it brought us", and Khadijah's household, where the captive Zayd becomes "Zayd, son of Muhammad" [Chopra, #46422]. These scenes are fiction built on traditional material. Ferrara's brief outline gives the conventional facts: born in Mecca, "raised by his uncle (a member of the Quraysh tribe) following the premature death of his parents", illiterate but "well-regarded for his integrity and honor" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 2 "Islamic Expansion and the Rise of Sufi Mysticism"].

Persecution and the hijra (612-622)

According to Armstrong, by 616 the Meccan elite called Muhammad "a charlatan". They were angered most by the Last Judgement, which "struck at the heart of their cut-throat capitalism": "why had they accumulated fortunes instead of sharing their money?" Abu Jahl imposed a two-year boycott that may have hastened Khadija's death; converted slaves were "tied up, and left to burn in the blazing sun"; and in 619 the death of Abu Talib left Muhammad without protection under "the harsh vendetta lore of Arabia". Yathrib's feuding tribes, some Jewish, pledged mutual defence in 620, and in 622 the Muslims "slipped away, one by one". "The hijrah marks the start of the Muslim era". To abandon one's blood-group was "essentially blasphemous", and Muhammad now led

groups bound "not by blood but by a shared ideology" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Prophet"]. Hitchens tells it in a hostile register: the only early interest came from "the greedy guardians of the temple at Mecca, who saw it as a threat to their pilgrimage business, and the studious Jews of Yathrib", who ended by seeing "yet another disappointment, if not indeed another impostor" [Hitchens, God Is Not Great, #65383, ch. 9].

Medina as polity: ummah, qibla and war

In Medina prophecy became government. The mosque was where Muslims discussed "all the concerns of the ummah - social, political and military as well as religious", for in the Quranic vision "there is no dichotomy between the sacred and the profane, the religious and the political" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Prophet"]. When most Medinan Jews rejected him, Muhammad in January 624 turned the prayer direction from Jerusalem to the Kaaba, "a declaration of independence". Without land, the emigrants raided Meccan caravans. Armstrong narrates Badr (624), the defeat at Uhud (625) and the Trench (627), fought by 3,000 Muslims against 10,000 Meccans. The Qaynuqa and Nadir were expelled, and when the Qurayzah sided with Mecca, "the seven hundred men of the Qurayzah were killed, and their women and children sold as slaves". She calls this "a horrible incident" but warns against judging it "by the standards of our own time". The treaty of Hudaybiyyah (628) followed; in 630 Muhammad took Mecca with 10,000 men "without shedding a drop of blood", destroyed the idols and rededicated the Kaaba. By 632 "almost all the tribes of Arabia had joined the ummah" [Armstrong, #53062].

The Sourdels' Romanian glossary states the doctrinal consequence: Medina was where, as the struggle with the Meccans was organised, "the duty was defined to fight all those who did not adhere to Islam until they converted or agreed to pay tribute, the sign of their submission" [Sourdel & Sourdel-Thomine, Civilizația Islamului clasic vol. III, #12462, glossary on jihad, citing vol. I p. 44; translated]. Ferrara adds that "because Mecca was won in battle", jihad's outward form "sanctions war against the enemies of Islam", growing "naturally out of Muhammad's practice of 'holy' warfare". He calls the community a "commonwealth of adherents" pledged to "what we now call the Five Pillars of Islam": the profession of one God and his prophet, ritual prayer, alms, the Ramadan fast and pilgrimage [Ferrara, #66945, ch. 2].

Seal of the Prophets

Negru summarises the finality doctrine: "Muhammad is the 'Seal of the Prophets,' the last in a long series, while Islam is the final and perfect monotheistic faith (Quran 5:3)" [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, Part I]. The Romanian Quran's 5:3 says "...v-am dat Islamul ca lege" ("...I have given you Islam as law") [Coranul, #40773, Sura V]. Qureshi shows the phrase *khatam an-nabiyyin* (33:40) becoming a dividing line within Islam. An Ahmadi missionary complains that other Muslims "call us kafir because we do not interpret two words in the Quran the way they do. Two words! 'Khatam an-nabiyeen, the seal of the prophets.' " Qureshi explains that Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, "running into the khatam an-nabiyeen argument", argued that he was a returning figure, not a new prophet [Qureshi, Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus, #68882, Part 1].

What outsiders saw

Hoyland preserves the earliest non-Muslim witnesses. The Greek *Doctrina Jacobi*, set in July 634, reports that "the prophet had appeared, coming with the Saracens", and an old man versed in scripture answers: "He is false, for the prophets do not come armed with a sword" [Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others Saw It, #55061, ch. 3 "A Christian Apologist of 634"]. Thomas the Presbyter records "the battle between the Romans and the Arabs of Muhammad in Palestine twelve miles east of Gaza" on 4 February 634, commonly equated with the defeat of the patrician Sergius of Caesarea [Hoyland, #55061, chs. 3-4]. Sophronius of Jerusalem describes Christians "bound by fear of the Saracens" [Hoyland, #55061, ch. 3 "Sophronius"]. The Armenian Sebeos (660s) speaks of "the horror of the invasion of the Ishmaelites", likening them to Daniel's fourth beast [Hoyland, #55061, ch. 4].

Critical, devotional and polemical readings

Hitchens accepts that "a person named Muhammad almost certainly existed", but holds that the accounts "are hopelessly corrupted into incoherence by self-interest, rumor, and illiteracy" and that Islam "is not much more than a rather

obvious and ill-arranged set of plagiarisms". He concludes that its "core claim—to be unimprovable and final—is at once absurd and unalterable". He cites the "satanic verses", the "betrothal to a nine-year-old girl" and the "division of the spoils after his many battles and numerous massacres" [Hitchens, #65383, ch. 9]. Hirsi Ali, in the Romanian edition of *Infidel*, recounts checking Bin Laden's citations after 11 September 2001 and finding them in the Quran and hadith. A Dutch paper later headlined that she called the Prophet "a pervert", after an interview in which she described him as "a cruel man who claimed absolute power" [Hirsi Ali, Necredincioasa, #10646; translated].

Helwa writes from devotion: the Prophet is "the full moon, because he fully faced the divine sun of Truth", embodying the message "in his gentleness, mercy, loving kindness, and forgiving nature" (citing 33:46, "an illuminating lamp") [Helwa, Secrets of Divine Love, #65220, ch. 12]. Ahmed Deedat argues the Muslim apologetic case that the Bible is not wholly God's word and that "parts of it are lost", invoking Quran 2:79 [Deedat, Este Biblia Cuvântul lui Dumnezeu?, #42350; translated]. Dennis Avi Lipkin (also known as Victor Mordecai) argues the reverse: that "the Bible prophesies the rise and fall of world-conquering Islam starting with the book of Exodus" [Lipkin, Return to Mecca, #67628, Foreword]. Keshe claims that Muhammad "learned from the Jews", took several wives to "justify" himself, and "never allowed the Arabs to cross Iranian borders" because Iranians "believe in a deeper God". The invasion of Iran, he says, came after Muhammad's death, "for the wealth of Iran" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 437, #378149, Q&A "Find the true history"]. Keshe gives no sources for these claims, and the historical sources above do not report a ban by Muhammad on crossing into Iran.

Episode	Armstrong (sympathetic)	Hitchens (critical)	Outside witness
Hira 610	Numinous experience; fear of being a kahin	Hearsay set down 120 years later	—
Hijra 622	"Supertribe" bound by ideology	Flight from temple guardians to Yathrib's Jews	—
Medina wars	Fight for survival; Qurayzah "a horrible incident"	"numerous massacres"	"prophets do not come armed with a sword" (Doctrina Jacobi)

Episode	Armstrong (sympathetic)	Hitchens (critical)	Outside witness
Finality	Message a "reminder" of primordial faith	"absurd and unalterable"	—

Key points

- Armstrong dates the first revelation to 17 Ramadan 610 and records Muhammad's terror that he had become a kahin, calmed by Khadija and Waraqa.
- Chopra's *Muhammad* is, in his own words, "a novel, not an official biography".
- Meccan persecution (the boycott, the death of Abu Talib) led to the hijra of 622, which starts the Muslim calendar and replaced blood ties with ideology.
- At Medina, mosque, army and government were one: Badr, Uhud, the Trench, the Qurayzah executions, Hudaybiyyah and the bloodless conquest of Mecca in 630.
- The Sourdels state that the duty to fight non-adherents until conversion or tribute was defined at Medina.
- Finality ("Seal of the Prophets", 33:40; 5:3) became doctrine and later the test case against the Ahmadiyya (Qureshi).
- Non-Muslim witnesses (Doctrina Jacobi, Thomas the Presbyter, Sophronius, Sebeos) attest an armed prophet and "the Arabs of Muhammad" by 634.
- Critical (Hitchens, Hirsi Ali), devotional (Helwa), apologetic (Deedat), counter-apologetic (Lipkin) and esoteric (Keshe) readings diverge sharply on the same events.

Chapter 72.

The Book and the Tradition: Quran, Hadith and the Problem of Sources

Islam rests on two textual pillars: the Quran, held to be the literal Word of God recited by Muhammad, and the sunna, the Prophet's words and deeds transmitted as hadith. How each took shape, and how far either can serve as a historical source, is one of the most contested questions in the study of religion. This chapter sets the traditional account (Armstrong, the Sourdels) against Hoyland's source criticism, the non-Muslim apocalypses and the polemics, and ends with the "uncreated" Quran.

The Recitation: revelation piece by piece

Armstrong emphasises that, "unlike the Torah … revealed to Moses in one session on Mount Sinai, the Koran was revealed to Muhammad bit by bit, line by line and verse by verse over a period of twenty-three years" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999, ch. 5 "Unity: The God of Islam"]. Because Muhammad "could neither read nor write", he "recited it aloud, the Muslims learned it by heart and those few who were literate wrote it down". "Some twenty years after Muhammad's death, the first official compilation of the revelations was made", with the longest suras first; it was meant "not … for private perusal but for liturgical recitation" [Armstrong, #68999, ch. 5]. In her shorter history she gives the revelation period as "the next twenty-one years" after 610 [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Prophet (570-632)"].

The library's Romanian Quran comes with a critical introduction by its translator, Silvestru Octavian Isopescul (1910), which states the borrowing question plainly: "Undeniably, Judaism and Christianity were the principal sources

of Muhammad's teaching", and "the only new teaching relative to Judaism and Christianity ... is the teaching that Muhammad is the messenger of God" [Coranul, #40773, Introducere III; translated from the Romanian].

Uthman's codex and its opponents

The Muslim tradition credits the third caliph, Uthman (644-656), with the standard text. Armstrong places it among the grievances that brought him down. The soldiers resented his nepotism, and "the Quran-reciters, who knew the scripture by heart and had become the chief religious authorities, were also incensed when Uthman insisted that only one version of the sacred text be used in the garrison towns, and suppressed variants, which many of them preferred, but which differed in minor details". In 656 mutineers from Fustat killed him and acclaimed Ali, opening the First Fitnah. Armstrong records that his critics held that "Uthman had failed to live up to the standard of the Quran" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Rashidun" and "The First Fitnah"].

Hitchens gives the fuller traditional story in order to attack it. Under Abu Bakr, "pieces of paper, stones, palm leaves, shoulder-blades, ribs and bits of leather" were given to Zaid ibn Thabit; others credit Ali or Uthman, who had Zaid unify the texts and sent standard copies to the provinces. "Outdoing Athanasius, Uthman ordered that all earlier and rival editions be destroyed." Hitchens adds that the undotted, unvowelled script enabled "vastly different readings even of Uthman's version", and that "the Arabic words written on the outside of the Dome of the Rock ... are different from any version that appears in the Koran" [Hitchens, God Is Not Great, #65383, ch. 9 "The Koran Is Borrowed from Both Jewish and Christian Myths"]. For the mainstream academic background on the recension and early manuscripts see [Wikipedia: History of the Quran].

Hadith, isnad and al-Shafi'i

The second pillar formed later. Armstrong defines *ahadith* as traditions of the Prophet's teachings and actions "not in the Quran", recorded by companions and family [Armstrong, Islam, #68695, Glossary]. Law-making drove their systematisation. Against Malik ibn Anas (d. 795), who relied on Medinan practice, al-Shafi'i (d. 820) based all jurisprudence on hadith. Shafi'i insisted that "each hadith had to be reliably supported by a chain (isnad) of devout Muslims leading

directly back to the Prophet himself. The isnad must be stringently examined, and if the chain was broken or if any one of its 'links' could be shown to be a bad Muslim, the hadith must be rejected" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Abbasids: The High Caliphal Period"]. The law was political: both Malik and Shafi'i "had taken part in Shii uprisings against the early Abbasids" before Harun's court patronised them [Armstrong, #53062].

The Sourdels' Romanian glossary defines the Tradition as the reports of the Prophet's and the Companions' words and deeds "constituting the SUNNA", and adds that "the Tradition is therefore one of the sources of theology as well as of law". The science of Tradition "developed above all in the tenth century, the epoch in which the canonical collections were composed which thenceforth carried authority in the SUNNI world and which are six in number", the first being "that of al-Buhari" [Sourdel & Sourdel-Thomine, Civilizaţia Islamului clasic vol. III, #12462, glossary "Tradiţia", citing vol. I pp. 167, 178-179, 232; translated]. Al-Bukhari was "born at Bukhara and died near Samarkand in 870" [Sourdel, #12462, entry "al-Buhari"]. Hitchens uses the same figures polemically. Bukhari "died 238 years after the death of Muhammad"; of "three hundred thousand attestations he accumulated … he ruled that two hundred thousand of them were entirely valueless", reducing the total to "ten thousand hadith". Citing Goldziher via Reza Aslan, he says many hadith were "verses from the Torah and the Gospels, bits of Rabbinic sayings, ancient Persian maxims", even "the Lord's Prayer" [Hitchens, #65383, ch. 9].

Hoyland's warning: compilers as authors

Hoyland supplies the scholarly model behind such doubts, and he does so without polemic. Drawing on rabbinic studies, he argues for "several stages in the process of editing before the emergence of a final redaction". Early works such as Ibn Ishaq's biography and Malik's compendium were then "incorporated, whole or in part, into later compilations, or else redacted anew". "This activity goes under the guise of compilation/transmission, but at each stage there is omission, addition and reworking of material. Thus the distinction between compiler/transmitter and author is frequently illusory" [Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others Saw It, #55061, ch. 2 "The Nature of the Sources", "Redactional Identity and Unavowed Authorship", pp. 34-37]. Fixed texts "with very few exceptions" did not antedate the ninth century [Hoyland, #55061, p. 37]. At the level of single reports: "An individual narrative unit (khabar/hadith) reporting some incident or saying, though its integrity and factuality appear guaranteed by a chain of

transmitters going back to an ear- or eyewitness, will be subject to rewording and reshaping in the interests of sundry literary, juristic and socio-political concerns" [Hoyland, #55061, p. 38].

He also blurs the line between Muslim and non-Muslim material. Jews and Christians were tutors and aides to Muslims; "converts, especially among the literary elite, must have introduced something of their native traditions into their newly adopted religion"; and books "circulated across confessional lines" [Hoyland, #55061, ch. 2, pp. 32-33]. Hoyland adds a caveat: he is "not denying that there was influence and borrowing", only "doubting that enough groundwork has been done as yet to allow determination of its nature" [Hoyland, #55061, p. 34 n. 8].

Outside texts: apocalypses reacting to Islam

The non-Muslim apocalypses are datable external witnesses to how Islam was perceived. The Syriac Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius, composed "most likely in North Mesopotamia ... around the year 690", narrates the "last millennium ... in which the kingdom of the Persians will be uprooted, and in which the sons of Ishmael will come out from the desert of Yathrib". They are "a chastisement in which there will be no mercy" for Christian sins. Then "the king of the Greeks will come out against them in great anger" and the Last Emperor lays his crown on the Cross at Golgotha. The author never grants the Ishmaelites a "kingdom", "only ... 'the chastisement of the sons of Ishmael' ". [Hoyland, #55061, ch. 8 "Apocalypses and Visions", "Ps.-Methodius", pp. 263-267]. The Bahira apocalypse, later fused with the legend of the monk Sergius-Bahira's "initiation of Muhammad into monotheism and writing for him of a scripture", allegorises Arab dynasties as beasts before a Christian king "dressed in green" restores the churches [Hoyland, #55061, ch. 8 "Bahira", pp. 270-273].

Polemic, eschatology and the uncreated Word

The anonymous *How All Religions Are False and Harmful* begins its Islam chapter from the doctrine that Muhammad was "the last messenger of Allah" and that "there cannot therefore be any falsehood or error in Quran". It then sets out "Falsehood of Islam" and "Contradictions in Islam". It traces Abrahamic eschatology to Persia: biblical composers "came into contact" with Zoroastrianism

"after Persian ruler Cyrus defeated Babylonians and released Israelites from the captivity in 539 BCE", and "might have studied Zoroastrianism favorably" [How All Religions Are False and Harmful, #78476, chs. 2 and 4]. The book presents itself as a polemic against all religions; its Persian-origin thesis echoes the transmission theme of earlier chapters.

Eschatological hadith remain living texts. *The Signs Before the Day of Judgement* (held in the library inside a larger compiled PDF collection) sorts the traditions into lesser and greater signs: "After the lesser signs of the Hour appear and increase, mankind will have reached a stage of great suffering. Then the awaited Mahdee will appear; he is the first of the greater, and clear, signs of the Hour" [The Signs Before the Day of Judgement, #68072, "The Greater Signs of the Hour"]. Negru summarises the tradition that the Mahdi "will announce his presence in the city of Mecca between the corner from Ka'ba and the place of Abraham", opposed by al-Dajjal and the Sufyani, and argues that "Islam eschatology copies to a great extent Christian eschatology", differing in that Jesus's return is secondary [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, Part I].

The final step from scripture to theology came under the Abbasids. Armstrong describes "a new type of devotion, which had first emerged at the end of the Umayyad period but only achieved prominence during the reign of Harun al-Rashid. It was similar to the Christian devotion to Jesus, since it saw the Quran as God's uncreated Word, which had existed with him from all eternity, and which had, as it were, taken flesh and human form in the scripture". The Mutazilites were "appalled", since the doctrine "seemed to make the Quran a second divine being". Its adherents, the *ahl al-hadith*, taught that "the rank and file must obey the caliph" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Abbasids"]. Her chronology records the later state inquisition (*mihnah*) that tried "to enforce Mutazilah views over those of the more popular ahl al-hadith, who are imprisoned for their doctrines", and names Ahmad ibn Hanbal as "a hero of the ahl al-hadith" [Armstrong, Islam, #68695, Chronology].

Issue	Traditional account	Source-critical view	Polemical view
Quran's form	Revealed piecemeal over 21-23 years, memorised, compiled ~20 years after Muhammad (Armstrong)	—	Fragments on bones and leather; rival codices burned; undotted script (Hitchens)

Issue	Traditional account	Source-critical view	Polemical view
Uthman's codex	Single version imposed; reciters protested (Armstrong)	—	Uthman as Athanasius (Hitchens)
Hadith	Isnad of devout Muslims; one bad link invalidates (Shafi'i via Armstrong); six canonical collections (Sourdel)	Reports reshaped at each stage; compiler/author distinction "frequently illusory" (Hoyland)	Borrowed from Torah, Gospels, Persian maxims (Hitchens/Goldziher)
Origins	Message as "reminder" of Abraham's faith	Cross-confessional tutors and converts (Hoyland)	Judaism and Christianity main sources (Romanian Coranul intro); Zoroastrian eschatology via Cyrus (#78476)

Key points

- Armstrong describes the Quran as a "Recitation" revealed piecemeal over 21-23 years, memorised and recited liturgically, and first compiled about twenty years after Muhammad's death.
- Uthman imposed a single text and suppressed variants; the reciters' anger fed the mutiny of 656 and the First Fitnah.
- Al-Shafi'i (d. 820) made hadith the basis of law and required an unbroken isnad of devout Muslims; one bad "link" invalidated a report.
- The Sourdels place the composition of the six canonical Sunni collections, beginning with al-Bukhari (d. 870), "above all in the tenth century", and treat sunna as a source of both theology and law.
- Hoyland argues that transmitted reports were reworded and reshaped "in the interests of sundry literary, juristic and socio-political concerns" and that compilers were often authors.

- Christian apocalypses (Pseudo-Methodius c. 690, Bahira) read Islam as divine chastisement awaiting a Last Emperor.
- Hitchens, the Coranul translator and #78476 argue for Jewish, Christian or Zoroastrian sources; Hoyland says borrowing's nature is not yet determined.
- The doctrine of the "uncreated" Quran, popular under Harun al-Rashid and compared by Armstrong to the Christian Logos, set the ahl al-hadith against the Mutazilites.

Chapter 73.

Succession and Civil War: the Rashidun, the Fitnas, Kharijites and Ibadis

Muhammad died in 632 without a successor who was also a prophet. The thirty years that followed (the age of the four *rashidun*, the "rightly guided" caliphs) were a time of conquest abroad and civil war at home. In Karen Armstrong's reading, the period was "just as formative as that of the Prophet himself", because "Muslims would define themselves and their theology according to the way they assessed the turbulent, glorious and tragic events of these years" [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Rashidun (632-661)"]. This chapter follows that political struggle: the elections of Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman, the murder of Uthman, the war between Ali and Muawiyah, the arbitration after Siffin, and the breakaway of the Kharijites, the first group in Islam to declare fellow Muslims unbelievers. Each faction gave its own answer to one question, namely who may lead the *ummah*, and those answers became the lasting divisions of Islam.

The Rashidun and the first conquests (632-656)

Armstrong reports that after the Prophet's death some Muslims doubted that there should be a "state" at all, and some thought each tribe should elect its own *imam*. Abu Bakr and Umar ibn al-Khattab argued for a single ruler. Others believed that Muhammad would have wanted his closest male relative, Ali ibn Abi Talib, "since in Arabia, where the blood-tie was sacred, it was thought that a chief's special qualities were passed down the line of his descendants". Ali was young, and Abu Bakr "was elected the first *khalifah* of the Prophet by a majority of votes" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Rashidun"]. Abu Bakr's short reign (632-634) was taken up with the *riddah* ("apostasy") wars. Armstrong calls these

revolts "entirely political and economic", although their leaders claimed to be prophets. She suggests it was "probably during the riddah wars that Muslims began to assert that Muhammad had been the last and greatest of the prophets, a claim that is not made explicitly in the Quran" [Armstrong, #53062]. Sourdel's glossary adds that Sunni tradition regarded Abu Bakr as the oldest convert, while the Shiites criticised him for taking power and pushing Ali aside [Sourdel & Sourdel-Thomine, Civilizatia Islamului clasic III, #12462, entry "ABU BAKR"].

Under Umar (634-644), who took the title *amir al-muminin* ("commander of the faithful"), Arab raids became conquest. The Persians were defeated at Qadisiyyah (637) and the Sasanian capital Ctesiphon fell. The Byzantines lost at Yarmuk (636), Jerusalem fell in 638, and by 641 Syria, Palestine and Egypt were in Muslim hands. Armstrong insists that "there was nothing religious about these campaigns": their aim was plunder and "a common activity that would preserve the unity of the ummah" [Armstrong, #53062, map "The Early Conquests"]. The conquered were organised as *dhimmis* (protected subjects) paying a poll tax, and the Arab soldiers were housed in garrison towns (*amsar*): Kufah, Basrah and Fustat. Umar was stabbed in the Medina mosque in November 644 by a Persian prisoner of war. Taheri's notes record that this man, Firuz, is held by some historians to have killed Umar "as an enemy of Persia", and that "to Shi'ites Firuz is a saint and his tomb, near Kashan in central Iran, is a place of pilgrimage" [Taheri, Holy Terror, #64433, notes to ch. 3].

Uthman ibn Affan, chosen by six companions, at first ruled successfully: Cyprus, Armenia, the Oxus, Herat and Sind came under Muslim control. But he gave the best posts to his Umayyad kinsmen, including the appointment of Muawiyah, son of the Prophet's old enemy Abu Sufyan, as governor of Syria. He also angered the Quran-reciters by imposing a single text of the scripture. In 656 mutinous soldiers from Fustat besieged his house and killed him, and the mutineers acclaimed Ali [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 31-33].

The First Fitnah: Ali, Aisha and Muawiyah

The murder of a caliph who had been the Prophet's son-in-law and one of the earliest converts "inspired a five-year civil war within the ummah, which is known as the *fitnah*, the time of temptation" [Armstrong, #53062, "The First Fitnah"]. Aisha, with Talhah and Zubayr, attacked Ali for not punishing the killers and was defeated at the Battle of the Camel near Basrah. Ali's own partisans insisted that Uthman had deserved death, and Ali "could not disown" them. Armstrong

judges that by not condemning the murder he cast himself "in a highly dubious light". The nineteenth-century writer Keightley, following Ockley, gives a sharply different portrait. He makes Aisha "the firebrand of Islam", vehemently hostile to Ali, and says Uthman was slain "holding the Koran in his lap, by a band of murderers, headed by the brother of Ayesha" [Keightley, Secret Societies of the Middle Ages, #64544, ch. II].

The decisive opposition came from Syria. In Armstrong's words, "Uthman had been his kinsman, and, as the new head of the Umayyad family, it was his duty as an Arab chieftain to avenge Uthman's death. He was supported by the wealthy Meccan clans and the Arabs of Syria, who had appreciated his strong and wise government" [Armstrong, #53062, "The First Fitnah"]. Taheri's notes add that Uthman's relatives "claimed that Ali had inspired the plot to kill the Caliph" [Taheri, #64433, notes to ch. 3].

Siffin, the arbitration and the secession

The armies met at Siffin on the upper Euphrates in 657. Armstrong's chronology summarises the outcome: "An attempt is made to arbitrate between the two sides at Siffin; when the arbitration goes against Ali, Muawwiyyah deposes him and is proclaimed caliph in Jerusalem. The Kharajites secede from Ali's camp" [Armstrong, Islam, #68695, chronology entry 657]. The offline encyclopaedia supplies the episode's famous detail: "On the verge of defeat, Mu'awiya ordered his soldiers to hoist leaves of the Qur'an (masahif) on their lances". The *qurra* (Quran-reciters) in Ali's army pressed him under threat to accept [Wikipedia: Kharijites]. Sourdel's glossary places the arbitration meeting at Adhruh, between Ma'an and Petra in present-day Jordan. It describes "the meeting intended to arbitrate, after the battle of Siffin, the conflict between Ali and Muawiyah, which led to the deposition of Ali" [Sourdel, #12462, entry "ADHRUH", translated from Romanian].

A party in Ali's army rejected the procedure entirely under the slogan *la hukma illa li-llah*, "judgment belongs to God alone". About 12,000 men withdrew to Harura near Kufa. They held that Muawiyah, as a rebel, had to be fought until he repented (Quran 49:9), and that by accepting human arbitration Ali had committed a grave sin [Wikipedia: Kharijites]. Armstrong describes their logic: Uthman had failed the Quranic standard, and Ali "had compromised with the supporters of injustice … and was, therefore, no true Muslim". The seceders, called *kharajis*, "insisted that the ruler of the Islamic community should not be

the most powerful but the most committed Muslim" [Armstrong, #53062, p. 35]. Sourdel defines them as "former partisans of Ali who abandoned him after the battle of Siffin and adopted a rigorist and egalitarian doctrine" [Sourdel, #12462, entry "HARIDJIṬI"].

When the arbitration talks went ahead in 658, the dissidents elected Abd Allah ibn Wahb al-Rasibi as their own caliph, gathered at Nahrawan on the Tigris and declared Ali and his followers unbelievers. After they killed a traveller and Ali's envoy, Ali attacked and destroyed them at Nahrawan in July 658 [Wikipedia: Kharijites]. Armstrong records the cost: "Ali's harsh treatment of the Kharajites cost him much support, even in Kufah. Muawiyyah made steady gains ... A second attempt at arbitration, which tried to find another candidate for the caliphate, failed ... and in 661 Ali was murdered by a Kharajite" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 35-36]. The assassin, Ibn Muljam, struck Ali with a poisoned sword during the morning prayer in the mosque of Kufa on 26 January 661, seeking revenge for Nahrawan [Wikipedia: Kharijites]. Taheri reports that he was one of three conspirators sworn to kill Ali, Muawiyah and Amr ibn al-As on the same day, "but only Abdul-Rahman managed to remain true to his oath" [Taheri, #64433, notes to ch. 3]. Hasan, Ali's son, came to terms with Muawiyah and retired to Medina "for a financial consideration" [Armstrong, #53062, p. 36].

Three answers to the question of leadership

Armstrong presents the civil wars as the origin of Islamic theology. They raised the question of how a society that killed its devout leaders could claim to be guided by God, and of what kind of man should lead: "Should the caliph be the most pious Muslim (as the Kharajites believed), a direct descendant of the Prophet (as the Shiis contended), or should the faithful accept the Umayyads, with all their failings, in the interests of peace and unity?" She compares these debates to "the great Christological debates of the fourth and fifth centuries in Christianity" [Armstrong, Islam, #68695 and #53062, "The Religious Movement"].

Position	Who may lead	Status of sinful rulers	Later heirs
Kharijites	Any morally irreproachable Muslim, of any descent	Sinner forfeits office; militant groups held rebellion a duty	Azariqa, Najdat, Sufriyya, Ibadiyya

Position	Who may lead	Status of sinful rulers	Later heirs
Shiat Ali	A descendant of the Prophet through Ali	Usurpers; the first three caliphs were illegitimate (radical view)	Zaydis, Twelvers, Ismailis
Majority (later Sunni)	Accepted ruler, preferably Qurayshi	Obey for the sake of unity; rebuke but do not depose	Murjites, *ahl al-hadith*, the four law schools
Mutazilites	"Withdrew" from judging Ali and Muawiyah	Activists for "command good, forbid evil"	Rationalist *kalam*

Sources: [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 45-48; Wikipedia: Kharijites, "Governance"].

Between the poles stood the Basran school of Hasan al-Basri. His pupil Wasil ibn Ata founded the Mutazilites, who "withdrew" from judging between Ali and Muawiyah, "since they claimed that only God could know what was in men's hearts". Armstrong notes, however, that "the Quran exhorts Muslims to 'command what is good and forbid what is evil,' and, like the Kharajites, some of the Mutazilites took this very seriously. Some supported Shii rebellions" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 47-48].

Kharijite sects and the doctrine of takfir

According to the encyclopaedia, most Kharijites "branded as disbelievers (kuffar) Muslims who had committed a grave sin, and the most militant declared killing of such unbelievers to be licit, unless they repented". It also warns that almost everything known about them comes from hostile ninth- and tenth-century heresiographers [Wikipedia: Kharijites]. During the Second Fitna (680-692) the movement split into four "mother sects":

- **Azariqa** (Nafi ibn al-Azraq): non-Kharijite Muslims were polytheists and apostates who could be killed "along with their women and children" (the doctrine of *isti'rad*). Intermarriage was forbidden, *taqiyya* was rejected, and emigration to their camp was obligatory. They were destroyed in Kirman in 698-699.

- **Najdat** (Najda ibn Amir): at one point they controlled most of Arabia. They later dropped the duty of war, and some denied that the imamate was obligatory, a stance Patricia Crone called "an early form of anarchism".
- **Sufriyya**: they held non-Kharijites to be unbelievers but avoided fighting them unless necessary. Modern historians suspect the heresiographers partly invented the category.
- **Ibadiyya**: they called opponents only *kuffar bil-ni'ma* ("ungrateful for God's blessings") or hypocrites, not polytheists, and permitted living among and marrying them [Wikipedia: Kharijites, "Beliefs and practices"].

The Umayyad governors Ziyad ibn Abihi and his son Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad "are said to have killed 13,000 Kharijites", which pushed survivors toward concealment and quietism [Wikipedia: Kharijites].

The Ibadis: the surviving moderate branch

Ibadism grew from that quietist current in Basra. Abd Allah ibn Ibad stayed in the city when Ibn al-Azraq left for Ahvaz, arguing that the Basrans were guilty only of "ingratitude" (*kufr ni'ma*), "a lesser offense that allowed true Muslims to live among them". The scholar Jabir ibn Zayd, recognised by Ibadis as their first imam, built the school under *kitman* (concealment). Its imam was elected rather than dynastic [Wikipedia: Ibadism]. The movement is dated to c. AD 692 in Basra and today numbers about 3 million. Oman holds the largest community, with outposts in the Mzab (Algeria), Djerba (Tunisia), the Nafusa mountains and Zuwarah (Libya) and Zanzibar. Contemporary Ibadis "may object to being classified as Kharijites" [Wikipedia: Ibadism]. Sourdel describes the Ibadis as a "moderate Kharijite sect" that spread chiefly among the Berbers of the Maghreb. There, "adherence to Kharijism was a form of opposition to the central power" and drove revolts against the Abbasid and then the Fatimid caliphates [Sourdel, #12462, entry "IBADIṬI"]. The encyclopaedia notes that "much of the earlier writings from within the Islamic world presented Ibadism as a heresy", and that Western study began in the mid-nineteenth century with French and Italian translations of Ibadi texts [Wikipedia: Ibadi studies].

Takfir as a political weapon: the forward link

The Kharijite habit of excommunicating a ruler held to be sinful did not die with the sects. The encyclopaedia observes that the term Kharijites "is often used by modern mainstream Muslims to describe Islamist extremist groups that have been compared to the Kharijites for their radical ideology and militancy", while "some modern Arab historians have stressed the egalitarian and proto-democratic tendencies of the Kharijites" [Wikipedia: Kharijites]. Rabasa and his RAND co-authors describe the modern form of the argument without using the Kharijite label. They trace al-Qaeda's division of the world into belief and "apostasy" to Sayyid Qutb, who "provided the theoretical underpinnings for 'violent Muslim resistance to regimes that claim to be Muslim, but whose implementation of Islamic precepts is judged to be imperfect' ". Toppling " 'apostate' regimes, particularly Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan" is listed among the movement's chief aims [Rabasa et al., Beyond al-Qaeda, #368002, pp. xvii, 11]. Chapter 8.11 takes up this line of descent.

Key points

- The four *rashidun* (632-661) were chosen by consultation, not by descent. A minority believed Ali had inherited the Prophet's charisma [Armstrong, #53062].
- Armstrong regards the early conquests as pragmatic campaigns for plunder and unity, not religious war [Armstrong, #53062].
- Uthman's murder (656) began the First Fitnah. Muawiyah claimed a chieftain's duty of vengeance, backed by the Meccan clans and Syria [Armstrong, #53062].
- The arbitration after Siffin (657), held according to Sourdel at Adhruh, led to Ali's deposition and Muawiyah's proclamation in Jerusalem [Armstrong, #68695; Sourdel, #12462].
- The Kharijites seceded under the motto "judgment belongs to God alone". Ali crushed them at Nahrawan (658), and a Kharijite, Ibn Muljam, killed him in 661 [Wikipedia: Kharijites].
- Three answers to the leadership question emerged: the most pious (Kharijites), the Prophet's descendant (Shiis), or the ruler in power for unity's sake (the majority) [Armstrong, #68695].
- The Azariqa, Najdat, Sufriyya and Ibadiyya differed chiefly on how far *takfir* (declaring Muslims unbelievers) licensed violence. The Ibadis, c. 3

million today and centred in Oman, are the surviving moderate branch [Wikipedia: Kharijites; Wikipedia: Ibadism].

- Modern Muslim critics apply the Kharijite comparison to jihadist movements whose excommunication of "apostate" regimes Rabasa et al. trace to Qutb [Wikipedia: Kharijites; Rabasa et al., #368002].

Chapter 74.

Karbala and the Imamate: the Birth of Shi'ism

The *Shiat Ali*, the "party of Ali", began as a political faction in the civil wars described in the previous chapter. It became a religious tradition with its own sacred history, its own theory of authority and its own expectation of the end of time. The turning point was the death of Husayn, the Prophet's grandson, on the plain of Karbala in 680. This chapter sets out the event and its meaning, then the doctrine of the imam's special knowledge passed down Ali's line, the split between quietist and revolutionary currents, the succession of imams to the occultation of the twelfth, and the uses of messianic expectation in modern Iranian politics. It closes with a contested question the library's sources raise repeatedly: whether Shi'ism carried Iranian, Zoroastrian or Mithraic content beneath its Arabic surface. The question is answered in different ways by the Zoroastrian specialist Mary Boyce, the ethnographer Navid Fozi, the journalist Amir Taheri and Mehran Keshe.

Karbala, 10 Muharram 61 AH

When Muawiyah arranged for his son Yazid to succeed him, Armstrong writes, "there was an immediate outcry. In Kufah, loyal Alids called for the rule of Ali's second son, Husain". Husayn set out from Medina "with a small band of followers, together with their wives and children", but the Kufans, "intimidated by the local Umayyad governor", withdrew their support. "On the plain of Kerbala, just outside Kufah, he and his followers were surrounded by the Umayyad troops and massacred. Husain was the last to die, holding his infant son in his arms" [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Umayyads and the Second Fitnah"].

The encyclopaedia dates the battle to 10 October 680 (10 Muharram 61 AH). It names the Umayyad commanders as Ubayd Allah ibn Ziyad, Umar ibn Sa'd and

Shimr ibn Dhi al-Jawshan. It puts Husayn's force at 70-145 against 4,000-5,000, and his escort at about 70 men when a 1,000-strong Umayyad force intercepted it and forced it to camp at Karbala on 2 October. Ibn Ziyad refused him safe passage unless he submitted, and after the battle the surviving family members were taken prisoner. "The battle was the start of the Second Fitna", during which the Tawwabin and then Mukhtar al-Thaqafi tried to avenge Husayn [Wikipedia: Battle of Karbala]. Among the dead were Husayn's half-brother and standard-bearer **Abbas ibn Ali**, killed "while attempting to obtain water from the Euphrates river for Husayn's thirsty children and companions" [Wikipedia: Abbas ibn Ali], and Hasan's son **al-Qasim**, born in 667 and killed at Karbala "aged 13" [Wikipedia: Al-Qasim ibn Hasan ibn Ali]. Sourdel's glossary gives the same date and adds that "the caliph Yazid is said to have deplored this death, which he had not ordered and which brought him the contempt of the Shiites", who have commemorated it ever since "by mourning ceremonies celebrated on 10 Muharram" [Sourdel & Sourdel-Thomine, Civilizatia Islamului clasic III, #12462, entry "AL-HUSAYN", translated from Romanian].

For Armstrong, Karbala became the Shii paradigm: "Like the murder of Ali, the Kerbala tragedy became a symbol for Shii Muslims of the chronic injustice that seems to pervade human life; it also seemed to show the impossibility of integrating the religious imperative in the harsh world of politics, which seemed murderously antagonistic to it" [Armstrong, #53062]. The encyclopaedia adds that the battle "galvanized the development of the pro-Alid party (Shi'at Ali) into a distinct religious sect with its own rituals and collective memory". On Ashura, it says, Shias "mourn, hold public processions … beat their chests and in some cases self-flagellate", while Sunnis "likewise regard the incident as a historical tragedy" [Wikipedia: Battle of Karbala]. The nineteenth-century historian Thomas Keightley called the account of Husayn's death "one of the most pathetic and best related incidents of Oriental history" [Keightley, Secret Societies of the Middle Ages, #64544, ch. II].

The doctrine of the imamate: ilm and nass

After Karbala, Husayn's descendants "lived secluded and devout lives in Medina". Armstrong traces the formation of the doctrine to the fifth imam, Muhammad al-Baqir (d. 735), who developed an esoteric (*batin*) reading of the Quran. His brother Zayd ibn Ali was a political activist killed in a revolt in 740. "To counter Zayd's claim to be the imam of his time, al-Baqir argued that the unique ilm of the Prophet was passed down the line of Ali's immediate descendants. Each one of

the imams chose his successor and passed on the esoteric lore … Only the imam who had received this special designation (*nass*) from his predecessor was the legitimate leader of the Muslims." Most Shiis at first preferred Zayd's revolution to al-Baqir's "mystical quietism". After the Abbasids suppressed Shii dissent, however, they listened to the sixth imam, Jafar al-Sadiq (d. 765). He held that the designated imam "would not press his claim to the caliphate" but would be a spiritual teacher, and he told his followers to practise *taqiyyah* (dissimulation) for their safety [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 56-57, 66].

Taheri, writing from inside the Iranian tradition, stresses doctrine over politics. Shiites "have added two principles of their own to the three principles of Islam": *Adl*, "the belief that divine justice must be meted out in this world", and *Imamah*, government by an imam "who must be ma'asum or chaste in the sense of being totally incapable of committing any sin". In his view the idea of *'ismah* (sinlessness) "lies at the heart of the doctrinal schism" [Taheri, Holy Terror, #64433, notes to ch. 3].

Keightley's four sects and the near-caliphate of the Twelvers

Keightley's nineteenth-century classification, drawn from von Hammer, Mirkhond and Malcolm, divides the Shiites into four sects, "the point of agreement being the assertion of the right of Ali and his descendants to the imamat … the point of difference being the nature of the proof on which his rights are founded, and the order of succession" [Keightley, #64544, ch. II]:

Sect (Keightley)	Line of the imamate	Notable features
Keissanee (Kaysaniyya)	Through Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, not Hasan or Husayn	One branch held he never died; the "Hashemite" branch passed the imamate to the Abbasids. Abu Muslim was "a real or pretended maintainer" of it
Zeidites (Zaydis)	Through Zayn al-Abidin to Zayd	Accepted the first three caliphs as legitimate. Idris, founder of Fez, was a real or claimed descendant

Sect (Keightley)	Line of the imamate	Notable features
Ghoollat (*ghulat*, "Ultras")	One divine imam	Ascribed divinity to Ali, who is said to have burnt some of them
Imamee	Visible imams ending in a hidden one	Seveners/Ismailis stop at Ismail; Twelvers continue to al-Askari, "vanished in a cavern at Hilla" until he returns as the Mahdi

Keightley adds that "the Twelvers were very near obtaining possession of the khalifat". Caliph al-Ma'mun named "Ali Riza, the eighth imam, to be his successor", even laying aside the Abbasid black for the green of Ali. The Abbasid family, "which now numbered 30,000 persons", rose and proclaimed his uncle Ibrahim, "and the opportune death of Ali Riza (by poison, as was said) relieved the son of Haroon Er-Rasheed from embarrassment. Ali Riza was interred at Meshed" [Keightley, #64544, ch. II]. Sourdel states more flatly that al-Rida, "chosen as heir by the Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun", "died poisoned at Tus in 818", and that the city of Mashhad grew up beside his tomb [Sourdel, #12462, entry "ALI AL-RIDA"]. Armstrong is more cautious: "A few months later, al-Rida conveniently died, possibly by foul play" [Armstrong, #53062, p. 63].

Occultation and the expected Mahdi

Sourdel's entry on the *imam* notes that "the line of visible imams stopped at a determined date: at the twelfth for some, at the seventh for others" [Sourdel, #12462, entry "IMAM"]. Boyce dates the disappearance of the twelfth imam to 878. He is "the 'hidden', or 'expected' imam, who will, like the Saoshyant, appear at the end of time, restore the faith, and fill the earth with justice" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, "Under the Caliphs"]. Armstrong records an earlier form of the belief: the *ghulat*, often converts who "brought some of their old beliefs into Islam with them", held that slain leaders were "in temporary 'occultation' " and would return to bring about "a utopian realm of justice and peace in the Last Days" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 52-53].

Kim Ghattas explains the political force of the doctrine: "Traditionally in Shiism, the perfect Islamic state can come into existence only with the return of the Mahdi, or Hidden Imam, a messiah-like redeemer and the twelfth imam after

Ali". She describes the crowds of 1979 greeting Khomeini "as though Khomeini were the Mahdi, the Hidden Imam returned from occultation", his years of exile having been his own "occultation" [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495, Part I]. Jerome Corsi, writing a hawkish case for Israeli action against Iran, points to Ayatollah Mohammad Taqi Mesbah Yazdi, "known as 'the Crocodile' ", as Ahmadinejad's spiritual adviser. He says Yazdi heads an institute in Qom, "site of the Jamkaran well, from which Shiite believers expect the Twelfth Imam will reappear" [Corsi, Why Israel Can't Wait, #87960, "Ayatollah Yazdi and the Mahdi"].

Najaf, Karbala and the clergy

Taheri describes Najaf in 1938 as "dominated by the golden dome of the mausoleum of Ali, the fourth Caliph and the first Imam of Shi'ism". He writes that the city "was said to earn its livelihood in two ways: exporting mullahs and importing corpses", since its two dozen colleges supplied clergy "throughout the Shiite realms in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon and faraway British India". Pilgrims who prayed at the shrines of Ali and Husayn "would have all their sins forgiven by Allah" [Taheri, #64433, ch. 3 "The Sayyed Who Saw the Light"]. Ghattas calls Najaf "the oldest and most prestigious hawza", where Khomeini in exile "trained hundreds of clerics" [Ghattas, #72495, Part I].

Was Shi'ism an Iranian vessel? Reported theories and the evidence

Taheri's reported theory. In an endnote on Hasan-i Sabbah, the founder of the Ismaili Assassins, Taheri writes that Hasan's view of the Seljuk Turks as aliens "is cited by some historians as an argument for the widespread belief that Hassan was a Persian nationalist and a secret Zoroastrian. This theory even claims that the entire Shi'ite movement was started by Persian nationalists who wished to de-Islamicize Iran while keeping an appearance of Qur'anic belief. Many of Iran's prehistoric religious beliefs continue to live on not only in mainstream Shi'ism but in the theories and practices of other much smaller sects such as the Alawites … the Druzes … the Ali-Allahis … and the Yazidis". He reports that the Yazidi leader Emir Muawwyyah, in a 1982 Paris book, *To Us Spoke Zarathustra*, said his people had been "Zoroastrians 'in secret' " since the advent of Islam

[Taheri, #64433, notes to ch. 3]. Taheri presents this as what "some historians" claim, not as his own finding.

Boyce's historical account. Boyce gives a more specific mechanism. She calls the princess Shahrbanu, said to have married Husayn and borne the fourth imam, a "wholly fictitious figure, whose name appears to derive from a cult-epithet of Ardvisur Anahid". Through this legend, she writes, "many Iranian converts espoused the Shi'ite cause", which let them oppose Umayyad "narrow Arab nationalism" and "uphold the claims of the heirs … of the Sasanian royal house; and so it was no longer the Zoroastrians alone who stood for patriotism". Under the Abbasids, Islam in Iran "grew steadily more Zoroastrianized", the imams were credited with "an especial divine grace, like the royal Khvarenah", and the hidden imam took the place of the Saoshyant [Boyce, #55117, "Under the Caliphs"].

Fozi's ethnography. Fozi records that Zoroastrians in Tehran told him "Shi'a have preserved Zoroastrian culture". In the words of their high priest (mobed), Shias still honour light, visit ancestral graves on Thursday nights, use the rosary and pray five times a day: "Iranians did not become Arabs". Some informants claimed that Zoroastrians protected sacred sites by renaming them *imam-zadehs*, and one Shia told him that "many treatises attributed to Shi'i Imams belong to Zoroastrians, like Nahjol-Balaqeh". Fozi also quotes Jonathan Berkey on "the circulation of Iranian religious ideas in Arabia" before Islam [Fozi, Reclaiming the Faravahar, #54976, ch. 5]. Yet the same community's memory runs the other way. Zoroastrian historical consciousness "articulated both cultural and genealogical links between the Shi'a and the Arabs … blaming, the contemporary Shi'a", so that Zoroastrian social imaginaries "embodied a line of religiously-informed resistance towards the ruling Shi'a" [Fozi, #54976, ch. 2]. He notes that *gabr*, "the Persian form of the Arabic Kafar or infidel", became the standard derogatory name for Zoroastrians, and *gabrak* added a "humiliating suffix" [Fozi, #54976, ch. 1].

Keshe's teaching. Mehran Keshe goes furthest. Answering a question in KSW 437 (16 June 2022), he says: "Zoroastrianism is the original religion it came through Mithraism … Jews learned from Zoroastrians and Mithraism and created the Jewish religion", and "Islam is a copy of the same". He claims that Muhammad never let the Arabs cross into Iran, that after his death they invaded "for the wealth of Iran", and that by marrying the Iranian queen to their son Ali's family mixed "the Iranian nation … with a religious … and Arab nation". "That's why Iranians are shear fanatic with Shia, because it's coming to the blood, through monarchy." He then joins the two cases: "Catholicism is the Roman mixture with the Christianity religion, to suit. The same as now I explained to

you about the Iran and Shia … Everything in Catholic religion you read … it's Mithraism" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 437, #378149, section "Find the true history"]. In KSW 425 (24 March 2022) he addresses "His Eminence Ayatollah Khamenei of Iran and … Vatican and … Jerusalem: The year of Mahdi is upon you". He frames the "Promised One" in terms of Mitra, whom he calls "not a prophet" but "the love of the Creator" [Keshe, 425th KSW, #378603; KSW 437, #378149]. In KSW 633 (12 March 2026) he says the black flags of the Mahdi ("Methi") have been raised in Iran and that Khamenei "established the army for coming of Methi". He predicts that the clergy will be "the biggest deniers … because then they have no position": with the Mahdi present, "Najaf, Karbala and Mecca don't exist … Jerusalem has no value". In the same session he asserts that "Ayatollahs" are of Lebanese and Iraqi origin while "Mullahs" are Iranian [Keshe, KSW 633, #378345].

Claim about Shi'ism's Iranian content	Source	Basis offered
Founded by Persian nationalists to de-Islamicise Iran	"Some historians", reported by Taheri, #64433	Hasan-i Sabbah's hostility to Turks; survival of secret sects
Shahrbanu legend and Saoshyant-like Mahdi let converts keep patriotism	Boyce, #55117	Textual history, Anahid epithet
Shias "have preserved Zoroastrian culture"	Zoroastrian informants, in Fozi, #54976	Ritual parallels
Zoroastrian memory blames the Shia, links them to the Arabs	Fozi, #54976	Ethnography
Shia, like Catholicism, absorbed Mithraism under rulers	Keshe, #378149	Personal teaching

Key points

- Husayn ibn Ali was killed at Karbala on 10 Muharram 61 / 10 October 680 with Abbas ibn Ali, the 13-year-old al-Qasim and most of his companions, by forces under Ibn Ziyad and Umar ibn Sa'd. This opened the Second Fitna [Wikipedia: Battle of Karbala; Sourdel, #12462].

- Armstrong reads Karbala as the Shii symbol of chronic injustice and of religion's conflict with power [Armstrong, #53062].
- Al-Baqir's doctrine of *ilm* passed by *nass* down Ali's line, and al-Sadiq's quietism and *taqiyyah*, separated the imams from Zaydi revolution [Armstrong, #53062].
- Keightley classes the Shia in four sects, agreed on Ali's line but divided on proof and succession. He reports Ali al-Rida's near-succession under al-Ma'mun and his rumoured poisoning, which Sourdel states as fact (Tus, 818) [Keightley, #64544; Sourdel, #12462].
- The occultation of the twelfth imam (878, per Boyce) made the Mahdi the condition of a perfect state, a theme Ghattas and Corsi trace into the politics of the Islamic Republic [Boyce, #55117; Ghattas, #72495; Corsi, #87960].
- Iranian or Zoroastrian content in Shi'ism is argued in four registers: a reported nationalist theory (Taheri), a historical mechanism (Boyce), informants' claims set against a memory of grievance (Fozi), and a Mithraic reading (Keshe).

Chapter 75.

Caliphal Empire: Umayyads, Abbasids and the Persian Inheritance

Between 661 and 1258 the caliphate went from a tribal chieftaincy in Damascus to a Sasanian-style monarchy in Baghdad, and then to a symbolic office over a mosaic of Turkish, Iranian and Arab military states. The library's sources agree that this political history cannot be separated from religious history. They describe each theological school as taking a position for or against the ruler. They also describe the conquered Iranians, and above all their Zoroastrian priesthood, scribes and court tradition, as passing a theory of sacred kingship into the empire that had defeated them. This chapter follows the Umayyad consolidation, the Abbasid revolution of 750 and the high caliphal age, the reign of al-Ma'mun, and the break-up after about 935, together with the slow conversion and decline of the Zoroastrians.

The Umayyad state (661-750)

Armstrong describes Muawiyah (661-680) as restoring unity by reviving Umar's segregation of Arab Muslims from subject peoples. He "discouraged conversion" and relied at first on non-Muslim officials from the Byzantine and Persian services, so that "Islam thus remained the religion of the conquering Arab elite". She rejects the image of "secular" Umayyads but sees a structural conflict "between the needs of the agrarian state and Islam" [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Umayyads and the Second Fitnah"]. After the Second Fitnah, "Abd al-Malik (685-705) was able to reassert Umayyad rule": "Arabic replaced Persian as the official language of the empire; for the first time there was an Islamic coinage ... In Jerusalem, the Dome of the Rock was completed in 691, the first major Islamic monument, which proudly asserted the supremacy of Islam in this

holy city which had a large Christian majority" [Armstrong, #53062; Armstrong, Islam, #68695, "Key Figures"]. Sourdel's glossary agrees on the date and notes that its "inscriptions inspired by Quranic verses underline the superiority of Islam over Christianity" [Sourdel & Sourdel-Thomine, Civilizatia Islamului clasic III, #12462, entry "CUPOLA STÎNCII"]. It calls Abd al-Malik "the true founder of the Marwanid branch", who with al-Hajjaj "arabised the administration" [Sourdel, #12462, entry "'ABD AL-MALIK IBN MARWAN"].

The transition can be seen on the coins themselves. The illustrated volume of Sourdel shows a unique transitional dirham. On it "the fire altar, whose image generally appears on the reverse of the Sasanian-type dirhams struck during the seventh century in Islamic Iran, is replaced ... by the engraved image of a *mihrab*, in the centre of which rises the lance, attribute of caliphal sovereignty", inscribed "Commander of the Faithful" [Sourdel & Sourdel-Thomine, Civilizația Islamului clasic I (ilustrații), #12460, coin plates]. The Sasanian legacy also ran through the chancery: Abd al-Hamid, secretary to the last Umayyad Marwan II, is credited with founding Arabic epistolary prose, and his treatises show "an evident influence of the tradition of the Sasanian secretaries" [Sourdel, #12462, entry "'ABD AL-HAMID"].

Under the last Umayyads (705-750) the dynastic principle was accepted "without demur", and al-Walid I reached Spain. Armstrong calls Poitiers (732) "no Waterloo". Umar II (717-720) was "the first caliph to encourage the dhimmis to convert", which cost poll-tax revenue, while Hisham (724-743) restored finances by becoming "more like a conventional absolute monarch", a form of autocracy "abhorrent to the devout" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Last Years of the Umayyads (705-750)"]. Boyce calls the Umayyad epoch "one of Arab imperialism", with "little serious pressure ... to adopt Islam" except under Umar II. She records one governor of Iraq whose commissioner extorted "forty million dirhams" from fire temples that bought their survival [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, "Under the Caliphs"].

The Abbasid revolution and the high caliphal age (750-935)

Armstrong writes that the Abbasids "capitalized on the widespread desire to see a member of Muhammad's family on the throne". They began recruiting in the Iranian provinces in 743, took Kufah in 749 and defeated the last Umayyad in 750 [Armstrong, #53062]. Sourdel identifies their organiser Abu Muslim as

probably a former slave "of Iranian origin" who led the clandestine movement in Khurasan. Al-Mansur "rid himself of him" by luring him to court, and his execution "triggered in Iran a revolt linked to a very heterodox movement of ideas" [Sourdel, #12462, entry "ABU MUSLIM"]. Hoyland documents these revolts. The Abbasids had "recruited Zoroastrian villagers in their armies ... only to disband them". The leader Sunbadh "took control of Rayy and returned to Zoroastrianism ... and he wrote to the king of Daylam that the rule of the Arabs was at an end". Other leaders foretold that Abu Muslim himself "would reappear to 'fill the world with justice' ". Hoyland concludes that, although medieval writers blamed Mazdakism or extreme Shi'ism, "it is clear that their basis was Zoroastrianism, here revealing its syncretic potential" [Hoyland, Seeing Islam as Others Saw It, #55061, ch. 1, pp. 29-30].

Once in power, Armstrong writes, the Abbasids "shed this religious camouflage". Al-Saffah "massacred all the Umayyads he could lay his hands upon", al-Mansur "murdered all the Shii leaders whom he considered a danger", and al-Mahdi took the Shii messianic title itself. Baghdad was built near Ctesiphon, and "the new caliphate was modelled on the old pre-Islamic autocracy". Under Harun al-Rashid (786-809) courtiers kissed the ground before the "Shadow of God on earth", the executioner stood behind the throne and the army became "a corps of Persians". Harun's reign was the peak: "the empire enjoyed an unprecedented peace", and a translation movement made "more scientific discoveries during this time than in the whole of previously recorded history". But "by the end of the reign of Harun al-Rashid, it was clear that the caliphate had passed its peak" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Abbasids: The High Caliphal Period (750-935)"]. Boyce gives the Zoroastrian side of the same events. The Abbasids "revived the traditions of the Sasanian court", gave Persians many posts and "imitated Sasanian authoritarianism in religious matters", so that "as antagonism between Arab and non-Arab disappeared, so that between Muslim and non-Muslim grew sharper" [Boyce, #55117].

Theology as politics: from the ahl al-hadith to al-Ma'mun

According to Armstrong, the *ahl al-hadith* taught that "commanding the right and forbidding the wrong" was for the very few and that "the rank and file must obey the caliph". This "was attractive to Harun al-Rashid", and leading Mutazilites were even imprisoned. At the same time the Shariah "constituted a

protest" against courtly culture: Malik and al-Shafii "had taken part in Shii uprisings against the early Abbasids" [Armstrong, #53062]. After the civil war of 809-813 between Harun's sons, which Armstrong calls a "clash of personal ambition", al-Ma'mun (813-833) faced "a civil war, with a Shii rebellion in Kufah and Basrah (814-15) and a Kharajite revolt in Khurasan". He brought back the Mutazilite rationalists, who launched the *mihnah* (inquisition) against the Hadith People, making Ahmad ibn Hanbal "a folk hero". He named the eighth imam, Ali al-Rida, his heir, and "a few months later, al-Rida conveniently died, possibly by foul play" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 62-63]. Boyce adds that al-Ma'mun, nicknamed "Commander of the Unfaithful", held debates at court in which the Zoroastrian high priest Adurfarnbag Farrokhzadan "ably defended the Zoroastrian faith", yet he still ordered raids on unconverted peoples beyond Khurasan [Boyce, #55117].

Ruler	Religious policy	Political purpose (per Armstrong)
Muawiyah I	Segregation; conversion discouraged	Unity after the fitnah; tax base
Abd al-Malik	Arabic administration, Islamic coinage, Dome of the Rock	Centralisation; assertion against Christianity
Umar II	Encouraged conversion	Piety, at the cost of revenue
Harun al-Rashid	Favoured the *ahl al-hadith*	Anti-revolutionary obedience
Al-Ma'mun	Mutazilism, *mihnah*, Ali al-Rida as heir	Woo elites and Shiis; curb a populist law
Al-Mutasim	Turkish slave army, move to Samarra	Personal power, at the cost of popular alienation

"Religion and sovereignty are twins": the Iranian theory of rule

Shaul Shaked's collected articles trace the passage of Sasanian political ideas into Islam. They include an article on " 'Religion and sovereignty are twins' in Ibn al-Muqaffa's theory of government" and a note on "the four sages" [Shaked, From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam, #60406, article VI, "From Iran to Islam: notes on

some themes in transmission"]. The maxim's Sasanian form survives in the Arabic *Testament of Ardashir*, which Shaked quotes: "kingship and religion are twin brothers, no one of which can be maintained without the other. For religion is the foundation of kingship, and kingship is the guardian of religion. Kingship cannot subsist without its foundation, and religion cannot subsist without its guardian" [Shaked, #60406, "Esoteric Trends in Zoroastrianism", Appendix D, "Secret religion and heresy in the Sasanian theory of government"]. Fozi reports Jonathan Berkey's view that "Zoroastrian doctrine affirmed the union of Kingship and religion, and so enjoined universal obedience to the sacralized monarch", and that this "is important for its foreshadowing of later developments in Islam" [Fozi, Reclaiming the Faravahar, #54976, ch. 5].

The main channel was Ibn al-Muqaffa. Boyce calls him Rozbeh son of Dadoy, "an unenthusiastic convert to Islam" in the Basra tax office. His Arabic version of the Sasanian chronicle *Khwaday Namag* became a basis for Muslim world histories, and it allowed noble Iranian converts to claim descent from Iran's heroes "without making their attachment to the new faith suspect" [Boyce, #55117]. Sourdel's glossary describes him as author of ethical treatises "inspired by Iranian traditions" and of a memorandum to the caliph, and as translator of *Kalila wa-Dimna*. It reports that he "was considered a crypto-Manichaean and is said to have written a refutation of the Quran", and that he was executed around 757 on al-Mansur's orders [Sourdel, #12462, entry "IBN AL-MUKAFFA"'].

The Shu'ubiyya: the Persian counter-claim

Sourdel describes the *mawali* (non-Arab converts attached as clients to Arab tribes) as mostly of Iranian origin. In the ninth century many joined "a movement at once literary and politico-social that aimed to combat the pre-eminence of the Arabs and of Arab culture". Citing Quran 49:13 on God's making mankind into "peoples" (*shu'ub*), they demanded equality with the Arab tribes. Sourdel adds that the movement "also had a religious incidence: its partisans meant to reduce the culture of the Arabo-Islamic world to Iranian culture and ethics; this amounted to reducing the influence of Islam". The entry cites H. A. R. Gibb, "The Social Significance of the Shu'ubiya" (1963) [Sourdel, #12462, entry "CLIENŢI", translated from Romanian]. The encyclopaedia distinguishes *taswiya* (equality) from *tafdil* (claims of Persian superiority). It names opponents such as al-Jahiz and the Persian-descended Ibn Qutayba, and quotes al-Biruni's rejoinder: "Our religion and the empire are Arab" [Wikipedia: Shu'ubiyya]. Sourdel describes

Ibn Qutayba as a defender of Arab culture who was nonetheless "open to Iranian influences" [Sourdel, #12462, entry "IBN KUTAYBA"]. Hoyland's evidence locates part of the same Iranian assertion in the countryside rather than at court, in the Zoroastrian-based millenarian revolts [Hoyland, #55061].

Conversion and survival of the Zoroastrians

Boyce describes the conquest as fought "in the spirit of Surah 9.29", aimed "not ... so much to convert the unbeliever as to subject him". Zoroastrians were treated as *dhimmis* "despite doubts that persisted down the centuries". She quotes the civil-service guide prescribing that the payer of *jizya* "be made to feel that he is an inferior person". Inducements to convert included freedom for slaves and escape from the poll tax. Qutaiba converted Bukhara four times and paid two dirhams for attendance at Friday prayer. On the other side, apostasy was punishable by death: a ninth-century question asks about a man who "cannot tie the kusti again for fear of his life". Some converts were drawn by Islam's simplicity and by doctrines that "derived ultimately from Zoroastrianism": "Heaven and Hell, the end of the world and the Day of Judgment ... the five times of daily prayer". Others held back from a faith that demanded submission to "an inscrutable, all-powerful God". By the ninth century Zoroastrians were "a substantial minority". Al-Balkhi wrote of Fars that "there is no country where the Zoroastrians are more numerous", and a prince of Tabaristan finally "break[s] his Zoroastrian girdle" in 854. The high priest Manushchihr's *Dadestan i dinig* shows a community growing poorer and short of priests [Boyce, #55117, "Under the Caliphs"].

Sundermann follows the same Iranian material into non-Zoroastrian forms. The Avestan king Kauui Usan becomes the Shahnameh's Kay Kaus, "an arrogant, foolish and incompetent ruler of Iran", with "his abortive ascension to heaven on a throne drawn by four strong eagles". Sundermann traces the punishment of his hubris to the lost Avestan *Sudgar nask*, in which the *frawahr* of the future king Xusrau saves him [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067, p. 162]. Sundermann also argues for an Iranian origin of the Jewish demon Asmodaios, from the Avestan Aēšma [Sundermann, #55067, p. 158], and Fozi quotes Berkey's evidence for Persian loanwords such as *firdaws*, "paradise", in the Quran [Fozi, #54976, ch. 5].

The New Order (935-1258) and the end of the caliphate

Armstrong writes that "by the tenth century it was clear that Islamdom could no longer function effectively as a single political unit". The Fatimids ruled from Cairo, Turkish amirs held the east, and the "Shii century" passed into the Seljuk seizure of Baghdad in 1055. The vizier Nizam al-Mulk then built madrasahs, which made the *ulama* the empire's "glue" [Armstrong, #53062, ch. 3 "A New Order (935-1258)"; maps "The Disintegration of the Abbasid Empire", "The Seljuk Empire"]. Sourdel's entry on the Abbasids records how the caliphs ceded "the essentials of their prerogatives" to the Buyid amirs from the mid-tenth century and then to the Seljuk sultans, until "the conquest of Baghdad by the Mongols ... its devastation and the killing of the last reigning caliph" in 1258 [Sourdel, #12462, entry "ABBASIZI"]. Armstrong describes the city's fall: "Baghdad fell after a single battle, and took the moribund caliphate with it: corpses filled the streets" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Mongols"; map "The Mongol World"]. In her judgement the decline of the caliphate was experienced as "a liberation", since a system of rival courts "approximated more truly the egalitarian spirit of the Quran" [Armstrong, #53062]. The illustrated volumes of Sourdel document the urban, courtly and artistic world of these centuries [Sourdel, #12460, #12461].

Key points

- Abd al-Malik (685-705) arabised the administration, struck Islamic coins and completed the Dome of the Rock in 691 [Armstrong, #53062; Sourdel, #12462].
- The Abbasid revolution (750) was organised from Khurasan by Abu Muslim with Iranian support. His execution set off Zoroastrian-based millenarian revolts such as Sunbadh's [Sourdel, #12462; Hoyland, #55061].
- Under Harun al-Rashid the caliphate reached its height as a Sasanian-style absolute monarchy and then began to decline [Armstrong, #53062].
- Al-Ma'mun's reign opened with Shii and Kharijite revolts. His turn to Mutazilism and the *mihnah* shows theology serving the ruler [Armstrong, #53062].
- The Sasanian maxim that kingship and religion are "twin brothers" passed into Islamic political thought through Ibn al-Muqaffa and the *Testament of Ardashir* [Shaked, #60406; Boyce, #55117].

- The Shu'ubiyya asserted Iranian equality or superiority against Arab privilege. Sourdel says it also sought to reduce Islam's influence [Sourdel, #12462; Wikipedia: Shu'ubiyya].
- Zoroastrians converted under fiscal, legal and social pressure and remained a large minority into the ninth century. Islam in Iran meanwhile became "steadily more Zoroastrianized" [Boyce, #55117].
- After 935 the caliphate became symbolic under Buyids and Seljuks and ended with the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258 [Armstrong, #53062; Sourdel, #12462].

Chapter 76.

Law and Theology: the Madhhabs, Mutazila, Ash'ari, Hanbali and the Philosophers

Between the Abbasid revolution of 750 and the tenth century, Sunni Islam acquired the intellectual architecture it still has today: four recognised schools of law, a dominant theological method (Ash'arism), a philosophical tradition (falsafa) that was pushed out of the official colleges in much of the Arab world but survived and grew in Persia, and a strict traditionalist current, the Hanbali, which produced Ibn Taymiyya and, through him, the Wahhabi movement of the eighteenth century. The library's sources stress that none of this was purely academic. Karen Armstrong writes that "the philosophy, law and spirituality of Islam were profoundly political" [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Esoteric Movements"]. The main turning point was a state inquisition, the mihna, through which a caliph tried to impose a theological doctrine and was defeated by popular scholars. This chapter follows that history through Armstrong's narrative history, Seyyed Hossein Nasr's traditionalist history of Islamic philosophy, Kim Ghattas's account of modern Saudi Arabia, the Romanian Wikipedia's survey of the law schools, and the Sourdels' glossary of classical Islamic civilisation.

The Abbasid demand for a unified law

Armstrong argues that the Abbasids, having "shed" the Shi'i camouflage that had brought them to power, tried to give their absolutist regime "Islamic legitimacy" by sponsoring fiqh (jurisprudence). Under the Umayyads "each town had developed its own fiqh, but the Abbasids pressed the jurists to evolve a more unified system of law." The result, she says, was a split inside the empire: ordinary people lived under the Shari'a, while the court "adhered to the more autocratic

norms of the pre-Islamic period" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Abbasids"]. She describes the Shari'a as a counter-culture: it "restricted the power of the caliph" and "tacitly condemned" court culture "as un-Islamic." Both Malik ibn Anas and al-Shafi'i, she notes, "had taken part in Shii uprisings against the early Abbasids" and had been imprisoned before caliphs took them up as patrons [Armstrong, #53062].

The first great compiler was Malik ibn Anas (d. 795) of Medina. His *al-Muwatta* ("The Beaten Path"), in Armstrong's words, recorded "the customal law and religious practice of Medina, which, Malik believed, still preserved the original sunnah of the Prophet's community" [Armstrong, #53062]. Muhammad Idris al-Shafi'i (d. 820), "born in poverty in Gaza," rejected reliance on any single city and grounded jurisprudence in reports (hadith) about the Prophet. Each hadith, however, "had to be reliably supported by a chain (isnad) of devout Muslims leading directly back to the Prophet himself," and "if any one of its 'links' could be shown to be a bad Muslim, the hadith must be rejected." Armstrong summarises his legal theory thus:

> "There were, al-Shafii taught, four 'roots' of sacred law (usul al-fiqh): the Quran, the sunnah of the Prophet, qiyas (analogy) and ijmah, the 'consensus' of the community. God would not allow the entire ummah to be in error..." [Armstrong, #53062]

She adds a historian's caveat that the method "was not capable of ensuring the strict historicity of the Prophet's sunnah, according to modern standards of accuracy," but that it "provided a blueprint" for a way of life. Al-Shafi'i's criteria led on to the canonical hadith collections of al-Bukhari (d. 870) and Muslim (d. 878) [Armstrong, #53062].

The four Sunni schools

By the mid-tenth century, Armstrong writes, "there were four recognized law schools, each regarded with Muslim egalitarianism as equally valid: the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii and Hanbali schools, the latter preserving the ideals of Ibn Hanbal and the Hadith People. In practice, these four madhhabs did not differ markedly from one another" [Armstrong, #53062]. The Romanian Wikipedia article gives a more detailed profile of each school. It also notes that ijtihad was officially "closed" among Sunnis from the eleventh or twelfth century, and that the Shi'a have their own Ja'fari, Zaydi and Ismaili legal traditions [Wikipedia RO: Școli juridice în islam]. The Sourdels' glossary sets out the basic division: on one

side the partisans of personal judgement (*ahl al-ra'y*), represented chiefly by the Hanafis; on the other the partisans of Tradition (*ahl al-hadith*), represented chiefly by the Hanbalis and the Shafi'is [Sourdel & Sourdel-Thomine, Civilizația Islamului clasic, vol. III, #12462, glossary].

School	Founder (death)	Method as described in the sources	Main regions
Hanafi	Abu Hanifa (767), Kufa	Most room for personal opinion (ra'y) and ijtihad; adopted by Seljuks and Ottomans, "almost half" of world Islam	Turkey, former Ottoman lands, Central Asia, northern India
Maliki	Malik ibn Anas (795), Medina	Practice of Medina as living sunna; *al-Muwatta*	Medina, Egypt, North and West Africa, al-Andalus
Shafi'i	al-Shafi'i (820)	Founder of usul al-fiqh; mediates between hadith-only and ra'y; analogy strictly limited	Lower Egypt, Hijaz, East Africa, Indian Ocean; al-Ghazali was Shafi'i
Hanbali	Ahmad ibn Hanbal (855)	Literal attachment to Quran and hadith; minimises opinion, consensus and analogy; most hostile to Sufism	Syria, Mesopotamia; revived by Ibn Taymiyya; Saudi Arabia

Sources for the table: [Armstrong, #53062]; [Wikipedia RO: Școli juridice în islam].

The Romanian article describes the Hanbali school bluntly as the "extreme right of orthodox intransigence." It records that the conservative scholar al-Tabari was buried at night "for fear of the Hanbalis" because he had not praised Ibn Hanbal enough, and it quotes a Hanbali maxim: "The Sunna is the garment above and the garment below" [Wikipedia RO: Școli juridice în islam].

The co-existence of the schools could be seen in Mecca itself. Kim Ghattas writes that "for centuries, scholars from the four different schools of Islam had taught

in the Holy Mosque," and that "the faithful prayed, at slightly different times, behind their imams; there was a prayer station for each school: Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanafi, and Hanbali." After King Abdelaziz took Mecca in 1924, the Wahhabi clerics asked: "If the community of Muslims was one, and the call to prayer was one, why not pray behind one imam?" They won the argument, and from then on a single imam "from Wahhabi circles" led all five prayers. Study circles (halaqas) fell "from several hundred to around thirty-five in the late 1970s" [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495, Part I, ch. 3].

The Mutazila, the Hadith People and the mihna

Armstrong places the theological conflict inside a dispute about piety. A popular devotion that grew under Harun al-Rashid treated the Quran "as God's uncreated Word, which had existed with him from all eternity." She compares this to "the Christian devotion to Jesus." The Mutazilites were rationalists committed to "the unity and utter simplicity of God," and the devotion "appalled" them because it "seemed to make the Quran a second divine being." Its adherents were the *ahl al-hadith*, the Hadith People. Armstrong calls them "conservatives" who "venerated all the rashidun, and even Muawiyyah," and who taught that "the rank and file must obey the caliph, whatever his religious credentials" [Armstrong, #53062, "Ibn Hanbal and the Hadith People"]. At first this suited Harun al-Rashid. The Mutazilites fell from favour, and "on occasion, at their request, the government even imprisoned leading Mutazilites."

Al-Ma'mun (813-33) reversed this policy. Armstrong writes: "An intellectual himself, he felt naturally drawn to the rationalism of the Mutazilites." He also saw that the populist claim that divine law "was directly accessible to every single Muslim, was not compatible with absolute monarchy." The Mutazilites then "turned upon the ahl al-hadith," and "an 'inquisition' (mihnah) ensued, in which leading Hadith People, notably the popular Ahmad ibn Hanbal, were imprisoned. Ibn Hanbal became a folk hero. Championing the Mutazilites had done al-Mamun no good; it had simply alienated the masses" [Armstrong, #53062].

In the same years al-Ma'mun named the Eighth Shi'i Imam, Ali al-Rida, as his heir. Armstrong says al-Rida "conveniently died" a few months later, "possibly by foul play" [Armstrong, #53062]. The Sourdels' glossary is more definite: Ali al-Rida, chosen as heir by al-Ma'mun, then "died poisoned at Tus in 818" [Sourdel & Sourdel-Thomine, #12462, entry "'Ali al-Rida"]. The philosopher al-Kindi (d. 870) also enjoyed al-Ma'mun's patronage and, in Armstrong's account,

"worked closely with the Mutazilites in their attempt to rid theology (kalam) of anthropomorphism" [Armstrong, #53062]. The Sourdels name the essayist al-Jahiz (d. 869) as a defender of "the Mu'tazili doctrine" [Sourdel & Sourdel-Thomine, #12462].

Al-Ash'ari's settlement

The settlement came from Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 935). Armstrong reconstructs the argument as follows:

> "The Mutazilites had been so fearful of anthropomorphic notions of God that they denied that the divine had any 'human' attributes at all. How could we say that God 'spoke' or 'sat on a throne,' as the Quran averred? … The ahl al-hadith retorted that this wariness drained the experience of God of all content, and reduced the divine to a philosophical abstraction with no religious significance. Al-Ashari agreed, but appeased the Mutazilites by saying that God's attributes were not like human qualities. The Quran was God's uncreated speech, but the human words which expressed it and the ink and paper of the book itself were created." [Armstrong, #53062]

Armstrong also attributes to al-Ash'ari a radical occasionalism: "There were, in al-Ashari's view, no natural laws. The world was ordered at every moment by a direct intervention of God. There was no free will … fire burned not because it was its nature to do so, but because God willed it." She concludes that "Asharism became the predominant philosophy of Sunni Islam," which was "obviously not a rationalist creed, but more of a mystical and contemplative discipline" [Armstrong, #53062]. Nasr's notes point to the specialist literature on "Ash'arite atomism and occasionalism" (Pines, Fakhry). They also observe that this atomism "was not new in Islam," since certain Mutazilites had already developed it [Nasr, Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present, #83281, ch. 8 notes].

Politics also shaped the institutions. Nasr records that the teaching of falsafa "came to be banned with the rise of Ash'arite power among the Abbasids and Seljuqs, to the extent that in his will and testament for the trust (waqf) of the Nizamiyyah school system, Khwajah Nizam al-Mulk ordered specifically that the teaching of falsafah be banned." The ban lasted "in most of the Sunni part of the Arab world afterward except for logic" [Nasr, #83281, ch. 2].

The philosophers and Nasr's 'land of prophecy'

Armstrong counts falsafa among the Abbasid-era "esoteric movements." These were elite paths, alongside Shi'i esotericism and Sufism, whose ideas "were kept secret from the masses" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Esoteric Movements"]. In her account, the Faylasufs believed "rationalism was the highest form of religion." Al-Kindi treated revelation as "parables of abstract philosophical truths" for the masses, "a 'poor man's Falsafah'." Al-Farabi (d. 950) made religion "a branch of political science," yet "was a practising Sufi." Ibn Sina (980-1037) "took religion far more seriously," making the prophet "the ideal philosopher." Ibn Rushd (1126-98), whom Renan hailed as a free-thinker, was "in fact ... a devout Muslim and a qadi" [Armstrong, #53062].

Nasr rejects the Western narrative in which Islamic philosophy ends with Ibn Rushd. He divides the relation between falsafa and kalam into five periods: (1) Mutazilite dominance and early falsafa up to the ninth century; (2) "intense opposition and often enmity" after the rise of Ash'arism; (3) from al-Juwayni and al-Ghazali to Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, when kalam itself "became even more 'philosophical' "; (4) a "more peaceful relationship" from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century; and (5) Mulla Sadra's "transcendent theosophy" (*al-hikmat al-muta'aliyah*), which in the Shi'i world "began to eclipse kalam" [Nasr, #83281, ch. 3 "Al-Hikmat al-Ilahiyyah and Kalam"]. He argues that Ash'arism "is too often taken in the West as representing Islamic theology as such," and that the Quran and Sunna on one side, and Sufi gnosis on the other, "were there to show some of the innate shortcomings of the whole Ash'arite approach" [Nasr, #83281, ch. 3]. He quotes Mulla Sadra's attack on the theologians: "some of the mutakallimun who have no logic or reason ... have made opposition to the Sufis their slogan." From the *Kasr asnam al-jahiliyyah* he quotes Sadra's claim that certainty "is not through discussions of kalam and disputations" but "through the acquiring of inner and intuitive knowledge" [Nasr, #83281, ch. 3].

Nasr also reports the long argument between Sufis and philosophers. Rumi wrote in the *Mathnawi* that "The leg of the syllogisers is a wooden one." Mir Damad replied: "Thou hast not distinguished between intellect and fantasy." He thus maintains that falsafa, joined to illumination (Suhrawardi) and gnosis (Ibn Arabi), "remains to this day in Persia and certain adjacent lands as a living intellectual tradition" [Nasr, #83281, ch. 2]. Armstrong's *A History of God* treats the same figures in its chapters "The God of the Philosophers" and "The God of the Mystics" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999, chs. 6-7].

Medicine belonged to the same culture. Nasr notes that the word *hakim* "denotes at once a physician, scientist, and philosopher," and that al-Razi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and al-Biruni were all philosopher-scientists [Nasr, #83281, ch. 2]. John Andrew Morrow names "the Sixth and the Eighth Imams" as the most distinguished herbalists of the Prophet's household. Ja'far al-Sadiq, he writes, "pioneered the principles, rules, and science of medicine, teaching over 4,000 students." Ali al-Rida is "the attributed author" of *The Golden Treatise on Medicine*, though Morrow cites Speziale's view that this attribution is "weak" and that the text was probably compiled by Muhammad ibn Jumhur. Morrow adds that Shi'i herbalists "operated in a more supportive sphere than many Sunni herbalists, who were hampered by the authorities' attempts to impose control and 'orthodoxy'." He records the opposing view as well: Ibn Khaldun said Prophetic medicine was "definitely not part of divine revelation," and Bürgel called it "quackery piously disguised." Morrow himself rejects both claims [Morrow, Encyclopedia of Islamic Herbal Medicine, #42235, Introduction, "Early Islamic Herbalists"].

Esoteric readings: Guénon and Vâlsan

The Traditionalist school places all of this inside a scheme of outer and inner. René Guénon takes the image of "the bark and the kernel" (*el-qishr wa el-lobb*), the title of a treatise by Ibn Arabi, for exoterism (shari'a) and esoterism (haqiqa). The tariqa, the "way," is the radius that leads from the circumference to the centre [Guénon, Aperçus sur l'ésotérisme islamique et le taoïsme, #68713, chs. I-II]. Guénon insists that Sufism "is not at all something 'superadded' to the Islamic doctrine" but "an essential part" of it, without which the doctrine would be "incomplete from above." He calls theories of a Greek, Persian or Indian origin "gratuitous," and declares that Sufism "is Arab like the Quran itself." He also argues that the scholars of the shari'a, *'ulama ez-zahir*, are competent only in the exoteric domain, and that by the numerical value of its letters the word *sufi* equals *El-Hekmah el-ilahiyah*, "Divine Wisdom." He rejects "mysticism" as a Christian, passive category foreign to Islam, against initiation, which he sees as active and transmitted through a *silsila* [Guénon, #68713, ch. I]. Michel Vâlsan's *L'Islam et la fonction de René Guénon* is the Guénonian school's statement of Guénon's role in relation to Islam. The library's copy is a page-image scan with no extractable text, so it can be cited here only as a work of record [Vâlsan, L'Islam et la fonction de René Guénon, #64067].

The Hanbali line to Ibn Taymiyya and Wahhabism

Armstrong describes Ahmad ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) of Damascus, from "an old family of ulama who belonged to the Hanbali madhhab," as the archetypal *mujaddid* (renewer). He declared that the converted Mongols "were in fact infidels and apostates, because they had promulgated the Yasa instead of the Shariah." He attacked "Shiism, Sufism and Falsafah" as inauthentic. At the same time he demanded ijtihad in place of textbook fiqh: "reactionary," Armstrong says, "but it was also revolutionary." He died in prison, and "his funeral became a massive demonstration of popular acclaim" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Mongols"]. She places Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92) "in the tradition of Ibn Taymiyyah" [Armstrong, #53062].

Ghattas draws the same lineage more sharply. Ibn Abdelwahhab "had been inspired by the dogmatic teachings of a literalist, medieval theologian, Ahmad ibn Taymiyya, who belonged to the Hanbali school of jurisprudence, the strictest of the four Islamic schools." Ibn Taymiyya, she writes, "would be quoted mostly for his edicts allowing war against a Muslim ruler in certain cases" and "would inspire generations of activist and jihadist Salafists who ignored the nuances of his teachings." Ibn Abdelwahhab "went further still by declaring war against anyone who didn't follow his teachings," and "was so extreme that his own father and brother denounced him." The scholars of al-Zaytuna in Tunis refuted him "one by one." His pact with Muhammad ibn Saud at Dir'iya joined preaching and raiding [Ghattas, #72495, Part I, ch. 3]. Chapter 8.10 and Part 9 follow that alliance into the modern state.

Key points

- Armstrong presents the Shari'a as a scholarly counter-culture to Abbasid absolutism. Al-Shafi'i's four roots (Quran, sunna, analogy, consensus) and his isnad requirement gave Sunni law its method [Armstrong, #53062].
- By the tenth century four schools (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali) were mutually recognised. Ghattas records their four prayer stations in the Holy Mosque until the Wahhabi single-imam rule after 1924 [Armstrong, #53062; Ghattas, #72495].
- The mihna was a state-imposed theology. Al-Ma'mun backed the Mutazilite created-Quran doctrine and imprisoned the Hadith People, and Ibn Hanbal became a "folk hero" [Armstrong, #53062].

- Al-Ash'ari's compromise (an uncreated divine speech in created words and ink, attributes "not like human qualities," occasionalism) became the Sunni mainstream [Armstrong, #53062].
- Nasr argues that Islamic philosophy did not end with Ibn Rushd but grew into Mulla Sadra's *hikmat muta'aliyah*. He criticises the "shortcomings of the whole Ash'arite approach" and records Nizam al-Mulk's ban on falsafa in the Nizamiyya colleges [Nasr, #83281].
- Philosophy, medicine and the Imams' teaching belonged to one scholarly culture. Morrow credits Ja'far al-Sadiq and Ali al-Rida as herbalists and records the scholarly disputes over Prophetic medicine [Morrow, #42235].
- Guénon reads tasawwuf as the "kernel" inside the shari'a's "bark," Arab in origin and initiatory rather than "mystical" [Guénon, #68713].
- The Hanbali line runs through Ibn Taymiyya, whom Armstrong calls a reformer and Ghattas a "literalist," to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the Saudi state [Armstrong, #53062; Ghattas, #72495; Wikipedia RO: Școli juridice în islam].

Chapter 77.

Esoteric Shi'ism: Ismailis, Fatimids, Nizari 'Assassins', Druze and Alawites

Twelver Shi'ism withdrew from politics to wait for a Hidden Imam. The "Sevener" line did the opposite. It produced a secret missionary network, a counter-caliphate in Cairo, a mountain state in Iran whose ruler abolished the religious law, a new religion that took the sixth Fatimid caliph for a manifestation of God, and an older "extremist" (ghulat) sect, the Nusayris or Alawites, which a thousand years later supplied the ruling family of modern Syria. Each of these groups combined the same ingredients in different proportions: an esoteric reading of scripture (batin), graded initiation, cyclical sacred history, and the readiness of a minority to use secrecy or violence to survive among hostile majorities. Their enemies wrote much of the record, so the library's sources disagree sharply about what is legend and what is history. This chapter sets the medieval polemic (as transmitted by Hammer and Keightley) beside the revisionist account of Anthony Campbell and the modern political uses traced by Amir Taheri and Edward Luttwak.

The Seveners: doctrine and da'wa

Karen Armstrong defines the movement by its succession dispute. The Seveners or Ismailis "held that Ali's line had ended with Ismail, the son of Jafar as-Sadiq, who had been designated imam but had died before his father. They did not, therefore, recognize the legitimacy of Jafar's second son, Musa al-Kazim, whom Twelvers revered as the Seventh Imam." Unlike the quietist Twelvers, "they tried to devise a wholly different political system and were often activists." Members "were initiated gradually into the sect by the local dai (agent)." The lower grades resembled Sunnism, but higher grades used "mathematics and science as a means

of awakening a sense of transcendent wonder." Their history was cyclical: six great prophets (Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, Muhammad), each with an "executor" (Aaron for Moses, Ali for Muhammad), would be followed by "the seventh prophet, the Mahdi." Ismailis spoke of God as "He Whom the boldness of thought cannot contain" and held that "no one revelation or theological system could ever be definitive," which Armstrong says was "alarming to the more conservative of the ulama" [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Esoteric Movements"].

Anthony Campbell begins with the paradox of the movement: "What started as a secret or semi-secret organization acquired a capital city and an empire, and yet in spite of its great temporal success it preserved its inner mystery" [Campbell, The Assassins of Alamut, #69687, "Who were the Ismailis?"]. He describes the missionary's method. The missionary would speak "of religion as a hidden science" and ask questions such as "Why are there seven cervical and twelve dorsal vertebrae?" in order to suggest that "the universe is a magnified man." He then administered an oath of allegiance, secrecy and financial contribution. Campbell finds the ritual "oddly reminiscent of modern Masonic initiation." Against the Sunni charge that initiates were led "step by step to the ultimate abandonment of all religious belief," he argues that the Ismaili texts show "a serious attempt to raise human consciousness to a higher plane" [Campbell, #69687].

Thomas Keightley, writing in 1837 from Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall's history, gives the hostile version: a nine-degree course of initiation that ended with the teaching that "Prophets and teachers, heaven and hell, all were nothing ... all actions were permitted" [Keightley, Secret Societies of the Middle Ages, #64544, account of the degrees of initiation, after Hammer]. Keightley himself warns that his main source, the Mongol vizier Juvaini, who burned the Alamut library after reading it, "was at liberty to invent what atrocities he pleased" [Keightley, #64544, ch. V].

The Fatimid counter-caliphate and the Nizari split

Armstrong dates the Ismaili seizure of Tunisia, under a leader styling himself al-Mahdi, to 909. In her account, "In 983 the Ismailis wrested Egypt from the Abbasids, and set up their own rival caliphate in Cairo, which lasted nearly two hundred years." (The reference shelf dates the Fatimid conquest of Egypt to 969 [Wikipedia: Fatimid Caliphate]; 983 is the date as printed in Armstrong.) At its

height the Fatimid state "ruled North Africa, Syria, much of Arabia, and Palestine." Under the Fatimids, she adds, "Cairo became a vital city of art and learning," and "the caliphs founded the college of al-Azhar" [Armstrong, #53062, "A New Order"]. Campbell notes that the Fatimids' claim of descent from Fatima "has been questioned," but that Bernard Lewis "thinks it was probably genuine," with support "from secret Ismaili works and from the Druze scriptures" [Campbell, #69687]. *Hidden Religion* notes that the Nizari Ismailis are "still active in parts of Syria, Pakistan, India, Iran," and that "some in the Nizari Ismaili sect still claim to be descendants of Nizar, one of the Fatimid Caliphs believed to be a descendent of Ali and Ismail" [Issitt & Main, Hidden Religion, #66220, "Ismaili Assassins"].

The decisive split came in 1094. Campbell explains that the caliph al-Mustansir "had designated his eldest son Nizar," a designation that "could not be revoked" by Ismaili rules. The military strongman al-Afdal instead enthroned Nizar's brother al-Musta'li, and Nizar was "defeated, imprisoned, and eventually executed." Cairo accepted al-Musta'li, but the Iranian Ismailis under Hasan-i Sabbah "remained loyal to Nizar." Campbell reads the break as partly doctrinal (the same question of an irrevocable designation had created the sect) and partly about "politics and national pride," since al-Afdal's troops "were largely Turkish" [Campbell, #69687, "The split with Cairo"].

Hasan-i Sabbah and Alamut

Campbell gives the life of Hasan-i Sabbah in detail. He was born at Qom "and was brought up as a Twelver," converted after "a near-fatal illness," and was sent to Cairo. "In 1080 he returned to Iran, surviving a shipwreck on the Syrian coast," and worked as a propagandist. In 1090 he took the castle of Alamut by infiltration, paying the castellan with a draft for 3,000 dinars on the governor of Damghan, which the governor later "kissed … reverently and paid." Campbell notes that the year 483 AH yields, in the abjad letter-number system, the name *Aluh Amut* [Campbell, #69687, "Hasan at Alamut"]. Under Hasan "the Muslim ritual law (sharia) was enforced at Alamut with full rigour." He had both his sons executed, one for drinking wine. Von Hammer took this as proof of depravity; Campbell calls it "impartiality" [Campbell, #69687].

Campbell treats assassination as a weapon of the weak. The first victim was usually said to be the vizier Nizam al-Mulk (1092). The legend that Hasan, Nizam al-Mulk and Omar Khayyam were school friends is "almost certainly apocryphal"

on chronological grounds. Since the Ismailis "were so enormously outnumbered," Campbell writes, "terrorism was a logical enough expedient," but "unlike their modern counterparts they did not kill innocent bystanders; they were highly selective" [Campbell, #69687, "The use of terror"]. Armstrong describes a "full-scale revolt" from 1092, a "campaign of terror" that "turned most Muslims against the Ismailis," and counter-massacres of suspected Ismailis. She also records the state around Alamut "which lasted 150 years and which only the Mongol invaders were able to destroy" [Armstrong, #53062]. Keightley lists Hasan's seven "rules" for missionaries and the ranks of the order: dais, refeeks, fedavees and laziks [Keightley, #64544, ch. V].

The Resurrection at Alamut (1164)

Campbell calls the qiyama "the central event in the story of the Assassins of Alamut." Hasan II, "attracted by Sufism," first relaxed the law. Then, on 17 Ramadan 1164, he assembled the Nizaris before a pulpit that faced away from Mecca, so that the people "had their backs towards Mecca." He announced in Persian:

> "The Imam of our time ... sends you blessings and compassion, for you are his special servants. And therefore he has lifted from you the burden of obeying the ritual law and has brought you the Resurrection (qiyama)." [Campbell, #69687, ch. 3 "The Resurrection at Alamut"]

He then broke the fast with food, "possibly accompanied by the forbidden wine," and music. Campbell observes that since "the ritual law is the civil law," Hasan "had therefore abrogated the religious law and the civil law simultaneously." The new doctrine, he writes, "threw away not just the shell of the egg but the white as well." It made Nizarism "pure esotericism made into a state religious doctrine," with the Imam as "a manifestation of God" [Campbell, #69687].

The sources differ on the details. Campbell says Hasan was murdered "eighteen months after the proclamation" by his brother-in-law Husayn-i Namavar, and that his son Muhammad II claimed a physical descent from Nizar. Keightley says Hasan "had governed the society only four years when he was assassinated by his brother-in-law, Namver." He presents the descent claim as Hasan's own ambition, a man willing "to defame the memory of his mother, and acknowledge himself to be a bastard, provided he could succeed in persuading the people to believe him a descendant of the Prophet." Both report Juvaini's two stories: a secret exchange of babies, or adultery between the hidden imam and the lord

of Alamut's wife. Campbell suspects the second is "a later fabrication by the Nizaris' enemies" [Keightley, #64544, ch. VII; Campbell, #69687].

The legend: paradise, hashish and the name 'Assassin'

The most famous text is Marco Polo's, which Keightley quotes in Marsden's translation. It describes a walled valley garden with "streams of wine, milk, honey, and some of pure water" and "elegant and beautiful damsels." Youths of twelve to twenty were drugged with "draughts of a soporific nature," carried inside, and told on waking that they could return to that paradise "if you show yourselves devoted to the obedience of my orders" [Keightley, #64544, ch. V]. Keightley adds a parallel Arabic romance, the *Sirat al-Hakim*, on the gardens at Masyaf, where the drug is *benj* (henbane). He reports Silvestre de Sacy's derivation of "Assassin" from *hashishin*, users of a hemp preparation. Yet he calls Polo's story "more suited to a place among the wonders of the 'Thousand and One Nights' than to admission into sober history," rejected by "De Sacy and Wilken" but believed by Hammer [Keightley, #64544, ch. V].

Campbell goes further. "It need hardly be said that this is a total fantasy." He writes that "there is no real evidence that the Assassins used hashish at all, at least for this purpose," that *hashishin* "was not used by members of the sect themselves," and that their usual names were "batinis, Ismailis, or Nizaris." "Old Man," he adds, is a literal rendering of the Persian *pir*. A special corps of fidais "is doubtful, at least until a much later date." He contrasts Polo with William of Tyre, who wrote about the sect "in a way that reveals a fair amount of understanding" [Campbell, #69687, ch. 1]. Armstrong likewise counts the hashish story among the "wild and inaccurate stories" the ulama spread [Armstrong, #53062]. *Hidden Religion* concludes that "historians believe that rumors surrounding the Nizari Ismaili's assassinations were greatly exaggerated," while noting that "some have speculated that the Ismaili Assassins still exist" [Issitt & Main, #66220].

Question	Legend (Marco Polo, Hammer)	Keightley (1837)	Campbell (revisionist)
Paradise garden	Real, used to train killers	"Romantic narrative," doubtful	"Total fantasy"
Hashish	Used before missions	De Sacy's etymology accepted	No evidence; enemies' nickname

Question	Legend (Marco Polo, Hammer)	Keightley (1837)	Campbell (revisionist)
Doctrine	Nihilism: "all actions permitted"	Sufism "carried to its worst consequences"	Spiritual discipline; law enforced until 1164
Hasan II's end	—	Killed after four years	Killed after eighteen months

Syria: Sinan, the Crusaders and the Old Man of the Mountain

Keightley narrates an Ismaili attempt to betray Damascus to the Crusaders. The Ismaili vizier secretly agreed with Baldwin II that the Franks would appear on a Friday while the emir was at the mosque, in exchange for Tyre. The plot was discovered, "a general massacre of the Ismailites" followed (6,000 dead, by his note), and the Franks gained only "the castle of Banias, which the Ismaïlite governor put into their hands" [Keightley, #64544, ch. VI]. Campbell's chapter on Syria presents Rashid al-Din Sinan, the original "Old Man of the Mountain" of the Crusader sources. He recounts the 1173 embassy to King Amalric "proposing" conversion to Christianity, which was ruined when Templars murdered the returning envoy; one of Sinan's conditions had been the remission of a tribute the Nizaris paid to the Templars. He also covers Sinan's conflict with Saladin and the 1192 murder of Conrad of Montferrat, for which Richard I "has also been suspected" [Campbell, #69687, ch. 4]. Campbell's epilogue follows the Nizaris to India as the Khojas and calls the Aga Khan "the lineal descendant of the Grand Masters of Alamut" [Campbell, #69687, ch. 6].

Amir Taheri reads the sect as the ancestor of modern Islamist terror. "Many of the fedayeen died in the performance of their sacred duty, but the prospect of death did not seem to discourage the followers of the Old Man of the Mountain." Of the Muslim Brotherhood he writes: "The Supreme Guide of Cairo was to find himself a worthy heir to his namesake, the Old Man of the Mountain, nearly a thousand years before him." He concludes that "radical Islam is bound to end in terrorism, as the experiences of Hassan Sabbah, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Fedayeen of Islam had already proved" [Taheri, Holy Terror, #64433]. Taheri also records "the widespread belief that Hassan was a Persian nationalist and a secret Zoroastrian," and a theory that "the entire Shi'ite movement was started

by Persian nationalists who wished to de-Islamicize Iran" [Taheri, #64433, ch. 3 notes]. He presents these as claims made by "some historians," not as his own conclusion.

The Druze: al-Hakim and the Unitarian call

The Druze faith grew out of the Fatimid da'wa itself. Campbell notes that the Druze are "a later offshoot from the Ismaili tradition" [Campbell, #69687]. The Wikipedia article gives the chronology. Hamza ibn Ali, an Ismaili from Khorasan, reached Cairo in 1014 or 1016 and "in 1017 … began to preach a Muwahhidun (Unitarian) doctrine." The sixth Fatimid caliph, al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, "became a central figure in the faith." The "unitarian call" opened on 30 May 1017. It "removed all attributes … from God" and superseded "ritual, law and dogma," with Thursday gatherings in *khalwat*s in place of mosques. The preacher al-Darazi, from whom the name "Druze" probably derives, taught that "al-Hakim and his ancestors were the incarnation of God." According to the article, al-Hakim had him executed in 1018, and the Druze regard him as a heretic. When al-Hakim disappeared on a night ride, "presumably assassinated, perhaps at the behest of his … sister Sitt al-Mulk," the Druze held that he had entered occultation and would return. The call was suspended in 1018-19 and again in 1021-26 during persecution by al-Zahir [Wikipedia: Druze]. The article characterises the faith as esoteric, with practices "kept secret," a division between initiated *uqqal* and uninitiated *juhhal*, a belief in reincarnation, no conversion, and between 800,000 and a million adherents, chiefly in Syria, Lebanon and Israel [Wikipedia: Druze].

The Alawites (Nusayris): from ghulat sect to ruling minority

According to the Wikipedia article on Alawism, the sect "originated in 9th-century Iraq as a ghulat sect" founded by Ibn Nusayr. He "declared himself the 'Bab (Door) of the Imams', and attributed divinity to Hasan al-Askari," who "denounced" him. Al-Khasibi then organised the community in Aleppo "a missionary who had gained patronage from Emir Sayf al-Dawla (r. 945–967)." The theology is a trinity of *Ma'na* (Meaning, Ali), *Ism* (Name, Muhammad) and *Bab* (Door, Salman the Persian), together with a mass with "consecration of

bread and wine" and reincarnation; the shahada is rendered as "there is no God but Ali." After "severe persecution by waves of the Crusaders, Mamluks, and by Ottoman conquerors," an Alawite State was created in coastal Syria after the First World War. The article reports that Ibn Taymiyya called for the sect "to be eradicated," and that Hajj Amin al-Husseini issued a 1932 fatwa recognising Alawites as Muslims on "political, anticolonial" grounds. Hafez al-Assad's 1970 coup established an "Alawite-led establishment" that continued under Bashar al-Assad, "who was eventually overthrown during the Syrian civil war" [Wikipedia: Alawism].

Luttwak's coup chronology shows how sect shaped Syrian politics. President Quwatli "tries (and fails) to destroy the power base of a major Druze clan," one factor behind Husni al-Za'im's 1949 coup, the first military dictatorship in the Arab world. In August 1949 Za'im "is overthrown by a group of officers, many of whom are Druzes." Of the Alawites he writes that "of all the communities of Syria, the Alawites were among the least prestigious," and that the French "had recruited most of their forces of repression" from them. Syria "went through more than a dozen coups before the Assad family dynasty was established by Hafez al-Assad's 1970 coup" [Luttwak, Coup d'État, #66112, ch. 2-3 and appendix]. Taheri records that many mullahs considered the ruling Alawites "Muslims of doubtful sincerity." He describes Brotherhood factions that preached "the destruction of the Alawite 'usurper regime' " and carried out car bombings, and gives estimates of the 1982 Hama dead "between three and thirty thousand" [Taheri, #64433, chs. 8, 12]. For Nusayri ritual (festivals, "The Nusayri Mass"), the specialist study is Matti Moosa's *Extremist Shiites: The Ghulat Sects* (Syracuse, 1988). It is listed in a bibliographic file in the library as "probably the best English-language study," but the library does not hold it as a separate work [Petrosyan, Haldi and Mithra/Mher, #38285; the library file is a compilation that also contains an Armenian-studies bibliography].

Key points

- Ismailis recognise Isma'il, not Musa al-Kazim, as heir to Ja'far al-Sadiq. They developed graded initiation, batin exegesis and a cyclical prophetology ending in the Mahdi [Armstrong, #53062; Campbell, #69687].
- The Fatimids turned a secret da'wa into a Mediterranean empire with Cairo and al-Azhar. The disputed succession of 1094 split Musta'lis from Nizaris [Armstrong, #53062; Campbell, #69687; Issitt & Main, #66220].

- Hasan-i Sabbah (back in Iran from Cairo in 1080, at Alamut from 1090) built a castle state and a policy of selective assassination while enforcing the shari'a strictly [Campbell, #69687; Keightley, #64544].
- The qiyama of 1164 abolished the law in the name of the Imam. Campbell and Keightley disagree on the duration of Hasan II's rule and on the meaning of his claim to descend from Nizar [Campbell, #69687; Keightley, #64544].
- The paradise-and-hashish story comes from Marco Polo and hostile sources. Keightley calls it romance; Campbell calls it "total fantasy"; Hidden Religion says historians think the rumours "greatly exaggerated" [Keightley, #64544; Campbell, #69687; Issitt & Main, #66220].
- Taheri treats the "Old Man of the Mountain" as the forerunner of the Muslim Brotherhood's "Supreme Guide" and of modern fedayeen [Taheri, #64433].
- The Druze began in 1017 under al-Hakim, whom they await from occultation. The Alawites, organised by al-Khasibi under Sayf al-Dawla, went from persecuted ghulat to the core of the Assad state [Wikipedia: Druze; Wikipedia: Alawism; Luttwak, #66112].

Chapter 78.

The Mystical Path: Sufism, the Orders and Their Western Afterlife

Sufism (tasawwuf) appears in the library's sources in two forms at once. It is an interior discipline aimed at the annihilation of the ego in God, and it is a social institution of lodges, masters and orders that held Islamic society together after the caliphate weakened. It was also a constant object of suspicion. Jurists objected to its music, dance and antinomian sayings, and its critics accused it of drugs and pederasty. In the modern period it became one of the main channels through which Western occultists, Traditionalists and nationalists claimed access to "Oriental" initiation. This chapter follows that arc from the early ascetics to Rumi, the Bektashis and the Hurufis, and then to Sebottendorff, Guénon's circle and Evola.

Origins: asceticism, intoxication and sobriety

Karen Armstrong traces Sufism to the asceticism (zuhd) of the Umayyad period, "a reaction against the growing worldliness and luxury of Muslim society," and to the coarse wool (suf) worn by the poor. She also sees it as "a reaction against the growth of jurisprudence," an attempt to reproduce Muhammad's "interior islam." She contrasts the "drunken" Sufis with the sober ones. Abu Yazid al-Bistami heard God say "I am through Thee; there is no god but Thou." Al-Hallaj cried "Ana al-Haqq!" ("I am the Truth!") and "was executed by the ulama for claiming that it was possible to make a valid hajj in spirit." Junayd of Baghdad (d. 910) treated intoxication as a phase to be transcended [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Esoteric Movements"].

Mark Ferrara places Sufism within the Islamic expansion. He calls it a syncretic tradition that "brought together contributions from pre-Islamic asceticism, Zoroastrianism, Mithra worship, monastic Christianity, and Neoplatonism." He notes that al-Bistami's grandfather "converted to Islam from Zoroastrianism" and that al-Bistami "created metaphors of being 'drunk' in God." Ferrara also cites an Arabic proverb: "If you want to find God, look in a hookah" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, "Islamic Expansion and the Rise of Sufi Mysticism"]. Franklin Lewis likewise describes Sufism as "a confluence of ascetic exercises (zohd), sharing much in common with Christian monasticism in Syria," and of mystical speculation "fed probably by Zoroastrian, Manichaean, Buddhist and Hindu theosophical teachings" [Lewis, Rumi: Past and Present, East and West, #76418, "Rumi as Sufi"]. René Guénon rejects this genealogy outright. For him, theories of a Greek, Persian or Indian origin are "gratuitous," and Sufism "is Arab like the Quran itself" [Guénon, Aperçus sur l'ésotérisme islamique, #68713, ch. I].

Contested practices: music, dance, cannabis and boys

Ferrara sets out the practices and the accusations made against them:

> "Intensive prayer sessions, dancing to religious orchestrations, reciting mystical poetry, and consuming profuse amounts of cannabis operated synergistically to clarify perception and induce mystical experiences. As one might imagine, wild displays of seemingly irreverent behavior gave rise to rumors of debauchery among some Sufi sects (including charges of pederasty and accusations of hashish-induced malaise)." [Ferrara, #66945, "Sufi Practices and Al-Ghazali's Defense"]

These charges, he writes, led "some 'sober' Sufis, along with more orthodox Muslims, to denounce Sufi religious practices and exaggerate the vices of its adherents." Ferrara cites al-Ghazali's *Alchemy of Happiness* as the classic defence of music: "The heart of man has been so constituted by the Almighty that, like a flint, it contains a hidden fire which is evoked by music and harmony, and renders man beside himself with ecstasy." Ferrara takes al-Ghazali to argue that the Quranic command to love God "cannot simply imply obedience to religious law" [Ferrara, #66945]. Armstrong describes al-Ghazali (d. 1111) as the man who gave mysticism "a ringing endorsement." After his breakdown in 1095 he concluded that "only ritual and prayer could give human beings a direct knowledge of God," and he urged the ulama to practise Sufi contemplation alongside the

Shari'a. After him, she writes, dhikr "became a group activity," the tariqas became "international," and every town had its khanqah [Armstrong, #53062, "A New Order"].

Ferrara goes further and argues that cannabis was itself a vehicle of mystical states:

> "For Sufis ascribing to the 'intoxication' school, hashish is a holy sacrament that stimulates mild feelings of euphoria and lends acquiescence and carefreeness." [Ferrara, #66945, "Peak Experiences and Cannabis in Sufi Tradition"]

He links the plant to the colour green, to al-Khidr the "Green Man," and to the Qalandar founder Qutb al-Din Haydar, who "apocryphally" discovered its spiritual uses. He notes that orthodox opponents called Sufis *hashishiyya*. He quotes a thirteenth-century poem by al-Is'irdi in which hashish, unlike wine, can be "drunk openly in a Sufi monastery or a mosque" and "recalls the secrets of Beauty." He also claims that "there was hardly an Arabic poet between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries who did not refer to cannabis" [Ferrara, #66945, "Cannabis's Enduring Appeal in Islamic Literature"]. These are Ferrara's interpretations; the Rumi biographies quoted below (Gooch, Lewis) do not say that Rumi used cannabis.

The accusation about boys has a documented basis in at least one milieu. Brad Gooch describes the Baghdad master Awhad al-Din Kermani as "very much in the school of Ahmad al-Ghazali, who glimpsed flashes of divinity in the faces of beautiful boys." Kermani "was notorious for tearing open the cloaks of beardless young men during sama dancing and pressing his chest against theirs." Shams of Tabriz mocked this practice of seeking divinity in a reflection: "Unless you have a boil in your neck, why not look at the sky?" [Gooch, Rumi's Secret, #70020, ch. 7]. The Bektashi editor of Sebottendorff's volume likewise notes Qalandari influence: "antinomian practices, the consumption of intoxicants," and *shahed bazi*, "witness play," which "involves in part the contemplation of the beauty of the human body" [Sebottendorff, Secret Practices of the Sufi Freemasons, #82052, editor's ch. 2 "The Bektashi Sect of Sufism"].

Ibn Arabi, Shams and Rumi

Armstrong presents Ibn Arabi (d. 1240) as the theosopher of the creative imagination. In her account, he taught that "every single human being was a unique

and unrepeatable revelation of one of God's hidden attributes" and that the mystic is "at home in a synagogue, mosque, temple or church" [Armstrong, #53062]. Jeffrey Raff, reading Ibn Arabi through Jung, writes that "God has an infinite number of names, all of which are living entities that can personify themselves as imaginal figures." He quotes Ibn Arabi: the "form is related to the spiritual being just as a light that shines from a lamp into the corners of a room is related to the lamp." Raff names Jabir ibn Hayyan (d. c. 800) as "the most famous of the Arab alchemists," one who "attempted to unite both the spiritual and practical sides of alchemy" [Raff, Jung and the Alchemical Imagination, #69596, ch. 1 and ch. 5].

Rumi's lineage, as Lewis reconstructs it, runs through his father Baha al-Din Valad, a preacher from Balkh, and then through Borhan al-Din Termezi. After Baha al-Din's death Borhan came to Anatolia to "turn over to him the mission which my Shaykh has entrusted to me." Lewis is cautious about the frequent claim that both men were Kubrawi Sufis. He notes that Najm al-Din Razi, a refugee from the Mongols, reportedly met in Konya "both Rumi and Sadr al-Din of Konya, the step-son of Ibn 'Arabi," but adds: "We do not know if, in fact," this meeting occurred as Jami claims [Lewis, #76418].

Gooch describes the meeting with Shams (born in Tabriz around 1180) as a rupture. The two men spent three months secluded in Salah al-Din's house. Shams commanded "Don't read! Don't read!" and sent the jurist to buy wine in the Jewish quarter. Rumi unveiled his wife before Shams, and when Shams "asked for a beautiful boy to serve him, Rumi presented Sultan Valad, though Shams thoughtfully declined." Shams then "rapidly introduced music, sung poetry, and dance into Rumi's life, through the practice of sama." Gooch records that Shams belonged to the Shafi'i school. In Damascus he "appears to have become a serious student" of "Sheikh Mohammad," thought to be Ibn Arabi, whom he praised as "a mountain, a true mountain!" but faulted because "he did not follow" the Prophet. Rumi's love poems to Muhammad won the comparison: "For such tender logic, Rumi became a 'pearl' to Shams, and Ibn Arabi a mere 'pebble' " [Gooch, #70020, ch. 7].

Armstrong calls Rumi (1207-73) a "drunken Sufi" whose "Mawlanah Order" of Whirling Dervishes "has had great influence in Turkey right up to the present day," and whose *Mathnawi* "is known as the Sufi scripture" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Mongols"]. Lewis notes that the Mevlevi order was "founded in Konya by Rumi's son, Sultan Valad," that its dhikr was "Allah, Allah, Allah," and that the sama' ceremony was something "of which not all Sufis and certainly not all jurisconsults approved." Since music and dancing "were associated with royal

courts, slave girls, wine drinking and debauchery, Islamic law generally did not encourage it, though it did not necessarily forbid it outright" [Lewis, #76418]. Nasr records the same tension at the level of philosophy: Rumi's verse "The leg of the syllogisers is a wooden one" provoked a reply from Mir Damad and a counter-reply from a Shirazi Sufi master [Nasr, Islamic Philosophy from Its Origin to the Present, #83281, ch. 2].

Primary voices: Sam'ani and the three kinds of worship

The library holds a major Persian primary text, Ahmad Sam'ani's twelfth-century commentary on the Divine Names, translated by William Chittick. It is organised name by name, from "Hu: He" and "Allah" through al-Rahman, al-Malik and al-Quddus. Its theme is the precedence of divine love. In one passage God is "tossing the secret hook of *He loves them* into the ocean of *they love Him* [5:54]," which the commentary glosses as meaning that "God's beginningless love … is the seed of our endless love" [Sam'ani, The Repose of the Spirits, #68110]. A contemporary devotional writer, A. Helwa, transmits a saying attributed to Ja'far al-Sadiq that people worship God in three ways: "the worship of the slave, who worships God out of fear of punishment; the worship of the merchant, who worships God seeking a reward; and the worship of the free, who worships God out of love and gratitude, which is the best form of worship" [Helwa, Secrets of Divine Love, #65220, ch. 12].

Bektashis, Hurufis and the road to the Safavids

According to the Wikipedia article, Haji Bektash Veli (c. 1209-1271) was a Khorasani migrant to Anatolia, "revered among Alevis." His teachings centred on Ali, the Twelve Imams and Ja'far al-Sadiq, and his silsila ran through Baba Ilyas, the Babai revolt and the Qalandari Qutb al-Din Haydar. The article calls the Vilayet-name genealogy from Musa al-Kazim "impossible" [Wikipedia: Haji Bektash Veli]. The editor's introduction to Sebottendorff's volume adds that the Bektashis "worship in assembly houses (cemevi), have ceremonies including music and dance, conduct rituals together with women." The order "was the official sect of the Turkish Janissaries" until 1826, and orthodox Muslims distinguished "bad

Bektashis" from good, the bad ones accepting "even Jews among them." Atatürk banned all Sufi orders in 1925 [Sebottendorff, #82052, editor's ch. 2].

The same introduction defines Hurufism. Fazlallah Astarabadi (1340-1394), who wrote under the name Naimi, was, "as was the case with several other Sufi pioneers," a victim of orthodox hostility. Its basic idea is "that God reveals himself in the word, and that the word is made up of sounds or letters with accompanying numerical values. These are made manifest in the human body through certain exercises. One who has gained proficiency in this may be able to act in a god-like manner" [Sebottendorff, #82052, editor's ch. 2]. The Sufi tariqa as a political force culminated in the Safavid order. The Wikipedia article describes it as a Sufi order founded by Zahed Gilani and named after Safi al-Din Ardabili (1252-1334). It was initially Shafi'i Sunni, but by the mid-fifteenth century it had turned into "a ghulat form of Twelver Shi'ism," militant under Shaykh Junayd and Shaykh Haydar. Its propaganda claimed the leader was "the Mahdi himself—or even a divine incarnation." In 1501 Ismail founded the Safavid empire and proclaimed Twelver Shi'ism the state religion [Wikipedia: Safavid order]. Chapter 8.10 takes up that story.

Order / current	Founder (date)	Distinctive practice per the sources	Political fate
Mevlevi	Rumi / Sultan Valad (13th c.)	Sama' with whirling; dhikr "Allah"	Influential in Turkey; banned 1925
Bektashi	Haji Bektash (c. 1209-71)	Cemevi, mixed rituals, Alid devotion	Janissary order until 1826
Hurufi	Fazlallah Astarabadi (d. 1394)	Letters and numbers realised in the body	Persecuted; absorbed by Bektashis
Qalandari	Yusuf al-Andalusi; Qutb al-Din Haydar	Antinomianism, intoxicants, "witness play"	Marginal, suspect
Safavid	Zahed Gilani / Safi al-Din Ardabili (d. 1334)	Messianic, ghulat Shi'ism by 15th c.	Founded Iran's dynasty, 1501

Western afterlife: Sebottendorff, the Traditionalists, Evola

The editor's biography of Rudolf von Sebottendorff (born Adam Alfred Rudolf Glauer, 1875) states that in Turkey he managed an estate near Bursa for the Sufi landowner Hussain Pasha. There he met the Termudi family, Jews from Greece and students "of the Kabbalah and Rosicrucianism," and he "was initiated into a Freemasonic lodge of which the Termudis were members." In 1910 he "founded a mystical lodge in Constantinople, which is a tariqat of the Bektashi Order of Sufis." He later led the Thule Society (1918-19), formed a militia, was "instrumental in the formation of the German Workers' Party," and bought the paper that became the *Völkischer Beobachter*. The Nazis banned his *Bevor Hitler kam* in 1934. He died, probably by suicide in the Bosporus, on 8 May 1945. The editor speculates about whether these exercises were "at the root of other men's power … from Muhammad to Hassan-i-Sabbah to Sebottendorff" [Sebottendorff, #82052, editor's ch. 1]. His 1924 manual, *The Practice of Ancient Turkish Freemasonry: The Key to the Understanding of Alchemy*, sets out letter-formulas (*alam, alar, kaha-ya, taha*) applied through "neck," "chest," "middle" and "stomach" grips. Its stated aim is "the spiritualization of matter, or in other words, the raw uneven stone is transformed into a cubical one," the Masonic rough ashlar recast as Sufi alchemy [Sebottendorff, #82052, "The Practice of Ancient Turkish Freemasonry"; ch. 4 "Alchemy and Sufism"]. Parts 10 and 11 follow his Thule and Masonic connections.

Guénon's Traditionalism, set out in Chapter 8.7, made tasawwuf the "kernel" of Islam and the model of regular initiation [Guénon, #68713]. Mark Sedgwick and Francesco Piraino's collection *Esoteric Transfers and Constructions* examines such crossings historically. Andrea Gondos argues that love functions "in very similar ways as a rhetorical tool for the mediation of theological ideals" in Jewish, Christian and Sufi mystical poetry. Mark Wagner, writing on the Yemeni Rabbi Shalom Shabazi, warns that because Sufi poetry is "an amalgam of other genres of Arabic poetry," the fact that Shabazi uses the same images "does not prove that the Sufi poets (of Yemen or elsewhere) influenced Shabazi" [Sedgwick & Piraino (eds.), #62621, Part I, chs. 2-3].

Julius Evola appears in *Julius Evola: The Sufi of Rome*, a first-person memoir by an Italian disciple who is not named in the library copy. There Cairo acquaintances call him "al-Roumi al-Thani, the second Roman," "to distinguish him from the first Roumi, Jelaluddin." In this portrait Evola "excoriated Kemal Ataturk":

> "Ataturk was a catastrophe for the Turks. What the Christians could never achieve, a Turk did. The enemy inside. He dethroned Allah. By changing the Arabic alphabet, he made it impossible for people to read their own language. Cultural genocide, you might call it. His abolition of the Caliphate was symptomatic..." [Julius Evola: The Sufi of Rome, #65750, "The Pope and the Sultan"]

The narrator also reports Evola's view that the last caliph had become "a shadow's shadow," and his prediction that Atatürk "too will be knocked off his throne," the "return of the repressed." The narrator presents the 1979 seizure of the Great Mosque of Mecca by "400 armed men" as Evola's words coming "almost true" [Julius Evola: The Sufi of Rome, #65750, "Queen of Heaven"]. Kim Ghattas's account of the same siege, and of the Sufi sheikh Muhammad Alawi al-Maliki teaching in the Holy Mosque while Wahhabi rule shrank the study circles, is treated in Chapter 8.7 [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495].

Key points

- The sources trace Sufism to Umayyad asceticism and to reaction against legalism. Ferrara and Lewis stress Zoroastrian, Christian and Neoplatonic inputs, while Guénon insists it is purely Arab and Quranic [Armstrong, #53062; Ferrara, #66945; Lewis, #76418; Guénon, #68713].
- Al-Ghazali's defence of music and inner religion brought Sufism into the mainstream and turned it into international orders [Armstrong, #53062; Ferrara, #66945].
- Ferrara argues that cannabis was a Sufi sacrament and records the charges of pederasty and intoxication. Gooch documents Kermani's sama' with beardless youths and Shams's rejection of it [Ferrara, #66945; Gooch, #70020].
- Shams studied with Ibn Arabi but ranked Rumi a "pearl" and Ibn Arabi a "pebble." The Mevlevi order, founded by Sultan Valad, made the sama' its rite despite juristic disapproval [Gooch, #70020; Lewis, #76418].
- Bektashis (the Janissary order), Hurufis (letters and numbers realised in the body) and Qalandaris formed a heterodox Anatolian milieu out of which the Safavid order rose to power [Wikipedia: Haji Bektash Veli; Sebottendorff, #82052; Wikipedia: Safavid order].
- Sebottendorff, initiated in a Bektashi-linked lodge, presented Turkish Sufi exercises as the "key" to alchemy and Freemasonry before leading the Thule Society [Sebottendorff, #82052].

- In the disciple's memoir, Evola condemned Atatürk's abolition of the caliphate as "cultural genocide," and Sedgwick's collection examines such esoteric transfers critically [Julius Evola: The Sufi of Rome, #65750; Sedgwick & Piraino, #62621].

Chapter 79.

Gunpowder Empires: the Safavid Twelver State, the Ottomans, the Mughals and the End of the Caliphate

Between 1500 and 1700 three Muslim states used firearms and centralised bureaucracies to rule more tightly than any earlier Islamic polity. Karen Armstrong calls the period "Imperial Islam (1500-1700)". She argues that these empires, unlike the Abbasid court, "all had a strongly Islamic orientation, promoted by the rulers themselves. In Safavid Iran, Shiism became the state religion; Falsafah and Sufism were dominant influences on Moghul policy; while the Ottoman Empire was run entirely on Shariah lines" [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "Imperial Islam", pp. 115-116]. In her account the Shii empire caused "a new and decisive rift between Sunnis and Shiis, leading to an intolerance and an aggressive sectarianism that was unprecedented in the Islamic world", comparable to Europe's Catholic-Protestant wars [Armstrong, #53062, p. 116]. This chapter follows the three empires, the frontier between them, the Western intrusion, and the contested abolition of the caliphate in 1924.

The Safavid revolution: Isma'il, the Qizilbash and forced conversion

According to Armstrong, the Safavid Sufi order of Azerbaijan had converted to Twelver Shiism and was raiding the Christians of Georgia and the Caucasus. In 1500 the sixteen-year-old Isma'il became its pir. In 1501 he took Tabriz, subdued Iran within a decade, and "declared that Twelver Shiism would be the official religion of his new empire" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Safavid Empire", p. 117].

His troops were the Qizilbash ("red heads", named for crimson caps of twelve gores honouring the Twelve Imams), "a diverse array of mainly Turkoman Shia militant groups that flourished in Iranian Azerbaijan, Anatolia, the Armenian highlands, and the Caucasus". They "regarded their rulers as divine figures", and "when Tabriz was taken, there was not a single book on Twelverism among the Qizilbash leaders" [Wikipedia: Qizilbash]. Armstrong agrees that Isma'il "probably knew very little about Twelver orthodoxy" and "may even have told his followers that he was the Hidden Imam" [Armstrong, #53062, p. 118].

Most Iranians were then Sunni. Isma'il suppressed the Sufi orders, executed or deported the Sunni ulama, and required officials to curse the first three caliphs [Armstrong, #53062, p. 117]. The reference article adds a royal order to insult Abu Bakr, Umar and Uthman publicly ("Whoever disobeys, he is to be beheaded"). It also records "thousands, maybe even 20,000" Sunnis killed at Tabriz and 4,000 members of the Kazeruni order killed in Fars, and it concludes that the campaign "merged the political and religious spheres in Iran, a combination that is still present today" [Wikipedia: Safavid conversion of Iran to Shia Islam]. Armstrong states the outcome: "By the late seventeenth century most Iranians were solidly Shii, and have remained so to the present day" [Armstrong, #53062, p. 118].

Abbas I, Isfahan and the clerical estate

Shah Abbas I (1588-1629), Armstrong writes, "rid his bureaucracy of those who held ghuluww views, imported Arab Shii ulama from abroad to teach the people a more orthodox form of Twelver Shiism, built madrasahs for them and gave them generous financial support". Under him Isfahan enjoyed a renaissance that drew on "the old pre-Islamic Persian culture" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 118-120]. Her "Key Figures" entry summarises: Abbas "presided over the zenith of the Safavid Empire in Iran, building a magnificent court at Isfahan and importing Shii ulama from abroad to instruct Iranians in Twelver Orthodoxy" [Armstrong, Islam, #68695, "Key Figures"].

The imported clergy became an independent estate, because "according to Twelver orthodoxy, the ulama and not the shahs were the only legitimate representatives of the Hidden Imam". Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d. 1700) persecuted Sufis, suppressed philosophy, and promoted the Muharram mourning rites for Husain. The Usuli doctrine, that believers must follow a living *mujtahid*, and the ulama's later move to Najaf and Kerbala gave the Iranian

clergy "a power unparalleled anywhere else in the Muslim world" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 120-124]. A late-Safavid convert shows the polemical climate. The Portuguese Augustinian friar António de Jesus converted in Isfahan between 1694 and 1697 and became Aliqoli Jadid-ol-Eslam. As court dragoman he was "a major polemicist against Christianity, Sufism, Judaism, Sunnism, philosophers and antinomians", author of *Sayf ol-mo'menin* ("The sword of the faithful in the fight against the associators"), and one of the converts who "helped reaffirm the Majlesi brand of conservatism" [Wikipedia: Aliqoli Jadid-ol-Eslam]. Afghan tribes took Isfahan in 1722 [Armstrong, #53062, p. 123].

The Ottoman Shariah state

Armstrong describes the Ottoman Empire, built on the Janissaries and a ghazi ideal of frontier jihad, as the "most successful and enduring" of the three. "To the west they faced Christendom, and to the east were the Shii Safavids. The Ottomans became as murderously sectarian as the Safavids, and there were massacres of Shiis living in Ottoman domains" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Ottoman Empire", pp. 130-131]. Under Suleiman al-Qanuni ("the Lawgiver", 1520-66), "known as Suleiman the Magnificent in the West", the empire reached its limits. The architect Sinan Pasha (d. 1578) defined mosques "spacious, filled with light, [with] low domes and high minarets" [Armstrong, #53062, p. 132; Armstrong, #68695]. The Shariah became the official law, and qadis, muftis and teachers became a salaried corps. Armstrong judges the result double-edged. Abu al-Suud made the qadis subordinate to the sultan, so "the Shariah was made to endorse the system of absolute monarchy ... which it had been originally designed to oppose", and the Ottoman ulama, unlike Iran's, "would become emasculated" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 133-134].

The frontier as sectarian border

Philip's Atlas of World History maps the period on its plate "Ottoman and Safavid Empires 1500-1683". The plate covers the growth of the Ottoman Empire to 1683 and "the making of the Ottoman-Safavid frontier 1514-1639". Its text calls the Safavid shahs, "most notably Abbas I", "deliberate propagandists of Shiite culture", and describes how, when "Shah Ismail and his Qizilbash forces began to infiltrate eastern Anatolia from Tabriz", the Ottoman artillery won "a dramatic victory over the lightly-armed Persians at Chaldiran in 1514",

which "led to more than 120 years of intermittent Ottoman-Safavid conflict over land occupied by Azeris, Kurds and Mesopotamian Arabs". The standard pattern was "an Ottoman offensive countered by Persian 'scorched earth' and guerrilla tactics" [Philip's Atlas of World History, #5213, "The Ottoman and Safavid Empires 1500-1683"]. The frontier opened at Chaldiran on 23 August 1514. Selim I's artillery defeated Isma'il, who "never again participated in a military campaign". War ran until the Peace of Amasya (1555), and the Treaty of Zuhab (1639) left Mesopotamia permanently Ottoman [Wikipedia: Battle of Chaldiran]. Selim's anti-Safavid campaign, Armstrong adds, became "a victorious war of conquest which brought the whole of Syria and Egypt under Ottoman rule" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 131-132]. The 1639 line still roughly divides Shii Iran from the Sunni lands to its west.

	Safavid Iran	Ottoman Empire	Mughal India
Religious basis	Twelver Shiism imposed by force	Sunni Shariah state	Sufi-philosophical universalism, later Shariah rigorism
Key ruler	Abbas I (1588-1629)	Suleiman al-Qanuni (1520-66)	Akbar (1542-1605)
Clergy	Imported Arab ulama, becoming an independent estate	Salaried state corps	Courted, then sidelined by Akbar
Subject population	Mostly Sunni at the conquest	Christians, Jews, Arabs, Turks, Berbers	Hindu majority
End (Armstrong)	Isfahan falls, 1722	Survives into the 20th century	Effective power until 1739

The Mughal alternative: Akbar, Sirhindi and Aurangzeb

Babur (d. 1530), Armstrong notes, "had been an ally of Ismail". Akbar abolished the *jizyah*, built temples, opened a "house of worship" for interfaith debate in 1575, and founded a Sufi order of "divine monotheism". His biographer Abulfazl presented him as the Perfect Man ruling by *sulh-e kull*, "universal peace" [Armstrong, #53062, "The Moghul Empire", pp. 124-127]. Ahmad Sirhindi (d. 1625)

"proclaimed that he himself rather than Akbar was the Perfect Man of the age" [Armstrong, #53062, p. 127]. The reference shelf calls him a Naqshbandi Hanafi jurist who opposed Akbar's Din-i Ilahi and is honoured as *Mujaddid al-Alf al-Thani*, "reviver of the second millennium" [Wikipedia: Ahmad Sirhindi]. Aurangzeb (1658-1707) reimposed the *jizyah* and destroyed Hindu temples. Armstrong reads the Hindu and Sikh revolts that followed as proof of "how wise the previous tolerance had been" [Armstrong, #53062, p. 128].

The arrival of the West and the abolition of the caliphate

In "The Arrival of the West (1750-2000)", Armstrong describes the West's rise as "unparalleled in world history". She traces the "plundering of Bengal", Napoleon in Egypt, the occupations from Algeria (1830) to Morocco (1912), and Sykes-Picot, which was "experienced as an outrage, since the European powers had promised the Arab provinces … independence" [Armstrong, #53062, ch. 5, pp. 141-148]. Ataturk's secularism, she writes, "closed down all the madrasahs, suppressed the Sufi orders and forced men and women to wear modern Western dress … Islam in Turkey did not disappear, it simply went underground" [Armstrong, #53062, "What is a Modern Muslim State?", p. 158]. The legal steps are uncontested. The sultanate was abolished on 1 November 1922. Kemal called the remaining caliphate "nothing more than a historic relic", and on 3 March 1924 the Grand National Assembly abolished it and exiled the dynasty, over the protests of the Indian Khilafat Movement [Wikipedia: Abolition of the Caliphate].

The readings diverge. Glenn Beck writes: "World War I marked the low point in Islam's retreat before Western powers … Suddenly, for the first time since the seventh century, there was nobody left to claim the title of caliph". In his account radicals grew in that vacuum, and Israel's creation "proved a useful propaganda tool" [Beck, It Is About Islam, #63847, ch. 4]. Evola, in his disciple's memoir, says: "What the Christians could never achieve, a Turk did. The enemy inside. He dethroned Allah. By changing the Arabic alphabet, he made it impossible for people to read their own language. Cultural genocide, you might call it" [Julius Evola: The Sufi of Rome, #65750]. Lawrence's annotation to bin Laden notes that "no country has replaced Turkey as the Muslim world's center. According to Sayyid Qutb, in order to bring about a new Caliphate … there must be a revival in one Muslim country" [bin Laden, Messages to the World, #73066, ed. note 25].

Inside Turkey, Said Nursi (1877-1960) gave up politics after the Ottoman fall. He wrote the six-thousand-page *Risale-i Nur* in prison and exile, and his Nurcu movement is credited with reviving Islam in Turkey [Wikipedia: Said Nursi].

Coda: Keshe on the Shii state's heir

Mehran Keshe speaks about modern Iran in KSW 631. He claims that "the knowledge which supersedes nuclear, is already in the hand of the Iranian scientists", and that "if anything happens to Iran ... the Iranian scientists will release the technology above nuclear to every nation on this planet". He also attacks the Republic's elite: "half of our negotiating are not Iranians, most of our leadership are not Iranians. And they see their own private interest ahead of a nation of Iran" [Keshe, KSW 631, #378343]. He explains Iranians' passion for their soldiers through "the culture of Shiite in Iran". Armstrong traces the ritual roots of that martyr culture to Majlisi's Muharram processions [Keshe, KSW 631, #378343; Armstrong, #53062, p. 121].

Key points

- Armstrong calls 1500-1700 "Imperial Islam": three gunpowder empires with an explicitly Islamic orientation [#53062].
- Isma'il I and the Qizilbash imposed Twelver Shiism on Sunni Iran. The reference shelf records mass killings [Wikipedia: Safavid conversion; Qizilbash].
- Abbas I imported Arab Shii ulama, who grew into an autonomous clerical estate [#53062; #68695].
- Suleiman made the ulama a state corps. Armstrong argues this "emasculated" the Sunni clergy [#53062].
- Chaldiran (1514) and Zuhab (1639) turned the Sunni-Shia split into a territorial frontier [#5213; Wikipedia: Battle of Chaldiran].
- Akbar's universalism and Sirhindi's revivalism were the two Mughal options, and Aurangzeb chose the second [#53062; Wikipedia: Ahmad Sirhindi].
- The caliphate ended on 3 March 1924. Beck sees Islam's low point, Evola a Turk "dethroning Allah", and Qutb (via Lawrence) a call to revive one Islamic state first [#63847; #65750; #73066].

- Keshe claims Iran holds a technology "above nuclear" and denounces its leadership as self-interested [#378343].

Chapter 80.

Revival, Reform and Revolt: Wahhabism, Salafism, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Republic

From the eighteenth century onward, Islamic reform movements became political projects: a desert kingdom, a mass brotherhood, a clerical republic and a transnational jihad. The sources for this history differ in kind. Karen Armstrong writes a sympathetic scholarly survey. Kim Ghattas is a journalist, and Christopher Davidson an academic critic of Western policy. RAND and the 9/11 Commission write as government analysts. Amir Taheri, Glenn Beck and Jerome Corsi are hawkish or polemical writers. Osama bin Laden's statements are primary evidence, and Mehran Keshe adds prophetic commentary. Each claim below is attributed to its source.

Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the Saudi pact

Armstrong describes Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-92) as "a typical reformer, in the tradition of Ibn Taymiyyah". He sought "a fundamentalist return to the Quran and sunnah, and ... a militant rejection of all later accretions, which included medieval fiqh mysticism and Falsafah", and he "declared that [the Ottoman sultans] were apostates and worthy of death". His "aggressive techniques would be used by some fundamentalists in the twentieth century" [Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062, "The Arrival of the West", p. 135]. Beck calls him "the father of the modern Salafist movement": "In 1744, Wahhab and bin Saud took an oath to each other and began decades of conquest to unite Arabia and reinstall a righteous Caliphate" [Beck, It Is About Islam, #63847, ch. 4]. Ghattas

calls the pact "a political and familial alliance" in which "Ibn Saud would handle politics and governing while Ibn Abdelwahhab would be in charge of religion and preaching", and names Ibn Taymiyya, the "literalist, medieval theologian" of the Hanbali school, as the preacher's inspiration [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495, Part I].

The Saudi state, the Ikhwan and Western patrons

Davidson emphasises the role of Western patrons. By 1899 Britain was encouraging the Saudis "to use its protectorate of Kuwait as a launch pad". Ibn Saud took Riyadh in 1902 with "his Wahhabi militia, the Ikhwan", and the India Office favoured him because "the Ikhwan's ferocity would help ward off other rival powers". When unrest rose in southern Iraq "it was easily put down by British aircraft ... The Saudi-Wahhabi killing spree that ensued" followed [Davidson, Shadow Wars, #66972]. Later, Faisal, "with his mother a direct descendant of Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab, ... was a man after the CIA's heart". He founded the Islamic University of Medina (1961) as a counterweight to Nasser's Al-Azhar [Davidson, #66972]. Armstrong notes that the 1932 kingdom "was based on the Wahhabi ideal" and had no constitution, and that the Muslim Brotherhood "condemned the Saudis' use of Islamic punishments as inappropriate and archaic" [Armstrong, #53062, "What is a Modern Muslim State?", pp. 161-162].

The Muslim Brotherhood, Mawdudi and Qutb

Armstrong presents Hasan al-Banna's Society of Muslim Brothers as a mass welfare movement, of which "a small minority engaged in terrorism" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 155-156]. Taheri quotes its founding formula, "We are all brothers in the service of Islam. We are, therefore, the Muslim Brotherhood". He records that an Iranian militant "in 1936 ... had frequented several Muslim Brotherhood mosques and attended a number of their secret meetings" in Cairo [Taheri, Holy Terror, #64433, ch. 4]. Beck claims that its ideology "gave rise to every major Islamic terrorist organization in the world" [Beck, #63847].

Armstrong argues that Mawdudi (1903-79) made jihad "the central tenet of Islam", which she calls "an innovation". Sayyid Qutb (1906-66), "the real founder of Islamic fundamentalism in the Sunni world", applied *jahiliyyah* to Muslim societies themselves after witnessing torture in Nasser's camps. "At al-Nasser's

personal insistence, he was executed in 1966" [Armstrong, #53062, "Fundamentalism", pp. 168-170]. Ghattas adds that "while in prison Qutb had read a copy of Mawdudi's book *The Four Expressions*", and that Mawdudi "had inspired Qutb in Egypt and Khomeini in Iran" [Ghattas, #72495, Part II]. The 9/11 Commission states that "Bin Ladin also relies heavily on the Egyptian writer Sayyid Qutb" [National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, The 9/11 Commission Report, #377534, ch. 2]. Taheri records that Faraj, "the mastermind behind President Sadat's assassination", wrote *Al-Faridhaat al-Ghayabah* (The Occulted Duty) and "was hanged in the Bab al-Khalq Prison in central Cairo on 15 April 1982 together with two companions" [Taheri, #64433, ch. 13 notes].

1979: Tehran and Mecca

Khomeini, Armstrong writes, "had evolved a radically new interpretation of Shiism: in the absence of the Hidden Imam, only the mystically inspired jurist, who knew the sacred law, could validly govern the nation". She adds that Rafsanjani later gave "a democratic interpretation of Velayat-i Faqih" [Armstrong, #53062, "Fundamentalism"]. Taheri is hostile. He describes the "Party of Allah" as "not a political organization in the classical style". On Saudi Arabia he writes: "To the Americans, the importance of the Wahabbite kingdom lies in its seemingly inexhaustible oil reserves. To the Party of Allah, however, it is the presence of Islam's two holiest shrines". He quotes an Iranian militant: "Our Prophet killed with his own blessed hands. Our Imam Ali killed more than seven hundred on a single day" [Taheri, #64433, ch. 8].

In November 1979 Juhayman al-Utaybi and some 400 armed Saudis seized the Grand Mosque. The anonymous narrator of a memoir of Evola notes that they "were not foreign infidels ... but Arab, Saudi men, zealots for their religion. Ikhwan, brothers, was the name they had given themselves" [Julius Evola: The Sufi of Rome, #65750]. Davidson calls them "a conservative Wahhabi sect" [Davidson, #66972]. Ghattas reconstructs the confusion. Khomeini blamed "criminal American imperialism", while a report "added credence to theories of a Shia takeover by saying the rebels had described the Mahdi in line with Shia beliefs, as the Twelfth Imam". The siege ended on 4 December 1979 [Ghattas, #72495, Part I]. Lawrence's annotation links the siege to the Saudi "awakening" (Sahwa) of Salman al-Auda and Safar al-Hawali, "which mingled radical wahhabism with the ideas of ... Sayyid Qutb" [bin Laden, Messages to the World, #73066, ed. note 19].

The forty-year rivalry

Ghattas argues that 1979 began a Saudi-Iranian contest that "unraveled the Middle East". Under Zia ul-Haq it reached Pakistan. In 1987 Sunnis and Shias in the tribal areas killed one another and "almost two hundred people died". She argues that Zia's provocations gave Shia "clerics like Hussaini a powerful rallying tool" against Sunni rivals such as Ihsan Elahi Zaheer [Ghattas, #72495, Part II]. The 9/11 Commission agrees: "In the 1980s, awash in sudden oil wealth, Saudi Arabia competed with Shia Iran to promote its Sunni fundamentalist interpretation of Islam, Wahhabism" [National Commission on Terrorist Attacks, The 9/11 Commission Report, #377534]. Davidson cites a Clinton cable naming Saudi donors as funders of al-Qaeda, the Taliban and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Lashkar-e-Taiba had set up a charity front in Riyadh "just three years before it carried out the 2008 Mumbai massacre" [Davidson, #66972]. Corsi, writing as an advocate, frames Iran apocalyptically. He describes Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi as "the chief living authority on the Mahdi", based in Qom near "the Jamkaran well, from which Shiite believers expect the Twelfth Imam will reappear", and concludes that Israel "can't wait" [Corsi, Why Israel Can't Wait, #87960].

From al-Qaeda to the Islamic State

Bin Laden's 1996 "Declaration of Jihad against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Sanctuaries" lists his grievances: "Your blood has been spilt in Palestine and Iraq". It vows to end "the injustice that has befallen our umma at the hands of the Judeo-Crusader alliance" [bin Laden, #73066, "Declaration of Jihad"]. RAND finds that al-Qaeda frames the world as a "stark and ultimately irreconcilable dichotomy" of belief and non-belief, and that "Saudis have played a prominent place in al-Qaeda, second only to the Egyptians" [Rabasa et al., Beyond al-Qaeda Part 1, #368002]. Jane's dates the first use of the name AQAP by Saudi-based groups to 17 March 2004 [Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment: Yemen, #367632]. Beck argues that the violence is intrinsically "about Islam". He traces a single line to al-Qaeda in Iraq, which "declared open season on Iraq's Shia, whom they call *rafidun*", and on to ISIS [Beck, #63847]. Armstrong disagrees: "It is not correct ... to imagine that Islam has within it a militant, fanatic strain". Fundamentalism, she argues, "exists in a symbiotic relationship with a coercive secularism" [Armstrong, #53062, pp. 164-167]. In America the Nation of Islam's *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews* shows Islam

used as political identity; Chapter 81 treats it as primary evidence [Nation of Islam, #51694].

Movement	Founding moment	Enemy named	Model of authority
Wahhabism	1744 oath (Beck)	Ottoman "apostates" (Armstrong)	Emir and preacher (Ghattas)
Muslim Brotherhood	al-Banna's society (Armstrong; Taheri)	Colonial rule, later Nasser	Mass society with a secret wing
Qutbism	Prison writings (Ghattas)	Modern *jahiliyyah*, Muslim rulers included	Vanguard
Khomeinism	Velayat-e faqih (Armstrong)	US; Saudi custody of the shrines (Taheri)	Ruling jurist
Al-Qaeda	1996 Declaration	"Judeo-Crusader alliance"	Transnational network (RAND)

Keshe on the present war

In his 2026 workshops Keshe reads the Iran-Israel war as eschatology staged by clerics: "This is not a war of nations, it's a war of religions". He calls the flags in Tehran "a flag of Methi … Khamenei established the army for coming of Methi", and adds that "Jews are doing the same" [Keshe, KSW 633, #378345]. "This war with Iran is done by religious leaders, paving the path for coming of their Methi, according to their script … But whose Methi is the real one?" he asks [Keshe, KSW 636, #378348]. He asserts: "The Iranian Sepah has flatten the Jews. Now they call it Tel Aviv … it's flattened" [Keshe, KSW 633, #378345]. In KSW 634 (19 March 2026) he claims that the US "purposely bombed Iran Space Research Center", which held a plasma centre "made specially for KF" technology, and vows: "I'll punish America for this, beyond their imagination" [Keshe, KSW 634, #378346]. These are Keshe's own statements; none of the other sources cited in this chapter reports these events.

Key points

- Armstrong calls Ibn Abd al-Wahhab an Ibn Taymiyya-style reformer who declared the Ottomans apostates. Beck dates his oath with Ibn Saud to 1744, and Ghattas calls it a political and familial alliance [#53062; #63847; #72495].
- Davidson reports British backing of the Ikhwan, a "Saudi-Wahhabi killing spree" under British air power, CIA favour for Faisal, and Saudi charities funding jihadists [#66972].
- The Brotherhood's radical line runs from Mawdudi through Qutb (hanged 1966) to Faraj (hanged 15 April 1982) [#53062; #72495; #64433].
- 1979 brought Khomeini's rule of the jurist and the Mecca siege by self-styled Ikhwan, which inspired the Sahwa [#72495; #73066; #65750].
- Ghattas and the 9/11 Commission both describe Saudi-Iranian competition to export doctrine, which turned sectarian in Pakistan [#72495; #377534].
- Bin Laden's 1996 Declaration names the "Judeo-Crusader alliance". RAND finds Saudis "second only to the Egyptians" in al-Qaeda [#73066; #368002].
- Beck and Corsi argue that the violence is intrinsic or apocalyptic. Armstrong argues that fundamentalism is a reaction to coercive secularism [#63847; #87960; #53062].
- Keshe calls the Iran-Israel war a clerical "war of religions" to bring each side's Methi [#378345; #378348; #378346].

Chapter 81.

After the Seal: Babism, the Baha'i Faith, Ahmadiyya, Black American Islam, and Keshe's 'True Koran'

Qur'an 33:40 calls Muhammad *khatam an-nabiyyin*, the "seal of the prophets". Most Muslims read the verse as closing revelation. Every movement in this chapter reopened that question in some way: by announcing a "gate" to a hidden Imam, a new manifestation of God, a subordinate prophet, a black God in America, or, in Mehran Keshe's teaching, the end of all religions with the "birth of Mitra". Mainstream Islam regards these movements as heterodox, and several have been persecuted. The chapter sets out what the library's sources report about each and then compares how they handle finality, the awaited Mahdi or Messiah, and the older Iranian substrate of Zarathustra and Mithra.

From the Shaykhi school to the Bab

Norman McClelland traces Babism to Shii esotericism: "A native of Shiraz, Iran, Mirza Ali Muhammad became a follower of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsai, who was strongly influenced by the cult of angels, which in turn had a strong influence on Mirza". He adds that Bahaism was founded by Baha'u'llah "after much effort to divorce itself from the militancy of Babism, and to shed itself of the influences of both Shiite Islam and the cult of angels" [McClelland, Encyclopedia of Reincarnation and Karma, #66947, "Babism"]. Issitt and Main describe the result in neutral terms: "The Baha'i faith arose out of Babism, a monotheistic cult built around the teachings of the Bab (Siyyid Ali Muhammad Shirazi) in Iran". Baha'i "developed out of the Shia branch of Islam in the 19th century" and today "has

more than 6 million adherents around the world" [Issitt & Main, Hidden Religion, #66220, "Baha'i: Origins and Evolution", p. 107]. The Bab's declaration of 1844 marks the start of the Baha'i calendar. Adolf Novak, a Christian critic of new sects writing for Romanian readers, writes that "the Baha'i era began with the year of the Bab's revelation, that is 1844" (*Epoca Baha'i a început cu anul destăinuirii lui Bab, adică 1844*) [Novak, Şapte secte, #9384].

Sylvia Browne tells the story of the Bab's death. In her account the Bab, imprisoned at the Iranian prime minister's instigation, wrote the *Bayan* in 1848. In 1850 he was suspended before a firing squad in Tabriz: "In what the Baha'i regard as a great miracle of their faith, not a single bullet struck the Bab, and he actually seemed to vanish into thin air". She draws this account from Shoghi Effendi's *God Passes By* [Browne, End of Days, #42246]. She also quotes Baha'u'llah's vision in prison: "I beheld a Maiden—the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord—suspended in the air before Me" [Browne, #42246].

Baha'u'llah and the Baha'i world faith

"Before he died in 1892, Baha'u'llah had created the Baha'i Faith based on the teachings of the Bab". Browne summarises its theology of progressive revelation: Baha'is believe in one God "who sent such divine teachers and prophets as Buddha, Abraham, Jesus, Moses, Krishna, Zarathustra, and Muhammad—in addition to the Bab and Baha'u'llah—to educate humankind" toward "an ever-advancing civilization" [Browne, #42246]. Zarathustra's place on this list ties the faith back to the Iranian origins examined in the opening Parts of this study.

Novak lists the faith's distinctive features. "The revelations of Baha'u'llah comprise more than a hundred books" and propose "a new concept for world society: a world parliament". The number nine "plays an important role", and the houses of worship are rotundas "with nine entrances", where no sermon is preached and only the scriptures of the various religions are read, near Chicago, in Panama City, Kampala, Frankfurt, Sydney and New Delhi. The year has 19 months of 19 days and begins on 21 March "according to the Persian tradition". The tombs of the Bab, Baha'u'llah and Abdul-Baha, "veritable mausolea, are in Haifa and Akko (Israel)" [Novak, #9384]. *Sacred Places of the World* calls the Shrine of the Bab "one of Haifa's most prominent landmarks" and "the Faith's second holiest Shrine", and adds that the Shrine of Baha'u'llah at Bahji near Akka is "the holiest place on earth for Baha'is and the point toward which they turn in prayer each day" [Sacred Places of the World, #48913].

Persecution is a political fact running through the faith's whole history. According to the reference shelf, "thousands of Bábís were killed" under the Qajars. In 1955 the Pahlavi state backed a clerical anti-Baha'i campaign. After 1979 persecution "has become an official and systematic policy of the Islamic Republic", codified in a 25 February 1991 memorandum, issued at Khamenei's request, directing that Baha'is' "progress and development are blocked". Iranian authorities "have executed or forcibly disappeared hundreds of Bahá'ís and have arrested, detained, prosecuted, or imprisoned thousands" [Wikipedia: Persecution of Bahá'ís].

Ahmadiyya: a prophet under the seal

McClelland defines Ahmadiyya as "the messianic sect founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmed Qadiyani (1835-1908) in the Punjab". His entry lists the founder's identifications, which reach "Maitreya, and even ... the (Judeo-Christian) Messiah", and notes that the identification with Jesus "was facilitated by Ahmed belief that the tomb of one Yuz-Assaf in the Kashmiri city of Srinagar was really the tomb of Jesus" [McClelland, #66947, "Ahmadiyya"]. Nabeel Qureshi, raised Ahmadi before he converted to Christianity, explains the dispute from the inside. Ahmad claimed "that he was a subordinate prophet under Muhammad", and "most Muslims argue that 33:40 precludes any prophethood after Muhammad, thereby making Mirza Ghulam Ahmad a false prophet and his followers non-Muslim". Ahmad's defence was that he was no new prophet at all: "Jews are waiting for Elijah, Hindus are waiting for Krishna, Buddhists are waiting for Buddha, and Christians are waiting for Jesus ... the world was waiting for the return of Jesus, but Ahmad was he" [Qureshi, Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus, #68882, Part 1]. Qureshi also describes the Ahmadi "swoon theory": Jesus survived the cross and was taken down by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. He contrasts it with the majority Muslim "substitution theory" [Qureshi, #68882, Part 2].

Black American Islam: the Nation and the Five Percent

The Nation of Islam (NOI) appears in the library mainly through its own polemical publications, which are treated here as primary evidence of its ideology. The

"Historical Research Department" trilogy *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews* opens: "Throughout the history of the practice, Jews have been involved in the purchase and sale of human beings". Volume 2 is titled *How Jews Gained Control of the Black American Economy* [Nation of Islam, The Secret Relationship vol. 1, #51694; vol. 2, #51695; see also #51696]. The texts show how the NOI tied religious separatism to an economic and racial politics directed against a named people.

Michael Muhammad Knight traces the Five Percenters to Clarence 13X of the NOI's Harlem mosque. The NOI's catechism of "Supreme Wisdom Lessons" defines the five percent as "the poor, righteous Teachers ... [who] Teach that the Living God is the Son of man, the supreme being, the (black man) of Asia". The Five Percenters took that literally: "the black man is God—all black men, without any sort of religiously ordered hierarchy". Knight points out the consequence for prophecy: "I have never heard of a Five Percenter named Muhammad; if the black man is God, why would he follow a prophet?" Through rap artists such as the Wu-Tang Clan and Busta Rhymes, the movement shaped hip hop [Knight, The Five Percenters, #68129]. These movements are treated further in the Parts on new religious movements.

Keshe: the birth of Mitra and the end of religions

Keshe takes the post-prophetic argument to its end point. KSW 412 (23 December 2021) opens with "the birthday of Mitra where all the religions then changed names ... branches of the branches, but the totality stays Mitra". He calls Christmas a "replication" of the Mitra story. On 21 December 2021, he says, "the Promised One, the Promised Day, has arrived ... the thousand year waiting in darkness has come to an end". He declares: "We celebrate the birth of Mitra, .. the return of Messiah, .. the return of Methi" [Keshe, KSW 412, #378124, sections 0-1]. He then announces the dissolution of the faiths: "We see the end of Islam as a religion, but as a path of correct conduct, the true writing in Koran. We see the end of Christianity ... We have already abolished the Judaism", and "very soon ... man will not remember a name for any religion" [Keshe, KSW 412, #378124, sections 3-4]. He interprets the Iranian relief of "Mitra - King - Ahura Mazda" as showing that royal power comes "from Creator as a light - through Mitra" [Keshe, KSW 412, #378124].

The Keshe material is consistently anti-clerical. "Need no charlatans in the name of Ayatollahs, Mullahs, Priests, Rabbis and the rest", he says, and asks: "do

you need a Prophet to understand the work of this planet?" [Keshe, KSW 629, #378341, section 0]. "There shall be no churches and no mosques, no temples in the U[niverse]", because "the temple of the Creator has to be in the STM" (Soul of the Man) [Keshe, KSW 303, #378015]. "Mankind has to understand that the time for intermediaries is over. … Messiah has come, and he's amongst us as a Soul of every individual" [Keshe, KSW 460, #378172]. He explains religious wonders as technology. Christ, Buddha "and the others understood the work of the transfer and transmutation, but they hid it under the name of religion", and Islam's "black seed" and Christianity's "holy water" are hidden instances of it [Keshe, KSW 453, #378165].

His position on the Baha'is is unusual. Asked whether his ideas resemble Baha'u'llah's, he answers in KSW 354: "I do not agree with none of what the Bahai faith stands for today … they have broken the agreement with the Creator, to the benefit of them". He also says: "this is what happened with me and the Bahai faith, I walked away, as the misconduct is beyond imagination, in the name and cover of religion". He speaks of the path as one "I set it up to be", a phrasing that implies a personal role in its founding [Keshe, KSW 354, #378066, section 12]. Where the reference shelf records the community as victims of state persecution, Keshe accuses its present leadership of greed and misconduct.

Comparison: finality, Mahdi and the Iranian substrate

	Baha'i	Ahmadiyya	Nation of Islam / Five Percent	Keshe
Finality of prophecy (33:40)	Revelation is progressive; the Bab and Baha'u'llah are new manifestations [Browne]	Ahmad a "subordinate prophet" under Muhammad; mainstream calls this false prophecy [Qureshi]	Five Percent: the black man is God, so no prophet is needed [Knight]	Prophets and intermediaries are obsolete; each person reaches the Creator through the soul [KSW 629, 460]

	Baha'i	Ahmadiyya	Nation of Islam / Five Percent	Keshe
Mahdi / Messiah	The Bab as "gate"; Baha'u'llah the one foretold [Wikipedia; Issitt & Main]	Ahmad as returned Jesus, Maitreya, Messiah [McClelland; Qureshi]	"Living God ... the (black man) of Asia" [Knight]	Return of Messiah/Methi fulfilled on 21 Dec 2021 as the "birth of Mitra" [KSW 412]
Zoroastrian-Mithraic substrate	Zarathustra counted among the manifestations [Browne]; Persian calendar from 21 March [Novak]	Not addressed in these sources	Not addressed in these sources	Mitra is the trunk of which all religions are "branches" [KSW 412]
Attitude to clergy	Elected institutions; no sermons in temples [Novak]	Missionary community [Qureshi]	Ministers; Five Percent rejects hierarchy [Knight]	"No charlatans in the name of Ayatollahs, Mullahs, Priests, Rabbis" [KSW 629]

Key points

- McClelland derives Babism from Shaykh Ahmad Ahsai's school, "strongly influenced by the cult of angels". Issitt and Main call Babism "a monotheistic cult" from which the six-million-strong Baha'i faith grew [#66947; #66220].
- Browne relays the Baha'i account that no bullet struck the Bab in 1850, and lists Zarathustra among the Baha'i manifestations of God [#42246].
- Novak describes the cult of nine, the 1844 era, Baha'u'llah's hundred-plus books, the world-parliament idea and the Haifa-Akko shrines [#9384; #48913].

- Persecution of Baha'is in Iran became official policy after 1979, set out in the 1991 memorandum [Wikipedia: Persecution of Bahá'ís].
- Ahmadiyya (1889) claimed a subordinate prophethood. Mainstream Muslims reject it under 33:40, and Ahmadis hold that Jesus survived the cross and is buried in Srinagar [#66947; #68882].
- The NOI's *Secret Relationship* volumes are primary evidence of its racial-economic politics. The Five Percenters made "the black man is God" a theology without prophets [#51694; #51695; #68129].
- Keshe declares that the old religions ended with the "birth of Mitra" on 21 December 2021. Islam survives only as "a path of correct conduct, the true writing in Koran", and clergy are "charlatans" [#378124; #378341; #378172].
- Keshe rejects today's Baha'i faith for misconduct, against the reference shelf's record of it as a persecuted minority [#378066; Wikipedia].

Part IX.

India: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism

Chapter 82.

From the Indus Cities to the Vedic Hymns: Origins and the Aryan Question

Part 9 begins on the Indus plain. An urban civilisation flourished and vanished there, and a body of orally transmitted hymns later appeared that became Hinduism's oldest scripture. How the two relate is among the most politically charged questions in the study of religion: philologists, imperial administrators, racial theorists, Hindu nationalists and Dalit organisations have each built a narrative on it [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, "Into or Out of India"]. This chapter sets out the archaeological record, the earliest Vedic stratum with its soma and fire cult, and the competing models of "Aryan" origins. It records the library's non-mainstream readings under their authors' names and links the Vedic pantheon back to the Indo-Iranian material of the Zoroastrian parts.

The rediscovery of the Indus civilisation

Walsh reports that Harappan traces "were discovered only in the 1820s when a deserter from the East India Company army happened upon some of its ruins in a place called Haripah". In the nineteenth century the ruins "were thought to date only to the time of Alexander the Great". Their antiquity was recognised only in the 1920s, after a description of two seals in the *Illustrated London News* led a specialist on Sumer to suggest a link with Mesopotamia [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, "Finding Harappa"]. Between 2600 and 1900 BC the civilisation covered more than 263,000 square miles. Mohenjo-daro covered 200 hectares and may have housed more than 40,000 people, and it and Harappa "were separated by 400 miles of Indus River", yet their remains are, in John Marshall's words, "to all intents and purposes identical" [Walsh, #38599, ch. 1]. Scarre, Fagan and Golden add that the two "are now recognized to be only two among

over a dozen large settlements". They illustrate a "steatite seal showing carved image of an antelope with symbols of the undeciphered Indus script above its back" [Scarre, Fagan & Golden, Ancient Civilizations, #65218, ch. 5, fig. 5.6].

Walsh counts more than 400 signs on the seals, "too many for an alphabet but too few for a pictographic writing system". The unicorn is the commonest animal on them. Proto-Dravidian decipherments "are not yet generally accepted" [Walsh, #38599, "Reading the Indus Script"]. No one knows what the bearded "Priest-King" bust represents. Still, a torso resembling the dancing Shiva, a seal figure seated "cross-legged in a yogic pose" and female figurines that recall later mother-goddesses suggest continuity with later Hinduism [Walsh, #38599, ch. 1]. Armstrong agrees that "we know next to nothing about either the Harappans or their religion", apart from "tantalizing hints" of later cults [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, "The Axial Peoples (c. 1600 to 900 BCE)"].

Dating, decline and the invasion debate

The sources agree on the mature-phase dates and disagree on the end and on the Vedic relationship. Van Voorst places the composition of the Vedic songs "soon after the Aryan invasion of India around 1500 B.C.E." and dates the final form of the Rig Veda to about 1200 BCE [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, "Historical Origin and Development"]. Sorajjakool likewise writes that "by 1500 bce, a semi-nomadic group called the Aryans invaded this region". He adds that their homeland is disputed and lists Central Asia, Lithuania and the Arctic (Tilak) among the proposals [Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, ch. 3].

Walsh gives the revised view: "studies now show that the Indo-Aryans actually entered India in large numbers two centuries after the decline of Harappan civilization". In her account the hymns began in southern Afghanistan around 1700 BC, and the tribes reached the Punjab by 1400 BC by a gradual process of trade, herding and migration. She notes that "no 'new' human subgroup entered the region" in the skeletal record, and attributes the collapse to climate change, the drying of the Ghaggar-Hakra and disease [Walsh, #38599, "Origins of the Aryans"]. Ferrara goes further. "More likely the Indus Valley Civilization was contemporaneous with Vedic culture—or the Vedic tradition was its precursor." He calls the idea of "a massive invasion by lighter-skinned Aryans who displaced darker-complexioned aboriginals" "a remnant of colonial ideology that justified racist policies", and concludes that "drought, and not outside aggressors, likely

caused its deterioration" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 1 "Vedānta, Sādhu Priests, and the 'Lord of Bhang' "]. The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* dates the Rig Veda's compilation to around 1500 BCE. It notes that older parts would put the Aryas in India "as early as c. 2000 B.C.E.", "synchronous with the theoretical migration of Indo-European-speaking peoples into India from the northwest" [Jones & Ryan, Encyclopedia of Hinduism, #42241].

Walsh traces the political uses. Max Müller drew on the linguistic theory to proclaim a family of "Celts, the Germans, the Slaves [sic], the Greeks and Italians, the Persian and Hindus". British imperialists used it to explain Indian "degeneration", and the Nazis made it a "master race" doctrine. Hindu nationalists answer with an "out of India" thesis under which Hindus alone "can legitimately claim the right to live in and govern" India. Dalit groups such as Dalitstan reverse the roles and say Aryan invaders, "the ancestors of today's Brahmans", "conquered and enslaved the original inhabitants of India". Walsh notes the absence of horses at Harappan sites and records that one "out of India" advocate altered a seal image to make a bull resemble a horse (Witzel and Farmer 2000) [Walsh, #38599, "Into or Out of India"].

Question	Invasion model (Van Voorst; Sorajjakool)	Migration model (Walsh)	Overlap view (Ferrara)
Arrival	Invasion c. 1500 BCE	Gradual; Punjab by c. 1400 BCE	Contemporaneous with, or before, Harappa
End of Harappa	Implied conquest	Climate, river loss, disease; Aryans came ~200 years later	Mainly drought
"Aryan race"	Not discussed	Its misuse documented	Called colonial ideology

Non-mainstream readings held in the library

The library also holds alternative-history readings, which are reported here as their authors' claims. B. E. Lewis writes that Aratta "may be the same as Harappa" and that Harappa and Mohenjo-daro were cities "of the ancient Dravidians, the legendary serpent people who preceded the Aryan occupation of India". He describes them as post-Deluge colonies of "the Nagas, a race of

serpent-men", and asks whether these were "again ... the Anunnaki" [Lewis, Ancient Serpent Gods, #68172]. Corrado Malanga's *Le guerre stellari di Mohenjo-daro* (1999) presents the topic as "protoufologia". It draws on the Ramayana's *vimanas* and on David Davenport's "2000 A.C.: distruzione atomica". Malanga claims that a strip of bricks was exposed to more than 900 °C "per pochi secondi" and that the city saw an aerial battle "tra opposte forze extraterrestri" [Malanga, Le guerre stellari di Mohenjo-daro, #59916]. Childress likewise attributes skeletons "holding hands and sprawling in the streets" to atomic explosions [Childress, Technology of the Gods, #64573, "The Doom of Mohenjo-Daro"]. Walsh records only that "unburied corpses have been found" at Mohenjo-daro's top level [Walsh, #38599, "The End of Harappan Civilization"].

The Rig Veda: structure, gods and sacrifice

Debroy explains that the Rig Veda "derives its name from the word *rik*, which means a mantra". He counts 1,080 suktas and 10,589 verses in ten mandalas, and in Mandala One "the bulk of the mantras are addressed to Indra. Agni comes next" [Debroy, The Rig Veda, #82390, Introduction]. The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* gives two different rankings. Under Indra it says that "by far the greatest number of the thousand plus hymns" go to him. Under Agni it says that "there are more hymns to Agni in the RIG VEDA ... than to any other divinity" [Jones & Ryan, #42241, "Indra"; "Agni"].

Van Voorst describes stages. "The oldest hymns deal with the gods of the Indo-Aryans: the sky-god Dyaus Pitar, whom the Greeks knew as Zeus, and the earth-goddess Prithivi Mater. In the next stage ... Indra the new sky-god, Agni the god of fire, Soma the god of drugged sacrifice" [Van Voorst, #63227, "Historical Origin and Development"]. His selections include RV 1.1 (Agni), 8.48 (Soma), 10.85 (marriage) and 10.16 (cremation). The cremation hymn asks that "Agni who eats all things make it whole, and Soma who has entered the Brahmins" [Van Voorst, #63227, "Cremation"]. In RV 2.12 Indra "killed the serpent and loosed the seven rivers" and "drove the race of Dasas down into obscurity". Van Voorst glosses *Dasas* as " 'slaves,' enemies of the Aryans whom they subjugated" [Van Voorst, #63227, "The God Indra"].

Debroy notes that Indra "killed the demon Vritra" with the vajra, and that "Mitra is an aspect of the sun that presided over the day. Correspondingly, Varuna presided over the night" [Debroy, #82390, Mandala One, "Vayu"]. Griffith's translation reads: "LET thy Bay Steeds bring thee, the Strong, hither to drink

the Soma draught— Those, Indra, who are bright as suns" (RV 1.16.1), and of the river goddess, "Sarasvati, the mighty flood … She brightens every pious thought" (RV 1.3.12) [Griffith, Keith & Bloomfield, Four Vedas, #42756]. Ferrara quotes RV 8.48: "We have drunk the Soma; we have become immortal; we have gone to the light; we have found the gods." He reports the view that soma mixed *Cannabis indica* with *Ephedra* [Ferrara, #66945, ch. 1].

Armstrong: violence, Varuna and the late question

For Armstrong, "by the time the Aryan tribes arrived in India, its language was already archaic". She describes a raiding society in which Varuna's attributes, "the administration of law, the guardianship of the truth, and the punishment of falsehood", pass to Indra. Yet "Indra was a killer, who had only managed to defeat Vritra by lying and cheating". One soma hymn begins "to win a cow, to win a steed: have I not drunk of Soma juice?", and a king returning from a ritual raid was hailed, "Thou, O King, art brahman!" By the tenth century the devas seemed "crude and unsatisfactory". RV 10.121 asks "What god shall we adore with our offering?" and answers with Prajapati, while RV 10.129 ends in "the silence of unknowing" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, "The Axial Peoples (c. 1600 to 900 BCE)"].

The Indo-Iranian link

According to Walsh, the languages of the Rig Veda and the Avesta are "like dialects of the same language". Both peoples call themselves "Aryans" and worship "similar gods with similar names" [Walsh, #38599, "Origins of the Aryans"]. The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* states that the Zend Avesta "has much in common with the Rig Veda, sharing many verses" [Jones & Ryan, #42241, Chronology]. Moulton suggests that a late Avestan demon named "in company with Indra and Saurva" may have been "reimported", and that the passage "represents anti-Hindu polemic (cf. the Indian gods Indra and Çarva)" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011]. The library also holds Chatterji's *Atharvan Zarathustra: The Foremost Prophet*, catalogued under Zoroastrianism, Hinduism and comparative religion. Its title gives Zarathustra the Vedic role of an Atharvan priest, but the library copy's text cannot be extracted, so its argument is not quoted here [Chatterji, Atharvan Zarathustra, #54924].

Key points

- Walsh: Harappa was first noticed in the 1820s by an East India Company deserter at "Haripah" and was at first dated to Alexander's time. It lies 400 miles from Mohenjo-daro. Scarre et al. count more than a dozen large sites, whose script remains undeciphered.
- The sources agree on c. 2600–1900 BCE for the mature civilisation. They divide between an invasion c. 1500 BCE (Van Voorst, Sorajjakool), a migration after Harappa's decline (Walsh), and overlap or Vedic priority (Ferrara).
- Walsh documents successive political uses of the Aryan question: philological, imperial, Nazi, Hindu-nationalist and Dalit.
- Lewis's "serpent people", Malanga's extraterrestrial war and Childress's "atomic" Mohenjo-daro are non-mainstream readings.
- Van Voorst's stages run from Dyaus Pitar and Prithivi Mater to Indra, Agni and Soma. The Encyclopedia of Hinduism ranks Indra first in one entry and Agni first in another.
- Armstrong presents Indra as a deceitful "killer" who absorbed Varuna's moral role, and RV 10.121 as the turn toward a single creator.
- Moulton reads the Avestan demon Indra as possible anti-Hindu polemic.

Chapter 83.

Sacrifice and Its Masters: Vedic Ritual, the Brahmanas and the Priestly Order

The Vedic hymns were not freestanding poetry. They were the spoken part of a sacrificial system, and the people who controlled that system came to hold a position in Indian society that no other priesthood has kept so long. This chapter treats Vedic religion as a ritual technology. It covers the four Vedas and their classes of priests, the fire and soma sacrifice, the Purusha hymn that grounds the four varnas in a primordial sacrifice, and the Brahmana texts that made ritual the engine of the cosmos. It then follows the sources as they describe how ritual expertise became social and political power, and how the same ritualists began to turn the sacrifice inward, preparing the ground for the Upanishads.

Four Vedas, four priests

Debroy writes that the Vedas were once called *trayi*, “three”. The Atharva Veda “is believed to have been a later addition to the sacred canon”. Each Veda has a samhita of mantras and Brahmanas that “explain the hymns and indicate how these are to be used in sacrifices”. Together these form the *karma kanda*, while the Aranyakas and Upanishads make up the *jnana kanda*. He assigns each Veda to a class of priest at the *yajna*. The *hotri* “invoked the gods by reciting the mantras” and used the Rig Veda. The *udgatri* chanted the Sama Veda, and the *adhvaryu* “carried out sacrificial rites while chanting” the Yajur Veda. The fourth class, “brahmana overseers”, “supervised the sacrifice and the hymns of the Atharva Veda are for this class of priests” [Debroy, The Rig Veda, #82390, Introduction].

Van Voorst describes the Yajur Veda as "mostly ... prose sacrificial formulas" and the Sama Veda as songs whose words come mostly from the Rig Veda. The Atharva Veda, "containing mostly spells, curses, and charms in 731 hymns", "reflects the everyday religious life of ordinary people just as the threefold Veda reflects the religious life of the priestly group" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, "Overview of Structure"]. Ferrara sees the Atharva Veda as "a backlash against the aristocratic elitism of the Rig Veda cult" that "most directly preserves ancient shamanistic rites" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 1].

The Purusha hymn and the origin of the varnas

The social charter of the system is RV 10.90. In Van Voorst's selection the gods "spread the sacrifice with the Man as the offering", and "His mouth became the Brahmin; his arms were made into the Warrior, his thighs the People, and from his feet the Servants were born" [Van Voorst, #63227, Rig-Veda 10.90]. Debroy's retelling puts the ritual canon itself into the same act: "From the sacrifice emerged the mantras of the Rig veda, Sama hymns, Various metres and the mantras of the Atharva Veda and the mantras of the Yajur Veda as well." It continues: "From the mouth of the purusha were born the learned brahmanas. From his arms were born the brave kshatriyas. From his thighs were born vaishyas and from his feet were born the shudras (a servant or slave class)" [Debroy, #82390, "Purusha"]. Armstrong reads the hymn as non-agonistic. The Purusha walks "of his own free will into the sacrificial ground" and lets the gods kill him; "there was no fighting in this sacrifice", and so, she argues, the hymn "laid the foundation for India's Axial Age" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, "The Axial Peoples (c. 1600 to 900 BCE)"].

Walsh notes that the four varnas appear "only in one late Rig-Vedic hymn". The terms karma, dharma and reincarnation are absent from the Rig Veda. These categories, she writes, developed as the Indo-Aryans settled on the Gangetic plain, where they "explained and justified the social and economic divisions of Gangetic society in terms of an individual's good or bad conduct in former lives" [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, chs. 1–2]. She adds that "the term caste comes from the Portuguese word casta", first used in the sixteenth century, and that the indigenous terms are *varna* (class) and *jati* (birth group) [Walsh, #38599, "Caste, Varna, and Jati"].

The Brahmanas: sacrifice as cosmic technology

Van Voorst calls the Brahmanas "manuals for sacrifice". They present "ritual utterance, the powerful sacrificial word correctly spoken" as "the power that strengthens the gods, keeps the universe intact, and brings blessing to the sacrificer". "The power of the priesthood steadily grew in Vedic times", and "the focus of the Brahmanas is on sacrifice itself, not on the gods" [Van Voorst, #63227, "Historical Origin and Development"]. He sets RV 1.1, "I pray to Agni, the household priest who is the god of the sacrifice", beside the Agni-Brahmana 1.1–19. In that text "Prajapati alone existed here in the beginning … He generated Agni from his mouth. Because he generated him from his mouth, therefore Agni is a consumer of food. Truly, he who knows Agni to be a consumer of food becomes himself a consumer of food." Van Voorst comments that "the god Prajapati is the precursor of Brahman" [Van Voorst, #63227, "Devotion to Agni in Prayer and Sacrifice"]. Ferrara makes the point more sharply. "Since the gods were thought to owe their divine positions, and very existences, to the sacrificial act", he writes, the ritual system "furthered the machinations of a priestly class eager to advance its own agenda" [Ferrara, #66945, ch. 1].

The largest of these texts, according to the reference shelf, is the Shatapatha Brahmana ("Brahmana of one hundred paths") of the White Yajur Veda, attributed to the sage Yajnavalkya. Wikipedia calls it "the most complete, systematic, and important of the Brahmanas", with detailed explanations of ritual "including construction of complex fire-altars". Keith places it linguistically in the 8th–6th centuries BCE and Parpola around 700 BCE, and its fourteenth book "constitutes the Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad" [Wikipedia: Shatapatha Brahmana].

Walsh's account of the horse sacrifice (*ashvamedha*) shows how ritual served kingship. A royal stallion roamed for a year with the king's armies demanding tribute behind it. It was then killed, and the chief queen lay beside it in a sexual rite that Walsh quotes from a Brahmana. The rite was in use "well into the sixth and seventh centuries A.D." [Walsh, #38599, "The Horse Sacrifice"].

Ritual power as political power

Armstrong describes the early sacrifice as a potlatch-like contest between rajas, with drinking, gambling, chariot races and mock battles that "could easily segue into serious fighting". A king's office depended on the annual *rajasuya*, in which he had to lead a successful raid and win at dice [Armstrong, #82303, "The Axial

Peoples (c. 1600 to 900 BCE)"]. The Agni rites sanctified conquest: "one becomes a settler when he builds the fire altar" [Armstrong, #82303, "The Axial Peoples (c. 1600 to 900 BCE)"]. Walsh's chapter "Caste, Kings, and the Hindu World Order (1000 B.C.–A.D. 700)" opens with Manu: "If the king did not tirelessly inflict punishment … the stronger would roast the weaker like fish on a spit." It shows how texts fixed the varna order. Brahmans performed the sacrifices and kept the texts, and Kshatriyas protected society. Later law codes and Puranic genealogies tried "to fix" kings of non-Kshatriya origin into the scheme [Walsh, #38599, ch. 2]. She quotes the Chandogya Upanishad: those of good conduct attain "the birth of a Brahman, or a Kshatriya, or a Vaisya", and the evil "the birth of a dog, or a hog, or a Chandala" [Walsh, #38599, "Karma and Reincarnation"].

The British historian Charles Allen puts the institutional result bluntly: "The Brahmin caste remains to this day the oldest and longest-lasting closed shop in history." He locates "the real Saraswati River and the original Arya homeland" in the north-west [Allen, Coromandel, #65507, ch. 2 "The Knowledge"].

Reform from within: interiorising the sacrifice

Armstrong's thesis is that the ritualists themselves dismantled the violent rite. The reformers of the Brahmana period "belonged to the Brahmin priestly class, which had risen to new prominence during the late Vedic period", and their work "was preserved in the Brahmanas, technical ritual texts compiled between the ninth and seventh centuries". They "were motivated by the desire to eliminate violence from the sacrificial rites": "there were to be no more competitions, chariot races, mock battles, or raids", and the patron "would henceforth be the only warrior or vaishya present". Prajapati became "the archetypal sacrificer", who conquers death by taking it into himself so that "Death has become his self (atman)". "The ritual reformers were pioneers. They redirected sacrifice from its original orientation, and focused instead on the creation of the atman, the self" [Armstrong, #82303, ritual-reform section, "Brahmanas"].

The *brahmodya* links ritual and philosophy. "A ritual often ended with the brahmodya competition to find a verbal formula that expressed the mystery of the brahman … reduced to silence, he was forced to withdraw." Through "the impotence of speech" the participants sensed brahman [Armstrong, #82303, "The Axial Peoples (c. 1600 to 900 BCE)"]. Renouncers took the reform further. One rite "internalize[d]" the sacred fire before the renouncer left the village, and "the renouncer regarded his brahmacarya as a higher form of sacrifice" [Armstrong,

#82303, "Kenosis (c. 800 to 700 BCE)"]. At the threshold of the Upanishads the Chandogya meditates on Om: "As all leaves are held together by a stalk, so all speech is held together by Om." In Armstrong's reading the chant was "one with the human body, with the atman, with breath, speech, ear, eye, and mind" [Armstrong, #82303, "Knowledge (c. 700 to 600 BCE)"]. Walsh adds that animal sacrifice "w[as] abandoned over the centuries beginning with the Upanishads and later in response to Buddhist and Jaina criticisms", and that cow protection grew out of this [Walsh, #38599, "Holy Cow"].

Western reception and the Iranian parallel

Max Müller's Cambridge lectures are an example of the nineteenth-century frame. He describes his life's work as "the publication of the text and commentary of the Rig-veda, the most ancient book of Sanskrit, aye of Aryan literature". In the Veda, he says, "an ancient city has been laid bare before our eyes", in which to read "the thoughts of our true ancestors, before they had become Hindus, or Persians, or Greeks, or Romans, or Celts, or Teutons, or Slaves" [Müller, India: What Can It Teach Us?, #78088, lectures "The Lessons of the Veda" and "Veda and Vedanta"]. Walsh records how this philological family later became the basis for racial politics [Walsh, #38599, "Into or Out of India"].

The soma–haoma parallel connects this chapter to Parts 1–2. Moulton writes of "conclusive evidence that Haoma was known and banned by Zarathushtra himself". He suggests that the original plant "failed the people as they migrated westward", which led to later substitutes [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011]. Ferrara sets "Vedic soma rites and Zoroastrian haoma rituals" side by side as religion that "must be experienced directly", and notes that the Vedic fire sacrifices "have correlates in the Mithraic and Zoroastrian traditions" [Ferrara, #66945].

Feature	Vedic yajna (Brahmanas)	Zoroastrian yasna (Moulton, Ferrara)
Sacred drink	Soma; Indra its chief drinker	Haoma; banned by Zarathushtra (Moulton), later restored
Fire	Agni, god and priest of sacrifice	Sacred fire central to worship
Ritual word	Correctly spoken mantra sustains cosmos	Recitation of Avestan texts

Feature	Vedic yajna (Brahmanas)	Zoroastrian yasna (Moulton, Ferrara)
Social effect	Brahmin monopoly on ritual knowledge	Hereditary priestly class

Key points

- Debroy assigns each Veda to a priest. The hotri recites the Rig Veda, the udgatri chants the Sama Veda and the adhvaryu performs the Yajur Veda rites, while the Atharvan "brahmana overseers" "supervised the sacrifice".
- RV 10.90 derives the four varnas and the mantras themselves from the sacrifice of Purusha. Walsh notes that this is the Rig Veda's only reference to the varnas.
- Van Voorst describes the Brahmanas as "manuals for sacrifice" in which the correctly spoken word sustains gods and cosmos, and the Agni-Brahmana makes Prajapati the source of Agni.
- The Shatapatha Brahmana, attributed to Yajnavalkya, is the fullest Brahmana. Its last book is the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.
- Walsh shows ritual and law codes fixing the varna order and kingship. Allen calls the Brahmin caste "the oldest and longest-lasting closed shop in history".
- In Armstrong's account, Brahmin reformers removed violence from the rite, focused it on the atman and led into the brahmodya's silence and the Chandogya's Om.
- Müller's lectures show the "Aryan" philological frame of nineteenth-century Western scholarship. Moulton and Ferrara draw the soma–haoma parallel.

Chapter 84.

The Upanishadic Turn: Atman, Brahman, Karma and the Renouncers

The Upanishads close the Vedic canon. Van Voorst notes that they are "also known as the Vedanta (End of the Veda)" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, "Overview of Structure"]. In them the outward sacrifice gives way to inquiry into the self. They announce that the self (atman) is identical with the ground of all being (brahman), and they give the first statements of karma, of samsara as recurring birth and death, and of moksha as release from both. The same period produced the wandering renouncers from whose milieu Jainism and Buddhism grew. This chapter sets out the texts, their central doctrines and the main Indian and Western interpretations, and records how the new doctrines also served as an explanation of social hierarchy.

The texts and their setting

Van Voorst counts 123 surviving Upanishads, "but only thirteen have been influential in Hindu history". Most were composed between the eighth and the fourth centuries BCE, and "the oldest of these are the Chandogya and Brihad-Aranyaka". Sectarian Upanishads devoted to particular deities were added "from the beginnings of the Common Era all the way to the sixteenth century C.E." In this literature the " 'world-affirming' Vedic religion" becomes "a 'world-negating' religion that seeks release from continually reincarnated existence". Van Voorst also notes that the Upanishads "were not fully written down until 1656 C.E.", when the "non-Hindu Sultan Dara Shakoh" ordered a Persian translation [Van Voorst, #63227, "Historical Origin and Development"; "Contemporary Use"].

Armstrong places the earliest texts in a society "at the very beginning of the process of urbanization". She thinks the Brihadaranyaka was "almost certainly composed in the kingdom of Videha", a frontier state with a mixed population. Kings took part in the debates (Janaka of Videha, Ajatashatru of Kashi), and so did women, "notably Gargi Vacaknavi and Maitreyi" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, "Knowledge (c. 700 to 600 BCE)"]. The Brihadaranyaka opens with the horse sacrifice reinterpreted. In the passage Walsh quotes, "the dawn is the head of the horse which is fit for sacrifice, the sun its eye, the wind its breath" [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, "Unity and Diversity in the Upanishads"]. Armstrong comments that the ritual "could be performed and completed mentally" [Armstrong, #82303, "Knowledge"].

Atman and Brahman

The central teaching is put in the "great sayings". Armstrong cites "This self is the brahman" (*ayam atma brahman*) and the Chandogya's "That you are!" (*tat tvam asi*) [Armstrong, #82303, "Knowledge"]. Van Voorst's text of the Chandogya, from Max Müller's translation, gives Uddalaka's teaching to Svetaketu. "In the beginning, my dear, there was one thing only, without a second". Rivers that enter the sea "do not know I am this or that river", and the refrain runs: "That which is that subtle essence, in it all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self, and that, Svetaketu, you are" [Van Voorst, #63227, " 'That You Are' (Chandogya Upanishad 6)"]. In the Brihadaranyaka selection the primal Person declares "I indeed am this creation". The text then adds: "Let men worship him as Soul [Atman], for in the Soul all these are one" [Van Voorst, #63227, Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad 1.4.1–7].

Armstrong presents Yajnavalkya's method as negative. "About this self [atman], one can only say 'not … not' [neti … neti]. He is ungraspable, for he cannot be grasped." His dictum "You can't see the Seer who does the seeing" points to the atman as the agent behind all perception, and the self in dreamless sleep is a state of unified consciousness "beyond fear" [Armstrong, #82303, "Knowledge"].

The Katha, Prashna and Mundaka, in Sri M's discourses, carry the same teaching in dialogue form. Yama tells Nachiketa: "There are two Selves that drink the fruit of karma in the world of good deeds. Both are lodged in the secret place of the heart". Sri M glosses the Self as one "which can be neither destroyed nor is born … Knowing that Self and abiding in that Peace be free from the fear of death" [Sri M, The Upanishads: Katha – Prashna – Mundaka, #82873, Katha ch. 3]. The

Mundaka declares: "In front is Brahman, behind is Brahman, to the right and to the left". Sri M reads its image of two birds on one branch as "the ego, which is one bird, eats and enjoys and also suffers. The atman, the Self … witnesses all this" [Sri M, #82873, Mundaka]. In the Prashna, six seekers come to the sage Pippalada "with sacrificial fuel in their hands". Sri M calls it "an Upanishad that questions" [Sri M, #82873, Prashna]. Aurobindo translates the opening of the Isha: "All this is for habitation by the Lord, whatsoever is individual universe of movement in the universal motion". Its seventh verse asks: "how shall he be deluded, whence shall he have grief who sees everywhere oneness?" He calls the Isha "one of the more ancient of the Vedantic writings in style, substance and versification" [Aurobindo, The Upanishads, #85813, Isha Upanishad, vv. 1, 7 and "Conclusion and Summary"]. He describes the Kena as reaching the same Lord "by the antithesis of one governing self-existence to all this that exists" [Aurobindo, Kena and Other Upanishads, #50236].

Easwaran builds his exposition on the Katha. It is "relatively late – perhaps only three or four thousand years old", and in his view "virtually all the fundamental ideas of Indian spirituality are found there". He stresses that "its essential lesson is how to live", as "Yama teaches Nachiketa" [Easwaran, Essence of the Upanishads, #68763, Introduction]. Ferrara quotes the Isha, "The Lord is enshrined in the hearts of all … Covet nothing. All belongs to the Lord". He calls the Mandukya's "fourth state" of consciousness the "supreme goal of life", and quotes the Katha: one who knows the "deathless … unchangeable Reality, springs out of the mouth of death" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 1].

Burger frames the doctrine as Advaita. He quotes the Upanishads, "Of everything, God is the innermost Self", and Shankara: "The identity of Brahman and Atman is declared in hundreds of holy texts." He then cites Radhakrishnan to the effect that "God does not create the world but becomes it. Creation is expression … It is the self-projection of the Supreme" [Burger, Esoteric Anatomy, #68445, ch. 4 "Vedic Origins and Advaita Philosophy"].

Karma, samsara, moksha

Armstrong writes that Yajnavalkya's teaching "is the first time we hear of the doctrine of 'action' (karma)": "What a man turns out to be depends on how he acts … If his actions are good, he will turn into something good." The doctrine was then "a new and controversial idea". When Artabhaga asked what happens after death, Yajnavalkya answered, "We cannot talk about this in public. Take

my hand ... let's go and discuss this in private." Only knowledge of the self frees a person from "this ceaseless cycle (samsara) of rebirth and redeath". Of one free of desire he says: "Brahman he is, and to brahman he goes" [Armstrong, #82303, "Knowledge"].

Walsh dates the idea that "humans also would experience the consequences of past acts" to the Upanishads (c. 600 BC). The least virtuous "become worms, insects, or snakes" [Walsh, #38599, "Karma and Reincarnation"]. Potter's *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* treats "complete freedom" as the goal shared by the Indian systems. He distinguishes "path philosophy", the search for "proper path(s) of renunciatory or disciplinary activity leading to complete freedom", from speculative philosophy. He lists "an indefinite number of different types of Vedanta, such as Dvaita ('dualistic'), Advaita ('non-dualistic'), Visistadvaita". He describes samsara as the "round of habits breeding habits ... governed by karma" [Potter, Presuppositions of India's Philosophies, #82613, Preface and "Renunciation, the Path to Freedom"]. The doctrine also shapes modern ethics. In Sorajjakool's handbook for clinicians, "suicide is perceived as a bad way to die and a reprehensible act. Similarly, euthanasia is discouraged", since the atman "takes on another body" at death until its "final goal—union with God" [Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, ch. 3].

Karma as social ideology

Walsh states the political side directly. The new concepts of reincarnation, karma, dharma and the four varnas "explained and justified the social and economic divisions of Gangetic society in terms of an individual's good or bad conduct in former lives". "Rebirth into a higher class showed that one had been virtuous in past lives; rebirth at a lower level showed the opposite", and for most people the goal was to fulfil the duties of their varna. She quotes the Mahabharata: "A Shudra ... should never amass wealth" [Walsh, #38599, "Karma and Reincarnation"]. Ferrara agrees that the karmic reward of caste duty "helped to rationalize India's highly tiered class system". He adds that moksha "was considered easiest to achieve in the priestly caste" [Ferrara, #66945, ch. 1].

The renouncers

Armstrong regards the renouncer (*samnyasin*) as the agent of the next stage: "It was he, not the Brahmin priest, who shaped the next stage of the Indian Axial Age." She cites the Rig Veda's wanderers with "long, loose locks" and "garments of soiled yellow hue", devoted to Rudra. She also points to the Vratya bands and their "three breaths", "an early form of yoga". The renouncer shaved his head, "practiced ahimsa", refrained from "injuring seeds" and was to be a "silent sage" (*muni*). "The new hero of the Axial Age was not a heroic warrior ... but a monk dedicated to ahimsa ... The renouncers were seeking yathabhuta, an 'enlightenment' that was also an 'awakening' to their authentic selves" [Armstrong, #82303, "Kenosis (c. 800 to 700 BCE)"]. Ferrara follows the line from the Rig Veda's munis "girdled with the wind" to the sramanas, who "spurned the authority of Brāhman priests ... and the caste system", and on to the Jains, the Ajivakas and the Buddha [Ferrara, #66945, ch. 1]. Walsh notes that Buddhist sources list "six unorthodox teachers" for c. 600–400 BC [Walsh, #38599, "Heterodoxy in North India"].

The later sectarian Upanishads

The genre continued well past the classical texts. The library's *Shakta Upanishads* lists twenty-seven goddess Upanishads drawn from the Adyar edition, among them the Tripura, Devi, Bhavana, Kalika and Sita Upanishads and an "allā-upaniṣat (Allāh)" [Shakta Upanishads, #49316]. The *Ganapati Upanishad* applies the full Advaita vocabulary to Ganesha. "You are being-consciousness-bliss. You are the non-dual. You are plainly Brahman." He is "always situated in the muladhara", and repeating the text frees a person "from the five greater and the five lesser sins" [Ganapati Upanishad, #42973].

Western reception and perennialism

Max Müller recommended the Vedanta's study "to all true students of philosophy" and quoted Schopenhauer: "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life" [Müller, India: What Can It Teach Us?, #78088, "Veda and Vedanta"]. Burger places the tradition within Huxley's "Perennial Philosophy", calling the Gita

"one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made". He notes that "Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman were students of The Bhagavad Gita" [Burger, #68445, ch. 4]. Ferrara reads Upanishadic nonduality through Maslow's "peak-experiences", and he also argues for cannabis as an aid to moksha among sadhus [Ferrara, #66945, Introduction, ch. 1].

Reader	Key claim about the Upanishads	Source
Armstrong	Axial interiorisation; karma first appears with Yajnavalkya	#82303
Walsh	Atman–Brahman unity; karma justifies varna hierarchy	#38599
Sri M / Aurobindo	Self as witness; oneness ends grief	#82873, #85813
Burger	Advaita: God "becomes" the world (Radhakrishnan)	#68445
Potter	"Complete freedom" as the shared goal; many Vedantas	#82613
Müller	Vedanta as philosophy for the West (via Schopenhauer)	#78088

Key points

- The Upanishads are the "Vedanta (End of the Veda)". Van Voorst counts 123, of which 13 are principal, with the Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka the oldest. Sectarian Upanishads were composed until the 16th century.
- The core doctrine is the identity of atman and brahman: *tat tvam asi*, *ayam atma brahman*, and Yajnavalkya's *neti neti*.
- Armstrong dates the first statement of karma to Yajnavalkya and notes that he would discuss it only "in private". Liberation from samsara comes through knowledge of the self.
- Walsh and Ferrara state that karma and rebirth "explained and justified" the varna hierarchy.

- Armstrong presents the renouncer devoted to ahimsa and seeking yathabhuta as the new hero of the age. His milieu (sramanas, Ajivakas) produced Jainism and Buddhism.
- The Shakta and Ganapati Upanishads show the genre continuing in goddess and Ganesha cults.
- Western reception runs from Müller and Schopenhauer to Huxley's perennialism, presented by Burger, and Maslow-based readings in Ferrara.

Chapter 85.

Varna, Caste and Dharma: The Social Order and Its Contestation

No institution of the Indian subcontinent has been argued over as much as caste. For its defenders it is a frame of duty (dharma) inherited from the Vedas, a division of labour that gives every person a place. For its critics it is a hereditary hierarchy of purity and pollution that pushed whole populations outside society as "untouchables". This chapter sets out what the library's sources say about the textual foundations (the Purusha hymn of the Rig-Veda and the Laws of Manu), about how varna and jati worked as social mechanisms, about the position of women, and about the modern politics of caste: B. R. Ambedkar's mass conversion to Buddhism, the constitutional abolition of untouchability, and the persistence of caste that journalists still report. Defenders and critics are quoted in their own terms. Heisman's remarks on rank and caste are added at the end as a comparative philosophical counterpoint.

Scriptural Foundations: the Purusha Hymn and the Laws of Manu

The oldest scriptural statement of the fourfold order is the Purusha Sukta (Rig-Veda 10.90), in which the gods sacrifice a cosmic Man and divide his body. In the translation in Van Voorst's anthology: "His mouth became the Brahmin; his arms were made into the Warrior, his thighs the People, and from his feet the Servants were born" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, "Hinduism: Purusha hymn"]. The Wikipedia survey of Dalit history notes that "scholars debate whether this was prescriptive or descriptive". Over time, how-

ever, these categories "hardened into a rigid caste system, eventually excluding large segments of society deemed 'untouchables' " [Wikipedia: Dalit history].

Judith Walsh places the codification of the order in the law books. "In the Laws of Manu, one of a number of Hindu law codes composed between 100 B.C. and A.D. 100, society is to be governed by the varna system, its duties and obligation overseen by Brahman priests." She adds that the king's role "was only the maintenance of these structures as they already existed". She quotes Manu: "The king was created as the protector of the classes [varnas] and the stages of life, that are appointed each to its own particular duty, in proper order" (Doniger and Smith 1991, 131). In Walsh's summary, "dharma was 'king' ", and she cites an early Upanishad: "This dharma is the sovereign power ruling over kshatra [royal power] itself" [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, "Kings and Emperors"]. The reference shelf gives a slightly wider date of the 2nd century BCE to the 2nd century CE, with the majority of scholars placing it "between 200 BCE and 200 CE". It reports that eighteenth-century philologists (Jones, Schlegel) dated the text to 1250-1000 BCE, a dating now considered untenable. The Manusmriti was among the first Sanskrit texts translated into English (by Sir William Jones in 1776), and the East India Company used it "to construct the Hindu law code" for its enclaves [Wikipedia: Manusmriti].

Charles Allen describes the same order from a southern vantage point. Through Manu, he writes, the Arya "received their God-given laws, along with the God-given social order known as varna, a vexatious word which, thanks to the Portuguese, is usually translated as 'caste', although it can equally be interpreted as 'race', 'class of men' or even 'colour'." His judgement on the priestly class is blunt: "The Brahmin caste remains to this day the oldest and longest-lasting closed shop in history" [Allen, Coromandel, #65507].

Varna and Jati: How the System Worked

Walsh separates the two indigenous categories that the single European word "caste" (from Portuguese *casta*, first used in the 16th century) runs together. The four varnas, "Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra", were tied early to hereditary occupations (priest, warrior, farmer/merchant, servant). "By the time of the early Upanishads the different and unequal duties of these groups were justified by karma and the individual's acts in former lives." Jatis, by contrast, were birth groups whose members "married, shared meals, or participated in funerals only with members of their own birth group". Varna rank was known across

India, but jati rank was local, and "there was no all-India hierarchy for these groups" [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, "Caste, Varna, and Jati"].

Walsh stresses that the system was more fluid than this description suggests. Through "Sanskritization", meaning the adoption of customs a higher varna is supposed to follow, a jati could raise its status over several generations. Groups that fell on hard times could "lose caste". She reports Bernard Cohn's finding that untouchable communities in north India "explained their low status in just such historical terms, as a loss of caste caused by poverty". Her example is the Kayasthas, classed as Shudra in the Gupta period, who rose as scribes and administrators by the 11th century. In her reading, jatis "functioned as a way to bring a wide range of non-Hindu peoples under the rubric of a Hindu (Aryan) varna system that in origin had been a Brahman view of society, not historical reality" [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, "Caste, Varna, and Jati"]. The reference shelf adds G. S. Ghurye's six-point definition of 1932: birth-segmented groups, hierarchy headed by Brahmins, restrictions on food and social intercourse, residential segregation and limits on wells and streets, inherited occupation, and endogamy. It also records a debate: Louis Dumont grounded caste in religious purity and pollution, while other scholars see it as "a secular social phenomenon driven by the necessities of economics, politics, and at times geography" [Wikipedia: Caste system in India].

On the spread of the order southward, Allen notes: "Many of the Jain immigrants who came south would have been Brahmin by caste but there is no evidence that Vedic Hinduism, whether introduced by Agastya or any other rishi, entered Tamil" country in the way the legend says [Allen, Coromandel, #65507, ch. 3 "Agastya's Country" and ch. 4 "Jains and Sangams"]. Indudharan Menon describes how Kerala was gradually brahmanised. In his account the Nambuthiri Brahman immigrants, by the time of the Perumal kings of the 9th century, had become wealthier than local rulers; "the caste status of rulers was often upgraded to that of the Kshatriya warrior caste through elaborate Vedic consecratory rituals", and "the Brahmanical conception of a social order based on the notion of four castes (chatur-varna) was reformulated to suit the social environment in Kerala". Society became "a stratified and rigid one that was based on the division of labour with codified rules and regulations of social intercourse", in which "each caste was regulated by rules of pollution" and had "assigned occupational roles" [Menon, Hereditary Physicians of Kerala, #43905, sections "Synthesis of Medical Knowledge and Brahman Migration in Kerala", "Transmission of Ayurveda and Caste Dynamics in Kerala"].

Women in the Dharmic Order

Walsh opens her section on women with Manu's best-known verse: "Her father guards her in childhood, her husband guards her in youth, and her sons guard her in old age. A woman is not fit for independence" (Doniger and Smith 1991, 197). She immediately qualifies it: "other texts and sources give a more varied picture". The Rig-Veda suggests that unmarried girls and young men mixed freely and that women took part in the Horse Sacrifice. The Upanishads show "two learned women (Maitreyi and Gargi)" in philosophical debate. By the early centuries CE, however, "knowledge of the Vedas had become forbidden to Hindu women (as also to Shudras)", and women were described "as an inferior class who could obtain moksha only after rebirth as men. Only in the heterodox sects of Buddhism and Jainism did women still have access to religious scriptures." Walsh also cites the Arthasastra's account of secluded harem quarters and of fines on wives "who drank, gambled, or left home without permission" [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, "Women in Ancient India"].

Duty, the Gita and Crossings of the Boundary

The Bhagavad Gita gives caste duty its most famous theological setting. Walsh summarises: when Arjuna doubts whether he should fight his kin, Krishna explains "that even though such conduct may seem immoral, it is simply Arjuna's Kshatriya dharma". Dharma is only one path, however, and bhakti is the best of them [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599, "Puranic Hinduism"]. Van Voorst's headnote to Gita ch. 18 states that "Krishna summarizes the duties of the castes and stresses the importance of doing one's caste duty in a spirit of detachment" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227]. Mark Ferrara reads Arjuna's initial reluctance as coming from a rigid adherence to caste duties and a fear of the karmic consequences of killing relatives, a fear Krishna dissolves by teaching detached action [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 1] (see Chapter 90).

Menon records an exception inside the system: the hereditary physicians of Kerala. He describes Ayurveda as "a syncretic tradition overtly influenced by Buddhist moral values", and adds that because "healers touched dead bodies and blood, post-Vedic Brahmanical orthodoxy began to consider the vocation of physician as not being an appropriate occupation for members of the Brahman caste". He contrasts the compassionate ethics of Vagbhata's *Ashtangahrdayam*,

whose author he identifies as a Buddhist, with the Brahmanical hierarchy around them, and in his account Kerala's hereditary physicians under that influence crossed caste pollution rules in treating patients, although modern curricula no longer stress these precepts. He also notes that village physicians (*vaidyans*) "may belong to any caste, high or low", and that liaisons across caste lines carried Sanskrit learning to non-Brahmans despite caste restrictions in classical texts such as the Sushruta Samhita [Menon, Hereditary Physicians of Kerala, #43905, "Vagbhata's Ethics and Ayurveda's Arrival in Kerala"; "Caste Hierarchy and Transmission of Medical Knowledge"].

Defence and Critique: Positions in Their Own Words

The apologetic position appears in *What Is Hinduism?*, a Q&A manual written to help young Hindus answer questions from others. It defines caste as "the hereditary division of Indian society based on occupation", notes that "wealth, especially in urban areas, often trumps caste", and argues that industrialisation and education have turned jatis "less like guilds and more like large clans of related families". When outsiders raise caste discrimination, it recommends what it calls "the 'You're one, too' defense". This "doesn't mean Hindus should not work much harder to end caste discrimination. But it reminds others that no country in the world is yet free from racial discrimination" [Baltutis, What Is Hinduism?, #54289, ch. 7 Q&A "What about caste and untouchability?"].

Osho offers a very different voice. He condemns Manu's system outright: "The basis of Manu's whole sociology was that the untouchables are souls coming from past lives who, because of their evil acts are born untouchables. Hence they should not be treated as human beings." He dates the system's creation to "five thousand years ago" and elsewhere places the *Manusmriti* "five or perhaps seven thousand years ago", far earlier than the c. 100 BCE–100 CE (Walsh) or 200 BCE–200 CE (Wikipedia) datings given above. Yet he is equally scornful of the Dalits who became Buddhists, as the next section shows [Osho, No Mind: The Flowers of Eternity, #46664, ch. 9].

Ambedkar, Navayana and the Constitution

B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956) was born into the Mahar caste, which was treated as untouchable. At school he could drink water only if a higher-caste person

poured it from a height ("No peon, No Water"). He earned doctorates from Columbia and the London School of Economics, chaired the committee that drafted the Constitution of India, and served as Law Minister under Nehru [Wikipedia: B. R. Ambedkar]. In 1935 he declared that though born a Hindu he would not die one. On 14 October 1956 at Nagpur he and his wife took the Three Jewels and Five Precepts from the Burmese monk Mahasthavir Chandramani. He then administered these and his 22 Vows to his followers, around 400,000 people by the Deekshabhoomi account (600,000 by others). Conversions continued after his death on 6 December 1956, reaching a reported 15-20 million by March 1959 [Wikipedia: Deekshabhoomi]. Article 17 of the Constitution outlawed untouchability, and reservations for Scheduled Castes in legislatures, government jobs and education followed [Wikipedia: Dalit history].

Osho's account of the movement names its monastic initiators: "One was Bhadant Anand Kausalyayan, the other was Bhikkshu Dharma Rakshita. Under the political guidance of Doctor Ambedkar, who was an untouchable, these two Buddhists converted a fraction of sudras." He calls Neo-Buddhist critics of himself "idiots". He argues that "initiation by Buddhist scholars can't have any meaning" and that a "wound of inferiority" from centuries of oppression "will not be simply erased" by conversion [Osho, No Mind, #46664, ch. 9]. Elsewhere he applies a remark he attributes to George Bernard Shaw to a converted *chamar*: "The people who have lived in inferiority for centuries, if you liberate them don't think they will be equal. They will immediately start being superior to you" [Osho, No Mind, #46664, ch. 11]. These are Osho's polemical views, delivered in 1988-89 in reply to Maharashtrian Buddhists who had called him a "self-styled buddha".

Persistence Today

Josy Joseph's reporting from Hridaychak, Bihar, describes the gap between law and practice: "Although abolished by the Constitution, the caste system – and discrimination on the basis of caste, which is illegal and punishable – thrives in India." Excluded from other ground, Mahadalits are forced to defecate on the road, and "the defilement of the road has often led to tension between Muslims and Mahadalits". The Mahadalits have proposed their own remedy: "build a road from their quarter out of the village in another direction." Joseph points out that the Modi government promised to end open defecation by 2019 and allocated Rs

11,300 crore to the Clean India Mission in 2016-17, but "many governments before this one have set similarly ambitious targets". Rural sanitation remains low, and women face sexual violence when they go out to defecate [Joseph, A Feast of Vultures, #63180, "Caste, Open Defecation, and Government Failure"]. The reference shelf states the general picture: some 98% of Indians, of every religion, identify with a caste, and "caste-based discrimination, segregation, violence, and inequality persist" [Wikipedia: Caste system in India].

Position	Source	Core claim
Scriptural-normative	Purusha Sukta; Manu (via Walsh, Van Voorst)	Varnas arise from the cosmic body; the king protects each class in its duty
Historical-sociological	Walsh; Ghurye/Dumont (Wikipedia)	Varna is a Brahman ideal; jati is local and mobile (Sanskritization, loss of caste)
Apologetic	*What Is Hinduism?*	Caste is weakening; "You're one, too": every country has discrimination
Reformist/convert	Ambedkar (Wikipedia)	Leave Hinduism; Navayana Buddhism and constitutional rights
Polemical outsider	Osho	Manu's system dehumanising, but converts carry an "inferiority complex"
Journalistic	Joseph	Abolished in law, thriving in practice; governments fail

A Comparative Counterpoint: Heisman on Rank and Equality

Mitchell Heisman does not write about Indian caste as such. His Singularity framework does, however, take up the question of whether hierarchy is natural. Discussing the political organisation of a post-human "Überorganism", he writes:

"Within the political whole of an Überorganism, there may be differentiations of rank or some form of caste" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252]. He also takes a genealogical view of equality from Nietzsche: "I think Nietzsche was right in drawing a connection between Biblical values and modern egalitarianism", for whom "modern egalitarianism and modern progress... were secularizations of Biblical values". Against Dawkins he argues that egalitarianism cannot simply be declared not to have come from religion [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252]. Read alongside this chapter, Heisman's thesis implies that the modern egalitarian norm by which Manu is judged has its own religious genealogy. The Purusha hymn and Heisman's Überorganism both describe a social body that is differentiated by function and ranked.

Key points

- Walsh dates the Laws of Manu to c. 100 BCE-100 CE. In them, society is governed by varna, with duties overseen by Brahmins and protected by kings. Wikipedia gives 200 BCE-200 CE as the majority view.
- "Caste" comes from the Portuguese *casta*. Walsh distinguishes the all-India ideal of four varnas from local, mobile jatis. Allen calls the Brahmin caste "the oldest and longest-lasting closed shop in history".
- Manu's verse "A woman is not fit for independence" is qualified by Walsh with Vedic and Upanishadic counter-evidence. Only the heterodox Buddhists and Jains kept scripture open to women.
- Menon documents Kerala physicians who, following Vagbhata's "caste-free" ethics, crossed pollution boundaries to treat all patients.
- The apologetic "You're one, too" defence argues that no country is free of discrimination, while conceding that Hindus should work harder against caste discrimination.
- Ambedkar's 1956 conversion at Nagpur founded Navayana Buddhism. Osho names Anand Kausalyayan and Dharma Rakshita as its initiators and treats the converts dismissively.
- Joseph reports that caste and untouchability persist despite constitutional abolition, with successive governments, Modi's included, failing on sanitation and caste.
- Heisman allows that "some form of caste" may exist within a future Überorganism. Following Nietzsche, he traces modern egalitarianism to Biblical values.

Chapter 86.

Jainism: Mahavira, the Tirthankaras and the Ethic of Absolute Non-Violence

Of the śramaṇa ("striver") movements that challenged Brahmanical ritualism in the Ganges valley in the middle of the first millennium BCE, Jainism took renunciation to its furthest point. It holds that the soul (*jiva*) is bound by a subtle karmic matter that can be shed only by austerity. It extends non-injury (*ahimsa*) to water, fire, earth and wind. Its ideal saint ends his life by fasting. It is also a religion of merchants and bankers, patrons of temples and animal hospitals, and its doctrine of non-violence reached twentieth-century politics through Gandhi. This chapter sets out the library's account of the Tirthankara cosmology, the life and dating of Mahavira, the doctrine of soul and karma, the five great vows, the scriptures and the Digambara/Svetambara schism, the southward migration, and the modern export of ahimsa.

The Tirthankaras: an Eternal Faith and Its Ford-Makers

Jains do not regard their religion as founded in history. The *Sacred Places of the World* compilation states: "According to Jain beliefs, their faith is eternal and has been revealed through the successive ages of the world by twenty-four Tirthankaras. The word Tirthankara means 'Ford maker' and is a title given to the (mostly mythical) enlightened sages of Jainism." It compares them to the avatars of Hinduism, "in that their function is to instruct and inspire humankind" [Unknown (ed.), Sacred Places of the World, #48913, Jain section]. Van Voorst glosses the term as "Ford-finder", "a person who goes across the river of the world's misery to Nirvana", and notes that "Jains believe that Mahavira was the

last of twenty-four Tirthankaras" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, ch. 4 "Jainism"].

On how Mahavira relates to this series, Rajendar Menen writes that Mahavira is "often and erroneously considered to be the founder of the Jain religion but actually the 24th Tirthankara (ford-maker), he is credited with the founding of modern Jainism" [Menen, The Healing Power of Mudras, #62132, "Hindu Deities and Mudra Practice"]. Osho, discussing his own role as a teacher, describes the imbalance in Jain devotion: "People missed with Rishabhdeva, the first Jaina tirthankara, but they could recognize Mahavira... Jainas don't think much of the first, Rishabhdeva. In fact, their whole homage is paid to Mahavira. To the Western mind, Mahavira is the originator of Jainism." He adds of himself: "I am not like Mahavira, but like Rishabhdeva" [Osho, The Heart of Yoga, #63135]. D. M. Thornton, writing in 1898, gives a more historical version. Hermann Jacobi held that the religion "was probably founded by Parsvanath, now revered as the twenty-third Jina; and merely reformed by Mahavira". Thornton cites the "four vows of Parsva" as distinct from Mahavira's five as evidence that "followers of Parsva actually existed at the time of Mahavira" [Thornton, Parsi, Jaina and Sikh, #55051, ch. II]. Thornton also notes that Jain temple worship favours "the first, twenty-third, and twenty-fourth" Tirthankaras. This partly qualifies Osho's claim that Rishabha is neglected.

Mahavira: Life and Dates

The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* chronology gives "Birth of Mahavira Vardhamana (c. 599-527), 24th Tirthankara, Jain master". One of its entries speaks of a mountain "visited and blessed in the sixth century B.C.E. by MAHAVIRA, the 24th and last Jain TIRTHANKARA of this half of the cosmic era" [Jones & Ryan, Encyclopedia of Hinduism, #42241, Chronology]. The reference shelf records that the sects disagree. Both accept the birth year of 599 BCE, but Svetambaras place his death in 527 BCE and Digambaras in 510 BCE. Following Hemachandra, some historians date him to 549-477 BCE or to a death around 468-467 BCE. Because Mahavira was a slightly older contemporary of the Buddha, scholars who adopt the "short chronology" for the Buddha move him later still: Dundas proposes a death "around 425 BCE", and Long proposes c. 499-427 BCE [Wikipedia: Mahavira]. The Romanian UNESCO course gives his death as 480 BCE. It says he left a community of 14,000 monks, 36,000 nuns and 377,000 lay followers, and

that its leadership passed to his disciples, the *ganadharas* ("leaders of the assembly") [UNESCO course, Istoria Religiilor pentru master, #81379, Jainism section; Wikipedia: Ganadhara].

The Acaranga Sutra, which Van Voorst calls "the most reliable Jaina story of Mahavira", narrates his birth to the Kshatriya woman Trisala. His parents "were worshippers of Parsva and followers of the Sramanas" and ended their own lives by ritual fasting. After thirty years as a householder, Mahavira gave away his wealth and resolved: "I shall for twelve years neglect my body and abandon the care of it." In the thirteenth year, "in a squatting position with joined heels exposing himself to the heat of the sun", he reached "the full, unobstructed, unimpeded, infinite, and supreme knowledge and intuition called Kevala" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, "The Life of Mahavira", Acaranga Sutra 2.15]. Thornton summarises the biography in contrast with the Buddha's. Mahavira waited until his father's death and left "with the consent of those in power". He practised austerities for twelve years against the Buddha's six, and for about eleven of them "seems to have gone about naked". He then taught for thirty years under the patronage of the kings of Videha, Magadha and Anga, and died at Papa. "Whereas Buddha… looked upon those six years as wasted time", Mahavira "was still convinced of the necessity of asceticism" [Thornton, Parsi, Jaina and Sikh, #55051, "Mahavira and Buddha"].

Soul, Karmic Matter and Liberation

The UNESCO course states the central mechanism: "earthly existence is a true bondage and is a consequence of the law of deeds. The deed is a subtle form of matter that 'clings' to the soul." Liberated souls do not merge into an impersonal absolute "similar to Brahman or Nirvana" but "will subsist individually in absolute isolation (*kaivalya*)". It adds: "Mahavira was convinced that to free oneself it is necessary to lead a strict ascetic life, and to maintain the purity and integrity of the soul, ahimsa must be practised" [UNESCO course, #81379, Jainism section, trans. from Romanian]. Thornton sets out the nine *tattva*. *Jiva* (life) is "always adapted to the body it animates, diminishing with the gnat and expanding with the elephant". *Ajiva* is the non-living. The list continues through merit, demerit, influx (*asrava*), stoppage (*samvara*), the burning off of karma by penance (*nirjara*) and bondage (*bandha*), "as of milk with water", and ends with *moksha*, "profound calm, as of a fire gone out". Jains, he notes, "stand alone in maintaining that souls are to be found 'in apparently lifeless masses, in stone, in clods of earth, in drops of water, in fire, and in wind' ". The path consists of the

three jewels: right faith, right knowledge and right conduct [Thornton, Parsi, Jaina and Sikh, #55051, "Leading Jaina Doctrines of To-day"].

Ahimsa in Its Strictest Form

The UNESCO course calls ahimsa the supreme virtue: "Although we meet it both in Buddhism and in Hinduism, in the Jain context it is an extremely elaborated doctrine" [UNESCO course, #81379]. The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* agrees: "The Jains were the most radical in this regard, and their monks were enjoined to sweep their path clear with whisks to prevent stepping on insects" [Jones & Ryan, Encyclopedia of Hinduism, #42241, "Ahimsa"]. The first great vow taken by monks and nuns reads: "I renounce all killing of living beings, whether tiny or large, whether movable or immovable. I myself shall not kill living beings nor cause others to do it, nor consent to it." The Uttaradhyayana Sutra draws practical consequences from this. A monk must not build a house, because "many living beings both movable and immovable… are killed when a house is being built". He must not cook or light a fire: "Nothing is so dangerous as fire". Van Voorst observes that although the texts speak of compassion, "the main motivation is less altruistic—to avoid as much as possible one's collection of karma" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, "Rules for Monastic Life", "The Five Great Vows"]. For laymen, Thornton reports, agriculture itself is forbidden "as an injury to the 'earth-body' ", and "even the ordering another man to plough a field is stigmatized as a sin" [Thornton, Parsi, Jaina and Sikh, #55051].

Vow / feature	Jainism	Buddhism	Brahmanical ascetic
Non-injury	First great vow, extends to earth, water, fire, wind (Thornton; Van Voorst)	First precept	Among ten obligations (Windisch, via Thornton)
Asceticism	Necessary until death; 12 years for Mahavira	Middle way; Buddha's 6 years "wasted" (Thornton)	Fourth *asrama*
Final state	Individual soul in *kaivalya* (UNESCO)	Nirvana	Union with Brahman

Vow / feature	Jainism	Buddhism	Brahmanical ascetic
Women's liberation	Svetambara yes; Digambara no (Van Voorst)	Nuns' order	Only after rebirth as men (Walsh, Ch. 85)

Scriptures, Sects and the Great Schism

Van Voorst explains that the canon, called Agama ("Tradition") or Siddhanta ("Doctrine"), descends from a "sacred sound" Mahavira emitted on reaching Nirvana. It was handed on orally among monks "until about 500 C.E., when they were written down". The original fourteen *Purvas* are "now all lost", and "the difficulties among the two sects and within each sect's canon are traced to the loss of these books". The Svetambara ("white-clad") branch, the larger, "teaches that a woman can achieve Nirvana without having to be reborn as a man; thus, this group has an order of nuns". The Digambara ("sky-clad" or naked) branch "teaches that women cannot achieve Nirvana" and has its own canon (Mulacara, Samayasara and others). The familiar count of forty-five Svetambara texts in six groups "was largely the work of the nineteenth-century German scholar Georg Buhler", a scheme now "called into question as simplistic" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, ch. 4 Introduction]. Thornton traces the split back to an early estrangement between Parsva's and Mahavira's followers, which "in the end developed into a great schism". The UNESCO course adds that the Svetambara canon was closed around 500 CE, while the Digambara canon remained open [Thornton, #55051; UNESCO course, #81379].

Thornton, writing as a Victorian missionary-scholar in a book subtitled "Some minor religious sects in India", treats Jainism as one of three "minor" sects. He nevertheless rejects the older view of Weber, Lassen and Barth that it was an offshoot of Buddhism. Following Jacobi and Oldenberg, he concludes that "that which Buddhists and Jaina have in common, comes in every case from older Brahman sources", that "in fundamental points the Buddhists and the Jaina are at variance", and that Jainism is "a development of Brahmanism" [Thornton, Parsi, Jaina and Sikh, #55051, ch. II]. Archer, a mid-twentieth-century comparativist (his edition counts a world population of "about two and a half billion"), lists "the Jainist Mahavira" alongside Moses, Zoroaster, Lao-tze, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, Muhammad and Nanak among the founders of the living faiths, and estimates the Jains at about 1,500,000 [Archer, Faiths Men Live By, #55131, ch. 1].

Merchants, Kings and the Migration South

Thornton counted about 1,400,000 Jains in 1898, "mostly traders, merchants, or bankers". "It is even said that half the mercantile transactions of India pass through their hands." He describes their charity as "boundless", and they "form the chief supporters of the beast hospitals". He also lists their pilgrimage centres: Satrunjaya hill at Palitana, the white-marble temples of Mount Abu, Parasnath, where nineteen Tirthankaras are said to have died, and the southern *basti* and *bettu* shrines at Sravana Belgola [Thornton, #55051, "Jaina Temples"]. The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* chronology records that "according to Jain history, Emperor Chandragupta Maurya abdicates; becomes Jain monk" [Jones & Ryan, #42241, Chronology]. Allen cites the Sravana Belgola inscription recording a migration south "under the direction of their leader Bhadrabahu", who foretold a famine in Ujjain. He finds "striking evidence of wide-ranging support for the Jain religion in the South in the first centuries of the Common Era". He also notes that "many of the Jain immigrants who came south would have been Brahmin by caste" [Allen, Coromandel, #65507, ch. 4 "Jains and Sangams"]. Indudharan Menon likewise lists Jainism with Buddhism among the influences on Kerala before Brahman dominance [Menon, Hereditary Physicians of Kerala, #43905].

Modern Ahimsa: Gandhi to Chitrabhanu

The UNESCO course states that "the idea of ahimsa proposed by Mahavira was later taken up by Mahatma Gandhi and transformed into an instrument of struggle against British domination, for the independence of India" [UNESCO course, #81379, trans.]. The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* describes a Jain who carried the doctrine abroad: "Chitrabhanu became an advocate of AHIMSA (nonviolence) during the same period that Mohandas Karamchand GANDHI pursued his nonviolent struggle for Indian independence. After the upsurge of violence afflicting the Western world during the 1960s, Chitrabhanu made a conscious decision to spread ahimsa around the world. In 1970, he was invited to the Second Spiritual Summit Conference in Geneva" [Jones & Ryan, Encyclopedia of Hinduism, #42241, "Chitrabhanu"]. Modern Jain monasticism has also drawn polemic. In 1988 Osho reported that the Terapanth sect of Acharya Tulsi, "more than seventeen hundred monks and double that number of nuns", was facing "exposures upon exposures" by former disciples alleging sexual exploitation despite the vow of celibacy. According to Osho, Acharya Tulsi first sought a government ban on the book and then dropped the action [Osho, No Mind: The Flowers of Eternity,

#46664, ch. 6]. These are allegations as Osho relayed them. A doctrine designed to free one soul from karmic matter thus became a political method in the anti-colonial struggle and, after 1970, an export to the Western spiritual market.

Key points

- Jains hold their faith to be eternal, revealed by 24 Tirthankaras ("ford-makers"). *Sacred Places of the World* calls them "mostly mythical" and likens them to Hindu avatars.
- Menen calls Mahavira the 24th Tirthankara, "erroneously considered" the founder. Osho says Jains neglect Rishabhdeva and that the West sees Mahavira as originator. Thornton, following Jacobi, calls Parsva the probable founder.
- Traditional dates are c. 599-527 BCE (Encyclopedia of Hinduism; the Digambaras give 510 for his death). Scholarly alternatives include 549-477, c. 468, and the "short chronology" c. 425 BCE (Wikipedia).
- Karma is subtle matter clinging to the soul. Liberation is the soul's isolation (*kaivalya*), reached through strict asceticism (UNESCO course; Thornton's nine *tattva*).
- In Jainism ahimsa is "an extremely elaborated doctrine". It extends to elements and plants, forbids monks to cook or build, and forbids lay agriculture.
- The Svetambara and Digambara branches split over nudity, canon and women's capacity for Nirvana, a split traced in part to the loss of the 14 *Purvas* (Van Voorst).
- Thornton's 1898 survey calls Jainism a "minor sect" but establishes its independence from Buddhism. Archer counts Mahavira among the founders of world faiths.
- Jain merchants, a royal convert (Chandragupta Maurya, per Jain tradition) and a southern migration under Bhadrabahu spread the faith. Its ahimsa passed through Gandhi to Chitrabhanu's global mission (Geneva, 1970).

Chapter 87.

The Buddha and the Early Sangha: Life, Teaching and the First Schism

Siddhartha Gautama, the "awakened one" (Buddha) of the Shakya clan, belongs to the same śramaṇa ferment as Mahavira (Chapter 86). His solution differed from Mahavira's. He rejected both sensual indulgence and the self-torment of the Jains, he denied the permanent self that the Upanishads identified with Brahman, and he left behind an order of monks (the Sangha) rather than a successor. This chapter reconstructs the life from the scholarly biographies in the library (Armstrong, Carrithers) and from the scriptural narratives (Ashvaghosha's *Buddhacarita*, the Pali canon). It then sets out the core teaching through Theravada expositors and a Theosophical lecturer. It follows the oral canon, the councils and the first schism between Sthaviras and Mahasanghikas. It closes with the dispute over whether Buddhism is atheistic.

Sources for a Life Lived 2,500 Years Ago

Michael Carrithers (in the Romanian translation of his *Past Masters* volume) states the problem directly: "As regards the life of the Buddha, we rely almost exclusively on Buddhist writings preserved in many Oriental languages." The oldest layers, the Basket of Discourses (Suttapitaka) and the Basket of Discipline (Vinayapitaka), present themselves as the Buddha's own answers given at particular places. Monks rehearsed these teachings during the four months of the monsoon retreat. They held a council "probably immediately after" his death and another "almost certainly a century later". They used formulae, verse and the division of material into overlapping corpora, each memorised by designated monks. "The Buddhist sacred books were written down only three or four hundred years after the Buddha's death." Carrithers adds that the oral methods

probably preserved his words better than "today's print culture would be willing to admit". Even so, some sayings were lost, some were misunderstood, and the monks "added much of their own, tending above all to glorify the figure of the Buddha". The oldest texts crystallised around the time of the second council, "so that all we can hope for is to understand the Buddha about as well as his own disciples did three generations after his death" [Carrithers, Buddha - Maestrii Spiritului, #74309, Introduction, trans. from Romanian].

Van Voorst records the believers' view, which differs from this: "Buddhists believe that Prince Gotama established among his monk disciples an oral transmission of his teachings on which later written scriptures are based. They trace all the varied scripture collections and their contents back to Buddha. All scriptures are his word." In the traditional account, the first council met at Rajagaha "in 483 B.C.E." Over seven months it fixed an official version, which Ananda recited, and the account even has the sayings written on palm leaves at that time. This differs from Carrithers' three-to-four-century gap. Mahayanists hold that all three baskets date from that council. Theravadins assign the Abhidhamma Pitaka to a third council in 253 BCE, and "most modern scholars agree that the nature of this basket seems to suggest a later origin" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, ch. 3 "Historical Origin and Development"].

The Life: Renunciation, Austerity, Awakening

The poetic life most widely read is the *Buddhacarita* ("Acts of the Buddha") by Ashvaghosha, "who lived in the first century B.C.E.", and whom scholars "place… between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism" [Van Voorst, #63227, "The Life of Siddhartha Gotama"]. In its account the Bodhisattva enters Queen Maya's womb as a six-tusked white elephant and is born from her side in the Lumbini garden, declaring "this is my last birth". The sage Asita foretells his renunciation. His father, King Suddhodana, surrounds him with pleasures and marries him to Yasodhara. On three excursions, gods create an old man, a sick man and a corpse to "stir the heart of the king's son". A fourth apparition, a heavenly ascetic who "flew up to the sky", rouses him to seek deliverance. On the bank of the Nairangana he practises fasting "for six years, vainly trying to attain merit… He had only skin and bone remaining" [Van Voorst, #63227, Buddhacarita 1-14]. Thornton (1898) sets the Buddha's six years against Mahavira's twelve and notes that "Buddha looked upon those six years as wasted time" [Thornton, Parsi, Jaina and Sikh, #55051, ch. II]. Karen Armstrong describes the outcome as the "Middle Way," which shunned "physical and emotional self-indulgence on the

one hand, and extreme asceticism (which could be just as destructive)" on the other [Armstrong, Buddha, #70021].

Carrithers reduces the legend to an outline he regards as historically secure: "birth, maturity, renunciation, search, awakening and liberation, preaching, death". He identifies its two pivots as the renunciation and the awakening. He quotes the Buddha's claim that "the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the path that leads to the cessation of the world exist within this fathom-long body" (S I 62), and the rule of testimony the Buddha set for himself and his monks: what one asserts must be "the same as what you have realised, seen, known yourself" (M I 265) [Carrithers, #74309, Introduction].

The night of awakening is traditionally divided into three watches, each bringing one of three knowledges. Jeff Shelley's short study focuses on the first, the recollection of former lives, quoting the Bhayabherava Sutta: "There I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my nutriment, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared elsewhere… Thus with their aspects and particulars I recollected my manifold past lives." Shelley notes that some readings "will lead the student to believe that the Buddha lived many lives spanning eons", while "others will state he was a man just the best of man". He offers a psychological reading built on the four nutriments (edible food, sense impression, volition, consciousness), in which recollection becomes moment-by-moment insight into how experience is fed [Shelley, A Further Investigation of the First Watch, #39079].

Osho offers an iconoclastic counter-story. In it, Siddhartha competed with Mahavira and six others for the vacant seat of twenty-fourth Jain Tirthankara. He lost because he "was not such a great ascetic", whereas "Mahavir was almost a masochist". He then took the parallel title "Buddha" and "visualized twenty-three absolutely imaginary Buddhas who had preceded him… just to complete the score of twenty-four" [Osho, No Mind: The Flowers of Eternity, #46664, ch. 6]. No other source in this chapter supports the claim. It is reported here as Osho's own account.

The Teaching: Four Truths, Path, Dependent Origination, No-Self

Narada Mahathera, a Sri Lankan Theravada monk, gives the canonical formulation: "The foundations of Buddhism are the four Noble Truths – namely, Suf-

fering..., its cause (i.e., Craving), its end (i.e., Nibbana...), and the Middle Way." Suffering is "birth... old age... disease... death... in brief the five Aggregates of Attachment". Its cause is "the craving which leads from rebirth to rebirth", for sensual pleasures, for existence and for annihilation. Its end is "the remainderless, total annihilation of this very craving". The path is "the Noble Eightfold Path which consists of right understanding, right thoughts, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavor, right mindfulness, and right concentration". He rejects the charge of pessimism: Buddhism "is neither totally pessimistic nor totally optimistic" [Narada Mahathera, Buddhism in a Nutshell, #54393, ch. V]. He describes *paticca samuppada* (dependent origination) as "only a discourse on the process of birth and death and not a theory of the ultimate origin of life" [#54393, ch. VIII].

On *anatta* Narada is explicit: "Buddhism denies the existence of an unchanging or eternal soul created by a God or emanating from a Divine Essence (Paramatma)." Rebirth must be distinguished from "re-incarnation which implies the transmigration of a soul". He enlists Hume ("I never catch myself..."), William James ("the thoughts themselves are the thinkers") and Bertrand Russell, and concludes: "The Buddha anticipated these facts some 2500 years ago." The mind is "nothing but a complex compound of fleeting mental states" [#54393, ch. IX "Anatta or Soul-lessness"]. Armstrong sets this against the Upanishads. The atman was "the eternal, unchangeable Self sought by the yogins... believed in the Upanisads to be identical with brahman". The Buddha "did not believe that 'consciousness' was the kind of permanent, eternal Self sought by the yogins, but saw it as a last flickering energy, like a flame". The doctrine "did not seek to annihilate the self. He simply denied that the self had ever existed" [Armstrong, Buddha, #70021, ch. 4 "Dhamma" and Glossary].

Annie Besant, lecturing at the Theosophical Society's Adyar headquarters in 1896, builds her account on Rhys Davids and Oldenberg's SBE *Vinaya Texts* (Mahavagga I.i) and the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.* At Benares the Buddha told the five ascetics "that the two extremes of self-indulgence and of constant self-mortification were alike profitless, and that, avoiding these, He had trodden the middle path, which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom". Besant also explains "the twelve Nidanas", whose "first is Avidya, 'ignorance' ". She quotes the *Sutra of Forty-two Sections* (Beal's translation from the Chinese) for the instruction "Keep wide awake, Ananda" [Besant, Four Great Religions, #55017, "Buddhism"].

Point	Upanishadic Brahmanism	Jainism (Ch. 86)	Early Buddhism
Self	Atman = Brahman (Armstrong)	Individual eternal *jiva*	*Anatta*: no permanent self (Narada; Armstrong)
Method	Knowledge, ritual, yoga	Strict asceticism unto death	Middle Way, Eightfold Path (Besant; Narada)
Karma	Moral causation	Subtle matter clinging to soul	Volition; craving as cause (Narada)
Goal	Union with Brahman	*Kaivalya*, isolation	Nibbana, extinction of craving
Ultimate being	Brahman	No creator	Disputed (see below)

Is Buddhism Atheistic?

The question divides the library's sources. The evangelical *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions* holds that Buddhist teaching on the self "probably accounts in part for the allegation that it is a form of atheism. Actually, Buddhism is no more atheistic than it is theistic or pantheistic." It argues that the charge "can hardly be laid at the door of a teacher who declares of the universe… 'There is an unborn, an originated [sic], an uncreated' ". The entry contrasts Buddhist "self-attainment of salvation" with Christian atonement. It also notes that Buddhism, "protesting the caste system", propounded "an ethic of egalitarianism", and that "Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists differ in their ideas of salvation and the afterlife" [Schmidt, Mather & Nichols, Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, #65667, "Buddhism"].

Armstrong takes the opposite line: "The Buddha always denied the existence of any absolute principle or Supreme Being, since this could be another thing to cling to, another fetter." Nibbana "was neither a personality nor a place like Heaven" [Armstrong, Buddha, #70021, ch. 4]. Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, the Thai reformer, rejects the Western view that Buddhism "isn't a religion, since it has no God". In his account, the Law of Nature "is the Buddhist God. In Buddhism there isn't a personal God; its God — the Law of Nature — is an impersonal God.

Because Buddhism, in fact, has a God, it is a religion" [Buddhadasa, The Natural Cure for Spiritual Disease, #54398]. Narada takes a middle position: "In one sense Buddhism is not a religion, in another sense it is the religion of religions… It is neither eternalism nor nihilism" [Narada, #54393]. Van Voorst records the historical shift that sharpened the question. With Mahayana (1st century CE), "the older idea of self-redemption characteristic of Theravada Buddhism gave way to redemption through the grace of this Buddha" and of bodhisattvas [Van Voorst, #63227].

Councils and the First Schism

The reference shelf summarises the scholarly reconstruction. According to the Cullavagga, three months after the parinirvana the arahants met at Rajagaha under Mahakassapa, with King Ajatasattu's support. Even then the monk Purana declared he would keep the teaching "in that same way that I heard it in the Lord's presence", which Paul Williams reads as early disagreement. "Some scholars argue that the First Council did not actually take place." According to Theravada tradition, the first schism followed the Second Council at Vaishali, "approximately one hundred years after" the Buddha. Lamotte and Hirakawa place it under Ashoka (c. 268-232 BCE), while Collett Cox places it after his death [Wikipedia: Early Buddhist schools]. Jan Nattier and Charles Prebish date the split to 116 years after the nirvana. The causes are disputed. The Mahasanghika *Sariputrapariprccha*, the earliest surviving account, attributes the split to the majority (*mahasangha*) refusing extra Vinaya rules proposed by a minority of Elders. Sthavira sources such as the Sarvastivadins blame Mahadeva's "five points", four of which make arhatship an imperfect attainment. Scholars note that Sthavira Vinayas do contain more rules, but Bhante Sujato denies that the Mahasanghika Vinaya is demonstrably the oldest [Wikipedia: Mahāsāṃghika]. The Mahasanghikas went on to anticipate Mahayana ideas, among them a transcendent Buddha, many contemporaneous buddhas and the luminous mind. The Sthaviras produced the Vibhajjavada orthodoxy of the Third Council under Moggaliputta Tissa, whose canon Mahinda took to Sri Lanka, where it was written down in Pali [Wikipedia: Early Buddhist schools; Wikipedia: Mahāsāṃghika].

A Modern Western Counterpoint: Heisman's "Rational Self-Annihilation"

Mitchell Heisman does not discuss the Buddha in the passages retrieved for this chapter. The comparison drawn here is therefore this study's, not his. His *Suicide Note* sets out what he calls "the non-Euclidean logic of rational self-destruction" as the inverse of Hobbes' "rational self-preservation". He asks: "Could the attempt to remove all sources of prejudice, bias, and subjectivity amount to rational self-destruction? Is to most fully approach objectivity to approach death?" He also asks whether a rigorously value-free scientist ends in "indifference to the survival, not only of a given individual,… but of all life" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252]. The Buddhist tradition addresses a similar question in Narada's list of three cravings, which includes "craving for annihilation" (*vibhavatanha*) as a cause of suffering, and in Armstrong's insistence that anatta "did not seek to annihilate the self". Nibbana, on this account, is the extinction of craving and not of a self, which never existed. Heisman's project, by contrast, takes the dissolution of the self's biases to its literal and physical end.

Key points

- Carrithers stresses that the Buddha's life is known almost entirely from Buddhist texts written down "three or four hundred years" after his death. Van Voorst records the believers' view that "All scriptures are his word", with a first council at Rajagaha in 483 BCE.
- Ashvaghosha's *Buddhacarita* (1st century BCE), placed between Theravada and Mahayana, supplies the classic narrative: miraculous birth, the four sights, six years of fasting, awakening.
- Shelley reads the first watch of the awakening night, the recollection of past lives, both literally and as moment-by-moment insight through the four nutriments.
- Narada gives the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path and defines anatta as the denial of "an unchanging or eternal soul". Armstrong contrasts this with the Upanishadic atman.
- Besant's Theosophical lecture relies on Rhys Davids and Oldenberg for the first sermon's Middle Way and on the twelve nidanas beginning with ignorance.

- On atheism, the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults* says Buddhism is "no more atheistic than it is theistic or pantheistic", Armstrong says the Buddha denied any Supreme Being, and Buddhadasa calls the impersonal Law of Nature "the Buddhist God".
- The first schism (Sthavira vs Mahasanghika) followed the Vaishali council c. 100-116 years after the Buddha. Sources disagree over whether Vinaya rules or Mahadeva's five points caused it.
- Osho's claim that the Buddha lost a "competition" to Mahavira, and Heisman's "rational self-destruction", stand as unconventional counterpoints to the tradition's own account.

Chapter 88.

Ashoka and the Dhamma State: Buddhism as Imperial Ideology

The third Maurya emperor, Ashoka (reigned c. 268–232 BCE), is the first ruler in the library's sources to turn a śramaṇa ethic into a programme of government. His rock and pillar edicts are the oldest readable Indian documents, his missions carried Buddhism to Sri Lanka, and Buddhist tradition remembers him as the model "wheel-turning" king. The sources read him in two ways. Some see a repentant conqueror who renounced war. Others see an exceptionally skilled ruler who used a moral vocabulary to bind a multi-ethnic empire together. This chapter sets out both readings. It then follows the Ashokan model to its modern heir, Theravada Buddhism as a state religion in Sri Lanka, where religion, ethnicity and armed separatism became entangled [Wikipedia: Ashoka; Wikipedia: Ashoka's policy of Dhamma].

The Maurya background and the Kalinga war

Armstrong traces the dynasty's religious eclecticism to its origins. Chandragupta Maurya, "a vaishya who may have come from one of the tribal republics", had "no strong links with Vedic religion". He favoured the Jains, his son Bindusara promoted the Ājīvikas, and Ashoka, who came to the throne in 268, patronised the Buddhists, while his brother Vitashoka became a monk. Armstrong notes that the Pali sources claim that before his conversion Ashoka "had been a cruel, self-indulgent ruler, who managed to win the throne only by killing his other brothers" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, ch. 9 "Empire (c. 300 to 220 BCE)"].

The Romanian political-communication scholar Bogdan Teodorescu gives the canonical figures. In 261 BCE Ashoka "launches the war with the kingdom of Kalinga". The defeated enemy left "a hundred thousand dead" on the battlefield and "more than a hundred and fifty thousand people were deported". On the

timing of the conversion Teodorescu writes: "Three years after the victory over the kingdom of Kalinga, Ashoka converts to Buddhism." He adds that "there are sources which state that Ashoka had gone over to Buddhism two years before the battle of Kalinga, but the effective acceptance of Buddhist philosophy and the awakening came three years after the battle" [Teodorescu, Cinci milenii de manipulare, #10924, section on India, "Prajapati…" (parts 5 and 47)]. Ashoka's own Thirteenth Major Rock Edict gives the same figures in the first person: "A hundred and fifty thousand people were deported, a hundred thousand were killed and many times that number perished. … the Beloved of the Gods felt remorse" [Wikipedia: Ashoka's policy of Dhamma, "Text of the edicts"].

Armstrong, who dates the conquest of Kalinga to 260 rather than 261, takes the edict seriously but also questions it. "Ashoka probably exaggerated the casualty figures: the Mauryan army was only sixty thousand strong, so it is hard to see how it could have killed a hundred thousand Kalingans." She asks why he did not "simply repatriate" the deportees, and suggests that "he may have wanted to deter rebellion by emphasizing the magnitude and ruthlessness of his victory". She adds that "he certainly did not abjure all warfare … and never disbanded his army" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, ch. 9]. Teodorescu says the opposite on repatriation: after his awakening Ashoka "ceases every war of conquest, returns to their homes the deportees who were still alive and compensates them" [Teodorescu, Cinci milenii de manipulare, #10924, part 47].

The edicts and the policy of Dhamma

Wikipedia's summary of the edicts lists the main measures of Dhamma. Rock Edict I banned animal sacrifice and certain festive gatherings. Edict II provided medical treatment for men and animals, roads, wells and tree planting. Edict V records the creation in the twelfth year of the reign of the *dhamma-mahāmattas*, officers "appointed … to look after the interests of all sects and religions and spread the message of Dhamma". Edicts VII and XII plead for tolerance among the sects, and Edict VIII replaced royal hunts with *dhamma-yātrās*, or moral tours. Edict XIII calls for "conquest by Dhamma instead of war". The same article notes that the *mahāmattas* "gradually developed into a type of priesthood of Dhamma with great powers and soon began to interfere in politics" [Wikipedia: Ashoka's policy of Dhamma]. Armstrong quotes the Twelfth Edict: "concord is to be commended, so that men may hear one another's principles" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, ch. 9].

Historians disagree about the death penalty. Armstrong writes that "capital punishment remained an option" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303]. The *Encyclopedia of World History* agrees that he "did not abolish the death penalty". It adds that his morality officers were allowed "even to pry into the households of his relatives" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Mauryan Empire"]. The popular *Story of the Silk Road* calls Ashoka the creator of "the world's first welfare state" and says he was "abolishing the death penalty" and offering amnesty. The same account says that decades of philanthropy "had virtually bankrupted the empire", so that his ministers refused his dying wish to donate his remaining goods to the Buddhist order [Story of the Silk Road, #63188, "Ashoka" feature by Hareth Al Bustani].

The Wikipedia article on Dhamma also covers the historiographical dispute. V. A. Smith and D. R. Bhandarkar equated Dhamma with Buddhism. Romila Thapar and Nayanjot Lahiri argue that Dhamma "stands apart from Buddhist ideas, even while being informed by them". On their reading it was a deliberate, non-sectarian ideology for an empire that "could not have been controlled by an army alone" [Wikipedia: Ashoka's policy of Dhamma, "Polity" and "Interpretations"]. Armstrong agrees that it "did not mention the uniquely Buddhist doctrine of anatta … or the practice of yoga" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303].

Teodorescu: Dhamma as a communication campaign

Teodorescu's book is a history of political manipulation through religion, propaganda and symbol. He puts Ashoka in a series of rulers who used the sacred to rule, alongside Akhenaten and Urukagina of Lagash, and he reads the edicts as a communication campaign. The edicts, "carved on stupas or ceremonial pillars, proclaimed Ashoka's social reforms, his policies, and the advice he gave his subjects". Looking back across 2,500 years, he writes, "the communication campaign launched by Ashoka was not accidental", because in most edicts the king insists that as many people as possible should "know, understand and finally apply" them. He calls the existence of a dedicated "structure for promoting government policy" that preaches "relatively abstract concepts" rather than the religion itself "an absolute novelty of the Old World" [Teodorescu, Cinci milenii de manipulare, #10924, parts 7 and 49]. Teodorescu does not deny the conversion; his frame concerns how it was used.

Script, medicine and a fringe reading

The edicts also matter as physical evidence. Ferrara notes that "aside from the yet undeciphered carved seals found among the urban ruins of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa … the earliest Indian script comes from Ashoka". He adds that the Indus signs bear little resemblance to "the Brahmi script that emerged nearly fifteen hundred years later with the Ashoka inscriptions" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 1 "Vedānta, Sādhu Priests, and the 'Lord of Bhang' "].

The surgical history in Flint's *Trauma* credits Ashoka with state medicine on the battlefield. In the summary of the section "Historical Trauma Care: India and Rome", King Ashoka "developed a formal trauma care system for his armies after the Kalinga conquest". It adds that "Ashoka's edicts and the book Artashastra document an ambulance service with surgeons and support staff", and that "Sushruta may have lived just before Ashoka" [Flint, Trauma: Contemporary Principles and Therapy, #34260, "Historical Trauma Care: India and Rome"].

Corrado Malanga's 1999 article on Mohenjo-daro gives a non-mainstream reading. It belongs to "protoufology", which argues that ancient India knew vimanas and atomic weapons. Malanga writes that "the Asoka empire was ruled by new scientists who had written new books on many other domains of science". He says these books "were not accepted, because the Asoka soon converted to Buddhism, rejected every idea of belligerence and feared that their scientific discoveries" might be put to warlike use [Malanga, Las guerras estelares de Mohenjo-Daro, #60072]. None of the historical sources cited in this chapter mentions such a suppression.

Missions abroad and the Theravada lineage

The Dhamma article records that Ashoka "sent many missions to propagate Dhamma … to far off places like Egypt, Greece and Sri Lanka" [Wikipedia: Ashoka's policy of Dhamma]. According to the Sri Lankan chronicles *Dīpavaṃsa* and *Mahāvaṃsa*, Ashoka's son Mahinda converted King Devānampiya Tissa during a royal hunt at Mihintale. His sister Saṅghamittā founded the order of nuns and brought a sapling of the Bodhi tree. The same article reports a historians' view that Mahinda's departure was "more of a political motive": Ashoka was afraid of a succession war [Wikipedia: Mahinda (Buddhist monk)].

Sorajjakool dates the split between those who held that enlightenment was "for all" (Mahayana, "the great vehicle") and the "Hinayana (the small vehicle)" to about 250 BCE. He follows Theravada as it spread to "Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos" [Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, "Buddhism: Theravada and Mahayana Traditions"]. Van Voorst identifies the Pali canon as the scripture of "South Asian Theravada Buddhism". He draws the doctrinal line clearly: in later devotional Mahayana, "the older idea of self-redemption characteristic of Theravada Buddhism gave way to redemption through the grace of this Buddha" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, Buddhism chapter].

Axial closure and the afterlife of the Ashokan model

Armstrong puts Ashoka at the end of an era. "The Indian Axial Age occurred after the disintegration of the Harappan civilization and ended with the Mauryan empire." She calls his experiment "brave" but says it "failed": after his death in 231 "the dhamma lapsed". She rejects the theory that non-violence "emasculated the army": "It is more likely that the empire simply outgrew its resources." Even so, "in Buddhist tradition, he is a chakkavatti, a universal king", and Guru Nanak and Gandhi later revived "the ideal of concord" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, chs. 9–10]. One political-science volume warns that Ashoka's empire "can be, and has been, portrayed as a golden age of imperial unity under enlightened rule, and this interpretation can just as readily be dismissed as a founding myth of modern India" [The Balance of Power in World History, #5211].

In Sri Lanka the link between throne and *sangha* became constitutional. Article 9 of the 1978 constitution requires that the Republic "shall give to Buddhism the foremost place" [Wikipedia: Freedom of religion in Sri Lanka]. Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism draws on the *Mahāvaṃsa*. That chronicle portrays the Buddha sanctifying the island as *Dhammadīpa*, and it tells of the war of King Dutugamunu against the Tamil king Elara "for the restoration and glory of Buddhism". Wikipedia reports that some scholars see the chronicle as having supplied a justification for religious violence [Wikipedia: Sinhalese Buddhist nationalism].

Sam Harris raises the Sri Lankan case in a footnote. He grants that the suicide bomber of his opening scene "could very well be a member of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the separatist organisation in Sri Lanka that has carried out more acts of suicide terrorism than any other group". He notes that this

group "is often offered as a counter-example to the claims that suicide terrorism is a product of religion" [Harris, Sfârşitul credinţei, #21476, ch. 1 note 2]. The Tigers were a Tamil separatist movement, not a Buddhist one. Wikipedia calls the LTTE "secularist" and records its bombing of the Temple of the Tooth and the Sri Maha Bodhi tree, two of the holiest Buddhist sites [Wikipedia: Freedom of religion in Sri Lanka].

Reading of Ashoka	Main source	Core claim
Repentant convert	Rock Edict XIII via Wikipedia; Teodorescu	Kalinga's slaughter caused remorse; conversion followed three years after the victory
Realist statesman	Armstrong	Casualties likely exaggerated; army kept; Dhamma as consensus ideology
Communicator/manipulator	Teodorescu	Edicts as an institutional communication campaign for a new political vision
Non-sectarian ideologue	Thapar, Lahiri (via Wikipedia)	Dhamma informed by, but distinct from, Buddhism
Welfare-state founder	Story of the Silk Road; Flint	Hospitals, trauma care, amnesty; philanthropy drained the treasury
Suppressor of science (fringe)	Malanga	Buddhist pacifism caused scientific books to be shelved

Key points

- Teodorescu dates the Kalinga war to 261 BCE and Ashoka's effective conversion to three years after the victory. He reads the edicts as a deliberate political communication campaign [#10924].
- Ashoka's Rock Edict XIII expresses remorse for 100,000 dead and 150,000 deported. Armstrong suspects exaggeration and notes that Ashoka never disbanded his army [#82303].
- Dhamma combined tolerance of all sects, restrictions on animal killing, welfare works and a new corps of *dhamma-mahāmattas*, who became a

quasi-priesthood with political influence [Wikipedia: Ashoka's policy of Dhamma].

- Ferrara notes that apart from the Indus seals the earliest Indian script is Ashoka's Brahmi. Flint credits Ashoka with a military trauma and ambulance service, and Malanga's fringe thesis claims Ashokan science was suppressed [#66945; #34260; #60072].
- Mahinda's mission planted Theravada in Sri Lanka. Van Voorst contrasts Theravada self-redemption with later Mahayana redemption by grace [#63227; Wikipedia: Mahinda (Buddhist monk)].
- Armstrong sees the Indian Axial Age ending with the Maurya empire, and the Ashokan ideal surviving as the *cakravartin* model [#82303].
- In modern Sri Lanka Buddhism holds the constitutional "foremost place". Harris cites the separatist Tamil Tigers as the standard counter-example in the debate over religion and suicide terrorism [#21476].

Chapter 89.

The Great Vehicle and the Diamond Vehicle: Mahayana, Vajrayana, Tibet and the Decline of Indian Buddhism

After the Ashokan centuries, Buddhism changed in two linked directions. In doctrine it grew into the *Mahāyāna*, the "Great Vehicle", which taught the bodhisattva ideal, the Pure Lands, the philosophy of emptiness and the Yogācāra analysis of a "store consciousness". It then grew into the tantric *Vajrayāna*, the "Diamond Vehicle". In geography it moved out of India just as it was fading there, and it found in Tibet a second homeland, where it became the basis of a theocratic state. This chapter follows that course through primary texts in the library (84000, Padmasambhava, Shantideva) and through interpreters who range from Tibetan lamas and Western Buddhologists to a Romanian university course, a mountaineer's memoir, a popular magic manual and a role-playing sourcebook. Each is identified for what it is.

Grace against self-effort: the Mahayana turn

The library's reference works mark the split in terms of soteriology. The Zondervan *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions* states that "Mahayana and Theravada Buddhists differ in their ideas of salvation and the afterlife" [Mather, Nichols & Schmidt, Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions, #65667, "Buddhism"]. Van Voorst describes what changed in devotional Mahayana: "the older idea of self-redemption characteristic of Theravada Buddhism gave way to redemption through the grace of this Buddha" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, Buddhism chapter]. Sorajjakool

explains the name. Those "who believed that enlightenment was for all called themselves Mahayana (the great vehicle)". He calls their ideal the bodhisattva who strives for enlightenment "to benefit all beings", and he lists Zen, Pure Land and Tantric Buddhism among its East Asian schools [Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, "Buddhism: Theravada and Mahayana Traditions"].

The Pure Land of Sukhāvatī

The clearest scriptural expression of salvation by grace in the library is the shorter *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, translated by 84000 from the Tibetan Kangyur (Toh 115). Its summary gives the setting: "In the Jeta Grove of Śrāvastī, Buddha Śākyamuni, surrounded by a large audience, presents to his disciple Śāriputra a detailed description of the realm of Sukhāvatī, a delightful, enlightened abode, free of suffering." The presiding buddha is "addressed as Amitāyus (Limitless Life) as well as Amitābha (Limitless Light)". The text promises that "virtuous people who focus single-mindedly on Buddha Amitābha will obtain a rebirth in Sukhāvatī in their next life". To support this, the Buddha cites the buddhas of the six directions. The buddhas of the east, for example, "who are as numerous as the sands of the river Ganges, pervade their own buddha realms" with their praise of this teaching [84000, The Display of the Pure Land of Sukhāvatī, #54211, Summary and Translation]. The translators' introduction dates the sūtra's written form to the first century CE, "possibly in what was then Northwest India and is now Pakistan" [84000, #54211, Introduction].

Mind-only and the bodhisattva path

The Yogācāra or "Mind Only" school gave Mahayana its psychology. The glossary to *Advice from the Lotus-Born* defines it as the school "propagated by the great master Asanga", whose "main premise is that all phenomena are only mind, i.e. mental perceptions that appear within the all-ground consciousness due to habitual tendencies" [Advice from the Lotus-Born, #53968, Glossary, "Mind Only School"]. Alexander Berzin follows the later Tibetan development of the *ālaya*, the "all-encompassing foundation". In the Sakya view, "clear-light mental activity" gives rise "to only pure appearances", and the habits of unawareness imputed on it account for impure ones. The Nyingma tradition distinguishes "ba-

sis rigpa" as "the primordial deepest alaya" from "the alaya for constant habits" [Berzin, Alaya and Impure Appearance-Making, #363675].

The ethical side of the Great Vehicle is set out in Shantideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, a work of the Nalanda monastic university. In his commentary, Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche calls it "the most brilliant commentary on how to engage on the Mahayana path to come out of Nalanda". He stresses that Shantideva claims nothing new: what he writes is "something which is in accordance with the teachings of the Buddha" [Thrangu Rinpoche, A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life, #39641]. Khentrul Rinpoche, writing from the Jonang tradition, records how the fourteenth-century master Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen "unified the sutra and tantra teachings" into the "Great Madhyamaka" view. This was the Jonang *zhentong* reading of emptiness, which later made the school doctrinally suspect to its rivals [Khentrul Jamphal Lodro Rinpoche, Paths of Pure Vision, #65195, Jonang chapter].

The Diamond Vehicle: tantra in Buddhism

Berzin defines tantra as "an everlasting stream of continuity" on three levels: the practitioner's mind-stream with its Buddha-nature, the "pathway" practice with Buddha-figures (*yidam*), and the resultant "enlightening corpuses" of a Buddha. The New Translation schools count four classes of tantra, from *kriya* to *anuttarayoga*; the Nyingma count six, culminating in *dzogchen*. Tantra requires preliminaries, including "a hundred thousand repetitions" of prostrations, the hundred-syllable Vajrasattva mantra, mandala offerings and guru-yoga, and it "is a method for combining and simultaneously practicing" all the sutra practices. Berzin warns that wrathful protectors are "like our fierce guard dogs. Unless we have the strength to control them … they may turn against us" [Berzin, Basic Features of Tantra, #363664].

In the terma (revealed "treasure") literature, Padmasambhava teaches guru devotion as absolute: "one's master is more important / Than even the thousand buddhas of this aeon … The master is the buddha, the master is the Dharma, / In the same way the master is also the sangha" [Advice from the Lotus-Born, #53968]. These dialogues are framed as questions from Yeshe Tsogyal, who, the editors note, "at first … was one of King Trisong Deutsen's queens but later was given to Padmasambhava to be his spiritual consort" [#53968, Glossary]. The tantric text best known in the West, the *Bardo Thödol* (*Tibetan Book of the Dead*), appears in the Romanian holdings mostly through secondary authors. Eugen

Celan describes it as containing "specific instructions addressed to the dying", and Amit Goswami's *Fizica sufletului* treats it as a map of post-mortem states of being [Celan, Viața după pragul morții, #13294; Goswami, Fizica sufletului, #71815].

Mark Ferrara makes an unconventional claim in his spiritual history of cannabis. He argues that cannabis entered Tibetan Vajrayāna "primarily through the Bön tradition". In his account the porous boundary between spirit and living worlds, the weight placed on ritual propitiation, the "weaving together" of Vedānta, Shaivism and Bön, and the plant's availability across the Tibeto-Himalayan region led to its "incorporation into tantric rituals and practices" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, "Tibetan Vajrayāna and Cannabis Use"]. This is Ferrara's thesis. The Tibetan sources used in this chapter do not discuss it.

Tibet: from royal faith to theocracy

The popular occultist Baal Kadmon gives the standard outline. Under "the first King of Tibet, Songsen Gampo (600–650 AD), Buddhism started to trickle in from India". Only "during the reign of king Trison Detsen (755–797 AD) … Buddhism became the official state religion". Then "the very last of the anti-Buddhist kings reigned from 838 to 842", was "assassinated", and Tibet entered "a protracted period of darkness … that lasted almost 200 years" [Kadmon, Tibetan Mantra Magick, #366939, "Historical Development of Tibetan Buddhism"].

The UNESCO course describes the Gelug ("Yellow Hat") school as founded by Tsong-kha-pa, whose dates the course prints as 1327–1419. It calls him "a specialist in Madhyamika Buddhism". He "reforms Tibetan Buddhism by purifying it of the superstitious practices that prevailed at that time". The course says of the result: "Tibetan Buddhism or lamaism … represents one of the strangest Buddhist schools, in which the most extreme manifestations of human nature join hands. Here we find, alongside the noble precepts of Buddhism, magical and sorcerous practices in which black magic occupies a prominent place." Its "most important personalities … are the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama": "the Dalai Lama is the embodiment of Avalokitesvara (Chenresi in Tibetan), and the Panchen Lama of Amitabha (Opame in Tibetan)" [UNESCO course, Istoria Religiilor pentru master, #81379].

The reincarnation principle behind this succession is the *tulku*. Wikipedia notes that the Old Tibetan verb *sprul* originally described "the emperor taking a human form on earth". This makes it "a local religious idea alien to Indian Buddhism"

[Wikipedia: Tulku]. The title "Dalai" was Mongolian. Altan Khan gave it to Sonam Gyatso in 1577–78, and the rival Tsang kings saw the move as "a politico-religious alliance between the Gelugpa and a foreign power". The Fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682) "became the first Dalai Lama to hold both Tibet's political and spiritual leadership roles". He unified Tibet "under the Ganden Phodrang, after Gushri Khan's successful military interventions", and he built the Potala [Wikipedia: 5th Dalai Lama]. Khentrul Rinpoche states the cost to the minority schools plainly: "During the Fifth Dalai Lama, both the Jonang and Kagyu traditions were severely suppressed" [Khentrul, Paths of Pure Vision, #65195].

Brian St. Claire-King's *Tibet: The Role Playing Game* is a game sourcebook, not historiography, but its background chapter is frank. "Tibet is not a perfect place. The Chinese have many criticisms of Tibet, and most of them are not completely false … There are government officials who are corrupt. There are aristocrats who are cruel to the farmers that live on their lands." On rivalry between the lamas it says: "The most famous is the struggle between Lhasa and Shigatse. The Panchen Lama … was in a struggle for power with the Dalai Lama and was forced to flee" [St. Claire-King, Tibet: The Role Playing Game, #54867].

Occupation, exile and sectarian survival

Heinrich Harrer, tutor to the young Fourteenth Dalai Lama, offers personal testimony. "From many discussions with him I know that the Dalai Lama was perfectly aware that his country had remained behind, and in 1954 drew up a rational plan of reforms aimed at the good of the people." Harrer continues: "Although this contradicts all human logic, the Chinese prevented the Tibetans from applying their own reforms. They devastated monasteries" [Harrer, Întoarcerea în Tibet, #14627].

The Jonang shows how sectarian status carried over into exile. Khentrul writes that "in 1998 a few Jonang monks escaped Tibet into India, and seeing the importance of sustaining the Jonang tradition, His Holiness the Dalai Lama privately gifted" them support. This came three centuries after the Fifth Dalai Lama's suppression of the same school [Khentrul, Paths of Pure Vision, #65195].

Feature	Theravada	Mahayana	Vajrayana (Tibet)
Ideal	Arhat; self-redemption [#63227]	Bodhisattva for all beings [#35015]	Bodhisattva via tantric method [#363664]

Feature	Theravada	Mahayana	Vajrayana (Tibet)
Key texts	Pali canon	Sukhāvatī, Shantideva [#54211; #39641]	Tantras, terma [#53968]
Means	Monastic discipline	Grace of Amitābha; perfections	Deity yoga, mantra, guru-yoga
Political form	Royal patron + sangha (Sri Lanka)	Imperial patronage (East Asia)	Tulku theocracy, Ganden Phodrang

Decline in India and return

Wikipedia summarises the scholarly consensus. Buddhism "gradually dwindled" in India from the fourth to sixth centuries and "was largely ousted by Hinduism approximately by the 12th century". The causes were lack of rural appeal, Turkic invasions and loss of patronage. Mahayana "adopted more ritualistic practices" until the line between it and Hinduism blurred [Wikipedia: Decline of Buddhism in the Indian subcontinent]. The modern return came through B. R. Ambedkar. Ambedkar was a Dalit leader and drafting chairman of the Indian Constitution. At a conference on 13 October 1956 he announced his rejection of Hinduism, and he adopted Buddhism about six weeks before his death. His school is *Navayāna*, the "New Vehicle". Mainstream Buddhists regard it as "a radical and political re-interpretation of Buddhism", and nearly 90 per cent of its adherents live in Maharashtra [Wikipedia: Navayana] (see Ch. 85).

Key points

- The library's reference works divide Theravada from Mahayana on salvation. Van Voorst describes Theravada self-redemption giving way to "redemption through the grace" of a Buddha [#63227; #65667].
- The 84000 *Sukhāvatī* sūtra, set in the Jeta Grove with Śāriputra, promises rebirth in Amitābha's land to the single-minded, a promise attested by buddhas "as numerous as the sands of the river Ganges" [#54211].
- Yogācāra "mind-only" analysis of the *ālaya* (Berzin) and Shantideva's bodhisattva path (Thrangu) form the doctrinal core of the Great Vehicle [#363675; #39641].

- Vajrayāna adds deity yoga, mantra, vast preliminaries and absolute guru devotion (Berzin; Padmasambhava terma). Ferrara claims a cannabis strand entered it via Bön [#363664; #53968; #66945].
- Kadmon dates Buddhism's arrival under Songtsen Gampo and its state status under Trisong Detsen. The Fifth Dalai Lama fused spiritual and temporal rule and suppressed the Jonang and Kagyu [#366939; Wikipedia: 5th Dalai Lama; #65195].
- The UNESCO course calls lamaism "one of the strangest Buddhist schools", with black magic beside noble precepts, and the Dalai and Panchen Lamas incarnations of Avalokiteśvara and Amitābha [#81379].
- Harrer testifies that the Chinese blocked the Dalai Lama's 1954 reform plan and devastated monasteries. A game sourcebook concedes corruption and the Lhasa–Shigatse power struggle [#14627; #54867].
- Buddhism was largely gone from India by the twelfth century and returned politically in 1956 with Ambedkar's Navayāna [Wikipedia: Decline of Buddhism…; Wikipedia: Navayana].

Chapter 90.

The Epics and the Bhagavad Gita: War, Duty and the Avatar

Buddhism and Jainism had made renunciation the high road to liberation. Brahmanical religion answered them with stories. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* turned the ethics of king and warrior into sacred narrative. Within the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* argued that a man could kill in battle and still reach *mokṣa*, provided he acted without desire and in devotion to a god who descends to earth "in age after age". The Gita is political scripture. It has been read as a manual of inner warfare, as a charter of Krishna-devotion, as a defence of caste, as a gospel of non-violence and as a licence for armed revolt. This chapter sets these readings side by side as their authors present them.

The epics as answer to the śramaṇas

Sorajjakool places the epics in what he calls the Ancient Period of Hinduism (600 BCE–1000 CE). He describes it as an era that "saw the rise of myths and narratives as a response to challenges posed by Jainism and Buddhism". It produced the six philosophical systems and "the epics of the Ramayana and Mahabharata, which explored themes of dharma and the relationship between the self and Brahman". Within the *Mahābhārata*, "the Bhagavat Gita … offered guidance on detachment and duty". The same period brought the first devotional (*bhakti*) cults of Vishnu and Shiva [Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, "Ancient Period of Hinduism (600 BCE – 1000 CE)"].

Karen Armstrong frames the same moment within the Axial Age. In the "dark age" after Ashoka, "Indian religion became theistic, and the people discovered God". The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* first joined yoga to a personal Lord, and in its last verse "we find an important new word … bhakti". Armstrong calls the Gita "one of the last great texts of the Axial Age". She reports that "some scholars believe" it was written in the late third century BCE, and that it "may originally

have been a separate text" later "inserted into the sixth book of the Mahabharata" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, ch. 9 "Empire"]. Wikipedia gives a later date, "likely composed in the second or first century BCE", and calls it "a composite work by multiple authors" [Wikipedia: Bhagavad Gita]. Bibek Debroy, the scholarly translator, agrees: "There is no reason to presume that the Gita had a single author. The Gita is a text that synthesizes and incorporates many teachings of the Upanishads." He places it in the *Bhīṣma Parva*: "Chapters 14–40 of Bhishma Parva deal with the Bhagavad Gita, although the Bhagavad Gita proper begins with Chapter 23 … and ends with Chapter 40." His introduction opens: "If there is one text that captures the essence of Hinduism, it is the Gita" [Debroy, The Bhagavad Gita, #81665, Introduction].

The teaching on the battlefield

Armstrong sets out the dilemma clearly. Arjuna, facing his kinsmen and his teachers Bhishma and Drona, lays down his bow. Krishna first gives "all the traditional arguments for war": the *ātman* cannot die, a fallen warrior goes to heaven, and refusal would violate "the dharma of the kshatriya class". Arjuna is not persuaded. Krishna must then counter "the arguments of the Jains, the Buddhists, and those ascetics who believed that all worldly action was incompatible with liberation". His answer is *karma-yoga*: "It was not the actions themselves that bound human beings to the endless round of rebirth, but attachment to the fruits of these deeds." Armstrong quotes the verse: "Be intent on action / Not on the fruits of action." She links the problem directly to Ashoka: "The emperor Ashoka had been committed to nonviolence but he could not decommission his army. … somebody had to defend the community" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303].

Debroy notes the structure of the text. The first six chapters "constitute almost a distinct sub-component" with an emphasis on *karma yoga*. "With the seventh chapter … there is a switch in emphasis to bhakti yoga." Chapter 18 makes clear that renunciation does not mean giving up action: "The Gita advocates detached action" [Debroy, The Bhagavad Gita, #81665, notes to chs. 7 and 18]. Mark Ferrara gives a summary reading. "In his unwillingness to fight, Arjuna clings to a popular, but ultimately unnuanced, understanding of karma and dharma": he believes that "slaying fathers, grandsires, uncles, brothers, and their sons would bring negative consequences upon himself, his family, and the kingdom". "Krishna explains to the doubt-ridden warrior that desireless action will not generate karma", so that "Arjuna need only to act in battle as if he were doing so

by proxy, in another's stead, to avoid enslavement to a karmic circuit of cause and effect, and reincarnation". On Ferrara's Advaita reading, "Arjuna's salvation comes in discerning that no distinction between self and other remains tenable to one who identifies with the undifferentiated energy that flows through all things" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 1].

The avatar doctrine

The Gita's political core is the descent of God to restore order. Armstrong quotes Krishna: "To protect men of virtue / And destroy men who do evil / To set the standard of sacred duty, / I appear in age after age". In the theophany of chapter 11, Krishna as Time has already slain the armies: "They are already / Killed by me. / Be just my instrument." Armstrong comments: "Too many politicians and warriors have insisted that they were simply the instruments of destiny, and used this to justify horrendous acts." She also stresses the text's social reach: "women, vaishyas, shudras, even men born in the womb of evil, reach the highest way" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303].

The Oxford missionary scholar D. M. Thornton, writing on the origin of Sikhism, follows Monier-Williams in tracing medieval bhakti to this Vishnu theology. "Vishnu is represented as a god that evinced sympathy with mundane suffering, was interested in human affairs, and active for the welfare of all created things. This caused his frequent descents (avatara) on earth under various forms." Thornton then connects this personal devotion to the Sikh doctrine of salvation through "the name of Hari" [Thornton, Parsi, Jaina and Sikh, #55051, "Origin of Sikhism", citing Monier-Williams, Religious Life and Thought in India]. Harris adds a modern twist on the avatar's elasticity: "many Hindus consider Jesus an avatar of Vishnu" [Harris, Sfârşitul credinţei, #21476].

Rival commentaries

Prabhupada (ISKCON). In *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*, Krishna is "the Supreme Personality of Godhead". "No living entity, including Brahmā, Lord Śiva, or Nārāyaṇa, can possess opulences as fully as Kṛṣṇa." "The individual fragmental spirit soul is represented by Arjuna" [Prabhupada, Bhagavad-gita As It Is, #39455]. In *The Perfection of Yoga*, chapter one, "Yoga as Rejected by Arjuna", he notes that Arjuna calls the eightfold sitting meditation of chapter 6 "impractical

and unendurable to me, for the mind is restless and unsteady" (Bg 6.33). Prabhupada concludes that the mind is "more difficult than controlling the wind", and that the real perfection is service to Krishna: of the "three basic types of yoga … karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga and bhakti-yoga … the service to the Supreme Lord is the same" [Prabhupada, The Perfection of Yoga, #51185, ch. 1]. He also takes the battlefield literally: "All the warriors on both sides were poised to fight, so there was very little time indeed-at the utmost, one hour. Within this one hour, the whole Bhagavad-gītā was discussed" [Prabhupada, The Perfection of Yoga, #51185, ch. 1].

Yogananda (Kriya Yoga). *God Talks with Arjuna* reads the war as interior. "On the battlefield of man's body—Kurukshetra, 'the field of action'—the offspring of the blind sense-mind and those of the pure discriminative intelligence now confront each other." The blind Dhritarashtra "symbolically represents the sense-mind", Duryodhana is "material desire", and the devotee prays that the "chariot of my intuition" be stationed "in the spinal centers" [Yogananda, God Talks with Arjuna, #63655, ch. 1].

Vivekananda / Ramakrishna Mission. Ravi Mj's essay summarises Vivekananda's Karma Yoga: "the method of performing any activity, rather than the activity itself, is key to spiritual transformation". In the Mission, "all the work is done as Karma Yoga and not as a drudge, or even as duty". The essay also criticises "modern misinterpretations that justify unethical behavior under the guise of spirituality" [Ravi Mj, Efficacy of Karma Yoga, #74353]. Wikipedia records Vivekananda's own allegorical reading of Kurukshetra as "the war which is constantly going on within man between the tendencies of good and evil" [Wikipedia: Bhagavad Gita, "Allegory of war"].

Osho. *Krishna: The Man and His Philosophy* rejects the ascetic Krishna. "Krishna alone accepts the body in its totality … Apart from Krishna, Zarathustra is another." He is "a lonely dancing island in the vast ocean of sorrow", and "Krishna symbolizes acceptance of the opposites together". Osho reads Arjuna's pacifism as a failure of goodness: "Goodness suffers from a basic weakness: it wants to keep away from conflicts and wars." He finds it "extraordinarily amusing that Arjuna is persuaded to fight by one who is not going to fight himself" [Osho, Krishna: The Man and His Philosophy, #44995, chs. 1 and 4].

Perennialists. Bruce Burger quotes Aldous Huxley's view that the Gita "is one of the clearest and most comprehensive summaries of the Perennial Philosophy ever to have been made". He notes that "Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman were students of The Bhagavad Gita", and quotes Thoreau: "In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous cosmological philosophy of The Bhagavad Gita"

[Burger, Esoteric Anatomy, #68445, ch. 4]. Wikipedia adds Eknath Easwaran's formula that the Gita's subject is "the war within, the struggle for self-mastery that every human being must wage" [Wikipedia: Bhagavad Gita, "Allegory of war"].

Reader	Battlefield is…	Krishna is…	Key practice
Prabhupada [#39455; #51185]	Literal (about one hour)	Supreme Personality of Godhead	Bhakti; meditational yoga "rejected"
Yogananda [#63655]	The body and its spinal centres	Spirit guiding the soul	Kriya Yoga
Vivekananda [#74353]	Inner war of good and evil	Teacher of method	Karma Yoga as service
Debroy [#81665]	Text within Bhishma Parva	Speaker of a composite synthesis	Detached action
Osho [#44995]	Life's conflicts	Celebratory, total, non-ascetic man	Acceptance of opposites
Ferrara [#66945]	Arena of karmic fear	Advaita revealer	Desireless "proxy" action

The Gita in politics

Judith Walsh summarises Gandhi's achievement in one sentence: "Gandhi used Hindu images and language to create a nonviolent nationalism" [Walsh, A Brief History of India, #38599]. Gandhi read the Gita as allegory, with "the battlefield … the soul and Arjuna … man's higher impulses struggling against evil". Others read it militantly. Lala Lajpat Rai saw its message as "the bravery and courage of Arjuna to fight as a warrior". Bal Gangadhar Tilak "saw the Gita as defending killing when necessary for the betterment of society, such as … the killing of Afzal Khan". According to Nicholas Owen, Savarkar, "the father of Hindutva", "often turned to Hindu scriptures such as the Bhagavad Gita, arguing that the text justified violence against those who would harm Mother India" [Wikipedia: Bhagavad Gita, "The Gita and war"]. Walsh's chapter "Hindu Race/Hindu Nation" traces how early nationalists imagined the nation both as citizenship and as a religious-racial community, a tension that led to the "rise to political dominance of Hindu nationalism in the 1990s" [Walsh, #38599].

The text also has radical critics. D. D. Kosambi wrote that "practically anything can be read into the Gita by a determined person, without denying the validity of a class system". He noted that "the high god repeatedly emphasizes the great virtue of non-killing (ahimsa), yet the entire discourse is an incentive to war". Ambedkar called the doctrine that only the body is killed an "unheard of defence of murder" and said that a lawyer pleading it "would be sent to the lunatic asylum". P. Lal called Krishna "the militarist" who used "forked-tongue speciousness" [Wikipedia: Bhagavad Gita, "Criticism" and "Ethics, war and violence"]. Armstrong's own reservation has already been noted: the text "seemed to absolve human beings of any responsibility for the carnage they committed" [#82303].

Key points

- Sorajjakool treats the epics and the Gita as Hinduism's narrative response to the Jain and Buddhist challenge, centred on dharma, Brahman and devotion [#35015].
- Debroy and Wikipedia regard the Gita as a composite synthesis of Upanishadic teachings, embedded in the *Bhīṣma Parva*. Armstrong calls it one of the last Axial texts [#81665; #82303].
- Its core teaching is *karma-yoga*: action without attachment to fruits, which lets a kshatriya kill and still reach liberation. Ferrara reads this as Arjuna's resolution of karmic fear [#82303; #66945].
- The avatar doctrine ("I appear in age after age") makes divine descent the guarantor of dharma. Thornton, after Monier-Williams, ties Vishnu's "sympathy with mundane suffering" to his "frequent descents (avatara)" [#55051].
- The commentaries diverge sharply. Prabhupada reads the text literally and as Krishna-centred, Yogananda yogically and inwardly, Vivekananda through service, and Osho iconoclastically [#39455; #51185; #63655; #74353; #44995].
- Huxley, Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman received the Gita as perennial philosophy [#68445].
- Walsh says Gandhi built a non-violent nationalism from Hindu imagery. Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Savarkar read the Gita as justifying violence [#38599; Wikipedia: Bhagavad Gita].

- Kosambi, Ambedkar and Lal attack the Gita as a defence of caste and killing, while Emerson and "most pandits and yogis" read it as allegory [Wikipedia: Bhagavad Gita].

Chapter 91.

Shiva, Vishnu and the Goddess: Sectarian Hinduism and the Tantric Current

What outsiders call "Hinduism" is, in the words of Michael Baltutis's primer, "a family of myriad faiths with four primary denominations: Saivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism and Smartism" [Baltutis, What Is Hinduism?, #54289, "Chapter 2: Hinduism's Four Denominations"]. Running through all four, and through Buddhism as well, is the Tantric current: ritual and yogic systems that use the body, sound, sexuality and the feminine power (shakti) as means of liberation. This chapter covers the sectarian map, Kashmir Shaivism, the goddess cults, the Tantric texts and their "left-hand" rites, and the Western readers who reshaped Tantra.

The four denominations and Daniélou's "primordial" Shaivism

Baltutis defines each denomination by its personal deity. For Saivites, "Personal God and temple Deity is Siva, neither male nor female," with Ganesha and Karttikeya also worshipped. For Shaktas the deity is "Shri Devi or Shakti, female, worshiped as Rajarajeshvari, Parvati, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, Kali, Amman, etc. — the Divine Mother." Vaishnavas worship Vishnu and his incarnations, and Smartas choose among several deities within one non-dual framework. Baltutis describes the Saivite path as four stages, *charya, kriya, yoga* and *jnana*: the soul moves from virtuous living through temple worship and internal yoga to "union with God Siva" [Baltutis, What Is Hinduism?, #54289, "Chapter 2"].The Kularnava Tantra lists five Tantric "branches" (Vaishnavas, Saivas, Saktas, Sauras and Ganapatyas) and complains that "the wrangling among the members sometimes

creates problems, while they forget that Tantra is the source of Mantras of each sect" [Kularnava Tantra, #54810, Introduction].

Alain Daniélou offers a far more radical history, and it is contested. In his essays collected as *Shiva and the Primordial Tradition* he claims that "since prehistoric times, India has known two great religious traditions," Shaivism, "a nature religion," and Jainism, "a humanistic religion." On this account Aryan Vedism only gradually absorbed them, and the result is "what is now known as Hinduism." He claims that "from Shaivism comes the cosmological research known as Samkhya, as well as Yoga." He further holds that the Jain doctrine of karma and transmigration "justifies the social hierarchy" and was later "used to justify contempt for the untouchables," while "Shaivism has never accepted the idea of the inequality of birth" [Daniélou, Shiva and the Primordial Tradition, #67683, "The Shaivite Revival from the Third to the Tenth Centuries C.E."]. He calls the period from the third to the tenth centuries CE "an extraordinary revival of a very ancient philosophic and religious heritage, coming from the prestigious pre-Aryan civilization." "Shaivite and Tantric rites, needing no brahmanic priesthood, continued alongside the Vedic rites" [ibid.]. He also argues that the textual record has been misjudged: "the Tamil versions of some texts are more ancient than the Sanskrit versions," and the roots of the Agamas, Tantras and Puranas go much deeper than their written dates suggest [ibid.]. His editor Jean-Louis Gabin adds that Sumerian parallels "confirmed" the authenticity of the Samkhya texts [Gabin, "Editor's Preface," in #67683]. These are the claims of Daniélou and his editor and are reported here as such.

Daniélou's theology is openly polemical. Monotheism, he writes, is "a metaphysical error" and "merely a political fiction," and monotheistic religions "have served as an excuse for persecutions, massacres, and genocides" [Daniélou, #67683, "Shaivite Cosmology and Polytheism"].

The linga and the Shiva–Shakti polarity

Daniélou reads the linga as cosmology, in three parts. The square base, hidden in the pedestal, "represents Brahma… the power of gravitation". The octagonal middle is "Vishnu, the centripetal force of concentration". The cylindrical top is "Shiva, the centrifugal force of expansion, the bursting forth of form and matter." The yoni is "Energy, which is the substance of the world" [Daniélou, #67683, "The Symbolism of the Linga"]. Devdutt Pattanaik, writing for a popular Indian audience, sees both sides as misreading the symbol: "Western scholars

have been spellbound by the sexual form but pay scant regard to the metaphysical thought… Hindu devotees, in contrast, are so focused on the metaphysical thought that they ignore, or simply deny, the sexual form" [Pattanaik, 7 Secrets of Shiva, #47449, "Author's Note"].

The *Soundarya Lahari*, a hymn attributed to Shankara, rests on the same polarity. In the commentary in the library's edition, Shiva "would not be able to stir even a second without Shakti." The Kanchi Mahaswami is cited as saying that "Shiva is quiescent and motionless and Shakti… keeps everything pulsating… and is inseparably united" [Adi Shankara, Essence of Soundarya Lahari, #41963]. The commentary places the divine couple "in the kundalini chakras in which Amba resides as tattvas, from manas to prithvi," with "a different name, function and quality" in each chakra [ibid., commentary]. The Kularnava's list of goddess names, which includes Chinnamasta, Bagalamukhi, Matangi and Kamalatmika, shows the same Mahavidya pantheon within Kaula worship [Kularnava Tantra, #54810].

Kashmir Shaivism: play, ignorance and the guru

Kashmir's non-dual Shaivism (Trika, or Pratyabhijna, "recognition") made this polarity a philosophy. In his oral commentary on Abhinavagupta's *Bodhapanchadashika*, Swami Lakshman Joo describes the supreme Shiva "along with this energy of his own nature," namely *svatantrya*, absolute freedom. Shiva is "fond of playing and playing" (*nityam kridarasotsukah*). His act is called "*ati durghata karitvam*… action which cannot be acted," the doing of creation and destruction together [Lakshman Joo, Abhinavagupta's Bodhapanchadashika, #74413, "Lord Siva's Unrestricted Creation and Destruction"]. "When you come to understand that it is only a trick, it is the play of Lord Siva and nothing else. Nothing has happened, nothing is lost, nothing is gained" [ibid., "The Nature of Ignorance and Illusion"].

The Motilal Banarsidass edition of the *Pratyabhijnahrdayam*, dedicated to Lakshmana Joo, states the doctrine systematically. Every appearance is an *abhasa*, a limited manifestation of universal consciousness. As images in a mirror are "non-different from the mirror," so the world, "though non-different from the purest consciousness of Parama Siva, appears as different"; therefore "this appearance cannot be called false" [Pratyabhijnahrdayam, #47798, Introduction, "Abhasavada"]. Chapter 92 takes up its comparison with Shankara.

Benjamin Luke Williams's Harvard dissertation sets out the social side of this metaphysics. The scriptures of the Kulamarga, "a complex of traditions that developed out of more esoteric branches of tantric Saivism," carry a "person-centered style of religious authority" in which gurus are "indispensable to the process of revelation." He contrasts this "Kaula idiom" with the Mimamsa view of the Veda as "eternal and authorless." Abhinavagupta's autobiographical passages present the ideal guru as "a fully-enlightened Kaula master" who is also learned in scholastic debate and Sanskrit poetry: "a cosmopolitan Siddha" [Williams, Abhinavagupta's Portrait of a Guru, #75643, Abstract].

Goddess traditions

David Kinsley's *Hindu Goddesses* traces the divine feminine from Vedic hints to Tantric theology. Kinsley retells the Sati myth: Daksha's sacrifice, Sati's suicide, Shiva carrying her corpse about the universe until Vishnu "slices bits and pieces from Sati's body," whose fragments become sacred sites [Kinsley, Hindu Goddesses, #66097, Parvati chapter]. He notes that the Lakshmi myths link the goddess with "victorious kings." When the demon Bali defeats Indra, Lakshmi "is attracted to Bali's winning ways" [ibid., Sri-Lakshmi chapter]. Royal fortune and divine favour are thus tied together. Kali is "summoned by Durga to help defeat the demon Raktabija" [ibid., Durga and Kali chapters]. A shilpa-shastra prescribes that Kali temples be built "near cremation grounds" [ibid.]. In "left-handed (vamacara) Tantrism," Kinsley writes, Kali "conveys death, destruction… the forbidden par excellence," and "during the pancatattva ritual, the sadhaka boldly confronts Kali and thereby assimilates, overcomes, and transforms her" [ibid., Kali chapter].

Tantra texts and the left-hand rite

John Woodroffe ("Arthur Avalon") was the first major Western advocate of Tantra. His *Introduction to Tantra Shastra* records that "the Tantra is spoken of as a fifth Veda" and that, according to the *Tara-Pradipa*, "in the Kali-yuga the Tantrika and not the Vaidika-Dharma is to be followed." [Woodroffe, Introduction to Tantra Shastra, #86209, "Mount Kailasa," "The Human Body"].

The library's *Kularnava Tantra* is a commented English digest, not Avalon's Sanskrit edition. It sets out the Kaula ladder of seven paths: Vedic ritual, bhakti,

jnana, dakshina, vama, siddhanta and kaula. The first three are "for the Pasus," the next two "for the Viras," and the last "for the Divyas." It ranks the guru above the gods: "between Guru and god, Guru is higher. There is no initiation higher than that of the Sakta." It lists the five Ms: "Madya, wine; Mamsa, meat; Matsya, fish; Mudra, grain; and Maithuna, sexual union." These are "performed with one's own wife. If the sadhaka has no wife or if the wife is incompetent, he can take another woman for rituals" [Kularnava Tantra, #54810, "Panchatattva"]. It also calls sexual bliss "the cheap worldly substitute for transcendental Bliss" [ibid.].

Mircea Eliade's Romanian essay *Introducere în tantrismul secret* calls Tantrism "the last creation of India" and "the most grandiose spiritual creation of post-Buddhist India." He holds that "there is no break from the Upanishads to Tantrism," and blames nineteenth-century scholars who read its sexual practices "ad literam" as "vulgar orgies." He presents the gradual awakening of Kundalini, "the most secret and sometimes (especially for the unprepared) the most dangerous practice," as the union of Shakti and Shiva "inside the human body" [Eliade, Introducere în tantrismul secret, #59256]. Dan Mirahorian's Romanian Shiva-Samhita manual opens with a warning to the same effect. Those who practised its exercises "without competent supervision… were seriously injured (psychosomatic and affective disorders; most often vascular accidents and sensory disorders) or died." He adds that electrical appliances in the practice room risk "death by autocombustion" [Mirahorian, Cartea secretelor din Hatha și Tantra Yoga, #361072, "Avertisment"].

Western appropriations: Evola, Crowley and the yoga debate

In *The Yoga of Power*, Julius Evola makes Tantra a metaphysics of power. Tantric iconography, he writes, shows "Shakti's dance over Shiva's outstretched and still body," whose "immobility represents the immutability of the male principle." He cites the union "in *viparita maithuna*, namely, the sexual position in which the male sits still and the woman… undulates her body over him." He then argues that "Western 'activistic' axioms operated an inversion of the traditional idea according to which the true male principle is characterized by 'being' " [Evola, The Yoga of Power, #65738, "Shakti: The World as Power"]. He traces Shaktism to a pre-Aryan "autochthonous spirituality," likening Kali and Durga to "Demeter Melaina, Cybele, Diana of Ephesus" [ibid., ch. I]. Wikipedia describes Evola as

"an Italian far-right philosopher," "an ideological mentor of the Italian neo-fascist and militant right," who advocated the Italian racial laws and "mentioned having worked for the Sicherheitsdienst" [Wikipedia: Julius Evola].

Aleister Crowley's *Eight Lectures on Yoga*, published under the name "Mahatma Guru Sri Paramahansa Shivaji," recast yama and niyama in astrological and "scientific" terms [Crowley, Eight Lectures on Yoga, #54622]. Hugh Urban documents the wider transfer. Theodor Reuss of the O.T.O. "regarded sexual rituals and the cult of the Lingam... as the root of all religion," and Crowley went further, identifying "sexual magic as the most powerful of all forms of magic." Crowley even used a "sexo-economic technique of imagining a shower of gold coins" at climax [Urban, The Yoga of Sex, #51741]. Baal Kadmon's *Lakshmi Mantra Magick* (2015) shows the commercial form: numbered mantras for "financial wealth," with "Lakshmi Money Incense" and gold candles [Kadmon, Lakshmi Mantra Magick, #366921]. Andrew Nicholson's essay "Is Yoga Hindu?" surveys the dispute over ownership. It runs from the Hindu American Foundation's 2010 "Take Back Yoga" campaign back to Vivekananda, who dismissed Hatha Yoga as "nothing but a kind of gymnastics" [Nicholson, Is Yoga Hindu?, #44108].

Interpreter	Reading of Tantra	Source
Woodroffe	Orthodox "fifth Veda" for the Kali age; defends the vamacara	#86209
Eliade	Pan-Indian synthesis; sexual rites as yogic technique	#59256
Daniélou	Survival of pre-Aryan Shaivism; anti-monotheist	#67683
Evola	Metaphysics of power; critique of Western "activism"	#65738
Reuss/Crowley	Sexual magic as the root and summit of religion	#51741, #54622
Kadmon	Mantra as technique for prosperity	#366921

Key points

- Baltutis classifies Hinduism into four denominations (Saivism, Shaktism, Vaishnavism, Smartism), each with its own deity and path; the Kularnava names five Tantric "branches."
- Daniélou's contested thesis holds that Shaivism is a pre-Aryan "primordial tradition" and the source of Samkhya and Yoga, revived from the 3rd to 10th centuries CE, and that monotheism is "a political fiction."
- Kashmir Shaivism (Abhinavagupta, Lakshman Joo) treats the world as Shiva's free play (*svatantrya*); appearances (*abhasa*) are real expressions of consciousness, not illusions.
- Williams shows that Kaula Shaivism placed authority in the living, deified guru rather than in an authorless Veda.
- Kinsley's goddess studies show the political side of the cult (Lakshmi and victorious kings) and the Tantric confrontation with Kali in the *pancatattva*.
- The Kularnava digest lists the five Ms and ranks the guru above the gods; Eliade and Mirahorian both stress the danger of unguided practice.
- Western readers turned Tantra into Traditionalist metaphysics (Evola, whom Wikipedia describes as a far-right ideologue), sexual magic (Reuss, Crowley) and commercial "mantra magick" (Kadmon).

Chapter 92.

Systems of Liberation: The Six Darshanas and the Vedanta Schools

Classical Indian philosophy is organised as *darshanas*, "views" or "points of view." There are six orthodox systems, usually paired: Nyaya and Vaisheshika, Samkhya and Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta. All accept the authority of the Veda. They argued with each other and with Buddhist and Jain thinkers about the self, the world and the means of liberation (*moksha*). By the second millennium CE one of them, Vedanta, had split into rival schools: Shankara's non-dualism, Ramanuja's qualified non-dualism, Madhva's dualism and the devotional schools that followed. This chapter sets out the systems as the library's reference works present them. It then follows the Vedantic schism, the monastic institutions built in Shankara's name and their modern politics, and the neo-Advaita of the twentieth century.

The six systems and their presuppositions

The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* (Jones and Ryan) gives the technical vocabulary. *Adrishta*, "literally… the 'unseen,' " is "a category in Mimamsa and Vaisheshika traditions." In Vaisheshika the term is "sometimes synonymous with adharma, the equally invisible negative karmic accrual." In a wider sense "adrishta is the unknown quality of things and of the soul; it brings about the cosmic order and arranges for souls according to their merits and demerits." The entry directs readers to Keith's *The Karma-Mimamsa* [Jones & Ryan, Encyclopedia of Hinduism, #42241, "adrishta"]. The moral order of the universe is thus built into the atomist cosmology itself.

Karl Potter's *Presuppositions of India's Philosophies* classifies the systems by how they relate knowledge to freedom. He separates "path philosophy," which concerns "finding… proper path(s) of renunciatory or disciplinary activity leading to complete freedom," from "speculative philosophy," and within the latter he separates "progress philosophy" from "leap philosophy." For Potter, "the systems called Nyaya and Vaisesika are progress philosophies, differing so little in fundamental assumptions as to be assimilable for most purposes," and "Samkhya too is a progress philosophy." Vedanta, by contrast, is no single school: "There are an indefinite number of different types of Vedanta, such as Dvaita ('dualistic'), Advaita ('non-dualistic'), Visistadvaita (usually translated 'qualified nondualistic')." Potter subdivides Advaita itself into "progress (Bhamati) Advaita, teetering (Vivarana) Advaita, and leap Advaita." Shankara "seems to teeter between leap and progress philosophy, and his followers divided into three strands" [Potter, Presuppositions of India's Philosophies, #82613]. Potter treats the Jains "as if they were one monolithic system." He notes that Buddhist tradition counts four systems: Vaibhasika, Sautrantika, Yogacara and Madhyamaka [ibid.].

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* are the root text of the Yoga darshana. Osho's lecture commentary *The Heart of Yoga* states that "Yoga will always be associated with Patanjali." Osho compares his own role to that of Rishabhdeva, the first Jain tirthankara: "I am not like Mahavira, but like Rishabhdeva," the founder who "had nobody in the past to look to" [Osho, The Heart of Yoga, #63135]. The modern ethical reading of the yamas is shown by Richard Freeman. He glosses *brahmacarya* as "to act within Brahman," treating "all beings as sacred," and warns that a teacher may claim that "the sexual act with a consenting student is not outside the bounds of ethical behavior." He answers that "just like with a priest, gang leader, or politician — anyone in a position of power — consent from someone who looks to you as a leader is not coming from a free, autonomous, integrated" self [Freeman, The Art of Vinyasa, #67024, ch. 2].

Shankara's Advaita: maya, mithya and superimposition

The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* summarises the doctrine plainly: "Shankara holds that the phenomenal world is false (mithya) and illusory (MAYA)… Only the one BRAHMAN is true." The central error is *adhyasa*, superimposition, as when a person "looking at a rope in a dark place" briefly sees a snake. The fundamental superimposition is "the ignorant superimposition of the empirical world upon

the attribute-free BRAHMAN" [Jones & Ryan, #42241]. The honorific "-acharya" ("an acharya is any spiritual guide or teacher"; originally "the one who initiated") "was, for example, appended to the names of all the great VEDANTA teachers: SHANKARA, RAMANUJA, MADHVA, and NIMBARKA" [ibid., "acharya"]. The encyclopedia also notes that "most TANTRIC philosophical systems are also termed advaita," but in a different sense: "the individual self is understood as being precisely brahman, God or Goddess, with no reservations… The world too is understood to be non-dual with the divinity" [ibid., "advaita"]. The *Yoga Vasishtha* is another major Advaita text. It is a Rama–Vasishtha dialogue attributed to Valmiki, condensed by Abhinanda Pandita to 6,000 couplets and by a later hand to about 230. It teaches that samsara "arises from the mind's projections and vanishes with cessation of thought" [Yoga Vasishta Sara, #52850].

The austere metaphysician is also credited with devotional and Shakta poetry. *Bhaja Govindam* opens: "Oh, Foolish one! Seek Govinda, seek Govinda. When the appointed time comes (death), grammar rules surely will not protect you" [Sukhabodhananda, Bhaja Govindam, #39624, v. 1]. The *Soundarya Lahari*, also attributed to Shankara, is a hymn to the Goddess. In it Shiva "would not be able to stir even a second without Shakti" [Adi Shankara, Essence of Soundarya Lahari, #41963]. Whether one author wrote both the commentaries and these hymns is a question the library's editions do not raise; they present all of them as Shankara's.

Two hostile readings: Kashmir Shaivism and Daniélou

The Kashmir Shaiva tradition rejects Shankara's denial of the world's reality. The introduction to the Motilal edition of the *Pratyabhijnahrdayam* calls his school "Santabrahmavada," "the philosophy of inactive brahman," and contrasts it with its own "Isvaradvayavada" point by point. For Shankara, brahman "is only prakasa or jnana," and "all activity in the case of Isvara is… due to avidya." The Shaiva author cites Brahma Sutra Bhashya 2.1.14 to show this. For the Shaivas, consciousness is "both prakasa and vimarsa," and Shiva "always performs the five-fold act" of emanation, maintenance, withdrawal, concealment and grace. Mahesvarananda is quoted as saying that inactive brahman "would be as good as unreal." Above all, "according to Santabrahmavada, visva or the universe is mithya or unreal. According to Isvaradvayavada, the universe is perfectly real." Since Shankara makes maya "neither real nor unreal," the author ar-

gues, "there would be a tinge of dualism in Samkara's philosophy," while Shaiva non-dualism is "integral, all-inclusive" [Pratyabhijnahrdayam, #47798, Introduction, §5 "Comparison and Contrast with Samkara's Advaitavada"].

Alain Daniélou attacks Shankara from a Shaiva-Samkhya position, and his view is contested. He calls Shankara a Dravidian scholar who "definitively annexed Vedism to Shaivism, utilizing a subtle and often perverse dialectic." He also calls him "one of the first inventors of what in modern terms is known as an ideology." Daniélou suggests that contact with Kerala's Jewish and Christian communities and with advancing Islam pushed Indian thought toward monism. In his reading, Brahman "becomes, without it being admitted, an only god, easily personified, close to the Christian and Muslim concept." He cites, and endorses ("not without reason"), Madhva's description of Shankara as "a deceitful demon who has falsified the teachings of the Brahma Sutras to lead souls astray" [Daniélou, Shiva and the Primordial Tradition, #67683, "Shankaracharya," "The Evolution of Vedanta"].

Ramanuja, Madhva and the devotional schools

The theistic Vedantas were Vaishnava. According to the Wikipedia article on Dvaita, Madhva's school (originally *Tattvavada*, "arguments from a realist viewpoint") was founded by the thirteenth-century Madhvacharya. He "believed in three entities: God, jiva (soul), and jada (maya, matter)," with souls "dependent (paratantra) on Vishnu (Narayana), who alone is independent (svatantra)." The same article contrasts this with Shankara's identity of Brahman and Atman and with Ramanuja's Vishishtadvaita, in which "ultimate reality (Brahman) and human soul are different but with the potential to be identical" [Wikipedia: Dvaita Vedanta]. The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* describes Bhaskara (c. ninth century) as accepting non-duality while rejecting "the notion that the phenomenal universe... is illusory." For him the universe is "a real evolute of the Supreme Reality" [Jones & Ryan, #42241, "Bhaskara"]. Daniélou adds that Bhaskara's "separation in unity" (*bhedabheda*) "was later taken over by the Muslim Sufis." He lists Vallabha's "absolute nondualism, the Shuddhadvaita" among the later schools [Daniélou, #67683]. Nimbarka, Vallabha and Chaitanya complete the "bhakti schools of Vedanta," as the encyclopedia's reading list calls them [Jones & Ryan, #42241, bibliography to "Bhedabheda"].

School	Teacher	Brahman–self relation	Status of world
Advaita	Shankara (8th–9th c.)	Identical	*mithya*, superimposed
Bhedabheda	Bhaskara (9th c.)	Difference-in-identity	Real evolute
Vishishtadvaita	Ramanuja	Different, potentially identical	Real
Dvaita	Madhva (13th c.)	Eternally distinct, dependent	Real
Shuddhadvaita	Vallabha	"Pure" non-dual	Real
Trika (Shaiva)	Abhinavagupta	Self is Shiva	Real display of *shakti*

Mathas, Shankaracharyas and modern politics

S. Vidyasankar's survey *Advaita Vedanta* covers the institutions. "All present day advaitins trace their guru-parampara through the four disciples of Sri Sankaracarya," the first heads of the four *amnaya mathas* at Puri, Sringeri, Dvaraka and Jyotirmath (Badrinath). He records, however, that "Paul Hacker attributes the tradition of four amnaya mathas… to Vidyaranyasvamin," the fourteenth-century Sringeri pontiff. He insists that "the advaita sampradaya is not a Saiva sect"; "advaitins are non-sectarian, and they advocate worship of Siva and Vishnu equally" [Vidyasankar, Advaita Vedanta, #38774, "Frequently Asked Questions," "Sources and Modern Literature"]. The mathas have been entangled in politics and litigation. Bharati Krishna Tirtha became Shankaracharya of Dvaraka in 1921 and of Puri in 1925. "Soon after the first world war, he was prosecuted along with the Ali brothers and other Muslim leaders, by the colonial British government for treason." At Jyotirmath the succession is disputed: "some people consider the rightful succession… to be along the disciple line of Sri Santananda Sarasvati," and so "there are at least two separate" claimants [ibid.].

Modern Advaita and the Traditionalist reading

Twentieth-century Advaita moved from scholastic commentary to the living sage. John Grimes's *Ramana Maharshi: The Crown Jewel of Advaita* dates Ramana's birth to December 1879 at Tiruchuzhi and his *mahasamadhi* to 14 April 1950. Grimes identifies "Ramana's unique contribution to methodology" as "his focus on the Self through Self-enquiry, on directing the seeker to ask, 'Who am I?' " [Grimes, Ramana Maharshi, #68283]. *I Am That*, the talks of Nisargadatta Maharaj, carries the same teaching: "The real does not die, the unreal never lived" [Nisargadatta, I Am That, #43742]. In the West, René Guénon's *Introduction générale à l'étude des doctrines hindoues* (1921) presented Vedanta as pure metaphysics: "c'est la métaphysique qui est le centre unique de toutes les doctrines de l'Orient." He accused Western Orientalists of "myopie intellectuelle" for reading these doctrines "en conformité avec leurs points de vue tout occidentaux" [Guénon, Introduction générale, #79029]. Guénon and Daniélou thus valued different things. Guénon put Vedantic metaphysics at the centre of the tradition, while Daniélou blamed the same Vedanta for overshadowing Samkhya and Tantra.

Key points

- The six darshanas share the Veda's authority but differ on cosmology and method; Vaisheshika's *adrishta* builds karmic merit and demerit into cosmic order.
- Potter divides the systems into "progress" and "leap" philosophies and counts "an indefinite number" of Vedantas, with Shankara "teetering" between the two.
- Shankara holds the world to be *mithya* and *maya*, superimposed on attribute-free Brahman; hymns attributed to him (*Bhaja Govindam*, *Soundarya Lahari*) are devotional and Shakta.
- Kashmir Shaivism charges Advaita with an "inactive brahman" and a "tinge of dualism"; Daniélou calls Shankara's system an "ideology" shaped by monotheism (his contested view).
- Madhva's Dvaita (God, souls and matter distinct and real) and Ramanuja's qualified non-dualism are the main Vaishnava alternatives; Bhaskara and Vallabha form intermediate positions.

- Vidyasankar traces the four Shankaracharya mathas and records Hacker's attribution of the scheme to Vidyaranya, a Shankaracharya prosecuted for treason by the British, and a disputed Jyotirmath succession.
- Ramana Maharshi's "Who am I?" and Nisargadatta's talks mark modern Advaita; Guénon's Traditionalism made Vedanta the West's model of "pure metaphysics."

Chapter 93.

Bhakti, the Sants and the Sikh Panth: From Devotional Revolt to the Khalsa and Its Politics

Bhakti, devotional love of a personal God sung in the vernacular, began in Tamil country and moved north over the next thousand years. It challenged Brahmin ritual and Sanskrit learning, and in the north it met Islamic Sufism. Out of that meeting, in the Punjab of the late fifteenth century, came Guru Nanak and the community (*panth*) of his disciples, the Sikhs. Within two centuries the community had a scripture, a holy city and a series of martyrs. In 1699 it acquired an armed initiatory order, the Khalsa. This chapter follows the line from the Tamil singer-saints to the Sikh kingdom, the colonial era, partition and 1984.

Bhakti: from the Tamil saints to the northern sants

The *Encyclopedia of World History* notes that "the word bhakti is derived from a Sanskrit word for 'sharing.' " It states that "bhakti movements combined songs (bhajan) with devotion. Two groups of singer-saints, the Alvars and the Nayanars, flourished in South India after the 600s" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "bhakti movements"]. Alain Daniélou assigns them their gods. "The Alvars, the Vaishnavite saints of the south, had already produced a vast mystical literature in Tamil, which came to exercise a great influence on Indochina and Indonesia," while "the Nayannars, other Tamil saints who were Shaivite," carried the same mysticism into Shaiva worship. "In the north, Chaitanya, Kabir, Mirabai, Surdas, and others are famous examples" [Daniélou, Shiva and the Primordial Tradition, #67683, "The Shaivite Revival"].

Mirabai (1498–1546) shows the social radicalism of the movement. The library's collection describes her as "an aristocratic Hindu mystical singer and devotee of

Lord Krishna from Rajasthan." She "danced from one village to another village," and one story places her "in the company of Kabir in Kashi, once again causing affront to social mores" [Mirabai, Mirabai (poems), #53913, biographical note]. Her verses state the break with family duty directly: "What I paid was my social body, my town body, my family body, and all my inherited jewels. Mirabai says: The Dark One is my husband now" [ibid.].

Nanak and the succession of the ten Gurus

Khushwant Singh's *A History of the Sikhs* gives Nanak's dates as 1469–1539. He was "the son of a petty official living in a village some thirty miles from Lahore." He "took to studying the Hindu and Muslim religions almost from his boyhood" and argued constantly with "itinerant holy men." Nine Gurus followed him. "Succession was not determined by the prevailing laws of inheritance, but with the object of finding a teacher most fitted to safeguard and develop the spiritual legacy left by Nanak... one Guru succeeded the other 'as one lamp lights another' " [Singh, A History of the Sikhs vol. 1, #68754, ch. 1]. A. Mandair's chapter in Sorajjakool's handbook credits Nanak with the *langar* (communal kitchen), Amardas (1497–1574) with separate Sikh shrines and festivals, and Ramdas (1534–1581) with the new centre that became Amritsar [Mandair, in Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, "Sikhism"].

What is Sikhism? The origins controversy

The sources disagree sharply. Khushwant Singh, himself a Sikh, writes: "Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, was a Hindu; so were the nine succeeding Gurus. Guru Nanak tried, like his contemporary reformers, to prune Hinduism of the many pernicious practices which were corroding Hindu society. His inspiration was essentially Hindu. The ideas were, of necessity, borrowed from Islam, the only other religion available for scrutiny" [Singh, vol. 1, #68754, ch. 13, "The Future"]. He places Sikhism as an "offshoot" of the Bhakti movement, sharing "much in common" with the Muslim Sufis [ibid., ch. 12]. He adds that "tendencies to revert to the Hindu fold had become stronger as the Sikhs attained temporal power. By the time of Ranjit Singh, Hinduism had practically come back into its own" [Singh, vol. 1, #68754].

Devotional Sikh authors present Nanak as the bearer of a new revelation. Sumeet Aurora's *Nanak: The Correspondent of the Ultimate* builds its life of the Guru on the Janamsakhi hagiographies. The fourth of these is "associated to Bhai Mani Singh," whom "the Sikhs of the time urged… to bring up an authentic portrayal of the life of Guru Nanak." Aurora's reading list sets these traditions beside the critical scholarship of McLeod (*Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, 1968), Grewal and Macauliffe [Aurora, Nanak, #75482, "Select Bibliography"]. Kirpal Singh's commentary on the *Jap Ji* stresses Naam and the Satguru (true master) over communal identity. It quotes Nanak: "Hindu temples and the mosques of the Muslims are all the same," and "to him whose delusion of the mind is gone, Hindu and Muslim are alike" [Kirpal Singh, The Jap Ji, #44978, Introduction].

Reading	Main claim	Source
Hindu reform	Nanak and all ten Gurus were Hindus; ideas "borrowed from Islam"	Khushwant Singh, #68754
Bhakti–Sufi synthesis	Offshoot of Bhakti, close to the Sufis; Hindu and Muslim "alike"	#68754 ch. 12; Kirpal Singh, #44978
New revelation	Nanak as "Correspondent of the Ultimate"; Janamsakhi tradition	Aurora, #75482
Missionary-Orientalist	Militarised sect; Granth partly "valueless"	Thornton, #55051 (citing Trumpp)

The Granth, the Mughals and the martyr Gurus

"The compilation of the Granth Sahib was largely the work of the fifth Guru Arjun and his disciple, Gurdas." It "contains the writings of the first five Gurus, the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, and a couplet by Guru Gobind Singh. A large part of the book consists of the writings of Hindu and Muslim saints of the time, chiefly those of the Muslim Kabir" [Singh, vol. 1, #68754, ch. 2].

The nineteenth-century missionary D. M. Thornton, relying on the German Indologist Ernest Trumpp, is hostile. He writes that some contributors were "personal flatterers of Guru Arjan, whose writings are quite valueless." He also writes that "Govind tried to procure the original book of the Adi Granth, as drawn up by Guru Arjan, in order to introduce into it a more martial spirit"

[Thornton, Parsi, Jaina and Sikh, #55051, citing Trumpp, Adi Granth, pp. cxx–cxxi]. After Arjan, Thornton says, "the work of the teacher was now in great measure transferred to the guardians of the sacred volume." "But the ninth Guru, Teg-Bahadur, attracted the attention of the fanatical Emperor Aurangzib" [ibid.]. Mandair puts the turn in political terms: "The Sikh Panth's involvement in political resistance came to a climax with the tenth guru, Gobind Singh (1666–1708)" [Mandair, in Sorajjakool, #35015].

The Khalsa of 1699

Khushwant Singh writes that Gobind "realized that a change in ideology was necessary... If his followers were to be saved from extinction, they had not only to be taught the use of arms but also convinced of the morality of the use of force." He quotes the Guru: "When all other means have failed, it is righteous to draw the sword" [Singh, vol. 1, #68754, ch. 1]. "On the Hindu new year's day in 1699, Gobind Singh assembled his followers and initiated five of them, known as Punj Piyaras, the Five Beloved, into a new fraternity." The five *kakkas* ("unshorn hair, comb, steel bangle, shorts and sword") "were introduced by Guru Gobind Singh on the Hindu new year's day in 1699, when he raised the militant Khalsa from the pacifist Sikh" [ibid., chs. 1, 13]. Wikipedia names the first Panj Pyare as Daya Singh, Dharam Singh, Himmat Singh, Mohkam Singh and Sahib Singh, initiated at Anandpur on 30 March 1699 [Wikipedia: Panj Pyare]. Mandair notes that initiates abandoned family surnames, men taking "Singh (literally, lion)" and women "Kaur (meaning princess)." The Guru "in turn received the same initiation from the panj piare," a "merger of identities between the guru and disciple" [Mandair, in Sorajjakool, #35015]. Thornton's verdict is: "From the moment of initiation the Sikh became a soldier, and the holy war his permanent occupation. He was not even to return a salute from a Hindu" [Thornton, #55051].

Kingdom, annexation and the colonial Panth

The second volume of Khushwant Singh's history covers 1839–2004. It describes the disorder after Ranjit Singh's death, with intrigue among the Dogra brothers; "Gulab Singh Dogra refused to send in revenue and incited" revolt. It follows the two Anglo-Sikh wars and the annexation of 1849. On annexation he reports that Mahajan and Ganda Singh accuse Dalhousie "of deliberately misrepresenting the

facts" that he gave as grounds [Singh, A History of the Sikhs vol. 2, #64452, Parts I–II].

Under British rule, religion and the army became bound together. After the Mutiny the army recruited Sikhs "beyond all proportion to their numbers" and insisted that recruits be "Kesadhari (the Khalsa with unshorn locks)" [Singh, vol. 1, #68754, ch. 5]. On the Hindu new year of 1857 Ram Singh, "following the precedent of Guru Gobind Singh, baptized five of his disciples" as the Namdharis (Kukas) [ibid.]. A Kuka prophecy foretold "the rebirth of Guru Gobind Singh in the person of one Ram Singh, carpenter of village Bhaini, who would resurrect the Khalsa, drive the English out of Hindustan." From prison Ram Singh "sent an emissary to Russia to elicit help." The Kukas claimed nearly a million members in 1871, but the 1891 census counted 10,541 [Singh, vol. 2, #64452, Part III]. The loyalist current took the opposite course. "On 5 March 1892, the lieutenant governor, Sir James Lyall… laid the foundation stone of the Khalsa College at Amritsar" [ibid.]. The Chief Khalsa Diwan pressed "separation from the Hindus, which, in political terminology, meant separate rights and reservation of seats" [Singh, vol. 1, #68754, ch. 10].

Akalis, partition and 1984

According to Wikipedia, the Akali movement (1920–1925) sought to take the gurdwaras from hereditary *mahants* and government managers. It took control of the Golden Temple and Akal Takht in October 1920, and it ended with the Sikh Gurdwara Bill of 1925, which placed the historic shrines under the elected SGPC [Wikipedia: Akali movement]. Partition in 1947 divided the Sikh homeland. Ramachandra Guha records that in Delhi "the Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan were baying for blood" [Guha, India After Gandhi, #65134]. The Akali Dal's Punjabi Suba campaign, led by Master Tara Singh, rested on his conviction that "the Sikh religion will live only as long as the Sikh panth exists as an organized entity." It produced the Punjabi-speaking state of 1966, with Haryana and Chandigarh split off [Wikipedia: Punjabi Suba movement].

The Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973 and Bhindranwale's Dharam Yudh Morcha (1982) led to Operation Blue Star, 1–10 June 1984 [Wikipedia: 1984 anti-Sikh riots; Wikipedia: Operation Blue Star]. Mark Tully calls it "the Indian army's clumsy attack on the Sikh Golden Temple," which "deeply wounded the pride of the Sikhs" and "gave them a martyr" for the Khalistan cause [Tully, No Full Stops in India, #62943, "Operation Black Thunder"]. Casualty figures for Blue

Star vary widely. The government White Paper gave 493 dead, independent estimates run to several thousand, and human-rights groups put the total at more than 10,000 [Wikipedia: Operation Blue Star]. Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards, and the pogroms that followed killed about 2,800 Sikhs in Delhi and 3,350 nationwide by government estimate, with other estimates of 8,000–17,000. The CBI believes the violence "was organised with support from the Delhi police and some central-government officials," and the Akal Takht calls it genocide [Wikipedia: 1984 anti-Sikh riots].

A note on fringe use of Sikh sources: Michael Tellinger's Romanian-translated *Sclavii zeilor* (vol. 2) reproduces the formal definition of a Sikh. This is anyone who firmly believes in "one Immortal Being," the ten Gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib and the baptism of the tenth Guru, and owes allegiance to no other religion. Tellinger quotes Granth passages as evidence for his thesis that the Anunnaki "gods" ruled early humanity [Tellinger, Sclavii zeilor vol. 2, #17919].

Key points

- Bhakti ("sharing") began with the Tamil Alvars (Vishnu) and Nayanars (Shiva) after the 600s and spread north with Kabir, Mirabai, Surdas and Chaitanya.
- Nanak (1469–1539) was followed by nine Gurus chosen for fitness, not by inheritance, "as one lamp lights another."
- Khushwant Singh holds that all ten Gurus were Hindus who reformed Hinduism with ideas borrowed from Islam; devotional authors (Aurora, Kirpal Singh) present a new revelation that transcends both.
- The Adi Granth holds the first five Gurus, Tegh Bahadur, a couplet of Gobind and much of Kabir; Thornton, following Trumpp, dismisses parts as "flatterers" and accuses Gobind of seeking to militarise the text.
- The Khalsa of 1699 (Panj Pyare, five Ks, Singh and Kaur) "raised the militant Khalsa from the pacifist Sikh"; Thornton calls holy war its "permanent occupation."
- Colonial rule bound Sikh identity to the army, millenarian revolt (the Kukas) and loyalist institutions (the Khalsa College, 1892).
- The twentieth century ran from the Akali gurdwara campaign and partition through the Punjabi Suba (1966) to Operation Blue Star, Indira Gandhi's assassination and the 1984 pogroms.

Part X.

East Asia

Chapter 94.

Heaven, Ancestors and Spirits: The Foundations of Chinese Religion

Long before anything was called "Confucianism" or "Taoism", the Yellow River peoples had a complete religious world. It held a high god in the sky, royal ancestors consulted through cracked bones, spirits of mountain and soil, gods of the door and the kitchen, and a crowd of souls and ghosts. Its political theology was just as old. The king ruled because he alone had privileged access to the supreme deity and the royal dead. The Zhou conquerors turned this claim into the Mandate of Heaven: what Heaven had given to a virtuous house it could take away. Every later Chinese tradition, and every later Chinese rebellion, stood on this ground.

The Shang: Di, the royal dead and the oracle bones

The translator's introduction to the Hackett *Analects* calls the Shang (traditionally 1751–1122 BCE) the earliest Chinese civilization "for which we have archeological and written evidence". Its records are oracle bones, inscribed with questions to the Shang ancestors and then heated, the cracks "decoded by the diviner, who was often the Shang king himself" [Analects, with selections from traditional commentaries, #40662, "Pre-Confucian Background"]. Above the ancestors stood the "Lord on High" (*shangdi*), who "seems originally to have been a nonhuman god who gradually came to be viewed as the first human ancestor of the Shang people". A ruler who kept up the sacrifices gained *de*, rendered "Virtue" in the sense of Latin *virtus*: "a visible mark of the spirits' favor" [#40662].

Karen Armstrong adds the dynastic myth. A dark bird sent by Di laid an egg that a lady ate, and she bore the first Shang ancestor, so "the king was the only person in the world who was allowed to approach the High God directly" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, ch. 1 "The Axial Peoples"]. She counts 150,000 inscribed oracle bones, with questions about hunts, harvests "or even a toothache". She also notes how unreliable Di was ("It is Di who is harming our harvests"). By the twelfth century the Shang had "stopped addressing him directly at all".

There was also blood in this religion. At Yin (Anyang) the tombs of nine kings were surrounded by "the remains of soldiers who had been sacrificed at their funerals", and Armstrong quotes Mozi's later disgust: "As for the men who are sacrificed in order to follow him, if he should be a Son of Heaven, they will be counted in hundreds or tens" [#82303, ch. 1]. Eugen Celan explains the practice as belief in life after death. Pre-Confucian Chinese "offered human sacrifices, so that in the afterlife the deceased ruler would not be left without a retinue" ("sacrificii umane, pentru ca în viața de apoi conducătorul decedat să nu rămână fără suită") [Celan, Viața după pragul morții, #13294].

The Zhou conquest and the Mandate of Heaven

The Zhou (conquest traditionally 1122 BCE; Armstrong gives 1045) were "very eager to identify with the religious and political systems of their predecessors" and merged the Lord on High with their own sky god *tian*, an "anthropomorphic figure". Heaven, however, could charge an earthly representative with the "Mandate" (*ming*) [#40662]. The introduction states the consequence:

> "Heaven ... is a supreme deity who has chosen to bestow the Mandate upon the Zhou because of their ritual propriety. In this case, what has been given can also be taken away. Ancestors still play a crucial role, and the Zhou were eager to claim for their ancestral line the same sort of privileged access to the supreme deity that the Shang line enjoyed, but there is no longer any guarantee that the ancestors can protect their descendents from the wrath of Heaven" [#40662, Introduction, near note 5 citing Book of Documents ch. 31].

The early texts present the conquest as almost effortless, the enemy armies submitting to King Wu's Virtue. From this came the lasting idea that "the need to exert force [is] evidence that a ruler does not truly enjoy Heaven's favor" [#40662].

Armstrong finds the doctrine in the Duke of Zhou's speech in the *Shujing*. The Shang had become "tyrannical and corrupt", Heaven pitied the people and revoked the mandate, and the new king had to be "in harmony with the little people". In her reading, "the Zhou had introduced an ethical ideal into a religion that had hitherto been unconcerned about morality": "if a ruler was selfish, cruel, and oppressive, Heaven would not support him, and he would fall" [#82303, ch. 1]. John Clark Archer's composite definition of the Chinese Supreme likewise includes "the dethroner of tyrants … [who] will give effect to what the people properly desire" [Archer, Faiths Men Live By, #55131, ch. 3 "An Introduction to Religion in China"]. A legitimacy that could be withdrawn implied a right to resist, and Mencius would draw that conclusion (Chapter 95).

Heaven, Earth and the ritual state

Archer compares China with Greece and India. Zeus headed a pantheon, and India's "Father Sky" gave way to gods of wind and storm, "in China, on the other hand, the sky maintained its high place and never became subordinated to other nature powers" [#55131, ch. 3, "Nature Worship"]. Earth received equal worship "from about 1000 B.C.", with sacrifices to Heaven at midsummer in the southern suburb and to Earth at midwinter in the northern suburb. This "was performed for the people, not by them. It was state ceremonial." The emperor reigned "by Heaven's appointment (not otherwise by divine right, for China entertained no theory of imperial divinity)" [#55131, ch. 3, "Ritual"].

Armstrong describes ninth-century Zhou cities as places where "life was entirely dominated by religion". Through ritual (*li*) the king kept the seasons and the heavens on course [#82303, ch. 2 "Ritual"]. Every city had two Earth altars, and "Location was everything in Chinese religion": tilling the soil joined the living to "the ancestors, who had tilled the ground before them". Expeditions set out from the Earth mound, where "subversive prisoners" were sacrificed on return. The king stood in a different corner of a ritual hall each season, because "his personal likes and dislikes were wholly unimportant". Order produced the "Great Peace (*tai-ping*)". Drought obliged him to confess his faults publicly. For Armstrong, this ritualisation of all noble activity is the seedbed of the Chinese Axial Age [#82303, ch. 2].

Souls, spirits and the ancestral tablet

Archer maps the *yang–yin* dualism onto the spirit world. "The gods and godly forces are called *shen*, while demons and things devilish are *kuei*." Originally ambivalent, the *kuei* became "altogether vengeful ghosts and evil spirits" [#55131, ch. 3]. At death the intelligent spirit "ascends 'on high' " (the earlier edition adds "not to Heaven, for Heaven was not conceived of as a Paradise" [#55131, earlier edition, ch. 3 n. 36]). Spirits lingered with the power "to occupy and control inanimate objects, such as ancestral tablets or a dead body, to enter the bodies of living animals (a girl's soul in a rat), or to enter human bodies as disease" [#55131, ch. 3].

In the seven-shrined Zhou royal temple each ancestor "was represented not by an image but by a tablet (*shen chu*)", into which the souls were called at worship. Commoners, whose ancestors "were all *kuei*", worshipped at household shrines. Under what Archer calls Sinaean ritual, "sacrifices and prayers were offered to all the spirits". The sacrifice was a family communion with no expiatory element: "Prayer was not for pardon, but to ask the spirits to 'regard' the offering" [#55131, ch. 3, "Ritual"]. Archer refuses to reduce religion to this cult: "Not all gods were first human spirits. All ancestor-worship is religion, but religion is not entirely ancestor-worship" [#55131, ch. 2].

Filial piety and the household religion

For Archer, filial piety is "the ruling idea in religion". It is the attitude toward living elders that "extends itself in worship of their spirits after they have died", and the root of Chinese conservatism, since "the faces of the living have been set toward the past" [#55131, ch. 3]. Even the Chinese idea of history begins inside this frame: "What the Chinese writings call 'history' (*shu*, to write) began with the accession of the emperor Yao ... in 2356 B.C.", although "the first verifiable date in Chinese history is 842 B.C." [#55131, ch. 3, "The Past"]. The *Analects* chronology gives Yao 2357–2257 BCE and notes no archaeological evidence for the Xia [#40662, "Traditional Chronology"].

Sorajjakool reports that traditional Chinese religions "are widely practiced in 60 countries around the world with more than 225 million adherents". Ancestor worship, one of the four family rites of the *Jiali*, "was a central religious activity which carried from generation to generation reinforcing the core virtue of Confucianism: filial piety". When Mahayana Buddhism arrived, "the concept

of heavenly beings in Mahayana could accommodate ancestor worship" [Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, ch. 5].

Many teachings, one people

Archer warns against Western-style counting: "It is useless to assign percentages of the population to these actually noncompetitive faiths … The average Chinese may be Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist—and an 'animist,' as well—without much sense of inconsistency" [#55131, ch. 3, "Religion Today in China"]. The Romanian essayist Paul Anghel stresses continuity. Compared with Europeans, he writes, "the Chinese have kept, almost to the present day, the religions of antiquity. It is as though the Romanians of today still worshipped Zamolxis", adding George Călinescu's parallel (from *Am fost în China nouă*) that it is as if Greeks and Italians still worshipped Zeus-Jupiter or Minerva-Pallas Athena [Anghel, O clipă în China, #25703]. Archer's 1950s revision ends with a political question: "Will Marxism be offered the Chinese as a new state religion? It is likely that the attempt will be made, but a study of Chinese history throws doubt upon its success" [#55131, ch. 3].

Feature	Shang–Zhou China	Indo-Iranian parallel (Armstrong, ch. 1; Parts 1–2)
Sky god	Di/Shangdi merged with Tian; never subordinated (Archer)	Indian "Father Sky" displaced by storm gods (Archer)
Sacrifice	Ancestor feasts; retainers killed for royal tombs	Competitive Aryan sacrifice that Zoroaster condemned
Legitimacy	Revocable Mandate of Heaven	Ritual upkeep of cosmic order (see Parts 1–2)
Ethical turn	Duke of Zhou: Heaven moved by justice	Zoroaster's moral dualism
Dead	Souls linger and dwell in tablets	Zoroastrian judgement of the soul (Part 1)

Key points

- Shang kings consulted Di and the royal dead by oracle bone, and royal tombs held sacrificed retainers (Armstrong citing Mozi; Celan).
- The Zhou merged Di with Tian and made rule conditional: "what has been given can also be taken away" (#40662).
- Armstrong dates the entry of ethics into Chinese religion to the Duke of Zhou, and Archer's composite Heaven is "the dethroner of tyrants".
- The cult of Heaven and Earth was state ceremonial "performed for the people, not by them", and "location was everything".
- Archer divides spirits into *shen* and *kuei*. Souls could enter tablets, animals or bodies as disease, and sacrifice went "to all the spirits".
- Filial piety extended into ancestor worship. Sorajjakool counts over 225 million adherents and records Mahayana accommodation of the ancestor cult.
- For Archer the faiths were "noncompetitive", and he doubted that Marxism would succeed as a state religion.

Chapter 95.

Confucius and the Making of a State Orthodoxy

Kongzi (traditionally 551–479 BCE), latinised as Confucius, was a disappointed minor official in his lifetime. Within four centuries he was the patron sage of an empire, and from 1313 to 1910 his canon was memorised by every candidate for office. This chapter follows that transformation through his teaching, the rival heirs Mencius and Xunzi, the Han state religion, Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucian orthodoxy and the modern quarrel over whether Confucianism is a religion at all. Throughout, the doctrine's political function stays in view, from the duty of ministers to the right to depose a ruler.

A minor official of Lu

The translator's introduction to the Hackett *Analects* is cautious about biography. Most traditional details come from Sima Qian's *Record of the Historian* (c. 100 BCE), "much of which clearly consists of legend and literary invention". From the *Analects* itself we learn that Confucius was a native of Lu, of humble means, and a member of the *shi*, "the lowest of the three classes of public office holders" [Analects, with selections from traditional commentaries, #40662, Introduction, "The Age of Confucius"]. He belonged to the *ru*, specialists "concerned with transmitting and preserving the traditional rituals and texts of the Zhou Dynasty". Lu was the fief of the Duke of Zhou's descendants and "preserved Zhou culture more or less intact" [#40662, n. 7]. Power in Lu had been usurped by the "Three Families", whose use of royal rites appalled Confucius as "a transgression against the very structure of the cosmos" [#40662]. On his career the introduction is plain:

> "Confucius himself probably never held anything more than minor posts in his lifetime, failing to realize his ambition of being employed at a high level, under a virtuous ruler, so that he could put his vision into practice. He did, however,

> gather around himself a fairly sizeable group of disciples, some of whom managed to obtain high governmental posts after the Master's death" [#40662, Introduction].

The sources disagree on when the West coined the Master's name and the word "Confucianism". The *Analects* translator says the latinised "Confucius" was "bestowed upon him by Jesuit missionaries in the 18th century" [#40662]. Archer says the term "Confucianism" "is of Western origin and not found in the writings of Chinese scholars prior to the latter part of our seventeenth century, when the Jesuits began to use it. Ju-chiao is the Chinese term, historically" [Archer, Faiths Men Live By, #55131, earlier edition, ch. 4 n. 1]. Both agree that the label is a Jesuit construct imposed on what Chinese called the "scholar-teaching" (*ju-chiao*).

The Way of Zhou: ritual, humaneness and the gentleman

The *Analects* introduction reads Confucius as a religious reformer who saw his age as fallen. The ideal was the Golden Age of the sage-kings and the early Zhou: "The Zhou gazes down upon the two dynasties that preceded it. How brilliant in culture it is! I follow the Zhou" (3.14). The ideal ruler acted by *wu-wei*: Shun "made himself reverent and took his [ritual] position facing South, that is all" (15.5). Decline meant empty externals. Filial piety had become mere feeding ("even dogs and horses are provided with nourishment", 2.7), and the conformist "village worthy" was "the thief of Virtue" (17.13). On human nature there is one saying: "By nature people are similar; they diverge as the result of practice" (17.2) [#40662].

Archer analyses the moral vocabulary. *Jen* (*ren*) is "an inward and spiritual love for all mankind, of which *i* ... what is right to do, is the outward and visible manifestation". *Li* "has a root and a flower": its root is sincerity and reverence, and its flower is "rites and ceremonies, harmonious social relationships, and good government" [#55131, ch. 3, "Ceremony"]. The golden rule appears in negative form in *Analects* 15.23. Mitchell Heisman quotes it as "Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II].

Mencius and Xunzi: the right to depose and the crooked stick

The two Warring States heirs divided over human nature, and their division had political consequences. The *Analects* introduction notes that the distinction between "internal" and "external" goods "begins in the commentarial tradition with Mencius". Internal goods are the Confucian virtues, "which have moral value and can be sought after and attained through human effort". External goods, "such as wealth, fame, or longevity", are "ultimately outside of human control" [#40662, n. 8, citing Mencius 7:A:3].

Archer lists Mencius' political doctrines: "The people are Heaven's great concern"; "the state is born of the people and on occasion may be modified or overthrown by them"; and rulers, as Heaven's agents, should "see according as the people see", for if they "outrage the benevolence and righteousness proper to their nature and their office, they may be deposed" [#55131, ch. 4, "Mencius: Major Doctrines"]. Mencius thus directed the system "toward democracy by his theory that the welfare of the people is the end of government … and that unjust rulers may be overthrown by rebellion morally justified" [#55131, ch. 4]. Archer nonetheless calls Mencius' exaltation of the individual "harmful to religion".

Xunzi took the opposite view. In Archer's summary, man is "a 'crooked stick' in need of straightening", and "eliminating prayer, providence, spirits, divination, and the supernatural, he placed man fundamentally upon his own resources" [#55131, ch. 4, "Hsün-tze"]. The politics of the student followed: the *Analects* introduction notes that Xunzi taught Hanfeizi and Li Si, "the two Legalists thinkers who helped the first Emperor of Qin unify China in 221 b.c.e." [#40662].

Thinker	Human nature	Heaven	Political consequence
Confucius	"similar; diverge through practice" (17.2)	Personal, mission-giving (Archer)	Rule by Virtue and ritual, not force
Mencius	Originally good	People's welfare is Heaven's concern	Unjust ruler may be deposed (Archer)
Xunzi	Prone to evil; must be straightened	Nature, not providence	Teachers and law; pupils became Legalists

Thinker	Human nature	Heaven	Political consequence
Zhu Xi	Good; evil as unrealised potential	Sky, Supreme Ruler, moral law	Orthodoxy, examinations, loyalty tablets

From burned books to state religion

The first emperor, Archer writes, "ordered most of the Confucian Classics burned, because, he said, they blocked the way of progress" [#55131, ch. 4]. The *Analects* introduction dates the burning to 213 BCE, and its chronology says that by the first century BCE "a syncretic form of Confucianism becomes the state religion" [#40662, "Traditional Chronology"]. Peter Stanford tells the same story in his Romanian-language survey. The Qin policy proved unpopular, and once the Han replaced the emperor, Confucian principles were popular again. The Han dynasty "lasted until 220 AD and confirmed Confucianism as a religion" by raising Confucius to perfection ("a confirmat confucianismul ca religie"). Stanford also notes that the *Analects* line "What joy to welcome friends from afar" opened the 2008 Beijing Olympics. He quotes Confucius: "He who rules his state on a moral basis will be supported by the people, as the pole star is surrounded by all the other stars" [Stanford, 50 de idei … Religie, #77349, "Confucianism"].

Zhu Xi and the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy

After an eclipse by Buddhism under the Sui and Tang, Confucianism was "officially revived in the Song Dynasty by the so-called 'neo-Confucian' school". Zhu Xi's "Four Books", with his commentary, "became the basis of China's civil service examination, and were therefore memorized by every educated Chinese person from 1313 until the last nationwide exam in 1910" [#40662, Introduction]. The translator warns that Zhu Xi "read quite a bit of anachronistic Buddhist metaphysics into the Analects" [#40662].

Archer presents Chu Hsi (1130–1200) as the "great Chinese monistic rationalist". The universe is matter (*chi*) and law (*li*), but "the 'matter' (*chi*) of Chu Hsi seems to have been in its primordial form pure spirit", which law sets rotating

to produce *yang* and *yin* and the five agents [#55131, ch. 4, "Chu Hsi's Theory of the Universe"]. Politically, "Chu Hsi raised Confucianism again to the place of pre-eminence and made it the state religion. Every other faith was required to recognize it by erecting in their temples and mosques and on their altars tablets of loyalty to the emperor" [#55131, ch. 4]. Through the examinations, religious orthodoxy and bureaucratic recruitment became one institution.

Religion or philosophy?

Archer answers that Confucius was religious. "He recognized invisible Power and powers—Heaven and the spirits. He felt that Heaven 'knew him,' had entrusted him with his mission, and would sustain him against his enemies", and "he commended sacrifice as the chief method of approach to Heaven and the spirits" [#55131, ch. 4]. The *Analects* introduction likewise reads the text as "a powerful religious and moral vision" [#40662].

Archer also documents the opposite reading. Tsai Yuan-p'ei held that Confucianism "was not even a religion", and the *La Jeunesse* radicals under Chen Tu-hsiu "opposed not only all religions but religion itself" [#55131, ch. 4]. Politics drove the swings. In reaction against Christian missions, Confucius "was elevated on December 31, 1906, by Imperial Rescript, to equal rank with Heaven". Yuan Shih-k'ai restored sacrifice in 1914 as part of his ambition "to make himself emperor". In 1948–49 Wing-tsit Chan found Confucian temples used as barracks and "a garbage dump", and the Communist government then abolished the national holiday for Confucius [#55131, ch. 4].

Confucian orthodoxy had practical effects beyond the court. Tarique Qayumi's chapter in Toledo-Pereyra's surgical history states that "according to Confucian teaching, the human body is sacred and therefore it cannot be dissected", so Chinese medicine remained "traditionally noninvasive" [Toledo-Pereyra (ed.), Vignettes on Surgery, History and Humanities, #34844, ch. 4 "Ancient Far East"]. In Korea, Octavian Simu reports, "Confucianism rejected the shamanic rituals" ("confucianismul a respins ritualurile şamanice") [Simu, Şamanismul, #48977], a conflict taken up in the Korea chapter of this Part.

Heisman: Confucianism and early Judaism

Mitchell Heisman draws the most pointed comparison in the library. After noting that "the creation of the Jews began with a decree of 'supernatural' law", he writes:

> "Of the major religions, Confucianism might be the closest analog to early Judaism. It is not simply because Confuscius's golden rule, 'Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you' (Analects 15:23), is virtually identical to Hillel's; versions of the same golden rule can be found in nearly all the major religions. Judaism and Confucianism both emphasize ancestral wisdom as a guide for living in this world. They both emphasize behavior more than belief" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II].

Elsewhere Heisman states that "original Judaism is more about behavior in this world than belief" [#38252, Part II].

Key points

- Confucius (traditionally 551–479 BCE) probably "never held anything more than minor posts", but his disciples gained office after his death (#40662).
- The sources disagree on when the Jesuits coined the Western name: late seventeenth century for "Confucianism" (Archer) or the eighteenth century for "Confucius" (#40662). The Chinese term is *ju-chiao*.
- His teaching restores the Way of Zhou, preserved in Lu: ritual with a "root and a flower", inner *ren*, sincere filial piety, and the negative golden rule (15.23).
- Mencius separated internal from external goods and, in Archer's account, held that rulers who outrage righteousness "may be deposed". Xunzi's pupils became the Legalists of Qin.
- The Han made a syncretic Confucianism the state religion, Stanford says until 220 CE. Zhu Xi's Four Books governed the examinations from 1313 to 1910.
- Archer argues Confucius was religious ("Heaven 'knew him' "), while Chinese modernists denied that Confucianism was a religion. Its state status rose and fell with politics from 1906 to 1949.
- Heisman calls Confucianism "the closest analog to early Judaism": both emphasise ancestral wisdom and behaviour over belief.

Chapter 96.

The Way and Its Power: Laozi, Zhuangzi and the Birth of Religious Daoism

Daoism has two faces. One is the philosophy of the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi*, quietist and paradoxical, yet full of advice to rulers. The other is a church of hereditary Celestial Masters, healing parishes that collected rice and confessions, armies, emperor-killing elixirs and revealed scriptures. Archer sums up the relation: Taoism "as mysticism was 'founded' by Lao-tze (sixth century B.C.), as religion, by Chang Ling (second century A.D.), and as philosophy, by Ko Hung (third century A.D.)" [Archer, Faiths Men Live By, #55131, ch. 5 "Taoism"]. This chapter follows both faces and the politics between them. The modern practice manuals on the shelf (Chia, Reid, Van Auken) are reported as practitioners' claims of lineage.

Laozi and the Daodejing

Archer records the traditional biography with caution. Laozi was born in 604 BCE, served as "keeper of the public records at Lo-yang", and rode west on a "black ox" after writing the book at the border officer's request [#55131, ch. 5]. The text has about five thousand characters in eighty-one chapters. Its standing was confirmed "in 666 A.D., when the author was canonized and made a member of the royal line", and it was included in the national examinations [#55131, ch. 5]. The *Analects* edition's chronology is more sceptical: Laozi is a "legendary figure, but text bearing name composed in latter part of 5th c. b.c.e." [Analects, with selections from traditional commentaries, #40662, "Traditional Chronology"].

The library's Romanian translation follows "in most cases the lexical guidance of Heshang Gong" [Lao Zi, Dao de Jing, #45052, note 16]. Its verse XXXVI shows the strategic side of the text:

> "If you would diminish a thing, first enlarge it. If you would weaken a thing, first strengthen it. If you would bring about its fall, first raise it up" ("De vei voi să micşorezi un lucru, întâi şi-ntâi să îl măreşti. De vei voi ca să slăbeşti un lucru, întâi şi-ntâi să-l întăreşti. De vei voi să îi stârneşti căderea, întâi şi-ntâi să îl ridici") [#45052, verse XXXVI].

Verse XXIX speaks to rulers directly: "If anyone wishes to rule under Heaven and acts as he pleases, I know he will not succeed. The country is an animated thing ... whoever wants to subjugate it will lose it" [#45052, verse XXIX]. The political doctrine is *wu-wei*. The *Analects* introduction notes that the ideal was already present in early Zhou court religion as "effortless action", not "doing nothing" [#40662]. Lao-tze, says Archer, "taught through negatives, and advocated inaction as the true means of the realization of life" [#55131, ch. 5].

Zhuangzi, Liezi and Mozi

For Archer, Chuang-tze (c. 350–275 BCE) "glorified his master, and gloried in attacks upon Confucianists". Offered a prime ministership, he said he would rather be "a common turtle alive in the mud". Where the Master spoke of *wu* ("nonexistence"), Chuang-tze spoke of *wu-wu*, "nonexisting nonexistence". Archer judges that this "obliterates all moral distinctions" [#55131, ch. 5]. Archer then turns to Mo-ti, who "seems actually to have been reared in the Confucian 'school' " and then "swung away—shall we say toward Taoism?" [#55131, ch. 5]. Archer calls him "the most religious of all the ancient thinkers" and notes that the Taoists "preserved his writings".

The Simpkins see the seed of religious Daoism inside the philosophical classics: "Both refer to faraway places where divine beings lived free of all worldly limitations, capable of great powers. Lieh-tzu spoke of men who could walk through walls, implying that nothing in this world could stop them" [Simpkins & Simpkins, Taoism for Beginners, #50704, ch. 1].

The Celestial Masters: a church and a theocracy

According to the Simpkins, Chang Ling (Zhang Daoling) was born under Emperor Huan and preached long-life methods in Szechwan. Converts "were required to pay five bushels of rice when they joined, giving the sect its original name", and he took the title "Heavenly Master". His son received an army through a governor's patronage. His grandson Chang Lu "had the general [Chang Hsiu] killed and became the leader of both sects", and then set up "free inns for travelers where Taoism could be taught". Chang Hsiu's rival cult held that "sickness was the result of sin" and cured it by confession [#50704, ch. 1, "Founding of the Taoist Church"]. The reference shelf gives the founding as 142 AD and says the movement won independence in 194 and "controlled a theocratic state in what is now Sichuan". Zhang Lu submitted to Cao Cao in 215 [Wikipedia: Way of the Celestial Masters; Wikipedia: Zhang Lu (Han dynasty)]. Camphausen dates Chang Tao-ling to 34–156 CE and names his school "Five Pecks of Rice Taoism" (*Wu-tou-mi Tao*), one of the major schools of religious Taoism (*Tao-chiao*) [Camphausen, Encyclopedia of Sacred Sexuality, #51423, "Chang Tao-ling"; "Five Pecks of Rice Taoism"]. Ripley's modern remedies still appeal to "one of the earliest Daoist precepts from the early community of Zhang Daoling, the first 'Celestial Master' " [Ripley, The Hundred Remedies of the Tao, #73569].

Archer's earlier edition describes the hereditary papacy as it stood in the 1930s:

> "Descendants lived on Lung Hu mountain and served as popes until recently, each head of the Chang family being known as T'ien-tze, or 'Heaven Master.' Tradition says there was passed on to each successor a sword of the founder, at once the symbol of the papal office and the instrument of miracle" [#55131, earlier edition, ch. 5, p. 113].

Visitors reported "a court-yard full of jars in each of which some hurtful demon is held prisoner". Emperors endowed the office (estates in 1015; Kublai Khan's invitation in 1276) until the Kuomintang "lately" drove the pope from his seat [#55131, earlier edition, ch. 5].

The Great Peace and the Yellow Turbans

The Simpkins describe a second movement. Yu Chi's *Book of Grand Peace and Purity* inspired the Way of Grand Peace under Chang Chueh. As the Han court "became cruel", "the magical mists of Taoism swept through the country". In their account, "most of China converted to Taoism by 184 C.E."; when the government threatened prohibition, "more than 350,000 people joined together and rose against the government as one, wearing yellow turbans on their heads", which "seriously weakened the crushing grip of the Han dynasty" [#50704, ch. 1]. The slogan was an old royal ideal: Armstrong shows "Great Peace (*tai-ping*)" was the Zhou name for cosmic stability under a righteous king [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, ch. 2]. Camphausen adds that collective sexual rites (*ho-ch'i*) "were practiced by the schools of religious Taoism known as the Way of Supreme Peace and Five Pecks of Rice Taoism until the time of the Sung dynasty", aiming at "sexual union with as many partners as possible" [#51423, "Ho-ch'i"].

Elixirs and immortality

Ferrara contrasts the two Daoisms. Philosophical Daoists followed Laozi's mysticism, "in contrast to the wizards of religious Daoism who studied alchemy to live forever". He also notes that "charlatan purveyors of religious Daoism and alchemy inadvertently, but all too frequently, poisoned themselves and others (including some emperors)" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 3]. He further records that the shaman-healers, who guarded their herbal knowledge in secret, saw their "medico-religious practices ... repressed beginning in the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) as state authorized religions commanded imperial favor" [#66945, ch. 3]. Archer gives the most striking figures. Shih Huang-ti sent an expedition for the herb of immortality, and "in the ninth century, A.D., five emperors in succession, each eager for long life, died from elixirs prepared by Taoist priests" [#55131, earlier edition, ch. 5]. The Simpkins describe how the cinnabar elixirs of the *fang shih* (c. 200 BCE) gave way to inner alchemy, in which "all ingredients, equipment, and transformations took place within the body" (*Dragon-Tiger Classic*, c. 220 CE) [#50704, ch. 1].

	Philosophical Daoism	Religious Daoism
Founders (Archer)	Lao-tze, Chuang-tze	Chang Ling; Ko Hung as systematiser
Goal	Stillness, accord with Tao (Ferrara)	Immortality, healing, exorcism
Means	*Wu-wei*, negation	Elixirs, talismans, confession, *neidan*, sexual rites
Organisation	Teachers and recluses	Hereditary Heaven Masters, parishes, armies
Politics	Advice to rulers (verse XXIX)	Theocracy, Yellow Turban revolt, Boxers

Shangqing, the Tang and Complete Reality

Mantak Chia and Kris Deva North state that "in 265 CE, under the Eastern Ch'in, the Lady Wei, daughter of a Celestial Masters' priest and herself a priestess, founded the Shang ch'ing school of Taoists to revive and sustain the shamanic practices of ecstatic flight and journeying". They add that Tao Hung-ching, "a former librarian at Court", collected the texts [Chia & North, Taoist Shaman, #68914, ch. 1]. The reference shelf instead connects the school to Yang Xi's revelations, which "Tao Hongjing subsequently compiled … into the c. 499 *Zhen'gao*" [Wikipedia: Yang Xi (mystic)]. Readers should weigh Chia's 265 date against that account.

Under the Tang, Daoism reached the summit of state favour. Van Auken writes that it "did become the official religion of the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE)" [Van Auken, Edgar Cayce and the Secret of the Golden Flower, #42057, "A Brief History"]. The Simpkins count "more than fifteen hundred Taoist monasteries" [#50704]. Van Auken attributes the *Secret of the Golden Flower* to Lü Yen (Lü Tung-pin, 700s CE) and links it to the "Master of the Pass" who received the *Daodejing* [#42057]. Daniel Reid traces "Complete Reality" (*chuan-jen*) Taoism to Lu Tung-pin. In his account it "transcended sectarian divisions" and was carried forward under the Sung by "Chang Po-tuan and Wang Che", whose disciple Sun Pu-er became "the most famous female adept of the Tao in Chinese history", and under the Yuan by Chang San-feng [Reid, The Complete Book of Chinese Health and Healing, #80213, ch. 1]. These are a modern practitioner's lineage claims.

Imperial favour alternated with repression. Archer notes that "in 955 the Emperor closed thirty thousand unauthorized Buddhist and Taoist monasteries" and that Taoism was sometimes persecuted "because of its critical attitude toward the power of a centralized government" [#55131, ch. 4–5]. The "Boxer" uprising of 1900 was in his view "Taoist both in origin and temper", and the Boxers "concocted a magical immunity, they thought, against the weapons of the 'foreign devils' " [#55131, ch. 5 and earlier edition n. 2]. The Communist regime opened campaigns against Taoist societies in 1950–51, and in 1953 it claimed that "more than 4,000,000 duped members had withdrawn from these reactionary sects" [#55131, ch. 5].

René Guénon offered a Western esoteric reading. His collection pairs Islamic esotericism with Taoism, and its final chapter, its preface explains, shows that "the difference between esoterism and exoterism is also found in the non-religious forms of the Tradition", that is, in Taoism and Confucianism [Guénon, Aperçus sur l'ésotérisme islamique et le taoïsme, #68713]. Taoism thus becomes the esoteric and Confucianism the exoteric side of one tradition.

Key points

- Archer distinguishes Taoism as mysticism (Lao-tze), as religion (Chang Ling) and as philosophy (Ko Hung). The *Analects* chronology treats Laozi as legendary and the text as late fifth century BCE.
- The *Daodejing* gives strategic advice to rulers (verse XXXVI: "to diminish a thing, first enlarge it"). Its *wu-wei* continues an older Zhou ideal of effortless rule.
- For Archer, Chuang-tze's "nonexisting nonexistence" obliterates moral distinctions, while Mo-ti, reared among Confucians, swung toward Taoism and was "the most religious of all the ancient thinkers". Liezi's wall-walkers and Zhuangzi's divine beings point toward religious Daoism (Simpkins).
- Zhang Daoling's Five Pecks of Rice church became a hereditary theocracy. Archer describes the Heaven Master's sword, the jars of demons and the papal estates.
- In the Simpkins' account, the Way of Grand Peace raised 350,000 Yellow Turbans in 184 CE, turning the royal ideal of *tai-ping* into revolt.
- Alchemy killed emperors: Archer says five died in succession in the ninth century. Inner alchemy replaced mineral elixirs.

- The Tang made Daoism official (Van Auken). Shangqing and Complete Reality lineages are reported by Chia and Reid as practitioner traditions, with dates that the reference shelf partly contradicts.
- Patronage and persecution alternated, from the closures of 955 to the Boxers and the Communist campaigns of 1950–53. Guénon reads Taoism as the esoteric side of the Chinese tradition.

Chapter 97.

The Dharma Comes East: Chinese Buddhism, Chan and Pure Land

Buddhism was the first great foreign religion to take root in China. Within a few centuries it had become, in John Clark Archer's words, the religion of a land that stayed "without doubt Confucian" in its general culture [Archer, Faiths Men Live By, #55131, ch. 3]. This chapter follows that process. It covers the first monks, the adaptation of Indian doctrine to Chinese categories, and the schools of Tiantai, Pure Land and Chan. It also covers the cycle of imperial patronage and persecution. Throughout, the tradition's own stories are set against Sam van Schaik's text-critical reading of the Dunhuang manuscripts.

Arrival and Sinicisation

Red Pine gives the earliest date: "As early as A.D. 65, a community of Buddhist monks was reported living under royal patronage in the northern part of Kiangsu Province, not far from the birthplace of Confucius, and the first monks had probably arrived a hundred years earlier" [Red Pine (tr.), The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma, #51474, Introduction]. He explains how the Chinese first understood the newcomers: "When Buddhism came to China, Tao was used to translate Dharma and Bodhi. This was partly because Buddhism was viewed as a foreign version of Taoism" [#51474, note 1]. The *Encyclopedia of World History* says missionaries travelled the Silk Road "until cut off by Muslim forces in the eighth century." It calls Buddhism "the single most influential foreign ideology that affected the Chinese civilization until modern times" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, Silk Road essay].

The sources explain Buddhism's success through adaptation. Siroj Sorajjakool argues that early monastic Buddhism grew slowly because it "did not go well with the traditional concept of ancestor worship that promoted marriage and family." Mahayana did better, he says, because its "concept of heavenly beings... could accommodate ancestor worship" [Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, ch. 5 "Chinese Religions"]. The Pure Land master Chin Kung describes the adaptation from inside the tradition: "The temples had a Chinese appearance, the monks and nuns clothing was in the Chinese style. If the temples had followed Indian design, the Chinese would not have wanted to enter such a foreign looking place" [Chin Kung, General Buddhism: The Art of Living, #54441, p. 31].

The sangha grew very large. Red Pine cites a northern census of 477 that counted 6,500 temples and nearly 80,000 clergy. Less than fifty years later another census counted 30,000 temples and 2,000,000 clergy, "about 5 percent of the population." He adds that this "undoubtedly included many people who were trying to avoid taxes and conscription" [#51474, Introduction]. That remark anticipates the later fiscal case against the monasteries. Hui-lin's essay of 435 had already called Confucianism and Buddhism "equally true" [#51474, note 25].

The Schools: Tiantai and Pure Land

Tiantai "was founded on Mount Tiantai in southeastern China by the monk Chiyi (Chih-I, 538–597 C.E.), during the Sui dynasty. It focused on the Lotus Sutra... as its central text." It taught that existence was "real but impermanent and insubstantial" and that one should follow the middle path [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "TIANTAI (T'IEN T'AI)"]. Van Schaik contrasts Zhiyi's "voluminous writings," an "ambitious attempt to synthesize" all meditation methods under calm (*śamatha*) and insight (*vipaśyanā*), with Bodhidharma's "modest" text [van Schaik, The Spirit of Zen, #51289, ch. 3].

Pure Land was the popular counterpart. According to *Popular Deities of Chinese Buddhism*, "the worship of Amitabha Buddha originated in India but took firm roots in China." It appealed "especially to those who are not attracted by scriptural studies... but possessing great faith," and "soon spread from China to its neighbouring countries like Vietnam, Korea and Japan." The text names the *Sukhavativyuha* and *Amitayus* sutras as its sources and calls Dharmakara's Eighteenth Vow "the basis of the Pure Land" [Popular Deities of Chinese Buddhism,

#54425, "Amitabha"]. The shorter sutra itself places Sukhāvatī "past 100,000 myriad buddha realms toward the western direction." There, "sentient beings experience neither physical pain nor mental suffering," among "seven rows of palm trees" and ponds "covered by jeweled lotuses" and "lined with golden sand." Buddhas "as numerous as the sands of the river Ganges" praise it [The Display of the Pure Land of Sukhāvatī (84000, Toh 115), #54211, 1.2–1.3]. The 84000 translators note that Chinese versions made in 240–400 CE "spread through China, Korea, Japan, and Vietnam" and that these versions "appear to embellish the description" [#54211, Introduction].

Bodhidharma: Legend and History

According to Red Pine, the tradition makes Bodhidharma the "patriarch of millions of Zen Buddhists and students of kung-fu." Legend credits him with bringing tea: he cut off his eyelids to stay awake, and "where they fell, tea bushes grew." Red Pine concedes that "it's become impossible to separate fact from fiction," and that "at least one Buddhist scholar… doubts that Bodhidharma ever existed." His own sketch has Bodhidharma born c. 440 as a Pallava prince and arriving by sea c. 475. In this sketch he dies in 528 "poisoned by a jealous monk," a detail Red Pine notes comes from the *Transmission of the Lamp* of 1002 and not from the earliest biography [#51474, Introduction].

Van Schaik is more sceptical. The only contemporary witness, a record of the Luoyang monasteries, calls Bodhidharma "a foreigner from Persia" who claimed to be 150 years old and "chanted the name of the Buddha for several days." Van Schaik treats the south Indian royal birth as a conventional honorific and cites Jeffrey Broughton's view that an Iranian master on the Silk Road is "more likely." The audience with Emperor Wu ("None at all… Emptiness, nothing sacred") first appears "some two centuries after the event" [van Schaik, #51289, ch. 3, ch. 9].

Both authors accept the *Two Entrances and Four Practices* as Bodhidharma's most reliable teaching. Entrance by principle demands "a profound faith that sentient beings… are the same in their true nature": "sit steadily and gaze at a wall" [#51289, ch. 9]. Entrance by practice comprises "suffering injustice, adapting to conditions, seeking nothing, and practicing the Dharma" [Red Pine, #51474, Outline of Practice]. The other sermons are disputed. Yanagida attributes the *Bloodstream Sermon* to the Oxhead school and the *Breakthrough Sermon* to Shenhsiu [#51474, Introduction]. The *Bloodstream Sermon* says "the path is zen" and "Seeing your nature is zen"; the *Breakthrough Sermon* reinterprets Pure Land

recitation: "If it's not present in your mind, your mouth chants an empty name" [#51474, note 1; Breakthrough Sermon].

Shaolin. Red Pine writes that Shaolin was built in 496 "for another meditation master from India, not for Bodhidharma." Bodhidharma "is honored as the founder" of Shaolin kung-fu, but "no early records mention him teaching any exercise or martial art" [#51474, Introduction]. Health literature presents the related exercise arts as temple inheritances. Penelope Ody calls t'ai-chi "one of the many styles of Qigong," and says "the original temple-style t'ai-chi" was "preserved by generations of the Yang family" [Ody, Practical Chinese Medicine, #69064, "Inner Balance from T'ai-chi"]. In this literature the Bodhidharma–martial arts link is a founding tradition, not a documented fact.

The Masters of the Lanka and the Making of a Lineage

Van Schaik's central thesis is that the textbook patriarchal line is "a retrospective creation, a 'string of pearls' with only one representative for each generation" [#51289, ch. 3]. The Dunhuang *Masters of the Lanka* preserves teachings rather than legends. Daoxin, who settled on Shuangfeng Mountain in 624, was "the first Zen teacher who left clear and specific instructions on how to practise sitting meditation." His first technique was "mindfulness of the Buddha, that is, visualization of a buddha and recitation of his name" [#51289, ch. 12]. Van Schaik generalises the point: Pure Land *niànfó* practices "were especially popular at the time of the early teachers of Zen, and became part of Zen practice at an early stage" [#51289, ch. 3].

In van Schaik's account, politics shaped the lineage. Shenxiu "gained the patronage of the empress Wu Zetian," and "the inevitable political struggles over who was the true inheritor" followed. The *Platform Sutra*'s verse contest sets Shenxiu's "Strive to polish it at all times" against Huineng's "Original bodhi has no tree." Van Schaik judges it "almost certainly a fabrication," "a political device to claim authenticity for a particular Zen tradition in eighth-century China." He adds that Hongren "had no interest in nominating a single successor." He also records the practitioners' answer. Shibayama Zenkei held that transmission "transcends historical concern," and John McRae wrote of the legends: "Those images are not true, and therefore they are more important" [#51289, ch. 3; see also Wikipedia: Lineage (Buddhism)].

Patronage, Persecution and the Three Teachings

Court favour could be lavish. Empress Dowager Ling's Yung-ning pagoda of 516 "nearly exhausted the imperial treasury" [Red Pine, #51474, Introduction]. Under the Song, "Zen monks became abbots of most of the public monasteries in China" [van Schaik, #51289, ch. 3]. Suppression came in four waves:

Year	Emperor	Stated motives
446	Taiwu, Northern Wei (Taoist)	Weapons found in temples during a revolt; abolition "under penalty of death"
574–577	Wu, Northern Zhou	Temples "too rich and powerful"; land given to soldiers
842–845	Wuzong, Tang (Taoist)	War debts; "foreign" religion; Confucian critique
955	Shizong, Later Zhou	Copper from statues for coinage

[Wikipedia: Four Buddhist Persecutions in China]

The edict of 845 states the Confucian case directly: "if one man does not plow, others feel hunger; if one woman does not tend the silkworms, others go cold." It reports more than 4,600 monasteries destroyed and 260,500 monks and nuns returned to lay life, and it calls Buddhism "a foreign religion." The same purge struck Nestorian and Zoroastrian clergy and "most likely led to the disappearance of Zoroastrianism in China." Confucians such as Han Yu charged that monasticism "eroded the loyalty of son to father, and subject to ruler" [Wikipedia: Huichang persecution of Buddhism].

Synthesis followed. Yongming Yanshou (904–976) worked under the protection of the Wuyue kings. He fused Chan, Tiantai, Huayan and Pure Land and held Chan "fully compatible" with *nianfo* [Wikipedia: Yongming Yanshou]. Archer describes the settlement: Buddhism "took its place as one of the 'three teachings' "; it "fused with Taoism, but did not supplant it"; "Confucianism held its place in morals." He also quotes the saying that "to understand China, one must see China in the light of Buddhism" [Archer, #55131, ch. 3].

Guanyin and the Popular Pantheon

Popular Deities of Chinese Buddhism calls Kuan Yin "easily the most popular of all the Deities of the entire pantheon." It notes that "in most of the Buddhist lands, the male form is predominant but in China, Kuan Shih Yin manifests in various female forms," such as the White-robed and Child-giving forms. The text connects this with the earlier worship of "female Taoist Deities, in the forms of 'Niang-Niang' " [#54425, "Kuan Yin"]. This lay devotion to Amitabha and Guanyin was the setting from which the White Lotus tradition (Chapter 102) later grew.

Key points

- Red Pine dates a Buddhist community under royal patronage in Kiangsu to 65 CE. Buddhism was read as foreign Taoism, and "Tao" translated Dharma and Bodhi (#51474).
- Sinicisation meant accommodating ancestor worship (#35015) and Chinese forms of temple, dress and teaching (#54441).
- Tiantai (Zhiyi, 538–597) centred on the Lotus Sutra. Pure Land promised rebirth in Sukhāvatī and spread to Vietnam, Korea and Japan (#5204, #54425, #54211).
- The only contemporary witness calls Bodhidharma a Persian who recited the Buddha's name. The Emperor Wu story is two centuries later, and no early record links him to martial arts (#51289, #51474).
- Van Schaik calls the Huineng–Shenxiu contest a probable fabrication serving lineage politics (#51289).
- Pure Land recitation was part of Chan from the start (#51289).
- Four persecutions (446–955) combined fiscal, Taoist and Confucian motives. According to the reference shelf, the 845 purge also "most likely" ended Zoroastrianism in China.
- Yanshou's synthesis, the "Three Teachings" settlement and a feminised Guanyin bound Buddhism into Chinese society (#55131, #54425).

Chapter 98.

The Way of the Kami: Shinto, the Imperial Myth and State Shinto

Shinto has no founder and no fixed creed, and for most of its history it had no name. Yet from its earliest records it was bound up with the legitimacy of a ruling house. The Yamato claim of descent from the sun goddess survived the Buddhist millennium and the shogunates. Under Meiji it became the core of a state cult with the emperor as a living god, and the occupation dismantled that cult in 1945–46. This chapter follows the tradition from prehistory and myth, through the fusion with Buddhism and the creation of State Shinto, to Japan's postwar "non-religious" religiosity.

Kami, Clans and the Unnamed Native Religion

Nicholas Pearson writes that "prior to the arrival of Buddhism in the sixth century (C.E.), the native religion had no formal name," and that it was afterwards called "Shinto or kami no michi… 'way of the kami' " [Pearson, Foundations of Reiki Ryōhō, #71701, ch. 19]. John Clark Archer adds that the term was borrowed from Chinese *shen-tao*. It was coined after the *Butsu-do*, the "Buddha way," arrived, "to distinguish it from Buddhism." In his view Shinto "is scarcely yet a system; it never had a founder" [Archer, Faiths Men Live By, #55131, ch. 7].

Jeremy Roberts dates the Jomon culture to about 10,000 BC. He places the rice-growing, metal-using Yayoi, who probably came from or traded with China and Korea, by the fourth century BC. By AD 250–350, *kofun* mounds marked the spread of the Yamato clan. Many anthropologists outside Japan, he notes, accept Egami Namio's "horse rider theory" of mainland conquerors [Roberts, Japanese Mythology A to Z, #78726, Introduction]. He describes the political order: "The

Yamato kings or emperors gradually and steadily extended their rule over the Japanese islands through warfare and diplomacy. Rival states... were organized according to clans... called uji, and an important function of each clan was to honor or venerate ancestral gods. The religion of Japan's emperor and people is SHINTO" [#78726, Introduction].

Roberts divides kami into nature spirits and *uji-kami*, ancestral clan deities. In his account, "those in charge of the local government were also in charge of maintaining shrines... Religion and government were, therefore, intertwined" [#78726, Introduction]. Carmen Blacker calls the Shinto *miko* "the oldest shamanic figure of which we have any record." She dates the miko's decline to Chinese influence and the Taika Reform of 645, after which "the appearance of mantic queens such as Pimiko and the Empress Jingo became impossible" [Blacker, The Catalpa Bow, #50912, ch. 6].

The Myths: Kojiki and Nihon Shoki

According to Matt Clayton, the *Kojiki* ("Record of Ancient Matters," 711–712) was commissioned by Emperor Temmu in 681. It is "one of the founding texts of both the Shinto religion and the origin of Japanese national identity," and "most scholars agree that much of the text is cribbed from Chinese mythology" [Clayton, Asian Mythology: A Captivating Guide, #79267, Part 2 ch. 1]. Izanagi and Izanami form the first island with a jewelled spear. Izanami dies giving birth to fire. Izanagi follows her to Yomi, breaks her prohibition and finds her "rotting... crawling with maggots," then seals the underworld with a boulder. "Izanami pronounced a curse: Everyday she would kill one thousand people... Izanagi replied that in return, he would 'people the earth' with five thousand." As he purifies himself, Amaterasu is born from his left eye, Tsukuyomi from his right, and Susanoo from his nose [#79267, Part 2 ch. 1]. In the *Nihon Shoki* variant, the couple's earlier offspring is the Leech-Child, who "even as he reached the age of three, his legs would not allow him to stand" [#79267, Part 2 ch. 2].

The sources disagree on one point. Clayton states that "it is from Susano-o that the Emperors dynasties are traced" [#79267, Part 2 ch. 1]. Roberts lists Amaterasu as the goddess "whose grandson became the first emperor of Japan, according to tradition," through Ninigi [Roberts, #78726, Introduction]. Archer's account of the Ise regalia follows the Amaterasu line [#55131, ch. 7].

Roberts treats the myths as political charters. "To justify their control, the Yamato rulers associated their clan with a story about the beginning of the world

that linked them to the gods." Jimmu's accession in 660 BC is "almost certainly far too early to be believed," and "historians point out that the claim of divinity would have added to the early emperor's power" [#78726, Introduction and "JIMMU"]. The *History of East Asia* adds that around 270 CE Ojin was "renamed Hachiman, the Shinto god of war. This deification of emperors continued all the way until 1946" [History of East Asia: A Captivating Guide, #71236, Part 2 ch. 1, "Children of the Sun"].

O. Corazza argues that the myth matters for near-death research because "the floating bridge of heaven… is, in fact, a common vision during Japanese NDE." She also links Izanagi's being halted at the burial-hall door to modern accounts in which dead relatives say "do not cross the river" [Corazza, Near-Death Experiences, #29924, "The river of no return"].

The Buddhist Millennium

Archer describes the long eclipse of Shinto: "the 'way of Buddha' dominated conscious religious devotion for a thousand years (from the sixth to the sixteenth centuries A.D.), but Shinto endured subconsciously during the entire millennium, subtly forceful, and ultimately triumphant once again" [Archer, #55131, ch. 7]. Roberts dates Buddhism's arrival to 552 "(or 538; there are conflicting records)." Kōbō Daishi's *Ryōbu* ("two-faced") Shinto made "Amaterasu… the Japanese version of Vairocana." The war god Hachiman was declared a bodhisattva, and "being a Buddhist did not mean giving up Shinto." Through the shogunates, the emperor's "direct connection to the most important gods" meant that rivals "could usurp his authority… but they could not replace him" [Roberts, #78726, Introduction]. Emperor Kammu moved the capital to Kyoto in 794 [#78726, "KAMMU"].

Mountain religion was the clearest product of this fusion. Bronwen and Frans Stiene cite Miyake Hitoshi to the effect that Shugendō, practised by *yamabushi* or *shugenja*, was a mixture "influenced by shamanism, Shintoism, Taoism and Buddhism." They add that "the Meiji regime outlawed Shugendô in 1872 because of Shugendô's mix of Buddhism and Shintoism" [Stiene & Stiene, The Japanese Art of Reiki, #73976, "Influence of Shintoism"]. The Ueshiba biography *Invincible Warrior* calls "the grand shrines of Kumano and the sacred waterfall of Nachi… the meccas of Shinto" [Invincible Warrior, #85726, Part One].

Restoration and the Making of State Shinto

Archer traces the revival to "Old Shinto" scholars such as Motoori. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they "scorned the view that Japanese life was dependent upon Chinese culture" and promoted "the divine origin of the Japanese ruling house by edict of the goddess" [Archer, #55131, ch. 6]. The 1868 Restoration, the *History of East Asia* explains, "restored" the emperor "to a supreme position in the country rather than a shogun" [#71236, Part 2 ch. 6]. Pearson describes the religious effect: "Reasserting the belief that the emperor was a direct descendant of the Shinto sun goddess Amaterasu Ōmikami resulted in a fierce rise in nationalism. This nationalism was now spiritual as well as social. The people were not merely believing in a political leader but in someone thought to literally be descended from the sun goddess" [Pearson, #71701, ch. 19].

Date	Measure	Source
13 Mar 1868	Restoration of the emperor; Department of Divinities re-established	[Wikipedia: Saisei Itchi]
1868	Kami and Buddhas Separation Order; *haibutsu kishaku* closes thousands of temples, bells melted for cannon	[Wikipedia: Shinbutsu bunri]
25 Apr 1869	Emperor Meiji personally performs priestly rites (*saisei itchi*, unity of rite and rule)	[Wikipedia: Saisei Itchi]
3 Jan 1870	Taikyo Proclamation invokes *saisei itchi*	[Wikipedia: Saisei Itchi]
1882	Shrine (State) Shinto legally separated from sect Shinto	[Archer, #55131, ch. 6]
15 Dec 1945	Shinto Directive disestablishes State Shinto	[Archer, #55131; Wikipedia: State Shinto]
1 Jan 1946	Emperor disavows divinity	[Archer, #55131, ch. 6]

Archer states the purpose plainly. State Shinto, with "one hundred thousand shrines under the supervision of the Home Ministry, was chiefly political rather than religious." In the words of a Japanese author he quotes, "its function was to enhance the glory of the state and foster worship of the Emperor." Sect Shinto,

by contrast, "was placed in the same category with Buddhism and Christianity." Archer singles out the Kudan Hill sanctuary (Yasukuni), where the souls of the war dead are "raised to the place of divinity." He calls it "a possible source of danger in case the spirit of nationalism in Japan again overruns its bounds" [#55131, ch. 6]. Wikipedia's account adds the legal device behind the system: shrines were defined as "patriotic, not religious," and Shinto as "a unity of government and teaching… not a religion." The emperor's divine origin was "taught in classrooms not as myth, but as historical fact." Scholars such as Sakamoto Koremaru dispute that a coherent "State Shinto" ever existed [Wikipedia: State Shinto]. The cult was also exported. Of the 204 shrines built in colonial Taiwan, most enshrined Prince Yoshihisa, who died during the 1895 conquest [Wikipedia: List of Shinto shrines in Taiwan].

Ise and the state cult. For Archer, Ise shows "what Shinto has meant as Yamato damashii, or kokutai, or the national spirit and cult." The Outer Shrine (Geku) honours the food goddess Toyo-uke, and the Inner Shrine (Naiku) honours Amaterasu and "the divine ancestors of the Emperor." The innermost sanctuary holds the mirror, which "symbolizes the unbroken succession of divine rulers." War trophies in the park are "suggestive of the nationalistic quality of Shinto" [Archer, #55131, ch. 7]. Archer defines *kokutai* as "the solidarity of the nation persisting through the centuries… the genius of the country" [#55131, ch. 6]. The emperor was addressed as "Tenshi Sama, Son of Heaven" [#55131, ch. 6, n. 6].

The Sects

Shinto, Archer writes, "never was exclusively a patriotic spirit." Its sects arose "during the latter days of Shinto's long subservience to Buddhism," and "while they have been despised by Buddhists and national Shintoists alike, they have numbered their adherents by the millions." Kurozumi-kyō "gained great influence mainly through its 'healing' of the sick by faith and illumination," and its founder performed "the 'great incantation' " [#55131, ch. 7]. Of the foundress Omiki, Archer writes that she made "Tsuki-hi, 'moon-sun,' " her formula for God, "a naive dualism, with neither theology nor philosophy" [#55131, ch. 7]. Before 1945 there were "thirteen officially registered sects… eighteen million adherents." After disestablishment "over six hundred" new religions arose [#55131, ch. 7]. Pearson calls the *shinshūkyō* a reaction to thinking "that gave no room for the miraculous" [Pearson, #71701, ch. 19].

Defeat and the Postwar Paradox

According to Archer, *kokutai* "still persists, even after the disastrous defeat... the disestablishment of the national Shinto cult by Allied directive on December 15, 1945, and the words of the emperor himself on January 1, 1946 when he... disavowed his own divinity" [Archer, #55131, ch. 6]. Wikipedia notes a point of wording. The "Humanity Declaration" denied that the emperor was *akitsumikami* ("manifest kami") but did not use the word *arahitogami* ("living god"). Dower and Bix therefore argue the renunciation was narrower than it appeared [Wikipedia: Arahitogami].

Census figures show a paradox. Ministry of Education statistics for 1953 count about 70 million Shintoists and 43.6 million Buddhists, totalling twenty million more than the population. Archer explains that "Buddhist totals usually represent the number of households whose ancestral graves or tablets are in a temple's custody, multiplied by five," and that Shinto shrines count "charms and amulets sold." He concludes that "all Japanese are Shintoists" [#55131, ch. 6]. Kaki Okumura gives the modern version. In 2013 "about 72 per cent of Japanese adults answered that they did not identify as religious," yet "66 per cent" thought "it was important to have a religious spirit" [Okumura, Wa: The Art of Balance, #68163, "Lean into Spirituality"].

Key points

- Shinto had no name before Buddhism arrived in the sixth century. The term was borrowed from Chinese *shen-tao* to tell the native cult apart from Buddhism (Pearson, #71701; Archer, #55131).
- Clan (*uji*) worship of ancestral kami fused religion and local government. The Yamato rulers' creation myth worked, in Roberts' account, "to justify their control" (#78726).
- The *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* give the Izanagi–Izanami cycle and imperial genealogies. Clayton traces the dynasty through Susanoo, while Roberts and Archer trace it through Amaterasu (#79267, #78726, #55131).
- Archer says Buddhism dominated devotion for a thousand years while Shinto "endured subconsciously." *Ryōbu* Shinto merged kami and buddhas (#55131, #78726).

- The Meiji state separated kami from buddhas, restored *saisei itchi*, and built State Shinto as a "non-religious" cult of 100,000 shrines. Pearson calls the resulting nationalism "spiritual as well as social" (#71701, #55131).
- Shinto sects such as Kurozumi-kyō and Omiki's sect were despised by both Buddhists and state Shintoists but drew millions. More than 600 new religions followed 1945 (#55131).
- The 1945 directive and the 1946 declaration ended State Shinto. Their exact theological meaning is disputed, and most Japanese now practise Shinto and Buddhist rites without calling themselves religious (#55131, #68163).

Chapter 99.

Buddhism in Japan: From Nara Temples to Zen, Pure Land, Nichiren and the Shamans

Buddhism reached Japan as a court religion, carried by the Soga clan and protected by kami who were enlisted to guard its temples (Chapter 98). Over the next millennium the Japanese remade it. The Kamakura period (1185–1333) produced popular faiths of radical simplicity: rebirth through the name of Amida, enlightenment through sitting alone, or salvation through the title of the Lotus Sutra. Zen became the religion of the warrior class and the aesthetic of tea. Beneath the schools, mountain asceticism and exorcism carried pre-Buddhist shamanism in Buddhist dress. Temples were also political powers: armed, burned, enlisted by warlords and finally made into the Tokugawa state's registry.

Court Buddhism and Mount Hiei

Jeremy Roberts reports that the most important form of Buddhism in Japan was Mahayana. It held that "all creatures contain the innate Buddha," and that the historical Buddha was only one manifestation of "the everlasting Buddha or life force." The Tendai school, based on the Lotus Sutra's doctrine that the Buddha "uses many different vehicles," encouraged "syncretism, or the combining of different beliefs, in Buddhism and Shinto" [Roberts, Japanese Mythology A to Z, #78726, Introduction]. Bronwen and Frans Stiene list five components of the Tendai curriculum: "the teachings of the Lotus Sutra; esoteric Mikkyô practices; meditation practices; Buddhist precepts; and Pure Land teachings." They add that "apart from the belief that the Lotus Sutra is Buddha's complete and perfect teaching it also teaches meditation based on esoteric elements like mudras and mandalas" [Stiene & Stiene, The Reiki Sourcebook, #73531].

Hiei was also a military power. Describing the monks who fought for Minamoto Yorimasa and Prince Mochihito in 1180, the *History of East Asia* records that "many monks at those times were warrior monks" [#71236, Part 2 ch. 2 "Warring Clans"]. In 1571 Oda Nobunaga "and his troops entered the Enryakuji temple, destroyed thousands of buildings there, and slaughtered many of the monks" [History of East Asia: A Captivating Guide, #71236, Part 2 ch. 3].

The Kamakura Movements: Pure Land, Rinzai, Soto, Nichiren

Roberts defines Pure Land Buddhism as "a group of Buddhist sects that developed during the KAMAKURA PERIOD (1185–1333), a time marked by war and great suffering in Japan." He calls Amida "the most important Buddha in Japan." For believers, "saying his name at DEATH deposited the soul in the Pure Land where enlightenment was possible" [Roberts, #78726, "PURE LAND BUDDHISM", "AMIDA", Introduction]. Wikipedia's article identifies Shinran (1173–1263), Hōnen's disciple, as the founder of Jōdo Shinshū. Shinran taught that enlightenment cannot be reached by "self-power (*jiriki*)" but only by "the other-power (*tariki*) of Amida Buddha's compassionate Vow." His school "became the largest Buddhist school in Japan by the sixteenth century" [Wikipedia: Jōdo Shinshū].

Zen came in two lineages. Sam van Schaik writes that Dogen (1200–53) "travelled to China to discover the true teachings on Zen, which he felt were not available in Japan," and on his return taught *zazen*. Esai (Eisai, 1141–1215), by contrast, "specifically sought the patronage of the ruling samurai class." In *Promoting Zen for Protecting the Country* Eisai wrote that Zen rituals "commemorating imperial birthdays... repaying the emperor's kindness, and so on, are all designed to enhance the imperial cause and the fortunes of the Japanese state." During the Muromachi period (1336–1573), "Rinzai monasteries were favoured by the shoguns and the court, and Zen monks worked in government roles" [van Schaik, The Spirit of Zen, #51289, ch. 3, "Zen in Japan"]. Philip Kapleau, writing of Dogen, says that "his dissatisfaction with the answers he received at Mount Hiei led him eventually to Eisai-zenji, who had brought the teachings of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism from China to Japan" [Kapleau, The Three Pillars of Zen, #69569, "Presentiment of Death"].

The Lotus school was the most exclusive of all. Roberts describes the Hokke (Lotus) sect as holding "that the LOTUS SUTRA contains the only important

truth." It "was founded in the 13th century by the monk Nichiren, who believed that other strands of BUDDHISM had harmed Japan." Nichiren taught that a dying person could reach heaven "by saying Namu-myoho-renge-kyo." "Though persecuted and repressed, Nichiren preached his beliefs relentlessly. He gained considerable standing after he predicted that Japan would be invaded by the Mongols. (The prediction was made in 1260 and 1268; the Mongols invaded in 1274 and 1281.) Many of his followers were SAMURAI. Historically, the Lotus Sect has been linked with Japanese nationalism and militancy" [Roberts, #78726, "HOKKE"]. Soka Gakkai, treated later in this study, grew from this root.

School	Founder (per sources)	Core practice	Political profile
Tendai	(Chinese Tiantai)	Lotus Sutra, Mikkyō, precepts, Pure Land	Mount Hiei; armed monks; burned 1571
Pure Land / Shin	Hōnen, Shinran	*Nembutsu*, "other-power"	Mass lay following; largest school by 16th c.
Rinzai Zen	Eisai	Koan (*kanhua*)	Samurai and shogunal patronage; "protecting the country"
Soto Zen	Dogen	*Shikantaza*	Long a minority practice; later the largest Zen school
Hokke / Nichiren	Nichiren	*Namu-myoho-renge-kyo*	Exclusivist; samurai following; "nationalism and militancy"

[Roberts, #78726; van Schaik, #51289; Stiene, #73531; Wikipedia: Jōdo Shinshū]

Zazen, Faith and the Koan

Kapleau stresses the religious side of Zen, against what he calls the " 'intellectual images' of Zen by scholars devoid of Zen insight." "Yasutani-roshi's emphasis on… faith as a prerequisite to enlightenment" derives "for the most part from the

teachings of Dogen-zenji." When Dogen was awakened he was practising *shikan-taza*, "a mode of zazen which involved neither a koan nor counting or following the breaths." Its "very foundation… is an unshakable faith that sitting as the Buddha sat… is the actualization or unfoldment of the inherently enlightened Bodhi-mind" [Kapleau, #69569, "Presentiment of Death"]. Van Schaik traces the two methods to Chinese "silent illumination" (Caodong, later Soto) and "viewing the phrase" (Linji, later Rinzai) [van Schaik, #51289, ch. 3].

The koan curriculum was normally kept secret. The collection published under the name Hau Hōō presents 281 koans with their expected answers. Its notes say the "one hand" koan was composed by Hakuin (1686–1769) and that "it is either this koan or the koan on 'mu' which the novice receives as his first koan upon entering the monastery." The first answer is given as: "The pupil faces his master, takes a correct posture, and without a word, thrusts one hand forward." A later check-question asks "The-Zen-monk-one-hand, what's it like?" and the required reply is "To eat meat, to take a wife is absolutely forbidden" [Hau Hōō, The Sound of the One Hand: 281 Zen Koans with Answers, #85236, Part One and "Notes to Part One"]. Van Schaik credits Hakuin Ekaku (1686–1769) with revitalising Rinzai through "great doubt" and with originating this koan [#51289, ch. 3]. D. T. Suzuki's *Manual of Zen Buddhism* collects the liturgical texts actually used in monasteries. Suzuki concedes that "properly speaking, the dharani has no legitimate place in Zen," yet he includes dharanis among the texts in use [Suzuki, Manual of Zen Buddhism, #54451, "The Dharanis"].

Van Schaik records two later changes. By the seventeenth century, "rigorous meditation had largely been abandoned in Zen temples," which had become places for "funerals and memorial services for… lay parishioners." Under the Meiji reforms, clerical celibacy was abandoned, so that "the vast majority" of Japanese clergy "are married" [#51289, ch. 3].

Zen, Warriors and Tea

William Scott Wilson attributes to Juko the phrase "Zen and tea are of one taste" (禅茶一味). He records Rikyu's rule that tea-room talk "should not be about worldly matters" and should run no longer than four hours "unless the subject matter was Buddhism" [Wilson, The One Taste of Truth, #64763, ch. 1, ch. 10].

Rikyu's death shows how dependent Zen aesthetics were on warlord power. Kenichi Yamamoto's historical novel *Enigma Rikyū*, held in the library in Romanian translation (quotations translated here), dramatises the events. The cri-

sis turns on "the incident with the temple gate of Daitokuji," repaired through Rikyu's donation, where his wooden statue stood. Hideyoshi protests: "I always go in and out through that gate! Do you want me to keep passing under Rikyu's feet?" The statue is taken down and "symbolically crucified" at Ichijō bridge. Rikyu is exiled to Sakai on 12 February 1591, and three guests "sent by Hideyoshi to make sure the seppuku was carried out" attend his last tea [Yamamoto, Enigma Rikyū, #16607, ch. 3]. These scenes are a novelist's reconstruction.

The Shamanic and Ascetic Undercurrent

Carmen Blacker's *The Catalpa Bow* documents the ascetic substratum. Medieval holy men practised "womb-like seclusion inside a cave" or "continuous wandering from one holy place to another," fasting, taking cold ablutions and "reciting [a] holy text." In one exemplary life, "day and night for ten years he recited the Lotus Sutra in his mountain retreat, never once relaxing his diet." Blacker shows how far the scripture has shrunk in modern popular practice. A "comparatively short passage," the Kannon chapter, in which "a man only has to think of the Bodhisattva Kannon to be saved," "is all that is left in popular ascetic practice of the Lotus Sutra, the Saddharma which in medieval times held so supremely important a place" [Blacker, The Catalpa Bow, #50912, chapters on ascetic practice]. The water austerity (*suigyō*) at the Nachi waterfall was "considered a powerful means of accumulating power," and the abstention from cereals derives from "the Taoist doctrine of the Three Worms" [#50912]. Blacker also records the darker side: the corrupt "mountain ascetic, a kitōshi or exorcist who has allowed the desire for money to corrupt him," paid "to use his power over the fox to have the woman killed" [#50912]. The Stiene account of Shugendō as a blend of "shamanism, Shintoism, Taoism and Buddhism," outlawed in 1872, belongs to the same world [Stiene & Stiene, The Japanese Art of Reiki, #73976].

Buddhism and the Family Dead: Jizō and the Mizuko

O. Corazza describes the Sai-no-kawara, "a riverbank where dead children were gathered," and the role of Jizō as the focus of "prayers for the soul of the fetus to be reborn into better circumstances." She cites Patrick Drazen: "there is a belief (which the West simply does not share) that nothing irretrievable has been lost by an abortion." She also notes that "aborted children have a different status

from newborn infants (*mizuko*). In dying, they 'go back' to the world previous to life" [Corazza, Near-Death Experiences, #29924, "The river of no return"]. Here Buddhism serves the household's dead (compare Chapter 98).

Christianity and Tokugawa Control

Roberts states that "Christianity came to Japan in 1549, when Jesuit priests founded a missionary on Kyūshū with the help of Portuguese traders." Converts "eventually included the lord Ōmura Sumita," who "ruled the northwestern part of the island of Hizen, and in 1574… declared that all citizens in his domain would be baptized" [Roberts, #78726, "CHRISTIANITY"]. The *History of East Asia* says Hideyoshi "viewed any change in religion as another potential threat." Under Ieyasu, the Arima Harunobu–Okamoto Daihachi bribery affair led in 1612 to a ban on Christianity "in the entire country." Ieyasu complained that Christians honoured the condemned: "If this is not an evil law, what is it?" Persecutions continued "from the year 1622 to the year 1637," and after the Shimabara Rebellion Japan was isolated [#71236, Part 2 ch. 3–5]. In reaction to Shimabara the *danka* system was made compulsory in 1638. Every household had to register with a Buddhist temple and obtain a *terauke* certificate "that a citizen was not a Christian." This turned the temples into "a government-mandated… system to monitor and control the population as a whole" [Wikipedia: Danka system].

Key points

- Tendai on Mount Hiei combined the Lotus Sutra, Mikkyō, precepts and Pure Land. It trained the Kamakura founders, kept warrior monks, and was destroyed by Nobunaga in 1571 (#73531, #71236).
- Roberts says Pure Land arose in a Kamakura age "marked by war and great suffering" and that Amida became "the most important Buddha in Japan." Shinran's "other-power" faith made Shin the largest school (#78726).
- Eisai sought samurai patronage and framed Zen as "protecting the country." Dogen brought Soto *shikantaza*, which Kapleau grounds in faith (#51289, #69569).
- The secret Rinzai koan curriculum, including Hakuin's "one hand," is documented with its answers in Hau Hōō's collection (#85236).

- Nichiren's Lotus exclusivism, Mongol prophecy and samurai following tied the Hokke sect, in Roberts' words, to "nationalism and militancy." It is the root of Soka Gakkai (#78726).
- The Rikyu affair, dramatised by Yamamoto, shows Zen aesthetics subject to Hideyoshi's power (#16607, #64763).
- Blacker documents Lotus Sutra asceticism, waterfall austerities and mercenary exorcists as a shamanic stratum beneath institutional Buddhism (#50912).
- Christianity was banned in 1612–14 and crushed by 1637–38. The Tokugawa *terauke* system then made every Buddhist temple an anti-Christian registry office (#78726, #71236, Wikipedia: Danka system).

Chapter 100.

The Roof of the World: Tibetan Buddhism and the Dalai Lama Institution

Tibet is the clearest Asian case of a Buddhist clergy becoming a state: a warrior monarchy adopted Indian Buddhism, monastic schools then competed for Mongol and Manchu patronage, and one reincarnating line came to rule from the Potala. Sam van Schaik's *Tibet: A History* (Yale, 2011) is the backbone here; its chapters run "Tibet Appears, 600–700", "The Holy Buddhist Empire, 700–797", "Keepers of the Flame, 797–1054", "Patrons and Priests, 1054–1315", "Golden Age, 1315–1543", "The Rise and Fall of the Dalai Lamas, 1543–1757", "The Balancing Act, 1757–1904", "Independence, 1904–1950", "Under the Red Flag, 1950–1959" and "Two Tibets, 1959 to the Present" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, Contents]. Sharply different readings of the institution, from a Romanian university course to an Orthodox theologian and an American conspiracy author, are given under their authors' names.

The emperors and the "Holy Buddhist Empire"

In 763 a Tibetan army rode through Chang'an, the Tang capital [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, "Emperor on the Run"]. The empire was built by the *tsenpo* Songtsen Gampo, who absorbed Zhangzhung (using a royal princess married to its king as a spy), made Nepal a vassal and forced the Tang to grant him a princess. Van Schaik keeps two traditions apart. Chinese historians say the princess "set to work civilising the Tibetans"; Tibetan historians say "the princess's greatest contribution was Buddhist in nature", since she brought the first Buddha statue, later housed in the Jokhang. Van Schaik cautions that "Buddhism, for the time being, was only one of many new cultural imports circulating in Tibet" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, "Power and the Princess"].

Trisong Detsen (r. 756–c.800) made "his revolutionary decision to adopt Buddhism as the state religion", founded Samye and issued an edict branding Mani a "great liar"; "if Buddhism was at first the religion of the court, it gradually became the religion of the people too, thanks to the efforts of Trisong Detsen and his successors" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 2, "The Dharma King"]. Baal Kadmon's popular account says that, "very much like Christianity as it was forming", anti-Buddhist kings resisted, the last (838–842) being assassinated and followed by "a protracted period of darkness" of almost 200 years [Kadmon, Tibetan Mantra Magick, #366939, "Tibetan Buddhism"]. Van Schaik notes that the Buddhist histories' claim that Darma forced monks to become hunters is not supported, since "other sources do not mention such radical persecution" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 3 n. 10].

Bon: the "old religion" that was a new religion

Van Schaik reverses the usual picture of Bon as the pre-Buddhist faith: "the Bonpo religion only started to take shape alongside the revival of Buddhism in the eleventh century". The " 'old religion' was a new religion, an inspired conjunction of Tibet's pre-Buddhist myths and rituals with the teachings of Buddhism". Hence "when the Dalai Lama declared the Bonpo one of the schools of Tibetan Buddhism, few Bonpos disputed it" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190]. Bon still had political weight in the 1630s, when Gushri Khan's army was first sent against an eastern ruler "supporting the Bon religion" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 6, "Victory"].

Peter Moon offers a different Bon: citing a Russian scholar, Kuznetzov, he claims that Bon came to Tibet in the fifth century BC with "a massive migration ... from northeastern Persia" of "Aryan settlers". He writes that Shenrab "was said to come from the region of Elam where he was known as Mithra, the bull god", taught the Kalachakra that Buddhists "borrowed, altered and absorbed", and that original Bon "was based upon the concept of the goddess as recognized in the symbolism of the Black Sun" [Moon, The Black Sun, #64627, ch. 28 "The Bon Religion"]. These are Moon's claims, linking Tibet to the Mithraic material of earlier parts of this study.

Patrons and priests: the Mongol model

The eleventh-century second diffusion came from the far west. The 14th Dalai Lama retells how a captured western king told his nephew: "Do not waste a single gold coin on my ransom. Use all the gold to invite Atisha from India." Atisha "eventually agreed to come to Tibet" and reconciled sutra and tantra [Dalai Lama, The Way to Freedom, #76238, ch. 1]. From this revival grew Kadam, Sakya and the Kagyu lineages beside the older Nyingma.

The political model for seven centuries was the patron–priest relationship. Sakya Pandita went to the Mongol prince Goden and "never returned to Tibet, passing away in 1251 in the temple that Goden had built for him". His nephew Pagpa became Kubilai Khan's preceptor [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 4, "Patron-Priest"]. Kubilai's "gift of Tibet to Pagpa in the thirteenth century" became the template re-enacted in 1642 [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 6].

Tsongkhapa and the Gelug reform

The Romanian UNESCO course (dating Tsongkhapa "1327–1419" rather than the usual 1357) calls him a Madhyamaka and *vinaya* specialist who "reforms Tibetan Buddhism by purifying it of the superstitious practices that prevailed at that time and of abuses" [Istoria Religiilor, Curs UNESCO, #81379, "Budismul"]. For van Schaik, "the monasteries and the annual Great Prayer Festival founded by Tsongkhapa made Lhasa very much the centre of the new Gelug school". Under the Dalai Lamas the Gelug "grew to become the most widespread and powerful of the schools of Tibetan Buddhism" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 5].

The Dalai Lamas: from Mongol title to theocracy

McClelland's entry reads: "This title (Mongol: oceanic lama) was first given to Snam Gyatsho (1543–1588) the third supreme leader of the Gelug-pa School of Tibetan Buddhism by the Mongol ruler Altan Khan. It was then applied retrospectively to the two previous Gelug-pa leaders" [McClelland, Encyclopedia of Reincarnation and Karma, #66947, "Dalai Lama"]. Van Schaik explains that Altan Khan of the Tumed "saw the political benefits in presenting himself as a new Kubilai; to play this role, he needed a new Pagpa". Arriving near Hohhot

after the 1577 delegation, Sonam Gyatso gave tantric initiation and received a title that "was partly a translation of Sonam Gyatso's own name ... 'The Wondrous Vajra-Holder, Excellent, Splendid Meritorious Ocean' ", quickly shortened to "Dalai". The next incarnation was found in Altan Khan's grandson, "a surprising and ingenious move"; Yonten Gyatso "remains the only non-Tibetan to have held the role of Dalai Lama" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 6].

The Fifth Dalai Lama, Losang Gyatso, admitted in his autobiography that as a child he "utterly failed" the recognition test. His regent Sonam Chopel (the Desi) secretly told Gushri Khan of the Qoshot to invade Tsang; the Dalai Lama later claimed ignorance but wondered whether "the tune of a flute had changed to the whistle of an arrow". In April 1642 Tsang surrendered and Gushri's "last gift was Tibet itself". The Karma Kagyu Encampment was destroyed, some 7,000 Kongpo rebels killed, Kagyu monasteries converted, Jonang and early Sakya works banned: "Printing blocks were locked away, and the voices of dissent silenced". The Potala rose on Songtsen Gampo's palace ruins [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 6, "The Chosen One", "Victory"]. His letter to the new Qing emperor was co-signed by Gushri, and the Manchus courted him to appear "genuine successors to Kubilai"; plate 19 shows his meeting with the Manchu emperor [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 6, "The Great Fifth"; van Schaik, O istorie a Tibetului, #21480, plates].

Qing protectorate, independence, and the Golden Urn

Qing control worked through ambans and the Golden Urn, which after 1792 "was thought to have been used in selecting the 10th, 11th and 12th Dalai Lamas"; the 14th Dalai Lama says it was really used only for the 11th, otherwise "only used to humour the Chinese" [Wikipedia: Panchen Lama]. After Chinese troops in Lhasa were defeated in 1912, the returning 13th Dalai Lama issued a 1913 proclamation "which many considered Tibet's declaration of independence", grounded in his authority as Avalokiteshvara's reincarnation [van Schaik, O istorie a Tibetului, #21480, ch. 8]. Charles Bell saw "the very arched eyebrows and a bushy moustache, its ends well waxed, emphasised the alertness of the administrator rather than the detachment of the meditating priest" [van Schaik, O istorie a Tibetului, #21480, ch. 8, quoting Bell, retranslated]. After 1924 the 9th Panchen Lama fled to China and was considered "extremely pro-Chinese" [Wikipedia: Panchen Lama].

Under the Red Flag and the two Tibets

In March 1959 the Nechung oracle told the Dalai Lama "Go. Go now!"; he left the Norbulingka "wearing a long black cloak and carrying only a rifle". A CIA-trained radio team relayed his asylum request to Nehru; van Schaik judges that "despite later claims from China, this seems to have been the only direct role played by the CIA" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 9]. The exile museum in Dharamsala chronicles "the Tibetan uprising, the invasion by China, and His Holiness' last trip by horse and mule" [Cryer, The Four Stages of Yoga, #46658, ch. 9].

Thereafter there were "two versions of what was happening inside Tibet". The Panchen Lama's 1962 "Seventy Thousand Character Petition" reported that of 2,500 monasteries in 1959 only seventy remained open by 1962 [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 10]. "The Chinese have characterised traditional Tibet as a 'hell on earth'. Countering them, the Dalai Lama has spoken of life in modern Tibet using the very same words." In 2009, while the exile government prepared anniversary speeches against the "repressive regime", Beijing declared the same date "serf liberation day" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, Preface].

In 1995 the Dalai Lama named Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the 11th Panchen Lama; Beijing used the Golden Urn to name Gyancain Norbu, and the first boy "has not been observed by an independent party since 17 May 1995" [Wikipedia: Panchen Lama]. The 1994 Third Forum on Work in Tibet had called the "Dalai clique" a serpent's head that "must be cut off" [van Schaik, Tibet: A History, #70190, ch. 10, "Struggle"].

Contested readings

Source	Reading of the lamaist institution
van Schaik (#70190)	A historically contingent Gelug-Mongol creation; tests "a mere formality"
UNESCO course (#81379)	"One of the strangest Buddhist schools", joining noble precepts with magic in which "black magic occupies a prominent place"; Dalai and Panchen Lamas "are said to be Buddha-incarnations"

Source	Reading of the lamaist institution
David-Néel (#9656)	The Dalai Lama receives initiations "like any other adept"; the tulku title "cannot be repudiated; a Dalai Lama does not abdicate"
Teodorescu (#43926)	A "pantheist-inspired" tradition, "a kind of caricature of the Lord Jesus Christ"
Moon (#64627)	Tibet as the occult partner of Nazi esotericism

The UNESCO course calls lamaism a school "where the most extreme manifestations of human nature join hands" [Istoria Religiilor, Curs UNESCO, #81379, "Budismul"]. Alexandra David-Néel's chapter XI, "The Dalai Lama Rulers", asks why he is not "the great master of the initiates", answers that he takes *angkur* initiations as Tsongkhapa did, and affirms that "the present Dalai Lama is particularly skilled in these teachings" [Iniţieri şi iniţiaţi în Tibet, #9656, ch. XI]. The Orthodox theologian Radu Teodorescu holds that reincarnation "comes on a pantheist background in which the identity of the person is no longer taken into account" [Teodorescu, Îngerii în marile religii ale lumii, #43926, n. 60].

Peter Moon, drawing on Peter Levenda, describes Ernst Schäfer's SS Ahnenerbe expeditions (1934–36, 1938–39) returning with the 108-volume Kangyur, and repeats that the Russians found "six Tibetans lying dead in a ritual circle" in Berlin and "over one thousand Asiatic bodies" in German uniform. He states that Karl Haushofer belonged to the "Yellow Hats, known as Dugphas", while conceding in a footnote that he does "not know exactly what Haushofer's personal affiliations actually were" [Moon, The Black Sun, #64627, ch. 27].

Key points

- Van Schaik (#70190) shows Buddhism arriving as one court import under Songtsen Gampo and becoming the state religion under Trisong Detsen. He treats Bon as a religion that took shape in the eleventh century, which is why "few Bonpos disputed" the Dalai Lama's classification of it as a Buddhist school.
- The patron–priest model (Pagpa–Kubilai, Sonam Gyatso–Altan Khan, Fifth Dalai Lama–Gushri Khan, the Manchus) was the constitutional core of Tibetan theocracy.

- The title “Dalai” is a Mongol grant of the late 1570s, applied backwards to two predecessors (McClelland, #66947; van Schaik, #70190).
- The Fifth Dalai Lama’s state was founded by Mongol conquest in 1642 and followed by forcible conversion of Kagyu and Jonang institutions and banning of their books.
- After 1792 the Qing Golden Urn and the Panchen Lama line served Chinese leverage over succession. The 1995 Panchen Lama dispute continues that pattern.
- Since 1959 two governments and two narratives, “serf liberation” against “repressive regime”, have mirrored each other (van Schaik, #70190).
- External readings range from the UNESCO course’s “strangest school” and Teodorescu’s Orthodox charge of pantheism to Moon’s Black Sun theory, which ties Bon to Mithra.

Chapter 101.

Korea: Shamans, Confucian Kings, Christians and the Kim Dynasty

Korea's religious history comes in layers, and each layer was laid down by a political power. The oldest is a native shamanism tied to a foundation myth. Three kingdoms and then Goryeo made Buddhism a political force. Joseon replaced it with an unusually strict Neo-Confucian state cult. Christianity arrived through scholars and missionaries and became bound up with nationalism under Japanese rule. After 1945 the peninsula split into a Christian-influenced South and a North whose official ideology some authors describe as a state religion. Korea also produced one of the most politically connected new religions of the twentieth century, Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church. This chapter follows the sources in that order.

The bear, the cave and the mudang

Popular history records the foundation myth this way. Hwanung, son of the "Lord of Heaven" Hwanin, descended on Paektu Mountain with the spirits of Rain, Wind and Clouds. A tiger and a bear asked to become human and were shut in a cave without food. "In time, the tiger tired, gave in to his baser instincts, and left the cave to hunt. However, the bear persisted and did become human." The bear-woman Ungnyeo bore Dangun Wanggeom, who founded Gojoseon with 3,000 followers [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 3 ch. 1 "Land of the Bear", "Creation Myth"]. The Cambridge World History of Food's chapter on Korea opens its account of traditional foods with "the myth of Tan-gun's birth involving moxa and garlic". It treats these as "powerful traditional substances" and links holiday foods to "the lunar calendar and Confucian rituals" [Cambridge World History of Food, vol. 2, #33333, "Traditional Korean Foods, Holidays, and

Seafood"]. The myth also serves modern nationalism. Don Baker notes that Korean nationalists cite "Neolithic stone needles or the Dan'gun myth" to claim indigenous origins for Oriental medicine [Selin (ed.), Medicine Across Cultures, #29343, Baker, "Oriental Medicine in Korea: Names and Origins"].

John Matthews writes: "The shamanism of Korea is known as Muism (from Mugyo, 'religion of the Mu') and encompasses a variety of beliefs and practices. … In North Korea, roughly 16 percent of the population has held true to the old way" [Matthews, The Shamanism Bible, #68052, "Korea"]. The Romanian scholar Octavian Simu derives Korean shamanism from Altaic migrants coming from Siberia and Mongolia "from around 5000 BC", and calls it "the oldest form of religious manifestation" on the peninsula [Simu, Șamanismul: Călătorie între două lumi, #48977, p. 185]. Paul Kleinman's survey lists "Shamanism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism" as Korea's most significant schools. He notes that native shamanism "had developed in Korea for thousands of years" before Taoist and Buddhist influence [Kleinman, Philosophy 101, #81821, "Korean Philosophy"].

Buddhist kingdoms and the Confucian purge

According to the reference shelf, Buddhism came from the Former Qin to Goguryeo in 372. Silla made it the state religion in 552, and "in the following unified state of Goryeo (918–1392) Buddhism flourished, and even became a political force" [Wikipedia: Religion in South Korea]. The Captivating History account says that Korea "officially introduced" Buddhism to Japan in 552 [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 2]. Baker adds that Buddhist monks carried Chinese medicine to the peninsula in the Three Kingdoms period, healing partly "through incantations" [Selin (ed.), Medicine Across Cultures, #29343, "History of Oriental Medicine in Korea"].

The Joseon founder Yi Seong-gye took power in 1392 after poisoning two kings. His son Taejong "closed many of the temples that were formerly constructed by the Goryeo kings, which increased the size of the treasury". Taejong also promoted Neo-Confucianism, "an orderly society guided by people whose positions are awarded on the basis of merit". The same source adds that "during the 14th century, Buddhism had fallen into disrepute as corruption and greed grew among the Buddhist monks" [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 3 ch. 4 "The Joseon Dynasty of Goryeo"]. The reference shelf gives the scale of the suppression. Joseon's "especially strict version of Neo-Confucianism … suppressed and marginalised Korean Buddhism and Korean shamanism". Monasteries fell

"from several hundreds to a mere thirty-six", monks and nuns were barred from the towns, and by 1900 Buddhism was "virtually extinct as a Korean religious institution" [Wikipedia: Religion in South Korea].

Simu ranks the traditions by how tolerant they were: "Korean shamanism was characterised by respect for nature, which confirms its closeness to the Buddhist religion. This explains the relative tolerance of Buddhism for shamanic manifestations. By contrast … Confucianism rejected shamanic rituals, just as Christianity, which also reached Korea, tolerated neither shamanism nor Buddhism" [Simu, Şamanismul, #48977, p. 189].

Catholics, Protestants and the nationalist turn

Christianity entered through books rather than missionaries. It had followers "as early as the 18th century, when the philosophical school of Seohak supported the religion" [Wikipedia: Religion in South Korea]. The clash that followed is the subject of Don Baker's Korean-language monograph on how Joseon Confucians "Confront Catholicism in the Latter Half of the Joseon Dynasty" (Seoul: Iljogak, 1997), listed in his bibliography [Selin (ed.), Medicine Across Cultures, #29343, Baker bibliography]. As Joseon declined in the late nineteenth century, "the monarchy and Korean intellectuals looked to the West as a model for modernizing the country and endorsed the work of Catholic and Protestant missionaries". The reference article argues that shamanism's weakness as a "national religious culture", compared with Shinto or Chinese folk religion, "was one of the reasons Christianity became deeply rooted early on" [Wikipedia: Religion in South Korea].

Japan took Korea in stages: protectorate in 1905, annexation in 1910. Simu writes that under the occupation "Korean shamanism was severely repressed". He also makes a strong claim about influence running the other way: Korean shamanism "much influenced the Shinto religion of the Japanese", and "one may even affirm that it stood at its origin" [Simu, Şamanismul, #48977, p. 187]. The reference shelf describes the political effect. Opposition to "the Japanese effort to merge native Korean shamanism with State Shinto" strengthened "the linking of Christianity with Korean nationalism" [Wikipedia: Religion in South Korea]. Yuval Noah Harari gives State Shinto as the model case of religion serving the modern state. The Japanese state "created an official version of Shinto, while discouraging many local traditions", and "it worked like magic", producing "a

fanatical loyalty to their state" [Harari, 21 Lessons for the 21st Century, #65632, ch. 8 "Religion"].

Two Koreas, two religious orders

After division the Christian population, "centered in the northern half of the peninsula", moved south, more than a million people by one estimate. The South Korean state then "enacted measures to further marginalise indigenous Korean shamanism", which strengthened Christianity and helped Buddhism revive [Wikipedia: Religion in South Korea]. A 2025 survey cited there gives 51 percent no religion, 20 percent Protestant, 11 percent Catholic and 16 percent Buddhist. Shamanic practice "may account for a large share of the seemingly irreligious" [Wikipedia: Religion in South Korea].

In the North, Kim Il-sung took his model from Stalin's "cult of personality". He purged rival factions, Pak Hon-yong in 1955 and the Ya'an and Pro-Soviet leaders by 1960. He rewrote history so that "Kim's guerilla faction … singlehandedly freed Korea from Japanese domination". In 1958 he sorted the population into core, wavering and hostile classes under the *songbun* system, with files that "even included family backgrounds" [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 3 ch. 9 "North Korea"]. Harari goes further and calls it religion: "The North Korean regime indoctrinates its subjects with a fanatical state religion called Juche. This is a mix of Marxism–Leninism, some ancient Korean traditions, a racist belief in the unique purity of the Korean race, and the deification of Kim Il-sung's family line" [Harari, 21 Lessons for the 21st Century, #65632, ch. 8]. Matthews's figure of 16 percent keeping "the old way" suggests that shamanism survives beneath the official cult [Matthews, The Shamanism Bible, #68052, "Korea"].

Cultural politics reach as far as medicine. In the North, Oriental medicine is called *Dongui* or, increasingly, *Goryeo uihak*. The South prefers *Hanui*, with its written form changed to mean "Korean" rather than "Chinese" medicine. Baker reads this as a shift from acknowledging Chinese roots to "asserting Korean independence" [Selin (ed.), Medicine Across Cultures, #29343, Baker, "Names and Origins"].

The Unification Church: a Korean messiah with a political arm

Peter Stanford's handbook gives the founder's story: "Sun Myung Moon was born in 1920 in Japanese-occupied Korea. His early education was Confucian, but at the age of 10 he converted to Christianity and joined the Presbyterians. He claims that at 16 he was visited by Jesus, who instructed him to complete his unfinished work of founding the kingdom of God on Earth." Moon's early years as a preacher were spent partly in prison [Stanford, 50 de idei ... Religie, #77349, "Sun Myung Moon"]. Sylvia Browne writes that by 1957 Moon had produced the 536-page *Divine Principle*, "which he claimed was directly communicated to him by Jesus Christ". In its teaching the cross is "a symbol of failure", because Jesus was crucified before he could father "perfect children". She quotes Moon on himself: "There have been saints, prophets, many religious leaders in past human history. Master here is more than any of those people and greater than Jesus himself ... I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" [Browne, End of Days, #42246].

Steven Hassan, a former senior member who became assistant director at the American headquarters, presents the political side as testimony and documentary citation. He relies on the 1978 report of Rep. Donald Fraser's House Subcommittee on International Organizations. According to Hassan, the report documented "the Unification Church's links to the Korean Central Intelligence Agency". He quotes "a February 1963 unevaluated CIA report" stating "that Kim Jong Pil had 'organized' the Unification Church while he was KCIA director and has been using the Unification Church as a 'political tool' ". He writes that "if I had learned that it was connected with the KCIA or that in 1967 Moon had forged an organizational link with Yoshi Kodama, a leader of the Yakuza, the Japanese organized crime network, I would have never become involved" [Hassan, Combatting Cult Mind Control, #64506, ch. 1]. Hassan says he gave Fraser's staff copies of *Master Speaks*, Moon's private speeches to leaders, and he describes being told that Americans "needed to learn how to submit" to the Korean and Japanese leadership [Hassan, Combatting Cult Mind Control, #64506, chs. 1–2]. These are the ex-member's and the subcommittee's findings as Hassan reports them.

Comparison: state and religion in East Asia

Feature	Joseon Korea	North Korea	Imperial Japan	Unification Church
Official creed	Strict Neo-Confucianism	Juche, "a fanatical state religion" (Harari)	State Shinto (Harari)	*Divine Principle*
Suppressed	Buddhism, shamanism	Organised religion	Local cults; Korean shamanism (Simu)	Those who question Moon's messiahship (Browne)
Sacred person	King as Confucian sage	Deified Kim line (Harari)	Emperor	Moon, "greater than Jesus" (Browne)
Political link	Ming tributary order	Songbun caste system (#71236)	Colonial assimilation	KCIA, per Fraser/Hassan (#64506)

Key points

- The Dangun myth (#71236; #33333) is still used for nationalist claims, from foundation dates to the origins of medicine (Baker in #29343).
- Muism, the "religion of the Mu", persists. Matthews puts adherence in North Korea at about 16 percent (#68052). Simu claims it influenced and perhaps originated Japanese Shinto (#48977).
- Simu finds Buddhism relatively tolerant of shamanism, while Confucianism, and later Christianity, rejected both (#48977).
- Joseon closed temples and confined monks to the mountains. By 1900 Buddhism was nearly extinct as an institution (#71236; Wikipedia: Religion in South Korea).
- Christianity entered through Seohak scholars, met Confucian resistance (Baker), and fused with anti-Japanese nationalism.
- Harari calls Juche "a fanatical state religion" combining Marxism-Leninism, tradition, racial purity and deification of the Kims (#65632).
- Moon's movement joined messianic claims (Browne, #42246; Stanford, #77349) to alleged intelligence and underworld ties reported by Hassan from the Fraser investigation (#64506).

Chapter 102.

Mandate and Revolt: Secret Societies and Millenarian Rebellions from the Yellow Turbans to the Boxers

Chinese political theory contained its own justification for overthrowing the ruler. The ancient idea of the Mandate of Heaven, "that a ruler was selected by the deities to lead the people" [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 1 ch. 1], implied that Heaven could withdraw its choice, and religious movements repeatedly claimed to announce that withdrawal. Across seventeen centuries the sources show one pattern: a sect forms around a prophecy of renewal (Great Peace, Maitreya, a Heavenly Kingdom), organises the poor, is banned, goes underground and rises in arms. Two such risings helped end dynasties; a third, the Taiping, became one of the deadliest civil wars recorded. Popular history, reference works and esoteric "secret society" literature are kept distinct below.

The Yellow Turbans and the scripture of Great Peace

The Captivating History account of the Han states that "the founder of the Yellow Turbans, Zhang Jue, was a devotee of Taoism. He announced to the people that the Han domination was coming to an end." His slogan was: "The Azure Sky is already dead; the Yellow Sky will soon rise", the azure sky standing for the Han dynasty [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 1 ch. 3]. The reference shelf connects his movement to a text. Zhang Jue "taught 'Taiping Taoism' based on" the *Taipingjing*, the "Scriptures of the Great Peace". That work held that the world was in chaos, shown by omens such as "droughts, floods, famines, epidemics". It also held that a better age "can only begin with the emergence

of a new healthy emperor, a new Heavenly Mandate and an end to evil omens" [Wikipedia: Taipingjing]. On this account the theology was itself a theory of dynastic replacement.

The size of the movement depends on the source. Annellen and C. Alexander Simpkins write that "most of China converted to Taoism by 184 C.E., with the exception of the area immediately surrounding the capital". When the government threatened to prohibit Taoism, "more than 350,000 people joined together and rose against the government as one, wearing yellow turbans on their heads". They conclude that "although they were not ultimately victorious, the rebellion seriously weakened the crushing grip of the Han dynasty" [Simpkins, Taoism for Beginners, #50704]. The Encyclopedia of World History's timeline is briefer: "A peasant revolt in China contributes to the fall of the Eastern Han dynasty" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Revolt of the Yellow Turbans"]. Siroj Sorajjakool, drawing on Overmyer, places the movement in the history of religion. "Taoism was influenced by two sect movements: the Yellow Turbans (184–215 CE) and the Way of the Celestial Masters, sometimes referred to as the Way of Five Bushels of Rice (200–300 CE)." He adds that the Yellow Turbans "worshipped a mother goddess, Xi-wang-mu, the 'Queen Mother of the West' ", believed to grant immortality to those who chanted her name [Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, ch. 5].

The White Lotus: Maitreya and the Red Turbans

The White Lotus tradition was the long-lived Buddhist counterpart. Micah Issitt and Carlyn Main describe it as growing "out of a Buddhist movement during the mid-Song dynasty" and becoming "an important part of the Chinese Maitreyan movement that lasted into the modern era". In their view its uprisings were "partially motivated by religion but primarily providing a system of organization to broader groups that were united against governmental oppression". Maitreya's coming would bring "a golden age" [Issitt and Main, Hidden Religion, #66220, "White Lotus Society"].

The same entry gives the political sequence. The society joined an uprising in 1281. It was reorganised in the 1300s by Han Shantong, an opponent of the Mongol Yuan, and was then banned and forced underground. Han Shantong's son Han Lin'er led an armed revolt in 1352 whose participants "wore red turbans". These Red Turbans "helped Zhu Yuanzhang, the first emperor of the Ming dynasty, to capture Beijing in 1368". However, "after Zhu Yuanzhang took control

of China, he turned away from the Maitreyan movement and attempted to destroy the White Lotus Society, believing them to be a threat to his government". In the 1620s the society was involved in "more than 20 armed uprisings against the Ming" [Issitt and Main, Hidden Religion, #66220]. The Captivating History account dates the outbreak a year earlier: "When the White Lotus organization was banned, they went underground. In 1351, the White Lotus movement spawned what was called the Red Turban Rebellion". It calls Zhu Yuanzhang "the hallowed victor of the Red Turban Rebellion" [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 1 chs. 6–7].

The Qing: Sufis, the 1794 rebellion and the sect literature

Under the Qing, religious unrest came from several faiths at once. Toward the end of the Qianlong reign, the Jahriyya and Khafiyya branches of Sufism "erupted in violence" in 1781. The state executed the Jahriyya leader Ma Mingxin and sided with the Khafiyya. Activists who persisted "were frequently exiled to Xinjiang, Guizhou, and Yunnan to serve as slaves in the military garrisons" [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 1 ch. 8, "Religious Persecution: The Jahriyya Revolt"].

The White Lotus Rebellion of 1794–1804 spanned the transition from Qianlong to Jiaqing. According to the Captivating History account, its members "promised eternal salvation for loyalty to their cause and proclaimed that they adhered to Confucian values". The Green Standard Army suppressed it, but there were spin-offs: "the Eight Trigrams, the Tiger Whips, and the Yihequan ('Boxers')" [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 1 ch. 8]. Issitt and Main say the rising began "as a protest against the tax system" under Liu Song and Liu Zhixie and spread to five provinces. They write that it drew "not only Maitreyan Buddhists but also members of many other religious and social groups united by a desire to see the end of the Qing dynasty and the return to Han Chinese leadership" [Issitt and Main, Hidden Religion, #66220]. For further study the *Martial Arts of the World* encyclopedia directs readers to Susan Naquin's *Millenarian Rebellion in China* (1976), *Shantung Rebellion: The Wang Lun Uprising of 1774* (1981) and "The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China" (1985) [Green (ed.), Martial Arts of the World, #88003, bibliography].

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom

The Taiping took the pattern to Christianity. In the Captivating History account the rising "erupted when a deluded man by the name of Hong Xiuquan preached that he was the brother of Jesus Christ. Hong was a self-styled Christian with his own version of Christianity". His Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had "religious ideals but also very opinionated political views", and he told followers they were fighting "a 'holy war' ". The same account judges that his motives were economic and political as well. It credits him with "the deaths of ten to twenty million" [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 1 ch. 8, "The Taiping Rebellion"]. The context: the treaties of 1858–60 "allowed Christian missionaries to spread their message across China peacefully, and perhaps worse of all, it legalized the import of opium" [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 1 ch. 8, "The Second Opium War"].

Casualty figures vary widely between sources. The Encyclopedia of World History says the revolt "lasts for 10 years and ends in failure" and "takes the lives of 20 million Chinese peasants" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "1850 Taiping Rebellion"]. The reference shelf gives 1850–1864, with a death toll estimated at "20 to 30 million" and higher estimates of "73 to 100 million". It describes Hong as "an ethnic Hakka who, after a series of visions, proclaimed himself to be the younger brother of Jesus Christ", and notes that the rebels sought "to entirely upend the country's social order" [Wikipedia: Taiping Rebellion]. The movement left survivors far beyond China. John Clifford Holt writes that in nineteenth-century Laos the "itinerant, militant, and greatly feared" Haw "were stubborn survivors of the failed millenarian Taiping rebellion" [Holt, Spirits of the Place, #66064, ch. 2].

The Boxers, the Triads and the secret-society frame

The Boxer rising of 1899–1900 targeted the missions directly. The Captivating History account calls the Boxers "well-meaning but naïve young men trained in the martial arts" who "started randomly killing foreigners and missionaries". Empress Dowager Cixi sided with them; it ended with 20,000 foreign troops lifting the siege of the legations and an indemnity of "450 million ounces of silver" [History of East Asia, #71236, Part 1 ch. 8, "The Boxer Rebellion"]. The religious core was invulnerability magic. John Clark Archer writes in a footnote to his chapter on Taoism: "The 'Boxers' concocted a magical immunity, they thought,

against the weapons of the 'foreign devils' whom they ruthlessly attacked and slew. They knew (?) how to prevent foreign blades from cutting them" [Archer, Faiths Men Live By, #55131, ch. 5 "Taoism", n. 2].

Esoteric writers place the Boxers in a wider brotherhood. Philip Gardiner writes that Boxer initiates were initiated "in much the same way as any protection society across the world. Placed in darkness, they were made to fast and meditate, opening up their minds to cleansing. This Boxer Society came from an older group known as the Big Swords, and this was another name used by the Triads" [Gardiner, Secret Societies, #77350, ch. 18]. The martial-arts encyclopedia makes a narrower claim. There "continued to be an association between secret societies, radical religion, and the martial arts", seen in the "Righteous and Harmonious Fists". It adds that "in 1911, the Triads played a role in the overthrow of the Qing" [Green (ed.), Martial Arts of the World, #88003, "Boxing, Chinese Shaolin Styles"]. Issitt and Main are more cautious about the Triads. They trace the name to the Three Harmonies Society (Hongmen), founded "in the mid-1700s". It went underground because the Qing banned fraternal societies, and it used "coded phrases and … secret handshakes". They write that "historians now doubt" its legendary Ming or Shaolin origins, while "it is generally acknowledged that the triads began as anti-Qing revolutionary groups" [Issitt and Main, Hidden Religion, #66220, "The Chinese Triads"]. Issitt and Main themselves group the White Lotus with the Templars and Freemasonry (treated elsewhere in this study) as one "secret society" myth-type [Issitt and Main, Hidden Religion, #66220, Introduction].

Movement	Dates	Religious idiom	Political outcome	Sources
Yellow Turbans	184–215	Taiping Taoism, Great Peace, Queen Mother of the West	Weakened/helped end Eastern Han	#71236, #50704, #5204, #35015
Red Turbans (White Lotus)	1351/1352–1368	Maitreya millenarianism	Helped found the Ming, which then persecuted the sect	#66220, #71236
White Lotus Rebellion	1794–1804	Maitreya; salvation for loyalty	Suppressed; spawned Eight Trigrams, Boxers	#71236, #66220

Movement	Dates	Religious idiom	Political outcome	Sources
Taiping	1850–1864	Hong as Jesus' younger brother	10–100 million dead by differing estimates	#71236, #5204, Wikipedia
Boxers	1899–1901	Invulnerability magic, initiation	Foreign occupation, indemnity	#71236, #55131, #77350

Analysis: why every Chinese state fears sects

Three features recur. The Mandate of Heaven made dynastic failure readable as Heaven's verdict, and the *Taipingjing* turned omens into a programme for "a new Heavenly Mandate" [Wikipedia: Taipingjing]. Millenarian hope gave the dispossessed "a system of organization" [Issitt and Main, Hidden Religion, #66220]. And victorious rebels became persecutors. Zhu Yuanzhang tried to destroy the sect that had carried him to power [#66220], and the Qing code applied its statutes "during the religious persecutions" [History of East Asia, #71236, "The Great Qing Legal Code"]. The modern Chinese state's close regulation of monasteries, seen in the Tibetan case in Chapter 100, stands in this long line.

Key points

- The Yellow Turbans (184) drew on Taiping Taoism, the doctrine of the Great Peace. Zhang Jue proclaimed "The Azure Sky is already dead" (#71236). Simpkins claims 350,000 rebels and the mass conversion of China to Taoism (#50704).
- Sorajjakool names the Yellow Turbans and the Celestial Masters as the two sect movements that shaped religious Taoism (#35015).
- The White Lotus carried Maitreya millenarianism from the Song onward. Its Red Turbans (1351/1352) helped found the Ming, whose first emperor then tried to destroy it (#66220; #71236).
- The 1794–1804 White Lotus Rebellion produced successor sects including the Eight Trigrams and the Boxers. The Jahriyya revolt (1781) shows the Qing suppressing Muslim dissent as well (#71236).

- Hong Xiuquan's Taiping Heavenly Kingdom joined a Christian messianic claim to social revolution. Death estimates range from 10–20 million (#71236) and 20 million (#5204) to 20–100 million (Wikipedia).
- Archer describes the Boxers' "magical immunity" (#55131). Gardiner derives them from the Big Swords and Triads (#77350). Issitt and Main treat Triad origin legends with scepticism (#66220).
- In each case the sect claimed to read Heaven's verdict on the dynasty, which explains why Chinese states have treated religious organisation as a political threat.

Chapter 103.

New Religions and the Party-State: Falun Gong, Soka Gakkai, Aum, Cao Dai and Keshe's China

In the twentieth century revolutionary and nationalist states took up the old East Asian question of who decides orthodoxy. China's Party encouraged, then crushed, a qigong revival. Japan's postwar freedom produced hundreds of new religions, one armed with nerve gas. Vietnamese sects raised armies. This chapter reports these cases as the library's sources present them, gives both sides of the contested ones, and sets out Mehran Keshe's account of China as his Foundation's partner.

From the Cultural Revolution to the Qigong Boom

James MacRitchie writes: "Following the disaster of The Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) and the passing of Mao in '76… Deng Xiaoping assumed absolute power, and the hallmark of his rule was 'modernization'." He adds that, "According to Palmer, thousands of Qigong 'Masters' suddenly emerged - many of them self-app[ointed]" [MacRitchie, The Eight Extraordinary Meridians Qigong, #51432, Part II (part 53)]. His political judgement is blunt: "the Chinese authorities just don't 'get' Democracy… for them the leaders lead, and the people do what they are told" [MacRitchie, #51432, Part II (part 3)].

Kevin Williamson says the Party promoted qigong in the 1980s as Chinese essence and national pride. "But in the 1990s, when some qigong masters (Li Hongzhi of Falun Gong was not the first) decided to build their own organizations outside Party control," the exercises became an "evil cult" and

a target of repression. His note 18 quotes a passage holding that the Party leadership's highest priority is "not economic development, or a just society… but its own grip on power" [Williamson, The Smallest Minority, #87845, note 18]. According to the reference shelf, the authorities ordered all qigong groups to set up Party branches in 1995. Falun Gong refused, its books were banned in July 1996, and the official press called it "feudal superstition" [Wikipedia: Persecution of Falun Gong].

Falun Gong: Founding, Confrontation and Ban

Daniel Lacoste's Romanian thriller *Secta diabolică* is fiction, and it carries the pro-Falun Gong narrative. It describes "a qigong school with four sets of standing exercises and one of meditation," founded by Li Hongzhi, "who first spoke publicly of this movement in 1992." It dates the persecution from "23 April 1999, following a very slanderous press article in a newspaper in the city of Tianjin," after which "about ten thousand Falun Gong practitioners" gathered in Beijing two days later [Lacoste, Secta diabolică, #16758, parts 11, 19; translated]. The reference account dates the Tianjin arrests to 22 April and puts "upwards of 10,000" practitioners at Zhongnanhai on 25 April. Jiang Zemin called the gathering "the most serious political incident since the '4 June' political disturbance in 1989," and the eradication campaign began on 20 July 1999 [Wikipedia: Persecution of Falun Gong]. MacRitchie gives the underlying reason: "Falungong grew to the point were it rivaled the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in numbers of members." He notes drily that Li sought no financial rewards for anyone "(except, not surprisingly, himself)" [MacRitchie, #51432, Part II (part 54)].

The Contested Case: Persecuted Faith or "Evil Cult"

The persecution account. The reference article describes the extra-constitutional "6-10 Office" and reports of torture and forced labour. By 2009 at least 2,000 practitioners had reportedly died in custody, and courts in Spain and Argentina had indicted senior officials. Allegations of organ harvesting followed from 2006, with one estimate of 65,000 practitioners killed between 2000 and 2008 [Wikipedia: Persecution of Falun Gong]. David Rothkopf describes the movement's response abroad: "At government buildings in Beijing and Chinese consulates around the world, Falon Gong members hold regular gatherings, usually silent demonstrations or vigils… armed with props

such as graphic posters, fake blood, and cages" [Rothkopf, Superclass, #79621, ch. 9 (part 269)]. The Tofflers' notes cite reports headlined "For Beijing, Fear Grows as Spirituality Blossoms" and "China Opens Door to Christianity – Of a Patriotic Sort" [Toffler, Avuţia în mişcare, #9847, notes 47-48].

The cult account. Rick Alan Ross writes that the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences published his 2009 paper "Is Falun Gong a Cult?" He describes meeting "self-immolation survivors and former Falun Gong practitioners Hao Huijun and her daughter, Chen Guo," who "participated in a staged protest at Tiananmen Square on the Chinese New Year's Eve on January 23, 2001." He calls it "the most poignant and heartbreaking meeting I have ever attended" and dedicates his book to them [Ross, Cults Inside Out, #62875, ch. 23 "Moving On"]. The reference shelf records that the event is disputed. Falun Gong says its teachings forbid suicide. The *Washington Post* found that "no one ever saw [the two dead] practice Falun Gong," and some journalists argued the immolations were staged by the state [Wikipedia: 2001 Tiananmen Square self-immolation incident].

Japan's "Rush Hour of the Gods"

Carmen Blacker finds a shamanic pattern behind Japan's new religions: "A series of almost unendurable sufferings culminates in a terrific experience of divine possession." Nakayama Miki, "the Foundress of Tenrikyō, now the largest and richest of the 'new' cults," gave away the family property under divine command. In January 1892 Deguchi Nao went into a violent trance, and her god "announced its name to be Ushitora-no-Konjin… in order that the present hideous state of the world should be transformed into a paradise." Organisers made these founders' powers spread: "Had not Nakayama Miki been joined by Izō Iburi, Deguchi Nao by Ueda Kisaburō, or Kitamura Sayo by Nakamura Kimitake," they might never have reached beyond a local circle [Blacker, The Catalpa Bow, #50912, parts 99-105]. Jeremy Roberts says such sects "used old Shinto methods for healing" [Roberts, Japanese Mythology A to Z, #78726]. Archer counted "over six hundred" new religions since 1945, "syntheses of Buddhism, Shinto, and Christianity" [Archer, Faiths Men Live By, #55131, ch. 7].

Soka Gakkai. Taro Gold, an insider, writes that Makiguchi founded the movement in 1930 and "staunchly opposed Japan's military government." After the war "Toda and his successor, Daisaku Ikeda, rebuilt the Soka Gakkai, which now has twelve million members in 180 nations" [Gold, Open Your Mind, Open Your Life, #47096]. Howell Woltz, a conspiracy author, lists "Daisaku Ikeda – founder

of the Soka Gakkai cult" among Club of Rome figures [Woltz, The Carbon Hoax, #72306].

Aum Shinrikyo: Apocalypse as Politics

Arthur Goldwag describes Aum as mixing "Buddhism, Hinduism, and apocalyptic Christianity." It was "founded in Tokyo in 1987" by a blind acupuncturist "who called himself Shoko Asahara and claimed to be the reincarnation of the god Shiva (his parents had named him Chizuo Matsumoto)." Twelve members were sentenced to death, and the group survives "in a much smaller form as Aleph" [Goldwag, Cults, Conspiracies, and Secret Societies, #73961]. Budowle's forensic volume draws out the political ambition. Matsumoto once hoped to be "Prime Minister of Japan," and the sect built "22 ministries," assuming "the form of a shadow government." Police were slow to act partly because Aum "was but one of more than 180,000 minor religions active in Japan" [Budowle, Microbial Forensics, #29475, "The Kameido Anthrax Incident"]. The *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults* says Asahara labelled the United States "the beast in the book of Revelation" and "regarded SOKA-GAKKAI as his chief religious/political rival." It dates the attack to 25 March 1995 [Mather, Nichols & Schmidt, Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, #65667, "Aum Shinrikyo; Aleph"]. The reference shelf gives 20 March 1995: fourteen dead, more than 200 arrests, and thirteen leaders executed [Wikipedia: Tokyo subway sarin attack]. Ross says Asahara saw plots by "Jews, Freemasons, and rival Japanese religions." He adds that "the Dalai Lama… also lent credibility to Asahara," who had donated about $1.2 million, and that after the attack the Dalai Lama still called him a "friend, although not necessarily a perfect one" [Ross, #62875, ch. 1].

Vietnam: Sects with Armies

Edward Luttwak lists the South Vietnamese power blocs of 1968. "Hoa Hao: A reformed Buddhist sect with a large following in the southern (Delta) part." "Cao Dai: An important Buddhist sect with a history of political participation." "Binh Xuyen: A small but very active part-sect and part-secret society," said to "own" Saigon's police and underworld [Luttwak, Coup d'État, #66112, ch. 2]. Robert Asprey treats "The Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao" as a stage in the anti-French struggle [Asprey, War in the Shadows, #70898, contents]. The Hòa Hảo, founded in 1939, "rapidly developed into a private army," fought the Việt Minh, who

killed its founder, and later opposed Diệm [Wikipedia: Hòa Hảo]. Caodaism was founded at Tây Ninh in 1926 out of a spiritist circle that read Kardec and Hugo [Wikipedia: Caodaism]. Martin Ebon's introduction to Chambers's book reports that adherents date the first encounter with Victor Hugo's spirit to "April 20, 1930, at 1:00 a.m., the earthly interviewer being one Hô-Pháp" [Chambers, Victor Hugo's Conversations with the Spirit World, #64805, introduction].

Keshe's China

A Brazilian Knowledge Seeker's introduction to KSW 495 is marked "Not checked by KF." It says the West tried "to silence" Keshe's technology, while "through the wisdom of President Xi" China chose "the path of peace." China is the right partner because "they don't have the religious dogmas and fanaticism we see in other countries. Their upbringing is in Taoism, which like the Plasma, seeks to accommodate." The author adds that "the Chinese will handle commercialization of products" [Keshe, China will lead us to Peace, #378541]. In the transcript Keshe says: "I trusted the Chinese leadership." He says the Silk Road policy would become a peace policy [Keshe, KSW 495, #378207]. In KSW 496 he announces that "Keshe Foundation will become China Keshe Organization Corporation." He says his technology "has written into the 14th and the 15th program of the Chinese nation," and describes a "Space Defense System" to be delivered to "Chinese highest rank military officers" [Keshe, KSW 496, #378208]. KSW 644 reports agricultural work with "Support of locals and CPC - part of 5 year Program - bring 30 million farmers out poverty," alongside teaching on the "Ethos of Mitra" [Keshe, KSW 644, #378356].

On Chinese culture he says of their fear: "They can't live without it, they've been ingrained into it… you cannot take this out of the blood of Chinese" [Keshe, KSW 656, #378368]. In KSW 659 he describes an assassination attempt at a Beijing safe house in which, he says, two young officers were killed. He attributes it to "the Belgians." He also describes ten days of interrogation and a death threat from Canadian officials at Toronto airport [Keshe, KSW 659, #378371].

Movement	Founded	Relation to state	Framing in sources
Falun Gong	1992	Banned 1999	Persecuted (Wikipedia, Lacoste; protests per Rothkopf) vs. cult (Ross)
Tenrikyo / Omoto	1838 / 1892	Shamanic founders	Blacker
Soka Gakkai	1930	Wartime opponent; mass movement	Gold vs. Woltz
Aum Shinrikyo	1987	Shadow government; sarin	Goldwag, Budowle, Mather
Cao Dai / Hoa Hao	1926 / 1939	Armed blocs	Luttwak, Asprey
Keshe Foundation	—	Claims CPC partnership	Keshe

Comparative Close for Part 10

Mitchell Heisman writes that "Confucianism might be the closest analog to early Judaism," since both "emphasize ancestral wisdom as a guide for living in this world" and "behavior more than belief" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II]. In the 1950s Archer asked, "Will Marxism be offered the Chinese as a new state religion?… a study of Chinese history throws doubt upon its success" [Archer, #55131, ch. 3]. Harari, writing decades later, states that North Korea "indoctrinates its subjects with a fanatical state religion called Juche" [Harari, 21 Lessons for the 21st Century, #65632]. One pattern runs through these sources: the East Asian state acts as judge of orthodoxy, and movements that organise outside its control meet co-optation or suppression.

Key points

- MacRitchie (citing Palmer) and Williamson describe a qigong boom after 1976 that the Party first promoted, then repressed.
- MacRitchie says Falun Gong rivalled the CCP in numbers. The April 1999 Zhongnanhai gathering came before the July 1999 ban.

- The reference shelf reports the persecution, Rothkopf describes the movement's protests abroad, and Lacoste's novel tells the movement's side. Ross presents Falun Gong as a cult. The 2001 immolation remains disputed.
- Blacker traces Tenrikyo and Omoto to shamanic possession. Archer counts more than 600 new religions in postwar Japan.
- Aum built a shadow government, named Soka Gakkai its rival, and released sarin in 1995. Mather and Wikipedia differ on the date.
- Hoa Hao and Cao Dai acted as armed political blocs. Cao Dai venerated Victor Hugo's spirit through séances.
- Keshe presents Taoist China under Xi as his partner. He claims a place in its five-year plans and recounts assassination attempts.

Part XI.

The Western Esoteric Tradition and Freemasonry

Chapter 104.

Kabbalah: From the Bahir and the Zohar to Lurianic Safed

Kabbalah, the "received" tradition of Jewish mysticism, is the single most important body of doctrine behind the Western esoteric tradition. The Renaissance magus, the Rosicrucian, the nineteenth-century occultist and the Scottish Rite Freemason all claimed to draw on it. Its documented history as a theosophical system starts in twelfth-century Provence with the Sefer ha-Bahir. It reached classic form in thirteenth-century Castile with the Zohar, and it was rebuilt in sixteenth-century Safed by Isaac Luria. This chapter follows that arc, setting the traditional claim of antiquity beside the critical account [Wikipedia: Kabbalah].

The Sefer ha-Bahir: parables of the king

The library holds the *Bahir* ("Brilliance" or "Illumination") in several editions. One is catalogued under the traditional author, Rabbi Nehunia ben HaKana [Nehunia ben HaKana (attrib.), The Book of Illumination, #78434]. The attribution is traditional. Aryeh Kaplan accepts it and calls Rabbi Nehuniah "the greatest esoteric master of his time". He writes that "it is from Rabbi Nehuniah that we have the Bahir, one of the oldest of all Kabbalistic texts", the book in which "we find the earliest discussion of the Sefirot, as well as the doctrine of reincarnation" [Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999, "The Hekhalot School"].

Its usual teaching device is the royal parable. The thirty-two paths of wisdom are "like a king who was in the innermost of many chambers. The number of such chambers was 32, and to each one there was a path." The king does not reveal "his hidden and concealed secrets" to all comers. Instead "he touches the Daughter, and includes all the paths in her and in her garments" [Sepher Ha-Bahir, #79998]. Alexandrian notes that the Bahir names only three of the sefirot

and that Isaac the Blind "probably invented" the names of the rest [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, "Misterele Cabalei"].

The Zohar: authorship disputed

The *Sefer ha-Zohar* ("Book of Splendour") appeared in Castile in the last decades of the thirteenth century. Kaplan describes its appearance: "Rumors began to fly that an ancient text had been discovered, stemming from the famed Second Century mystic, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. This remarkable manuscript was being published by an important Kabbalist of that time, Rabbi Moshe de Leon (1238–1305). By 1281, a number of mystical texts were already quoting passages from this text" [Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999, "Publication of the Zohar"]. Kaplan records the rival stories, including "whispers that Rabbi Moshe himself had written these books," and the inquiry of Rabbi Isaac of Acco: de Leon "swore that the manuscript was an authentic text", but after his death his widow "claimed that the manuscript had never existed." Kaplan himself defends authenticity, judging it "difficult to imagine that a saint such as Rabbi Moshe would violate the Third Commandment and swear falsely" [Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999].

The traditional editions print the text under Shimon bar Yochai's name. Their commentary tells how he "buried himself neck deep in the ground for 13 years, during his learning of the Zohar" [Shimon bar Yochai (attrib.), Zohar, #52967; The Zohar, #72058].

Gershom Scholem gives the critical account. He rejects Heinrich Graetz's picture of de Leon as a forger driven by "greed for profit," but concludes that "Moses de Leon must indeed be considered the actual author of the book." His grounds are that de Leon "was in possession of the original work and circulated it from 1280 on," so that Isaac ibn Sahula "read The Secret Midrash as early as 1281," and that de Leon's own Hebrew writings from 1286 on "reveal an author who lives and moves wholly in the specific world of the Zohar" [Scholem, Zohar. The Book of Splendor, #53020, "Origin and Authorship"]. Alexandrian summarises Scholem's linguistic analysis: eighteen treatises share one author and show "the spirit of thirteenth-century medieval Hebrew" behind the Aramaic. He adds that the translator Jean de Pauly held to its antiquity [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, "Zoharul"]. Nesta Webster, following Paul Vulliaud, takes a middle position: "the Zohar was not the composition of Moses de Leon, but a

compilation made by him from various documents dating from very early times" [Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, ch. I].

Position	Holder in the library	Main argument
Ancient, by Shimon bar Yochai	Traditional editions #72058, #52967; Kaplan (#45999)	Revealed in the cave; de Leon's oath; Isaac of Acco's informants
Compilation of older material by de Leon	Webster after Vulliaud (#69057); de Pauly per Alexandrian (#9675)	Medieval rabbis would not have accepted a modern forgery
Composed by de Leon	Scholem (#53020); Graetz as reported by Scholem	Language, style, de Leon's own writings, chronology

The Zohar is not a single book in form. It is "a Midrash (a biblical commentary)" that "follows the same pattern of division of biblical books used in midrashim" [The Book of Self Creation, #77740, ch. 8]. Alexandrian describes it as "an ensemble of treatises" recording the discourses of Simeon ben Yohai with his son Eleazar and his disciples. It was printed at Mantua (1558–1560) and Cremona [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, "Zoharul"]. Scholem writes that "from about 1500 to 1800" it stood "as a source of doctrine and revelation equal in authority to the Bible and Talmud" [Scholem, Zohar. The Book of Splendor, #53020, Introduction].

Ein Sof, the sefirot, the Shekhinah and the four worlds

The Zohar's account of creation begins beyond all attributes: "Within the most hidden recess a dark flame issued from the mystery of eyn sof, the Infinite… of no color whatever." A "hidden, supernal point" then shone forth, and "beyond this point nothing can be known. Therefore it is called reshit, beginning" [Scholem, Zohar. The Book of Splendor, #53020, "The Beginning"]. In the section Scholem titles "The Ten Sefirot," the emanations are compared to a source, a current, a sea and seven channels: "In this same wise has the Cause of causes derived the ten aspects of his Being which are known as sefirot, and named the crown the Source, which is a never-to-be-exhausted fountain of light, wherefrom he designates himself eyn sof, the Infinite" [Scholem, Zohar. The Book of Splendor, #53020, "The Ten Sefirot"].

Alexandrian lists the sefirot in descending order: Keter (Crown), Hokhmah (Wisdom), Binah (Intelligence), Hesed, Gevurah, Tiferet, Netzah, Hod, Yesod and Malkhut. He calls them "pure Intelligences of God" and treats them as the counterpart of the Gnostic aeons. On the Shekhinah, the indwelling divine presence, he reports the Zohar's teaching that "the Shekhinah settles on the head of a man," which he gives as the reason for covering the head [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675].

The four worlds were given their classic form in Kaplan's Lurianic sources: "Atzilut (Nearness), the universe of the Sefirot, Beriyah (Creation), the universe of the Throne, Yetzirah (Formation), the universe of angels, and Asiyah (Making), the universe of forms" [Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999, "The Ari"]. Mathers tabulated the same scheme for English occultists, assigning to each sefirah in "the Four Worlds" a divine name, archangel, angelic order, planet and "archdevil" [Mathers (tr.), The Kabbalah Unveiled, #77911, Plate IV]. His translated "Book of Concealed Mystery" (*Siphra Dtzenioutha*) opens with the formula: "The Book of Concealed Mystery is the book of the equilibrium of balance." Mathers glosses it as the doctrine "of counterbalanced power," a "fundamental qabalistical idea" [Mathers (tr.), The Kabbalah Unveiled, #77911, Introduction].

Safed and Isaac Luria

The Safed school, Kaplan writes, "reached its zenith in the teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534–1572), commonly known as the Ari." Kaplan calls the Ari "considered by many to have been the greatest of all Kabbalists" [Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999, Introduction]. Alexandrian gives Luria's dates as 1534–1582. He says Luria spent seven years as a hermit on the Nile before settling in Safed in 1569, and that his disciple Hayim Vital set out the teaching in the *Etz Hayyim* [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675].

Three doctrines dominate. On *tsimtsum*, Alexandrian writes that Luria "renewed metaphysics through the concept of tsimtsum (withdrawal, contraction), explaining that God, in order to make room for the universe he wished to create, withdrew partially into himself" [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675]. On *shevirat ha-kelim*, Kaplan writes that in the first stage, the "Universe of Chaos (Tohu)," the primitive sefirot "could receive God's Light, but could neither give nor interact… they were overwhelmed by the Light and 'shattered.' This is the idea of the 'Breaking of Vessels.' " The fragments fell from Atzilut to Beriyah, where "evil begins to manifest." This happened so that man would have

free choice, "necessary for the rectification of the Vessels" [Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999, "The System"]. *Tikkun* is that rectification. The vessels are "rebuilt into the Partzufim," each of which has 613 parts, "paralleling the 613 parts of the body, as well as the 613 commandments of the Torah." Keeping the commandments is how man takes part in the repair [Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999].

Speculative, meditative and practical Kabbalah; Idel against Scholem

Kaplan divides the tradition three ways. The theoretical Kabbalah includes the Zohar, the Bahir and Luria. The practical Kabbalah "was a kind of white magic," using "divine names and incantations, amulets and talismans, as well as chiromancy, physiognomy and astrology." The Ari and other theoretical Kabbalists "frowned on the use of such techniques, labeling them as dangerous." Some of these techniques, he adds, "appear to have been preserved among the non-Jewish school of magic in Europe." The meditative Kabbalah "stands between these two extremes" [Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999, Introduction]. Its central Lurianic method is the *yichud* (unification) of divine names. The Zohar describes the meditator who must "unify the upper and lower levels… binding them so that all of them are a single knot in the Infinite Being (Ain Sof)" [Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999, quoting Zohar 2:216a].

Alexandrian reports the opinion of "certain authors" that "only speculative Kabbalah is serious, the other being mere charlatanry." He rejects it: "It would be unjust to believe" this, he writes, since Luria, the "unequalled master of operative Kabbalah," also renewed metaphysics [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675].

Moshe Idel challenges the historiography itself. Scholem organised the field by "schools – or currents, as Gershom Scholem called them – and their chronological succession," and "described Kabbalah as a fundamentally gnostic phenomenon." Idel instead proposes "a phenomenological approach" built on the premise that "within Kabbalah there are two main currents: one theosophic-theurgic, the other ecstatic." He objects that Kabbalah "is often presented as a body of theoretical knowledge, more a gnosis than a practical-experiential position toward reality." He traces the ecstatic current back to Hekhalot techniques meant to produce "paranormal experiences of ascent to the Merkavah" [Idel, Cabala: Noi perspective, #46403, Introduction].

Occult, Masonic and polemical readings

Eliphas Levi taught the Kabbalah to a correspondent in ten letters. He states that "all the Qabalah is contained in what the masters call the thirty-two roads and the fifty gates." [Levi, Elements of the Qabalah, #77581, "The Qabalah"]. Mathers, presenting what he called the "first English translation" of three books of the Zohar, offered the Zoharic *Idras* to "every biblical and theological student." He presented the Qabalah as the "key" without which the Old Testament, and therefore the New, cannot be understood [Mathers (tr.), The Kabbalah Unveiled, #77911, Introduction].

Albert Pike, in the Knight of the Sun degree (XXVIII), writes: "All truly dogmatic religions have issued from the Kabalah and return to it: everything scientific and grand in the religious dreams of all the illuminati, Jacob Bœhme, Swedenborg, Saint-Martin, and others, is borrowed from the Kabalah; all the Masonic associations owe to it their Secrets and their Symbols. The Kabalah alone consecrates the alliance of the Universal Reason and the Divine Word" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree XXVIII]. Pike names no source for the passage. Pike's own preface states that he extracted "quite half" of the book from other writers, and René Guénon and Chris Hodapp, as reported on the reference shelf, hold that whole passages were taken from Levi's *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* [Wikipedia: Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry].

Two library authors read the tradition with hostility. Nesta Webster accepts that an ancient secret tradition "in harmony with Christian teaching" survived in the Cabala. She argues that the later synagogue narrowed it into a doctrine of "salvation for the Jews alone." She also presents the Toledot Yeshu as "the story of Christ according to the Jewish Cabalists." She quotes Deschamps on the Cabala as "that science of demoniacal arts, of which the Jews were the initiators," and holds that "the influence of the Jewish Cabalists cannot be ignored" in the rise of European magic [Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, chs. I, IV]. Deanne Loper, writing for Christian readers, argues that the Messiah of modern Kabbalah, identified with Metatron, is "Another Jesus." In her account the Kabbalist "uses occult methods to achieve union with the divine apart from faith in Jesus Christ" [Loper, Kabbalah Secrets Christians Need to Know, #75115, chs. 1–3].

Key points

- The Bahir, traditionally attributed to Nehunia ben HaKana, is the earliest sefirotic text in the library. It teaches through parables of a king and names only some of the sefirot.
- Kaplan reports that Moses de Leon (1238–1305) "published" the Zohar, which other texts were already quoting by 1281. Kaplan defends its antiquity. Scholem concludes de Leon was its author. Webster, after Vulliaud, calls it a compilation of older material.
- The core doctrines are Ein Sof, the ten sefirot, the Shekhinah as the indwelling presence, and the four worlds of Atzilut, Beriyah, Yetzirah and Asiyah.
- Luria's Safed system adds tsimtsum, the breaking of the vessels and tikkun. In Kaplan's account the repair is carried out through the 613 commandments.
- Kaplan separates theoretical, meditative and practical Kabbalah. Alexandrian rejects the view that only the speculative kind is "serious."
- Idel replaces Scholem's chronology of schools with a phenomenology of two currents, the theosophic-theurgic and the ecstatic.
- Levi and Mathers passed Kabbalah to modern occultism. Pike declares that all dogmatic religions and all Masonic symbols issue from it.
- Webster and Loper read Kabbalah as a source of anti-Christian or occult influence. These are positions held by those authors.

Chapter 105.

Hermes Trismegistus, Christian Kabbalah and Renaissance Magic: Ficino, Pico, Agrippa, Dee

Between 1463 and 1614 a small group of humanists, priests and physicians built a Christian magical philosophy. It rested on three supposedly ancient revelations: the writings of the Egyptian sage Hermes Trismegistus, the Neoplatonic theology of Pseudo-Dionysius, and the Hebrew Kabbalah. Frances Yates's *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* remains the library's main interpretation of this movement. Yates argues that the "Hermetic-Cabalist" synthesis produced the Renaissance magus and was undone only when Isaac Casaubon dated the Hermetica [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, Preface]. This chapter reads her account alongside the primary texts the library holds and the later scholarship that qualifies it.

The Corpus Hermeticum and Ficino's Pimander

Yates describes the Hermetica as a collection of fifteen Greek dialogues, the first of which is the *Pimander* (Poimandres), together with the Latin *Asclepius*. The Renaissance took them as the work of an Egyptian priest older than Moses. Yates holds that they were in fact written by "various unknown authors, all probably Greeks," and contain "popular Greek philosophy of the period, a mixture of Platonism and Stoicism," with "some Jewish and probably some Persian influences" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. I]. Their reputation was such that in 1463 Cosimo de' Medici told Ficino to put aside the Plato manuscripts: "mihi Mercurium primo Termaximum, mox Platonem mandavit

interpretandum." Ficino finished in a few months "whilst the old Cosimo, who died in 1464, was still alive." Yates comments: "There are the complete works of Plato, waiting, and they must wait" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. II].

The Poimandres is a visionary dialogue. In the English *Divine Pymander* the divine Mind declares: "I am that Light, the Mind, thy God, who am before that Moist Nature that appeareth out of Darkness, and that Bright and Lightful Word from the Mind is the Son of God." The text then describes the creation of the archetypal Man: "the Father of all things, the Mind being Life and Light, brought forth Man, like unto himself, whom he loved as his proper Birth". This Man "would needs also himself Fall to Work, and so was separated from the Father" [Hermes Trismegistus, The Divine Pymander, #51557, Book I; cf. Hermes Trismegistus, Corpus Hermeticum, #40797, CH I]. The regeneration treatise (CH XIII, Everard's "Secret Sermon in the Mount") teaches that "no man can be saved before Regeneration," and that "this Wisdom is to be understood in silence, and the Seed is the true Good" [Hermes Trismegistus, The Divine Pymander, #51557, Book VII]. To Ficino and his readers such passages read like Genesis and the Gospel of John foreseen by a pagan. Yates argues that this is why the magical *Asclepius*, which Augustine had condemned, was "rehabilitated" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. II].

Ficino's natural magic and the Picatrix

Ficino was a priest and a physician. His *Libri de vita* (1489) was a medical treatise, and its third book, *De vita coelitus comparanda*, was translated by Yates as "On capturing the life of the stars." It taught a scholar how to "draw down the life of the heaven" through planetary music, scents, colours and talismans [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. IV]. Yates follows D. P. Walker's suggestion that this magic was "probably mainly subjective... he used it chiefly on himself," working through the imagination [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. V].

Yates names the Arabic *Picatrix* as a likely source. It is "an extremely comprehensive treatise on sympathetic and astral magic, with particular reference to talismans," written in Arabic "probably in the twelfth century" by an author "under strong Sabean, that is to say, Hermetic, influence" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. III]. Quoting the Latin *Picatrix* (Sloane MS 1305), Yates summarises its doctrine of the *spiritus*, which "descends from

the above to the below and resides in the place where it is caught (ubi captus est)," because "the virtues of the superior bodies are the form and power of the inferiors" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. III, citing Picatrix Lib. I cap. 7 and Lib. IV cap. 1]. She finds Ficino's healing image of "a king on a throne, in a yellow garment, and a crow and the form of the Sun" strikingly close to an image in the *Picatrix* [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. IV]. The library's English translation from the Arabic, by Hashem Atallah, describes it as an eleventh-century manuscript. It defines magic as "everything that absolutely fascinates minds and attract souls by means of words and deeds," a discipline whose subject "is a spirit within a spirit" [Ghayat al-Hakim, Picatrix, #53503, Book I ch. 2]. Its catalogue of planetary images draws on earlier sources. For Saturn, it says, *The Interpretation of Spiritual Talismans* gives "the image of a man whose face is a face of a crow and his legs are similar to the legs of a camel… holding a cane in his right hand and a lance in his left hand" [Ghayat al-Hakim, Picatrix, #53503, Book II ch. 10 "Planets' Stones and Picture Drawings"].

Pico, Reuchlin and Christian Cabala

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola joined Hermetic magic to Kabbalah. In 1486, Yates writes, he "went to Rome with his nine hundred theses" from all philosophies, offering to prove them reconcilable in public debate. Yates holds that he "was the founder who first united the Hermetic and Cabalist types of magic" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. V]. Alexandrian says Pico learned Hebrew and Chaldaic from the convert Flavius Mithridates. His *Conclusiones* contained forty-seven theses drawn from Jewish Kabbalists and seventy-one of his own. In Pico's view the Kabbalah clarified "the incarnation of the Word, the Trinity, the divine origin of the Messiah… the angelic hierarchies, original sin" [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, "Începuturile Cabalei filozofice"]. The most notorious thesis held that "there is no science which gives us more assurance of Christ's divinity than magic and the Cabala" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. V]. Alexandrian records that thirteen theses were denounced to Innocent VIII as heretical, "especially those in which he declared that magic and the Kabbalah are means of proving the divine origin of Christ." Pico signed a retraction on 31 March 1487 [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675]. Yates adds that the Borgia pope Alexander VI absolved him after 1492. The Spanish bishop Pedro Garcia, who had sat on

the commission, wrote a long refutation holding all magic "evil and diabolical" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. V].

Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522), "Pico's most important follower," wrote *De verbo mirifico* (1494) and *De arte cabalistica* (1517). He divided history into three ages marked by the divine names Shaddai, the Tetragrammaton and a five-letter name, YHShVH, read as "Jesus." This was an attempt "to read the name of the Christian deity into" the unpronounced name of God [Wikipedia: Christian Kabbalah]. Yates notes that through Reuchlin, "Pico's Cabalist magic leads straight on to the angel magic of Trithemius or of Cornelius Agrippa" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. V]. Nesta Webster reads the same transmission differently. She traces it to Jewish Cabalists who by 1450 "had penetrated into the intellectual circles of Florence" [Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, ch. IV].

Pseudo-Dionysius and the three worlds

The Christian magus needed his angels to be orthodox. Yates's chapter VI shows how Pico's *Heptaplus* joined the Kabbalists' division of the universe into "the elemental world or terrestrial world, the celestial world or the world of the stars, and the supercelestial world" with the nine angelic orders of Pseudo-Dionysius. "Between all these worlds there was continuity of influences" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. VI]. Yates shows that Ficino treated Dionysius as the summit of Platonism and the pillar ("columen") of Christian theology. She also notes R. Roques's comparison of the Dionysian orders with Gnostic cosmic religion [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. VI].

Agrippa's systematisation

Cornelius Agrippa (born Cologne, 1486) finished *De occulta philosophia* by 1510 but published it only in 1533. That was after his *De vanitate scientiarum* (1530) had declared all sciences vain. Yates calls the earlier book on vanity "a safety-device of a kind" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. VII]. Alexandrian credits Agrippa with inaugurating "occult philosophy" as a named discipline. He records that the Inquisition had the printing halted in Cologne in January 1533 and that Agrippa got the book out in July [Alexandrian,

Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, "Căutarea secretului secretelor"]. Agrippa's first chapter sets out the plan of all three books: "Seeing there is a three-fold World, Elementary, Celestiall, and Intellectual, and every inferior is governed by its superior… Wise men conceive it no way irrationall that it should be possible for us to ascend by the same degrees through each World." Accordingly magicians "seek after the vertues of the Elementary world, through the help of Physick, and Naturall Philosophy," then those "of the Celestiall world… according to the rules of Astrologers, and the doctrines of Mathematicians," and then confirm them "with the powers of divers Intelligencies" [Agrippa, Three Books of Occult Philosophy, #6700, Book I ch. 1].

Agrippa's world	Book	Means of operation	Corresponding Renaissance source
Elementary	I	Natural magic, medicine, occult virtues	Ficino's *De vita*; Picatrix
Celestial	II	Number, astrology, talismans	Picatrix; Pythagorean mathematics
Intellectual	III	Ceremonial magic, divine names, angels	Pico's practical Cabala; Reuchlin; Pseudo-Dionysius

John Dee: the Monad and the angels

John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Antwerp, 1564) was dedicated to Emperor Maximilian II. It reduces the cosmos to one glyph through twenty-four theorems. Its first reads: "It is by the straight line and the circle that the first and most simple example and representation of all things may be demonstrated." The third makes the central point "the Earth, round which the Sun, the Moon, and the other planets follow their respective paths" [Dee, The Hieroglyphic Monad, #51052, Theorems I–III]. Dee also recorded angelic séances, part of which Meric Casaubon published in 1659 as *A True and Faithful Relation* [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. VIII]. The library's edition of *De Heptarchia Mystica* calls that system "possibly the only true example of a complete magical system to be found in the Dee papers." Its prayers ask God for "the Holy and friendly conversation" of his "Mighty, Wise and Good Spiritual" ministers [Dee, The Heptarchia Mystica, #64714, Introduction and text]. Yates connects Dee to

what followed. In 1589 he met "that famous Hermetique Philosopher, Dr Henricus Khunrath," whose *Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom* reproduces the monas. Yates sees in Khunrath the joining of "Magia, Cabala, and Alchymia" into "a religious philosophy which promises a new dawn," the language of the Rosicrucian manifestos [Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, #62112, ch. 3].

Bruno, the critics and Casaubon

Yates's central claim concerns Giordano Bruno. Ficino had cited Augustine's condemnation of the *Asclepius* and then practised a timid magic anyway. Bruno instead took "the bolder course of maintaining that the magical Egyptian religion of the world was not only the most ancient but also the only true religion, which both Judaism and Christianity had obscured and corrupted" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. I]. In England he styled himself "doctor of a more abstruse theology" and proclaimer of "a general philanthropy." Yates reads this as a "Hermetic reform" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. XII]. On Kabbalah, she argues, he knew little Hebrew and took his Sephiroth and angelic orders "direct from his bible, that is to say from the occult philosophy of Cornelius Agrippa" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. XIV]. Bruno was imprisoned by the Holy Office from 26 May 1592. He was sentenced "as an impenitent heretic" and "burned alive on the Campo de' Fiori in Rome on February 17th, 1600" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, ch. XIX]. This reading of Bruno as Hermetic missionary rather than martyr of science is Yates's own.

Opposition came from two directions, theological and humanist (Yates, ch. IX). The decisive blow was philological. When "Isaac Casaubon in 1614 pointed out for the first time" that the Hermetica "cannot have been written by any such person," he "assumed that the works… were fakes by Christians." Yates calls this "a watershed separating the Renaissance world from the modern world" that "shattered at one blow" the *prisci theologi* and "the whole position of the Renaissance Magus" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, chs. X, XXI]. The tradition continued in Robert Fludd, whose controversies with Mersenne and Kepler Yates treats as "a conflict between a late revival of the Hermetic-Cabalist tradition and the seventeenth-century scientific movement" [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, Preface, ch. XXII].

Later readings: Hanegraaff and Hall

Wouter Hanegraaff (2022) takes the Hermetica on their own terms rather than as a lost *prisca theologia* or a Christian forgery. His subtitle, "altered states of knowledge in late antiquity," states the thesis. Hermetic practitioners "believed that the horizon of human consciousness could not just be expanded but could be transcended altogether, resulting in… gnōsis." Hanegraaff adopts "radical methodological agnosticism," neither affirming nor denying "the ultimate truth of Hermetic beliefs." He refuses the usual scholarly move of treating gnosis as "an irrational illusion" [Hanegraaff, Hermetic Spirituality and the Historical Imagination, #63731, Prologue].

Manly P. Hall's *Secret Teachings of All Ages*, subtitled "An Encyclopedic Outline of Masonic, Hermetic, Qabbalistic and Rosicrucian Symbolical Philosophy," treats these currents as one esoteric wisdom. In Hall's account, Hermes entrusted "the sacred Book of Thoth," the "Key to Immortality," to "his chosen successors," and its surviving volumes are known "to only a few initiates of the secret schools" [Hall, The Secret Teachings of All Ages, #45649, "The Life and Teachings of Thoth Hermes Trismegistus"]. This is Hall's synthesis. Yates's history, by contrast, is built on dates and on Casaubon's correction of them.

Key points

- Cosimo de' Medici had Ficino translate the Hermetica (1463) before Plato, believing them older than Moses. Yates and modern scholars date them to the post-Christian Greek world.
- Ficino's astral natural magic in *De vita coelitus comparanda* drew on talismanic sources such as the Arabic *Picatrix*.
- Pico's 900 theses united Hermetic and Cabalist magic. Thirteen were denounced as heretical, including the claim that magic and Cabala best prove Christ's divinity. He retracted in 1487.
- Reuchlin's *De verbo mirifico* (1494) and *De arte cabalistica* (1517) made the Christian Cabala a system. The pentagrammaton YHShVH was used to read Jesus into the divine name.
- Agrippa's *De occulta philosophia* (1533) organised magic by three worlds: elemental, celestial and intellectual.
- Dee's *Monas* (1564) and angelic system passed, according to Yates, through Khunrath into Rosicrucian language.

- Yates presents Bruno, burned on 17 February 1600, as a missionary of Egyptian Hermetic religion. Casaubon's 1614 dating ended the Hermetica's claim to antiquity.
- Hanegraaff reads the Hermetica as records of altered states. Hall treats Hermes, Kabbalah and Rosicrucianism as one Masonic-esoteric philosophy.

Chapter 106.

The Royal Art: Alchemy and Astrology in the Western Esoteric Tradition

Kabbalah and Hermetic theology supplied the Western esoteric tradition with its metaphysics. Alchemy and astrology were its operative arts: alchemy worked on matter, astrology read the heavens. Both rest on the axiom ascribed to Hermes, "What is below is like that which is above." Both passed from Hellenistic Egypt through Arabic learning into Latin Europe. Both were later taken into Rosicrucian and Masonic symbolism. The sources in the library divide on how alchemy should be read. One school reads it as proto-chemistry concerned with real transmutation. The other reads it as a symbolic language of inner transformation. This chapter sets out both readings and names the authors behind each.

The Emerald Tablet and the Greco-Arabic transmission

The founding text is the *Tabula Smaragdina*. The library's compilation of translations summarises the work of Holmyard, Ruska and Needham. The Tablet "probably first appeared in the West" in Latin versions of the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secretum Secretorum*, translated by Johannes Hispalensis around 1140. Its earliest Arabic witnesses are a version attributed to Jabir and one appended to the *Book of the Secret of Creation* of "Balinas" (Apollonius), which may date "as early as 650" and was "definitely finished by the Caliphate of al-Ma'mun (813–33)." Ruska suggested an origin further east, and Needham proposed China [Multiple Translations, The Emerald Tablet of Hermes, #50982, "History of the Tablet"]. The versions differ in substance. The Jabir text reads: "That which is above is

from that which is below, and that which is below is from that which is above, working the miracles of one." Isaac Newton's translation (c. 1680) reads: "That wch is below is like that wch is above that wch is above is like yt wch is below to do ye miracles of one only thing" [Multiple Translations, The Emerald Tablet of Hermes, #50982, "Translations From Jabir ibn Hayyan"; "Translation of Isaac Newton"]. Redgrove gives the legend in his version of the thirteen sentences. Alexander the Great found "the tomb of Hermes in a cave near Hebron," with the text inscribed "in Phoenician characters." The Tablet ends: "Therefore am I called Hermes Trismegistus, possessing the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world" [Redgrove, Alchemy: Ancient and Modern, #38930, §30]. Manly P. Hall holds that the Tablet "is in reality a chemical formula of a high and secret order" [Hall, The Secret Teachings of All Ages, #45649, "The Theory and Practice of Alchemy"].

Line	Jabir (Arabic, after Holmyard)	Newton (Latin, c. 1680)
2	"That which is above is **from** that which is below"	"That wch is below is **like** that wch is above"
4–5	"Its father is the Sun and its mother the Moon. The Earth carried it in her belly"	"The Sun is its father, the moon its mother, the wind hath carried it in its belly"
8	"It ascends from the earth to the heaven and becomes ruler over that which is above and that which is below"	"It ascends from ye earth to ye heaven"

The Greek alchemy of Egypt reached Islam through translation. Redgrove calls Zosimus of Panopolis, who "flourished in the fifth century," "a master of the Art," and notes that "only fragments remain" [Redgrove, Alchemy: Ancient and Modern, #38930, §31]. The chemist H. S. El Khadem reports that "an Arabic translation of a Greek text by Zosimos was found in a copy of a book entitled 'Keys of Mercy and Secrets of Wisdom,' written by the twelfth century alchemist Al-Tughra'i." One part of the book is headed "From Keys of Wisdom by Zosimos" [El Khadem, A Translation of a Zosimos' Text in an Arabic Alchemy Book, #38726, Abstract].

Geber, the Stone and Redgrove's theory of origins

Redgrove (first edition 1910) proposes that alchemy "originated in the attempt to demonstrate the applicability of the principles of Mysticism to the things of the physical realm." He argues that this hypothesis "brings into harmony the physical and transcendental theories of Alchemy" [Redgrove, Alchemy: Ancient and Modern, #38930, ch. I §11]. He criticises chemists who "label it nonsense" and mystics who "take a purely transcendental view of the subject, forgetting… that the alchemists were, for the most part, concerned with operations of a physical nature" [Redgrove, Alchemy: Ancient and Modern, #38930, Preface]. In the preface to the second edition he reports a welcome "change in the attitude of the educated world towards the old-time alchemists" [Redgrove, Alchemy: Ancient and Modern, #38930, Preface to the Second Edition].

On the physical theory, Redgrove sets out pseudo-Geber's doctrine. The imperfect metals "were to be perfected or cured by the application of 'medicines.' " The first order of medicine brings about only a temporary change, and the second makes a permanent but incomplete one. The third order is the Stone: "every Preparation, which, when it comes to Bodies, with its projection, takes away all Corruption, and perfects them." The white stone transmutes metals into silver and the red into gold [Redgrove, Alchemy: Ancient and Modern, #38930, ch. II §23]. Redgrove also reports Berthelot's finding that the Latin *Summa Perfectionis* is "a forgery of the fourteenth century." He adds that the genuine Arabic Jabir "give[s] no warrant for believing that the famous sulphur-mercury theory was due to this alchemist" [Redgrove, Alchemy: Ancient and Modern, #38930, §32].

Paracelsus and the turn to medicine

The library's histories of alchemy mark Paracelsus (1493–1541) as the turning point. Neil Powell opens his chapter on the medieval masters with the newly appointed city physician of Basel standing in the city square beside a brass pan of burning charcoal: "In one hand he held a book of the works of Avicenna, and in the other the works of Galen. Then he thrust them into the fla[mes]." Powell describes the three principles "known as mercury, sulfur, and salt, and… sometimes referred to as the tria prima." For his own healing alchemy Paracelsus "coined the word 'spagyric'," and "Paracelsus' main aim in alchemy was to use its methods to prepare medicines" [Powell, Alchemy The Ancient Science,

#67902, "The Medieval Masters"]. R. Krebs's encyclopedia credits him with challenging Galen's humoral theory and pioneering iatro-chemistry [Krebs, Encyclopedia Scientific Principles, Laws and Theories, vol. 2, #26311, "Paracelsus"]. John Read's history gives the fullest account. Alchemical theory "was essentially static throughout the medieval period" until Paracelsus added "to sulphur and mercury of a third principle, which he called 'salt'." Read notes that "until the day of Descartes, in the seventeenth century, men drew no rigid distinction between matter and mind" [Read, From Alchemy to Chemistry, #42870, ch. II "The Tria Prima of Paracelsus"]. At Basel in 1527, inspired by Luther's burning of the papal bull, Paracelsus celebrated his appointment "by publicly consigning the venerated writings of Galen and Avicenna to the flames." Read judges that "the significance of Paracelsus in alchemy lies in his vigorous insistence that its true object was to prepare healing drugs and not to make gold… Here came at last, after a thousand years," a parting of the ways. The new iatro-chemistry "was destined to flourish until about the end of the seventeenth century, while the old alchemy simultaneously fell into a slow decline" [Read, From Alchemy to Chemistry, #42870, ch. VII "The Parting of the Ways"]. Alexandrian treats the same moment as a revolt in Renaissance medicine. He notes that Paracelsus called himself the "Christ of medicine" and founded a reforming current with followers into the twentieth century [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, "Medicina spagirică"].

Boehme and Fludd: alchemy as theosophy

Redgrove places Jacob Boehme apart from the laboratory tradition: "Jacob Boehme was an alchemist of a purely transcendental order… he employed the language of Alchemy in the elaboration of his system of mystical philosophy." For Boehme "the Philosopher's Stone… is the Spirit of Christ which must 'tincture' the individual soul." He quotes him: "The Phylosopher's Stone is a very dark disesteemed Stone, of a Gray colour, but therein lyeth the highest Tincture" [Redgrove, Alchemy: Ancient and Modern, #38930, ch. IV §56]. Robert Fludd's *Mosaicall Philosophy* (Latin, Gouda, 1638; English, 1659) is a Hermetic-Kabbalistic physics. It sets out to demonstrate "that God is that pure and catholic Unity, which includes and comprehends in itself all multiplicity." It describes how "that amiable and bright emanation of vivifying Love" drove darkness from "the obscure Chaos," so that "a World might be made of nothing" [Fludd, Mosaical Philosophy, #70536, Section II, Book I, chs. 1–3]. Alexandrian classes Paracelsus, Fludd and van Helmont as "operators" who carried

Kabbalistic techniques into medicine and into the exploration of the invisible [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, "Misterele Cabalei"].

Inner alchemy against the laboratory

The twentieth century made the spiritual reading systematic. Herbert Silberer's *Hidden Symbolism of Alchemy and the Occult Arts* (English 1917) takes an old alchemical "Parabola" and reads it psychoanalytically. Its translator, Smith Ely Jelliffe, presents it as a contribution to "paleo-psychology," linking "the unconscious of present day mankind" to medieval thought through the principle of "sublimation" [Reference book: Silberer, Hidden Symbolism of Alchemy and the Occult Arts, Preface and Part I]. Adam McLean's study course goes the other way. He warns students against forcing "an interpretation onto the alchemical emblem" from "modern ideas from psychology, kabbalah, tarot, eastern philosophy, or western occultism." For McLean, emblems are "not textual information encoded in symbols" but "dynamic gateways, before which we can stand and allow ourselves to enter into an inner dialogue with the imagery" [McLean, Study Course on Inner Alchemy and Alchemical Symbolism, #45246, Lesson 7]. His lessons teach the student to tell the dragon from the snake, ouroboros and salamander. A many-headed dragon's heads "can correspond to the three principles (salt, sulphur mercury), the four elements or the seven planets" [McLean, Lesson 13: The Dragon, #45244].

Jean Dubuis stands for the surviving laboratory tradition. His publishers urge students to master plant spagyrics before the *Mineral Alchemy* course, which works through alkahests, the vinegar of antimony, metallic oils and "Separation of the Three Elements." It pairs each operation with a numbered meditation and joins "Oratory; Laboratory" [Dubuis, Mineral Alchemy, #67098, vol. 1, Index of Lessons]. Alexandrian adds that while Berthelot was studying Arabic alchemy "as one studies a dead language," a group of French alchemists was still at work on the Great Work. One of them, Jollivet-Castelot, wrote in 1897 that "for Hermetic philosophy, chemistry is a laboratory apprentice's science" [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, "Alchimia triumfătoare"].

Astrology: from Babylon to Ficino's Florence

The reference shelf finds "the oldest undisputed evidence of the use of astrology as an integrated system" in the first dynasty of Babylon. By the end of the seventeenth century heliocentrism had "undermined the theoretical basis of astrology" [Wikipedia: History of astrology]. Julia and Derek Parker describe the Babylonian omen series *Enuma Anu Enlil*, "over 7000 astrological articles recorded on 70 tablets." They credit the Persians with "inventing" the four elements later built into the scheme by Ptolemy. They also note that Islamic astronomy drew on Greek, Indian and Sasanian sources [Parker, Istoria Astrologiei, #44582]. Alexandrian credits Ptolemy's *Tetrabiblos* with unifying earlier beliefs through the six aspects. He says European astrologers relied on Ptolemy "until the middle of the seventeenth century" [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, "Astrologia"].

The Arabic *Picatrix* links astrology to Renaissance magic. Yates calls it "an extremely comprehensive treatise on sympathetic and astral magic, with particular reference to talismans," and finds Ficino's planetary healing images, such as "a king on a throne, in a yellow garment, and a crow and the form of the Sun," strikingly close to images in it (see Chapter 105) [Yates, Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition, #42768, chs. III–IV]. The library's Atallah translation gives, in its chapter "Planets' Stones and Picture Drawings," an image for each planet compiled from Apollonius and other sources [Ghayat al-Hakim, Picatrix, #53503, Book II ch. 10]. The Church's response was uneven. The Parkers record that Peter of Abano's bones were exhumed and burned by the Inquisition, though for theological speculations rather than for astrology. They describe Cecco d'Ascoli as "the only astrologer burned by the Inquisition" [Parker, Istoria Astrologiei, #44582]. Astrology also served politics. The Parkers trace it from the emperors to Elizabeth I, Himmler and Reagan. They report that the astrologer Frau Ebertin warned in 1923 that Hitler "could expose himself to danger through lack of prudence" before the Munich putsch. They also report that the physician-astrologer Karl-Gunther Heimoth, a friend of Ernst Röhm, was killed with him in June 1934 [Parker, Istoria Astrologiei, #44582].

Modern astrology moves toward psychology. Dane Rudhyar proposes a "person-centered" and "transpersonal" astrology. He describes it as "not... a bigger and better kind of astrology; it is 'more-than-astrology'," a "transformative process" rather than Jung's "healing way" [Rudhyar, The Astrology of Transformation, #67654].

Alchemy and the stars in Pike's Masonry

Albert Pike takes both arts into the Scottish Rite. In the Master Mason degree he writes: "Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, conceals its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled." A few pages earlier he writes: "Gold, to the eyes of the Initiates, is Light condensed" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree III]. In the Knight of the Sun degree he gives the Great Work "a threefold signification… religious, philosophical, and natural." He reads its prima materia as "the Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt, which by turns volatilized and fixed, compose the AZOTH of the Sages." He adds that the alchemists gave "their Sulphur, represented by the Baphomet of the Temple, that goat's head which brought into such disrepute the occult Mediæval associations" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree XXVIII]. He also quotes a Scottish Elder Master ritual in which "the true process for the transmutation of metals" lies in Salt, Sulphur and Spirit, symbolised by three golden basins [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree XXVIII].

Pike's astral reading of the Mysteries comes from Porphyry. In the Mithraic cave "the Persians… fixed the seat of that God, Father of Generation… near the equinoctial point of Spring." The cave "displayed the zodiacal and other constellations, and marked gates at the four equinoctial and solstitial points… whereat souls enter into and escape from the world of generations." His index adds "Mithras, the Sun God of the Persians, born in a cave at Winter" (p. 587) and "on 25th December was celebrated the birth of" Mithras (p. 406). He links Serpentarius, "identical with Æsculapius," to the descent of Osiris in the autumn signs [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717]. In Pike, alchemy and astrology become two keys to one concealed religion of Light.

Key points

- The Emerald Tablet reached Latin Europe c. 1140 from Arabic sources that may date to the seventh to ninth centuries. Its key line reads "from" in the Jabir version and "like" in Newton's.
- El Khadem documents a Zosimos text translated into Arabic by the twelfth-century Al-Tughra'i, physical evidence of the Greek-to-Arabic transmission.

- Redgrove derives alchemy from mysticism applied to matter and sets out pseudo-Geber's three orders of "medicine." He reports Berthelot's exposure of the Latin Geber as a fourteenth-century forgery.
- Read, Powell and Krebs present Paracelsus's tria prima (mercury, sulphur, salt), his burning of Galen and Avicenna at Basel and his medical aim as the turn toward iatro-chemistry. Read calls it "a parting of the ways" after "a thousand years."
- Boehme used alchemy as a language for Christian mysticism, with the Stone as the Spirit of Christ. Fludd built a Mosaic-Kabbalistic physics.
- Silberer reads alchemy psychoanalytically, while McLean refuses to import outside meanings. Dubuis keeps laboratory practice and pairs it with meditation.
- Astrology runs from Babylon through Ptolemy and the Picatrix to Rudhyar. The Parkers document its political uses up to Nazi Germany.
- Pike says Masonry "like… Hermeticism and Alchemy, conceals its secrets," calls gold "Light condensed," and reads the Mithraic cave as a zodiacal map of souls.

Chapter 107.

The Knights Templar: History, Trial and the Templar Legend

The Order of the Temple existed for less than two centuries, from a handful of knights guarding a pilgrim road to the arrests of 13 October 1307 and the burning of its last Grand Master in 1314. Its afterlife in high-degree Freemasonry, occultism, conspiracy literature and fiction has lasted far longer. The library's sources fall into three groups. One is a sceptical historiography, represented by John Michael Greer's encyclopedia and C. G. Addison's 1842 history. Another holds that the Templars survived, argued by Sanford Holst and by Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince. A third treats the order as the carrier of a hidden doctrine with political aims, as Nesta Webster and Albert Pike do. This chapter gives each group its own voice and states its evidence.

Foundation and rise

Greer gives the standard account. "In the year 1119, nine French knights living in Jerusalem formed a religious order devoted to the protection of pilgrims." King Baldwin II gave them "a place to live near the ruins of Solomon's Temple," hence the name "the Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and the Temple of Solomon." Greer says that "many strange claims have been floated in recent years about the founding of the order, but it made perfect sense in the context of the time." [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Knights Templar"]. The order was poor, and "on occasion two brothers had to ride a single horse." A letter from Hugues de Payens written around the Council of Troyes in 1128 shows it "struggling for survival." After the council recognised it, and Bernard of Clairvaux helped draft its rule, donations poured in. By 1170 it had "nearly a thousand brother knights in the Holy Land" [Greer, #64911, "Knights Templar"].

Webster begins her chapter differently: "IN the year 1118… a band of nine French gentilshommes, led by Hugues de Payens and Godefroi de Saint-Omer" [Web-

ster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, ch. III "The Templars"]. The Lévi text quoted in Pike's Kadosh degree also gives 1118. [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree XXX "Knight Kadosh"]. Greer's 1119 follows the historians. The 1118 date passed into esoteric and conspiratorial writing.

Wealth and the "river of gold"

The sources agree that the order grew rich. Greer calls the Templars "the first international bankers in medieval Europe," and notes that the French crown kept its treasury at the Paris Temple [Greer, #64911]. Holst argues that the vaults were usually emptier than they looked. The order's aim was to turn the produce of "more than 870 estates" into coin and ship it east: "What they had was a flowing river of gold. It coursed from West to East." He cites Jacques de Molay's anger when his Paris treasurer lent King Philip 400,000 florins. [Holst, Sworn in Secret, #50535, ch. 10 "A River of Gold and Friday the 13th"]. Webster, following Funck-Brentano, turns the banking role into a political charge. Had the Templars not been suppressed, she writes, "trusts, monopolies, and 'corners' " would have come in the fourteenth century "in a far worse form" [Webster, #69057, ch. III].

Arrests, charges and trials

Greer describes Philip IV as "perpetually short of money." He had his "hand-picked papal candidate, Clement V" elected in 1305, and rumours spread by the renegade Esquin de Floryan gave him his pretext. "At dawn on Friday, October 13, 1307, in an operation that would have done credit to a modern police state," every Templar house in France was raided and about two thousand men were imprisoned [Greer, #64911]. Holst writes that "the vast majority of men escaped." He quotes the testimony of Bernard de Vado after torture by the inquisitors: "the flesh was burnt off my heels, two pieces of bone came away, which I present to you" [Holst, #50535, ch. 10].

Webster lists the charges brought by the Inquisitor of France. They were denial of Christ and insults to the Cross at reception, "the adoration of an idol," omission of the words of consecration, absolution given by lay chiefs, and "unnatural vice" [Webster, #69057, ch. III]. Greer explains the idol's name: "Baphomet" is "simply the standard medieval French mispronunciation of 'Muhammad' ". The

implication was that the Templars "had gone over to the enemy" [Greer, #64911]. The sources part ways over what the confessions are worth:

- **Webster** points to the seventy-two knights examined at Poitiers "without torture or pressure of any kind in the presence of the Pope himself." She argues that torture "does not necessarily invalidate" a confession, and that matching accounts from several countries suggest a real rite. Her conclusion is that the knights were "both innocent and guilty," with a secret doctrine kept by a few. She cites Stephen de Stapelbrugge: "there were two modes of reception, one lawful and good and the other contrary to the Faith" [Webster, #69057, ch. III].
- **Greer** stresses that German courts found the Templars "innocent of all charges." Of the 2,000 men seized in France, "only 60 were actually executed" [Greer, #64911].
- **Addison** prints the English depositions and calls them "hearsay, these vague suspicions and monstrous improbabilities". [Reference book: Addison, The History of the Knights Templars, the Temple Church, and the Temple].
- **Holst** draws on the Holyrood trial, which opened on 17 November 1309. Only two Templars were taken in all Scotland, Walter de Clifton and William de Middleton, and forty-one witnesses produced "nothing of a criminatory nature." The caretaker of Balantrodoch said the brethren "threw off their habits and fled" [Holst, #50535, ch. 12 "Underground Railroad, Lodges and Inns"; ch. 13 "The St. Clair Barons of Roslin"].

Fifty-four relapsed Templars were burned at Paris on 12 May 1310. Clement abolished the order by the bull *Vox in excelso* on 22 March 1312 [Holst, #50535, ch. 12]. Greer adds that many bishops at Vienne supported the order, so Clement dissolved it "on his own authority" [Greer, #64911]. On the scaffold Molay retracted: "I disdain to seek a wretched and disgraceful existence by engrafting another lie upon the original falsehood." He was burned that evening [Holst, #50535, ch. 12]. Holst dates this to 18 March 1314, Webster to 14 March [Webster, #69057, ch. III]. The Chinon Parchment of 17-20 August 1308 was found by Barbara Frale in 2001. On its basis she claims that Clement's cardinals absolved Molay and the leadership [Wikipedia: Chinon Parchment].

Survival theses

Holst works from the numbers. Of "approximately 4000 brothers" only "about 500" appear in the records, so "what happened to the 3500 others?" He rejects the idea of a warning, since the Grand Master and "roughly 232 Templars" were taken at their posts. He argues instead that the network of "unmarked couriers and unheralded country houses" that had carried the river of gold became an "underground railroad" of safe houses and inns [Holst, #50535, ch. 11 "Vanished into Thin Air"; ch. 12]. He follows the St Clairs of Roslin, four miles from Balantrodoch, down to William St Clair, first Grand Master of Scotland in 1736 [Holst, #50535, ch. 13; ch. 20]. He rejects the legend that Templars won Bannockburn, citing John Barbour's 1375 account of camp-followers with sheets for banners. He still maintains that "much better candidates for Templar-Freemason connections" exist [Holst, #50535, ch. 13]. Greer writes that Rosslyn Chapel is "no more based on the Temple of Solomon than any other Gothic church" [Greer, #64911, "Rosslyn Chapel"].

Picknett and Prince argue that the Templars' veneration of John the Baptist "conceals something far more radical": a Johannite heresy that ranked the Baptist above Jesus. Their evidence includes the Templar Lamb of God, which in some regions referred to John. They also cite churches dedicated to the Baptist and the parallel between the severed head of the Baphomet charge and the bodiless heads of the Grail romances. They point as well to the founding of the Grand Lodge of England on 24 June, the Baptist's feast, and to the Johannite passage in Pike [Picknett & Prince, Misterul templierilor, #17309].

Pike's Kadosh: Johannism, two principles, a political plot

Pike introduces the Lévi text he quotes as the words of "an enemy of the Templars." According to it, the Johannite pontiff Theoclet initiated Hugues de Payens. The order was therefore "at its very origin devoted to the cause of opposition to the tiara of Rome and the crowns of Kings." The passage goes on: "The Templars, like all other Secret Orders and Associations, had two doctrines, one concealed and reserved for the Masters, which was Johannism; the other public, which was the Roman Catholic." Freemasonry accordingly took Saint John the Evangelist and Saint John the Baptist as patrons, "thus covertly proclaiming itself the child

of the Kabalah and Essenism together" [Pike, #378717, Degree XXX "Knight Kadosh"].

In his own commentary Pike links the doctrine to Persia: "wherever, in the higher Degrees, the two colors white and black, are in juxtaposition, the two Principles of Zoroaster and Manes are alluded to," as on the tessellated pavement. He rejects the idol charge: "It is absurd to suppose that men of intellect adored a monstrous idol called Baphomet." The quoted text then casts the order in political terms. "The Templars were unintelligent and therefore unsuccessful Jesuits." "It was impossible to unfold to the people the conspiracy of the Templars against the Thrones and the Tiara," so the accusers fell back on charges of magic. It also claims that "the secret movers of the French Revolution had sworn to overturn the Throne and the Altar upon the Tomb of Jacques de Molai" [Pike, #378717, Degree XXX]. Webster quotes the same Lévi phrase, "those terrible conspirators," in support of her own case [Webster, #69057, ch. III].

How the legend was made

Greer dates the myth closely. Until the 1730s only two views existed: that Philip destroyed the order out of greed (the view of Dante and Jean Bodin), or that the charges were true. "Abruptly, in the late 1730s," Jacobite Masons in France, following Ramsay's 1736 oration, presented the Templars as guardians of an ancient wisdom. The idea became central to the Scottish degrees, the Rite of Perfection and the Strict Observance (both 1754). In Greer's words, "the evidence does seem to support" the view that "the entire Templar myth was created by Jacobite propagandists." Further layers followed. Hammer-Purgstall's *Mysterium Baphometis Revelatum* (1818) was in Greer's view a Metternichian "strategy of disinformation." Fabré-Palaprat's "Charter of Larmenius" (1804) was "an eighteenth-century forgery." Lévi's Baphomet came in 1860, and later the OTO and the Priory of Sion [Greer, #64911, "Knights Templar"]. Webster reads the same Ordre du Temple publications of 1811 and 1831 as evidence of a living Johannite tradition [Webster, #69057, ch. III]. The Masonic line from Ramsay to the Strict Observance is taken up in the chapters on high-degree Masonry. Katherine Kurtz's novels in the library (*Temple and the Stone*, #7268; *Temple and the Crown*, #361861) are part of the legend's reception, not evidence.

Question	Greer / Addison	Webster	Pike (quoting Lévi)	Holst	Picknett & Prince
Founding	1119	1118	1118	Hugues in Scotland 1128	—
Charges true?	No; hearsay; Baphomet = "Muhammad"	Partly: secret rite for a few	Idol "absurd"; secret Johannism real	No; extracted by torture	Head cult points to the Baptist
Motive	Philip's greed	Fear of a state within the state	Plot against "Thrones and Tiara"	Greed and royal debt	Fear of heresy
Survival	Myth born in the 1730s	Through Johannite successors	Through "Occult, Hermetic, or Scottish Masonry"	Underground network; Scotland	Johannite secret handed on

Key points

- Greer dates the founding to 1119 and stresses the order's poverty before Troyes (1128). Webster and the Lévi text in Pike give 1118.
- The 1307 arrests were Philip IV's operation with Clement V's cooperation. Greer, Holst and Addison put them down to greed; Webster defends Philip.
- Webster treats some confessions as genuine evidence of a secret inner rite. Greer and Addison stress the acquittals outside France and the hearsay quality of the depositions.
- Greer reads "Baphomet" as "Muhammad". Pike calls Baphomet worship "absurd" but affirms a hidden Johannite doctrine.
- Holst argues that most Templars escaped through an underground network, citing the Scottish trial. He rejects the Bannockburn legend.
- Picknett and Prince argue for a Johannite secret about the relative standing of John the Baptist and Jesus.
- Greer traces the Templar-Masonic myth to Jacobite France after 1736, reshaped by Hammer-Purgstall, Fabré-Palaprat and Lévi.
- Pike links the black-and-white pavement to "the two Principles of Zoroaster and Manes."

Chapter 108.

The Rosicrucian Manifestos and the "Rosicrucian Enlightenment"

Between 1614 and 1616 three anonymous German publications announced an invisible brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. Its founder had supposedly learned the secrets of nature in Arabia and Morocco, and its members now invited the learned of Europe to join a "general reformation" of the world. No such brotherhood has ever been found. Yet the manifestos set off a furore across Europe, a witch-scare in Paris, a long debate about the origins of the Royal Society and of Freemasonry, and a line of self-styled Rosicrucian orders that lasts to the present. This chapter sets out the documentary facts, Yates's thesis, the corrections offered by McIntosh, Greer and Churton, and the later claimants to the name.

The three publications

Greer warns at the start that "the most common assumption about the Rosicrucians – that they are a single secret organization, active for the last 400 years if not longer – is also the most inaccurate." He then gives "the established facts." In 1614 the printer Wilhelm Wessel of Cassel issued a booklet with three parts. The first was the *Universal and General Reformation of the Whole Wide World*, "a pirated German translation of one dialogue from *News from Parnassus* (1612)" by Traiano Boccalini, a satire in which Apollo's council of sages ends by regulating vegetable prices. The second was the *Fama Fraternitatis*. The third was a reply by Adam Haselmayer, "for which he was seized by the Jesuits and condemned to a galley" [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Rosicrucians"]. The *Fama* told of C.R.C., who learned his secrets at Damcar and Fez and died in 1484, and of the rediscovery of his vault in 1604. In 1615 the same

press issued the *Confessio*, bound with Philip à Gabella's essay drawn from John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica*. In 1616 Lazarus Zetzner of Strasbourg printed *The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz* [Greer, #64911, "Rosicrucians"].

Greer reads the *Fama* "by the company it originally kept." It was "a grand scheme of social reform... printed alongside a raucous satire on grand schemes of social reform." "If this is true, it counts as the most influential college prank of all time" [Greer, #64911]. McIntosh reads the pairing as a lesson "that an inner reformation within men's minds and hearts must precede any external reformation." He dates Haselmayer's *Reply* to 1612, "the earliest known printed reference to the Rosicrucian brotherhood," and has him freed from the galleys in 1617 [McIntosh, The Rosicrucians, #67335, ch. 3 "The Tubingen Circle"].

Andreae, the Tübingen circle and the ludibrium

Who wrote the texts? Greer says the *Chemical Wedding* "was apparently the first one written." Its author, Johann Valentin Andreae, wrote it "in 1605 while he was a student at Tübingen University" in a circle "centered on Tobias Hess and Christoph Besold." Andreae "admitted in his autobiography" that the work was his, "though it was published against his wishes." The *Fama* and *Confessio* came from "one or more members of the Tübingen circle" between 1606 and 1610 [Greer, #64911]. McIntosh reports that recent research by Carlos Gilly "has revealed Hess as a key figure," since an early *Fama* manuscript was sent out from Hess's house. He traces the manifestos' lion-and-eagle prophecy to Simon Studion's *Naometria* (1604), whose chronology ends in 1620 [McIntosh, #67335, ch. 3].

Andreae later disowned the affair. In *Turris Babel* (1619) he wrote: "Listen ye mortals, in vain do you wait for the coming of the Brotherhood, the Comedy is at an end." McIntosh suggests, as "speculation," that Andreae published the *Chemical Wedding* in 1616 "to show that the fraternity was a myth." He also records John Warwick Montgomery's contrary view that Andreae was hostile to Rosicrucianism from the start [McIntosh, #67335, ch. 3]. Yates writes that "Andreae made painful efforts to make clear that Christian Rosencreutz and his Fraternity were a fiction." She adds that the fiction "suggested a reality, the Christian Unions," groups that tried to form real societies [Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, #62112, ch. 15; ch. 11 "The R.C. Fraternity and the Christian Unions"]. Churton devotes a chapter to Andreae's later writings and his *Societas Christiana*

[Churton, The Invisible History of the Rosicrucians, #64729, ch. 11 "Andreae CosmoXenus"].

The Chymical Wedding: the primary text

The library holds the 1690 English translation. It opens on Easter Eve: "On an evening before Easter Day, I sat at a table, and having (as my custom was) in my humble prayer sufficiently conversed with my Creator…" A storm breaks, and "a fair and glorious lady" with a golden trumpet leaves a letter sealed "IN HOC SIGNO VINCES." The letter reads: "This day, today / Is the Royal Wedding day. / For this thou wast born / And chosen of God for joy… Keep watch / Inspect thyself / And shouldst thou not bathe thoroughly / The Wedding may work thy bane." Below it are written "Sponsus and Sponsa" [Andreae, The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz, #40448, "The First Day"].

Yates summarises the seven days. On the first day comes the invitation. The hero, wearing four red roses in his hat, calls himself "a brother of the Red Rosy Cross." Then come the weighing of the guests, a play before the king and queen, the deaths and alchemical restoration of the royal pair, and finally the knighting of the guests into the Order of the Golden Stone. Yates calls it "an allegory of alchemical processes interpreted symbolically as an experience of the mystic marriage of the soul" [Yates, #62112, ch. 5 "The Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz"].

Yates's thesis: the Palatinate and the Bohemian catastrophe

The core of Yates's book is historical and political. In her preface she writes that "what has slipped out of history" is that "a 'Rosicrucian' phase of culture was attached to" the marriage of Elizabeth Stuart and Frederick V, Elector Palatine, in 1613. In her account the manifestos were connected with it, Dee's earlier movements in Bohemia lay behind them, and the brief reign at Heidelberg "was a Hermetic golden age, nourished on the alchemical movement led by Michael Maier, on Dee's *Monas hieroglyphica*." When James I disowned the movement, it foundered [Yates, #62112, Preface; ch. 1 "A Royal Wedding"; ch. 2 "The Bohemian Tragedy"; ch. 3 "John Dee and the Rise of 'Christian Rosencreutz' "].

She offers several lines of evidence. The *Chemical Wedding* carries "a roughly drawn version of John Dee's 'monas hieroglyphica' " in the margin and on its title page. Its castle of lions recalls Heidelberg, home of the Palatine Lion, and the red cross and roses may echo Frederick's Order of the Garter. Yates holds that both an exoteric chivalric meaning and an esoteric alchemical one (*Ros Crux*, dew-cross) "might stand together" [Yates, #62112, ch. 5]. De Bry's press at Oppenheim, in the Palatinate, published Fludd and Maier in 1617 [Yates, #62112, ch. 6 "The Palatine Publisher"]. Frederick took the Bohemian crown in 1619 and lost it at the White Mountain in 1620. [Yates, #62112, ch. 2].

Greer accepts the outline as Yates's argument. Frederick's supporters "were involved in propagating Rosicrucian documents, particularly the *Confessio*," and the promised reformation "was propaganda for Frederick's party." He adds that "if this was the political reality... the scheme failed disastrously" [Greer, #64911]. McIntosh is more guarded: "Her claims about Dee's role appear exaggerated, however, in the light of recent scholarship" [McIntosh, #67335, ch. 3].

Furore, scare and the "invisible college"

The manifestos drew a flood of replies; Yates covers the German furore in her chapter 7 [Yates, #62112, ch. 7 "The Rosicrucian Furore in Germany"]. In France the reaction turned to fear. "In the year 1623 placards are said to have appeared in Paris announcing the presence in the town of the Brethren of the Rose Cross": "We, being deputies of the principle College of the Brothers of the Rose Cross, are making a visible and invisible stay in this city." A 1623 pamphlet, *Horrible Pacts made between the Devil and the Pretended Invisible Ones*, turned them into devil-worshippers. The Jesuit François Garasse said they "all deserve to be broken on the wheel or hanged." Yates calls this "an attempt... to start a witch-craze" [Yates, #62112, ch. 8 "The Rosicrucian Scare in France"].

Yates then follows the "invisible college" through Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Comenius and Hartlib to the Royal Society of 1660 [Yates, #62112, ch. 9; ch. 12; ch. 13 "From the Invisible College to the Royal Society"]. She shows that Elias Ashmole copied out the manifestos in his own hand with a letter asking to join, and she traces the "Dee tradition" to Newton's alchemy [Yates, #62112, ch. 14 "Elias Ashmole and the Dee Tradition"].

Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry

In her chapter 15 Yates states her negative finding plainly: "I have found no evidence of a real secret society calling itself 'Rosicrucian'… There is immense evidence of a passionate search for Rosicrucians but no evidence that they were ever found." She then sets out the evidence that does exist. Robert Moray was admitted to the Edinburgh lodge on 20 May 1641, and Ashmole was made a Mason at Warrington on 16 October 1646. Both were founder members of the Royal Society. A 1638 Perth poem links the two: "For we be brethren of the Rosie Crosse: / We have the Mason word and second sight." A 1676 squib announces that "the Ancient Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross; the Hermetick Adepti and the company of Accepted Masons intend all to dine together." She judges that De Quincey's view, that "Freemasonry is neither more nor less than Rosicrucianism as modified by those who transplanted it to England," "cannot be entirely right" [Yates, #62112, ch. 15 "Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry"].

Greer gives the Masonic route more concretely. The Scottish degrees that appeared in France in the 1740s and 1750s, which he attributes to Jacobite authors, carried Rosicrucian elements into "the 18° of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite" [Greer, #64911]. Pike's Eighteenth Degree, Knight Rose Croix, treats its ceremonies as open to each brother's own reading. Some see in the Master's legend "the condemnation and sufferings of Christ; others those of the unfortunate Grand Master of the Templars." He identifies the Word of the degree with "the Ormuzd of Zoroaster, the Ainsoph of the Kabalah" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree XVIII "Knight Rose Croix"]. In his Kadosh degree he gives the symbol's meaning: "To unite the Rose to the Cross, was the problem proposed by the High Initiation" [Pike, #378717, Degree XXX].

Later claimants to the name

Greer calls the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross (*Gold- und Rosenkreuz*) of the 1750s, founded by Hermann Fichtuld, "the first solidly documented Rosicrucian order." It admitted only Master Masons, counted Frederick William II of Prussia as a member, and claimed descent from an Egyptian magus, Ormus, in 96 CE [Greer, #64911]. Later came the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia (1866), the Paris Kabbalistic Order of the Rose+Cross (1888) and Heindel's Rosicrucian Fellowship (1907). AMORC was founded by H. Spencer Lewis in 1925. Greer says Lewis "backdated his own initiation… and his order to ancient Egypt," and that his feud

with R. Swinburne Clymer's Fraternitas Rosae Crucis involved charges of sex magic that "probably had merit in both cases" [Greer, #64911]. Churton covers Steiner, Heindel, Lewis and the Lectorium Rosicrucianum in a chapter he titles "The Age of Insanity" [Churton, #64729, ch. 17]. Christian Rebisse's *Rosicrucian History and Mysteries* was published by AMORC's Supreme Grand Lodge. It is the order's own history, running from "Egypt and the Primordial Tradition" to Lewis's initiation at Toulouse and "The Fourth Rosicrucian Manifesto" [Rebisse, Rosicrucian History and Mysteries, #66262].

Steven Sora goes further. He claims that "a very small handful of individuals... alchemists, geomancers, and philosophers" calling themselves "the Invisibles," from "a college in sixteenth-century England," shaped the founding of the United States. His chapters run from Bacon's *New Atlantis* to Pennsylvania's Pietists and the Revolution [Sora, Rosicrucian America, #64376, Introduction]. Rudolf Steiner gave his 1907 lectures on "Anthroposophy and Rosicrucianism" at Kassel, the town of the *Fama*'s first printing, and they set out the anthroposophical reading taken up in a later chapter [Steiner, Cunoașterea lui Hristos (GA 100), #48586].

Question	Yates	Greer	McIntosh	Churton / Rebisse	Sora
Authors	Andreae and allies under Dee's influence	Tübingen circle; Andreae wrote the *Wedding*	Hess central; Andreae possibly	Andreae, Hess	—
Meaning	Palatine reform propaganda	Erudite joke turned serious	Parable of inner reform	Spiritual current	Programme of the "Invisibles"
Real order in 1614?	No evidence	No	Possibly linked to the *Unzertrennlichen*	Rebisse: continuous tradition	Yes, an invisible college
Link to Freemasonry	Ashmole, Moray, 1638 poem	Via Jacobite Scottish degrees	Parallel emergence	Rose Croix 18°	Through the American founders

Key points

- Greer's "established facts": the 1614 Cassel booklet from Wessel bound the *Fama* with a pirated Boccalini satire and Haselmayer's reply. The *Confessio* (1615) and *Chemical Wedding* (Strasbourg, 1616) followed.
- Andreae claimed the *Chemical Wedding* as a youthful work of about 1605 and later called the brotherhood a "Comedy." McIntosh and Gilly give Tobias Hess a central role.
- Yates ties the manifestos to Frederick V and Elizabeth Stuart, Dee's *Monas*, the De Bry press at Oppenheim and the defeat of 1620. Greer accepts this as her argument; McIntosh finds the Dee claims exaggerated.
- The 1623 Paris placards set off an attempted witch-scare against the "Invisibles."
- Yates found "no evidence" of a real Rosicrucian society. She documents overlaps with early Masonry: Moray (1641), Ashmole (1646), the 1638 poem and the 1676 squib.
- The Rose Croix entered Freemasonry as the 18th degree. Pike reads it as a universal symbol of the redeeming Word.
- Later orders from the Gold- und Rosenkreuz to AMORC built their own lineages. Rebisse writes AMORC's self-history; the American thesis is Sora's.

Chapter 109.

The Origins of Freemasonry: Operative Lodges, the Scottish Evidence and the Grand Lodge of 1717

Freemasonry tells two stories about its origins. In its own legends it is as old as geometry, reaching back through the medieval cathedral builders to Solomon's Temple, to Hiram, to Enoch's pillars or to Egypt. The documentary record is much shorter. It begins with the manuscript "Old Charges" of the masons' craft, takes institutional shape in the Scottish statutes of 1598-1599, shows gentlemen entering lodges in the seventeenth century, and becomes public with the Grand Lodge formed in London in 1717. The library's historians, chiefly Margaret Jacob, R. F. Gould, Sanford Holst and John Michael Greer, reconstruct the documented line. Masonic and other writers such as Albert Churchward and Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas offer ancient origins. Nesta Webster reads the whole question in her own way. Politics runs through the story, since in Jacob's account the eighteenth-century lodge became a school for constitutional self-government.

The Old Charges and the guild

The oldest Masonic documents are the "Old Charges," manuscript constitutions of the masons' trade. Gould catalogues them roll by roll and copy by copy. They include the poem published by J. O. Halliwell in 1840 and 1844, the Scottish versions (the Melrose text "is clearly a transcript of one of A.D. 1581, or earlier"), and later rolls such as the Papworth MS of 1714. He treats with suspicion documents that claim too much, such as the supposed York constitution of 926 first

announced in 1808, "of whom no trace can be found" [Gould, Gould's History of Freemasonry Throughout the World, Vol. I, #63659, "The Old Charges"]. Yates summarises their legendary content. "Masonry, or building, or architecture is identified with geometry", discovered before the Flood or taught by Abraham to the Egyptians and attributed to "Thoth-Hermes... who is identified with Euclid" [Yates, The Rosicrucian Enlightenment, #62112, ch. 15]. Jacob quotes a 1659 manuscript held by the Royal Society. In it Hermes, "the father of Wisemen," "found out the two pillars of Stone whereon the Sciences were written." The same text speaks of "parliament" and of observing "the Charges in the Constitution," and she reads this as evidence of its revolutionary-era setting [Jacob, The Origins of Freemasonry, #78059, ch. 1 "Origins"].

Holst traces the guild framework itself. In 1376 the London masons were one of the city's forty-seven "sufficient misteries." In 1475 Edinburgh's "Masons and Wrights" were incorporated by a Seal of Cause. Its rules provided seven-year apprenticeships, examination by "four men" before an apprentice became "fellow of the craft," and burial of the brethren. From this incorporation came the Lodge of Edinburgh (Mary's Chapel), "the records of this lodge, from 1599 forward" surviving [Holst, Sworn in Secret, #50535, ch. 15 "Master Masons to the Crown"]. Webster, drawing on Masonic writers, mentions the Culdees, the Roman *collegia* and the York charter of 926. She adds that "all this is speculation. No documentary evidence has ever been produced" before Gothic times [Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, ch. V "Origins of Freemasonry"].

Scotland: Schaw, Moray and the first gentlemen

Greer gives the decisive Scottish evidence. William Schaw (1550-1602), appointed Master of Works by James VI in 1583, "issued a set of ordinances, the first Schaw Statutes," in 1598 and a revised second set in 1599. "These statutes are the earliest detailed records of the organization of operative masons in Scotland, and provide a crucial snapshot of the Scottish lodges early in their evolution toward Freemasonry" [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Schaw, William"]. Holst describes Schaw as a well-born courtier set over the Mylne dynasty of royal Master Masons. In his account Schaw's actions "would have a tremendous impact on the legends of Freemasonry," including those of the St Clairs of Roslin [Holst, #50535, ch. 15].

The first records of non-masons follow. Yates cites "a well authenticated earlier" initiation than Ashmole's: "the admission into the mason's lodge of Edinburgh of Robert Moray, on 20 May 1641" [Yates, #62112, ch. 15]. Jacob places Moray's admission in "the 1650s." She notes that the Dundee lodge admitted non-masons throughout the seventeenth century until "by 1700 the gentlemen have taken charge." She cites David Stevenson's view of Scotland as "the home of modern freemasonry" [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1]. Jacob offers an economic explanation. In the advanced wage economy of Scotland and England, lodges "began to admit nonmasons largely because their dues were needed… What began out of necessity transformed this one guild into a voluntary society" [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1].

England: Ashmole, Plot and the hidden lodges

Ashmole's diary entry is the best-known English record. Webster quotes it: "I was made a Freemason at Warrington in Lancashire with Col. Henry Mainwaring." She adds Yarker's comment that "the majority of the members present were not operative masons," and Ashmole's 1682 attendance at Mason Hall in London [Webster, #69057, ch. V]. Yates notes that the Royalist Ashmole was admitted together with a Roundhead cousin, so "members of opposite parties in the civil wars could join in Freemasonry" [Yates, #62112, ch. 15]. Holst quotes Robert Plot's *Natural History of Staffordshire* (1686). Plot found "persons of the most eminent quality" admitted by "certain secret signes, whereby they are known to one another all over the Nation." An "accepted mason" was obliged to help a brother "tho' from the top of a Steeple." Holst also cites a Scarborough lodge of 1705 and the minutes of the York lodge from 1712, which record gentlemen presiding [Holst, #50535, ch. 20 "Lodges Young and Grand"]. Webster and Mackey both report a 1703 decision of the Lodge of St Paul "that the privileges of Masonry should no longer be restricted to operative Masons" [Webster, #69057, ch. V; Mackey, The History of Freemasonry, #65129].

1717, Wren and the legend-making

Jacob opens with the fact: "In 1717, four old London lodges consolidated… They formed the Grand Lodge of London." Holst gives the date as 24 June 1717 [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1; Holst, #50535, ch. 20]. On Wren the record is thin and disputed. Jacob writes that "Wren, had been asked to head the London lodges as early as 1710." In another passage she has him presiding "somewhere before 1717"

as Grand Master. Webster repeats the Masonic tradition of Inigo Jones as Grand Master under James I and of Wren from "about 1685 to 1702" [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1; Webster, #69057, ch. V]. Webster's own list, from the *Royal Masonic Cyclopædia*, records twelve theories of origin. They are the patriarchs, the pagan mysteries, Solomon's Temple, the Crusades, the Templars, the Roman *collegia*, medieval operatives, the Rosicrucians, Cromwell, the Stuarts, Wren, and "Dr. Desaguliers and his friends in 1717" [Webster, #69057, ch. V].

Anderson's book followed. Gould records the Grand Lodge resolution of 29 September 1721 empowering "Bro. James Anderson, A.M., to digest the old Gothic Constitutions, in a new and better method." He also notes that an unauthorized print of *Old Constitutions* (1722) appeared "one year earlier than the premier Book of Constitutions" [Gould, #63659]. Jacob dates the *Constitutions* to 1723 and reads its plural title as "an amalgam of various constitutions used by individual lodges." Its religious clause obliged a brother "only… to that religion in which all men agree" [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1]. Webster rejects the sceptics' view that the system "was devised… by Dr. Desaguliers, Dr. Anderson, and others." She concludes that they "revised but did not originate the ritual" [Webster, #69057, ch. V].

Politics and society: Jacob's "schools of government"

Jacob's central thesis is political. Masonic practices such as "elections, majority rule, orations by elected officials, national governance under a Grand Lodge, and constitutions" all "owed their origin to the growth of parliamentary power." She links the Whig republican John Toland and Lord Mayor Sir Robert Clayton "directly to London lodges that may have formed the nucleus of the Grand Lodge." The lodges were "schools for government—more, rather than less, democratic government." Freemasons "did not cause the French Revolution of 1789, as the conspiracy theorists right up to the Nazis claimed, but they did make it more rather than less likely to happen" [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1; ch. 3 "Schools of Government"].

She also documents a libertine strand. Toland's papers in the British Library (MSS ADD 4295) contain the record of the "Chevaliers de la Jubilation," held at "Gaillardin" on 24 November 1710. The members used "brother," "Grand Master" and "constitutions," and Jacob finds the libertinism in "the list of food and drink, and in the noticeable deterioration of the handwriting as the meeting proceeds."

Associates of this circle circulated the treatise of the "three great imposters," Jesus, Moses and Mohammed [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1]. Jacob follows the lodges' dues, charity and market dealings, and the women's "lodges of adoption." By 1785 there were "probably well over fifteen hundred women freemasons." One ritual had a Queen of the Amazons urging her sisters "to regard as tyrants those who will not obey women" [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1; ch. 4 "Money, Equality, and Fraternity"; ch. 5 "Women in the Lodges"]. The Church condemned the lodges in 1738 and objected, among other things, to "frequent elections as being republican" [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1].

Expansion and schism

Holst traces the spread of the new system. The Grand Lodge of Ireland is recorded in 1725. York declared its own "Grand Lodge of All England" the same year. Desaguliers brought Chester back as a Provincial Grand Lodge in 1727, and the Grand Lodge of Scotland was formed in 1736 under William St Clair. In America, Benjamin Franklin was initiated in 1731 and became Grand Master of Pennsylvania in 1734 [Holst, #50535, ch. 20]. Jacob records that Ramsay's oration in Paris (she dates it to 1738, Greer to 1736) described Freemasonry as "an entire spiritual nation" [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1; Greer, #64911]. In England a rival Antient grand lodge appeared in the 1750s. "A minority of English lodges left the Modern grand lodge, as the Antients called their rivals… and for more than six decades England had two" grand lodges, until the union of 1813 created the United Grand Lodge of England. The Royal Arch, "the first of the higher degrees," belonged at first to the Antient side [Greer, #64911, "Antient-Modern Schism"; "Royal Arch"].

The alternative origin theses

- **Egyptian**. Churchward, a 30th-degree Mason, traced the craft to a prehistoric "Stellar Cult" of the Pole Star, about 600,000 years old, and dated the Great Pyramid to that era. The 2005 introduction to his book records that he received "scholarly disdain and the ridicule of Masonic historians" [Churchward, The Arcana of Freemasonry, #66015]. Webster quotes him admitting that all writing on origins "has hitherto been theories, without any facts for their foundation" [Webster, #69057, ch. V].

- **Solomonic, Hiramic and Enochian**. Knight and Lomas, in the Romanian edition of their book, trace Masonic ritual from Neolithic "Grooved Ware" astronomers and the "megalithic yard" through Venus-aligned temple building, Hiram "son of Venus" and an "Enochian Jesus" to the Templars and Rosslyn. Their "Masonic Testament" runs from Enoch to the Templars [Knight & Lomas, Francmasoneria, Venus și Secretul Vieții lui Iisus, #86921, Contents]. The two pillars of the 1659 manuscript show that the Enochian-Hermetic motif was already present in the Old Charges tradition [Jacob, #78059, ch. 1].
- **Templar and Rosicrucian**. These are treated in the two preceding chapters. Holst rejects Bannockburn but looks for other Templar links [Holst, #50535, ch. 13]. Yates finds only "hinting" Rosicrucian contacts [Yates, #62112, ch. 15].
- **Webster's synthesis**. She opens with an eighteenth-century Mason's remark that "the origin of Freemasonry... is known to Freemasons alone." She concludes that the craft is "a dual system": an operative guild form joined to "a secret group of philosophical Adepts," whose central idea of a loss and its recovery is "the ancient secret tradition" [Webster, #69057, ch. V].

Stage	Date	Evidence	Source
London masons a city "mistery"	1376	City records	Holst
Edinburgh Masons and Wrights incorporated	1475	Seal of Cause	Holst
Schaw Statutes	1598, 1599	Ordinances	Greer
Moray admitted, Edinburgh	1641 (Yates) / 1650s (Jacob)	Lodge record	Yates, Jacob
Ashmole made a Mason, Warrington	16 Oct 1646	Diary	Yates, Webster
Plot describes "accepted masons"	1686	*Natural History of Staffordshire*	Holst
Grand Lodge of London	24 June 1717	Four lodges	Jacob, Holst
Anderson commissioned / *Constitutions*	1721 / 1723	Grand Lodge minutes	Gould, Jacob

Stage	Date	Evidence	Source
Antient-Modern schism to union	1750s-1813	Rival grand lodges	Greer

Key points

- The Old Charges trace masonry through geometry to Hermes, Euclid and the two pillars. Gould catalogues the manuscripts and rejects forgeries such as the "York 926" constitution.
- Greer calls the Schaw Statutes of 1598-1599 "the earliest detailed records of the organization of operative masons in Scotland."
- Non-masons entered the lodges in the seventeenth century: Moray (1641 or the 1650s), Ashmole (1646), and Plot's "persons of the most eminent quality" (1686).
- The Grand Lodge of 1717 united four London lodges. Wren's role as Grand Master is a tradition with thin documentary support.
- Anderson was commissioned in 1721 to "digest the old Gothic Constitutions." The 1723 *Constitutions* set a minimal religion "in which all men agree."
- Jacob argues that the lodges were Whig-republican "schools of government" and documents libertine circles (the 1710 "Chevaliers de la Jubilation") and women's lodges.
- The Antient-Modern schism left England with two grand lodges for "more than six decades" until the union of 1813.
- The Egyptian (Churchward), Venus-Enochian (Knight and Lomas), Templar and Rosicrucian origins are claims made by their authors. Webster treats Freemasonry as an operative form joined to an adept tradition.

Chapter 110.

Degrees, Symbols and Rituals of the Craft

Freemasonry describes itself, in a definition its own writers repeat, as "a science of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols" [Gruber, "Freemasonry: Its Origin and History", printed in Sickels, The General Ahiman Rezon, #66646, quoting Mackey]. The Craft, or "Blue Lodge", has three degrees: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason. Most other bodies (the Royal Arch, the Scottish Rite, the Templar orders) present themselves as developments of these three [Wikipedia: Scottish Rite]. This chapter describes that world as the lodge's own handbooks and commentators present it, sets their readings beside the hostile readings in the library, and uses Emilian M. Dobrescu's Romanian dictionary as a terminological cross-check.

What the monitors print and what they keep oral

The monitors are lodge handbooks printed with the approval of grand lodges. Z. A. Davis's *The Monitor* (Philadelphia, 1853) promises "explanations and plates of all the emblems" from the Entered Apprentice up to the Knights of Malta [Davis, The Monitor, #71706, title page]. Cornelius Moore's *The Craftsman, and Freemason's Guide* (Cincinnati, 1846; eighth edition 1854) was "compiled and arranged from Webb, and other standard authors" and approved for Ohio lodges [Moore, The Craftsman, #73192, preface]. These books print the opening and closing prayers, the charges, the scriptural readings and the "explanations" of the emblems. One example is the Apprentice's working tools in Davis:

> "The twenty-four inch guage … is emblematical of the twenty-four hours of the day, which we are taught to divide into three equal parts; whereby are found eight hours for the service of God, and a distressed worthy brother; eight for our usual vocations; and eight for refreshment and sleep" [Davis, The Monitor, #71706, "Entered Apprentice"].

For the Fellow Craft the monitor prints the praise of "Geometry, the first and noblest of sciences … the basis on which the superstructure of Masonry is erected". For the Master Mason it prints the trowel, which spreads "the cement of brotherly love", and emblems such as the beehive, the forty-seventh problem of Euclid and the All-seeing Eye [Davis, The Monitor, #71706, "Fellow Craft", "Master Mason"]. What the monitors leave out are the modes of recognition, the words and the dramatic content of the obligations. Mackey says the legend of the third degree, apart from two sentences in Anderson's *Constitutions* of 1738 and 1756, "has always remained unwritten, and descended, from age to age, through the means of oral tradition" [Mackey, The Symbolism of Freemasonry, #66062, ch. XXVII]. Dobrescu records how this works in the lodge. Apprentices may express themselves "only in writing" (*numai în scris*): when the Worshipful Master asks for their opinion, a Master reads it aloud. Companions may speak in the work of the lodge, and in some obediences they may vote [Dobrescu, Dicționar de terminologie masonică, #41499, entries on speaking in lodge and "Companion"].

The Hiramic legend and the Lost Word

John Michael Greer gives the outline of the legend. Hiram, the Tyrian brassworker of 1 Kings 7, became in guild legend the Temple's master builder; fifteen journeymen plotted to extort the Master's Word, and twelve repented. "Three went ahead with the plot, lying in wait for him at noon at the three entrances of the unfinished temple. When Hiram refused each of them in turn, each struck him with a tool, and the third blow killed him." The "three ruffians" buried the body, and "Hiram's death, the search for his body, and its recovery make up the core of the Master Mason degree" [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Hiram Abiff"].

For Mackey the legend is a drama of death and immortality. The ancient Mysteries, he writes, taught "the consoling doctrine of the immortality of the soul" by scenic representation: Osiris in Egypt, Adonis in Phoenicia, Dionysus in Syria. Through the Tyrian workmen at Solomon's Temple, the narrative of the Temple builder was "substituted for that of Dionysus". "Hiram Abif is, in the masonic system, the symbol of human nature, as developed in the life here and the life to come" [Mackey, The Symbolism of Freemasonry, #66062, ch. XXVII]. The Word is "the symbol of Divine Truth; and all its modifications—the loss, the substitution, and the recovery—are but component parts of the mythical symbol which represents a search after truth". [same, ch. XXXI]. Sickels' lecture goes further:

"OSIRIS and the Tyrian Architect are one and the same—not a mortal individual, but an idea—an IMMORTAL PRINCIPLE!" The twelve Fellow Crafts sent in search "represent the companions of Isis" [Sickels, The General Ahiman Rezon, #66646, "Master Mason", "The Twelve Messengers"].

Pike offers several readings. In the Master's degree he says the name is properly KHURUM, "KHUR-OM, the same as Her-ra, Her-mes, and Her-acles … the personification of Light and the Son, the Mediator, Redeemer, and Saviour". The ritual names of the assassins, Jubelo, Jubela and Jubelum, "embody an utter absurdity" in Hebrew or Arabic [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degrees III and XXV]. In the Knight of the Sun he reads the three murderers as "Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas the High-Priest, and Judas Iscariot" [same, Degree XXVIII]. He identifies the Word itself: "This knowledge of God … is the Master Mason's Word" (index: "God, the Master Mason's Word is a knowledge of") [same, Degree XIII]. A. E. Waite (1916) holds that the Master-Builder "signifies a principle and not a person". He traces the loss and substitution of the Word to the Kabbalistic "Secret Tradition of Israel". He also notes that in an early philosophical high degree the Master-Builder "rises as Christ" and completes the Divine Name by inserting the letter Shin, producing *Yeheshua*, "the restoration of the Lost Word in the Christian Degrees" [Waite, Some Deeper Aspects of Masonic Symbolism, #79382].

The lodge and its furniture

Mackey writes that the oblong lodge reproduces the ancient habitable world, with the Pillars of Hercules corresponding to "the two pillars that stood at the porch". "A masonic lodge is, therefore, a symbol of the world." Extended in height and depth, it becomes "a symbol of the universe" [Mackey, The Symbolism of Freemasonry, #66062, ch. XIII]. His *Encyclopedia* derives Boaz from Hebrew *b*, "in", and *oaz*, "strength", meaning "in strength" [Mackey, An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, #71610, "Boaz"]. Pike begins from the same Hebrew: "Schlomoh the wise King caused to be placed in front of the entrance to the Temple two huge columns of bronze, one of which was called YAKAYIN and the other BAHAZ … The Masonry of the Blue Lodges gives no explanation of these symbolic columns". His key is Kabbalistic. The columns are Wisdom and Understanding, the active "POWER of generation and the CAPACITY of production", "contraries like the Man and Woman, like Reason and Faith" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree XVIII "Knight Rose Croix"]. In the Fellow Craft lecture he lists them among the pairs of the Duad: "Two, or the Duad, is the symbol

of Antagonism; of Good and Evil, Light and Darkness. It is Cain and Abel, Eve and Lilith, Jachin and Boaz, Ormuzd and Ahriman, Osiris and Typhon" [same, Degree II].

On the letter G, Pike says that in the East, inside a triangle, the proper sign is the Hebrew YŌD, "the symbol of Unity, of the Supreme Deity, the first letter of the Holy Name". English and American lodges substitute G, the initial of GOD, "with as little reason as if the letter D., initial of DIEU, were used in French Lodges" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree I]. Sickels calls G "the Saxon representative of the Hebrew Yod and the Greek Tau", which unites "GOD and Geometry" [Sickels, The General Ahiman Rezon, #66646, "The Letter G"]. Dobrescu's *Delta*, the luminous triangle in the Orient behind the Worshipful Master, carries the divine eye, which "leaves each one free to imagine the God of his own religion" [Dobrescu, Dicționar de terminologie masonică, #41499, "Delta"].

The tesselated pavement shows the clearest disagreement among insiders. Davis gives the standard monitorial meaning: the Mosaic pavement represents the ground floor of Solomon's Temple and "is emblematic of human life … chequered with a strange contrariety of events" [Davis, The Monitor, #71706, "Entered Apprentice"]. Mackey's *Encyclopedia* states: "There is no historical evidence to substantiate this statement" [Mackey, An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, #71610, "Mosaic Pavement"]. Pike agrees: the Temple floor "was covered with planks of fir" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree I]. In the Kadosh degree he gives his own reading. The Johannite adepts adopted Manes' "doctrines of the two Principles, the recollection of which is perpetuated by the handle of the dagger and the tesselated pavement or floor of the Lodge, stupidly called 'the Indented Tessel' … And wherever, in the higher Degrees, the two colors white and black, are in juxtaposition, the two Principles of Zoroaster and Manes are alluded to" [same, Degree XXX]. Here the floor of the lodge is read directly through the Persian dualism with which this study began (Chapters 11 and 16). Dobrescu's dictionary gives the neutral modern definition: white and black squares symbolising "positive and negative, light and darkness, active and passive, matter and spirit, life and death" [Dobrescu, #41499, "Pavaj mozaicat"]. On the square and compasses he adds that the square lies under the compasses in the Apprentice degree, the two intersect in the Companion degree, and in the Master's degree the square is placed above the compasses [Dobrescu, #41499, "Echer", "Compas"].

Symbol	Monitorial meaning	Pike	Hostile reading
Jachin and Boaz	Strength and establishment; "archives to Masonry" (Castells)	Kabbalistic pair Wisdom/Understanding; the Duad with Ormuzd/Ahriman	Phallic or solar pillars, Osiris and Isis (Burns, via Fellows)
Letter G	God and Geometry (Sickels)	Should be Yod; the "Creative Energy of the Deity"	"Generation", citing Pike (Burns)
Pavement	Human life chequered (Davis)	The two Principles of Zoroaster and Manes	not addressed in the passages examined
All-seeing Eye	Providence (Davis, Castells)	not addressed in the passages examined	Eye of Osiris, part of an "unholy trinity of Lucifer" (Marrs)

Oaths, the Royal Arch and the high degrees

The library holds the text of an obligation in a hostile source. A twentieth-century Canadian reprint of chapter VII of Charles G. Finney's anti-Masonic book (Finney was an ex-Mason) is headed "If you want to save Canada from Communism never vote for a Freemason or a Jew!". Its preface, signed "P. M.", calls Freemasons "oath bound slaves to an International conspiracy" to "build a glorified Judaism". Finney's text says that below the Royal Arch a Mason keeps a brother's secrets "murder and treason excepted". In the Royal Arch the candidate swears to aid a companion "WHETHER HE BE RIGHT OR WRONG", and Finney concludes that such a man cannot be trusted as magistrate, sheriff, juror or witness [Finney, Sign of Satan: A Freemason or a Jew!, #70244].

According to Greer, the Royal Arch was "the first of the higher degrees added to Freemasonry in the eighteenth century". It is attested in England before 1744, its inventor is unknown, and it belonged first to the "Antients". "In England, the Royal Arch is considered the completion of the Master Mason degree." Its legend tells of the Word's recovery from an underground vault, and its emblem is the Triple Tau [Greer, #64911, "Royal Arch"]. Mackey writes that in the Royal Arch

"the veils … are withdrawn". The truth revealed is "synonymous with the knowledge of the nature of God … embraced in the sacred Tetragrammaton" [Mackey, An Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, #71610, "Royal Arch"]. The "Scottish" high degrees above it, Greer says, drew on Andrew Michael Ramsay's oration, which he dates to 1736 (other accounts give 1737). It traced Masonry to the crusading knights, "the first time that claim had been made", and it "provided crucial backing for the new 'Scottish' Masonry" [Greer, #64911, "Ramsay, Andrew Michael"]. Records of a "Scots Master" degree go back to 1733 in London [Wikipedia: Scottish Rite].

Philosophers of the Craft

Roscoe Pound, writing in 1915 as Past Grand Master of Nebraska, counted four systems of Masonic philosophy. Two were "intellectual": Preston's, whose keyword is Knowledge, and Krause's, whose keyword is Morals. Two were "spiritual": Oliver's, whose keyword is Tradition, and Pike's, whose keyword is Symbolism [Pound, Lectures on the Philosophy of Freemasonry, #87767, ch. I]. Waite reads the Craft as Kabbalistic speculation grafted onto a building guild by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Christian Hebraists [Waite, #79382]. Castells, a clergyman and Past Master, reads the lodge as a sevenfold image of Solomon's Temple and cites Robert Kirk (1691), who connected "the Mason Word" with "a Rabbinical Tradition, 'by way of comment on Jachin and Boaz' " [Castells, The Apocalypse of Freemasonry, #76251, "Specifications" and historical introduction].

The hostile readings

Cathy Burns (1998) reads the same objects as occult. Quoting the nineteenth-century writer Fellows, she treats the pillars as phallic and solar, with Boaz "Osiris, or the sun" and Jachin "Isis". She says "the 'G' really means generation", citing Pike on the "generative principle", and she places the All-seeing Eye beside the logos of the OTO and New Age groups [Burns, Masonic and Occult Symbols Illustrated, #62278, sections on pillars, the letter G and the eye]. Texe Marrs (2008) calls the All-seeing Eye the sign of Osiris, "the One whom all Masons bow to and worship". He states that Mackey was "Pike's successor as Grand Sovereign Commander", which does not match the reference shelf: there Mackey is the man who conferred the 4th to 32nd degrees on Pike in 1853 [Marrs,

Mysterious Monuments, #66353; Wikipedia: Scottish Rite]. The Catholic historian Hermann Gruber, whose essay opens the Jazzybee edition of Sickels, says many Masonic authors refer the symbols "to the solar and phallic worship of the ancient mysteries", and quotes Pike: "It is in the antique symbols and their occult meaning that the true secrets of Freemasonry consist" [Gruber, in Sickels, #66646].

Both camps go back to the same sentence of Pike's. In the Kadosh degree Pike says the Blue Degrees are "but the outer court or portico of the Temple" and that the Initiate there "is intentionally misled by false interpretations" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree XXX]. Critics take it as an admission. Defenders such as Pound warn that "texts from Pike … are more than usually deceptive" when they are read in isolation [Pound, #87767, ch. IV]. Chapter 112 examines this passage and its uses.

Key points

- The monitors (Davis 1853, Moore 1846/1854, Sickels) print charges, prayers and the meanings of the emblems and working tools. The words, signs and the drama of the Hiramic legend stay oral, as Mackey states.
- The Hiramic legend has three ruffians, three blows and the loss and substitution of the Master's Word. Mackey reads it as the drama of immortality and Sickels as the Osiris myth. Pike reads the Word as the knowledge of God, and Waite traces it to the Kabbalah.
- Pike says the Blue Lodges give "no explanation" of Jachin and Boaz. He reads them as a Kabbalistic pair and sets them beside "Ormuzd and Ahriman, Osiris and Typhon".
- Pike says the letter G should be the Hebrew Yod. He reads the black-and-white pavement, "stupidly called the Indented Tessel", as the "two Principles of Zoroaster and Manes", which ties lodge symbolism to Persian dualism.
- In Greer's account the Royal Arch recovers the lost Word and, in England, counts as the completion of the Master's degree. Ramsay's oration (1736 in Greer; 1737 in other accounts) launched the "Scottish" high degrees.
- Pound classes Masonic philosophy into four systems: Preston (Knowledge), Krause (Morals), Oliver (Tradition) and Pike (Symbolism).
- Hostile authors (Finney's reprint, Burns, Marrs) read the oaths as a danger to the state and the symbols as phallic, solar or Luciferian. They draw partly on Pike's own words.

- Dobrescu's dictionary supplies the Romanian terms: *lojă*, *Venerabil*, *Mare Maestru*, *ucenic*, *companion* (with *calfă* as a synonym), *maestru*, *echer*, *compas*, *Delta*, *pavaj mozaicat*.

Chapter 111.

The Scottish Rite and Albert Pike: Morals and Dogma on Religions, Zoroaster and Mithra

The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite is the system of thirty-three degrees built on top of the three Craft degrees, and Albert Pike (1809-1891) is the figure who shaped it. His *Morals and Dogma* (1871) is a lecture-book for the degrees from the first to the thirty-second. It is also a long comparative history of religions in which Zoroaster, Ormuzd and Ahriman, and Mithras appear at almost every stage. This chapter introduces the Rite and its leader, then examines how Pike presents the Persian material that opened this study (Parts 1-2). His version is set beside the specialist scholarship used there.

The Rite: from the Order of the Royal Secret to Charleston

The reference shelf traces the Rite's prehistory through "Scots Master" lodges (from 1733) and the French trader Estienne Morin. Morin compiled a rite of twenty-five degrees, the "Order of the Royal Secret". On 31 May 1801 John Mitchell and Frederick Dalcho opened "the Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree for the United States of America" at Shepheard's Tavern in Charleston. A Northern Jurisdiction followed in 1813 [Wikipedia: Scottish Rite]. Greer dates the foundation to 1802; the founders' printed "Manifesto" is dated 4 December 1802 [Wikipedia: Scottish Rite]. He says the Rite of Perfection "claimed descent from the medieval Knights Templar but actually had their roots in the Jacobite Masonry of the mid-eighteenth century", and that for decades the Scottish Rite "ranked as one of the minor rites" [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite"].

The front matter of *Morals and Dogma* shows the book's authority. It was "prepared for the Supreme Council of the Thirty-third Degree for the Southern Jurisdiction ... and published by its authority" at "Charleston A.'. M.'. 5632". It was entered by Pike in 1871 and by the Supreme Council in 1906, and the library's copy was reprinted in February 1944. The degree list runs from 1° Apprentice to 32° Master of the Royal Secret. It passes through the Royal Arch of Solomon (13°), Knight of the East (15°), Prince of Jerusalem (16°), Knight Rose Croix (18°), Pontiff (19°), Prince of Mercy (26°), Knight of the Sun or Prince Adept (28°) and Knight Kadosh (30°). The text is grouped under the headings "Lodge of Perfection", "Chapter of Rose Croix" (15°-18°), "Council of Kadosh" (19°-30°) and "Consistory" (31°-32°) [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, front matter]. The 33rd degree is conferred by the Supreme Council itself [Wikipedia: Scottish Rite].

Albert Pike: two accounts

Greer's entry and the Wikipedia article agree on the outline but differ in detail, as the table shows.

Point	Greer, "Pike, Albert" (#64911)	Wikipedia: Albert Pike
Birth, education	Massachusetts, 1809; accepted at Harvard, could not afford it	Boston, 29 Dec 1809; passed Harvard exams 1825, declined to pay
Bar	1834	1837 (one source: 1834)
Know-Nothings	"became the leader of the Know-Nothings in Arkansas"	joined at its founding, helped introduce it in Arkansas in 1854; walked out of the 1856 convention when it would not adopt a pro-slavery platform
Mexican War	"1846 during the Texan war for independence"; Buena Vista 1847	captain, Arkansas Mounted Infantry, June 1846; Buena Vista
Civil War	commissioner to the Indian nations; resigned July 1862 protesting broken treaties; jailed	Confederate envoy; brigadier general; resignation 12 July 1862; arrested 3 Nov 1862

Point	Greer, "Pike, Albert" (#64911)	Wikipedia: Albert Pike
Scottish Rite	initiated 1853; Sovereign Grand Commander 1859	received 4°-32° from Albert Mackey, March 1853; Grand Commander January 1859
Pardon	congressional pardon after moving to Washington in 1868	pardoned by President Andrew Johnson, 23 April 1866
Royal Order of Scotland	Provincial Grand Master from 1878	1877-1891
Ku Klux Klan	"had nothing to do with the Klan"; the claim is "debunked by historians"	1868 editorial proposing "one great Order of Southern Brotherhood"; Fleming (1905), Davis (1924) and Horn (1939) make him a Klan officer; Brown (1997) finds "no contemporary, nor no reliable late evidence"

Greer's leadership claim about the Know-Nothings is his own; Wikipedia gives a smaller role. Greer also says Pike, secluded in the Ozarks until 1868, revised the rituals and included "a wealth of material from nearly every aspect of western occult tradition" [Greer, #64911, "Pike, Albert"]. Wikipedia dates his first ritual revision, the "Magnum Opus", to 1857 and its completion to 1884 [Wikipedia: Scottish Rite]. Greer adds that after Pike's death the Southern Jurisdiction adopted "a more active political stance": anti-Catholic propaganda, lobbying against parochial schools and, in the mid-1920s, "a tacit alliance with the revived Ku Klux Klan" [Greer, #64911, "Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite"]. Pike died on 2 April 1891 at the Supreme Council's temple in Washington [Wikipedia: Albert Pike].

"About equally Author and Compiler"

Pike's preface describes how the book was made:

> "In preparing this work, the Grand Commander has been about equally Author and Compiler; since he has extracted quite half its contents from the works of the

> best writers and most philosophic or eloquent thinkers ... It not being intended for the world at large, he has felt at liberty to make, from all accessible sources, a Compendium ... He claims, therefore, little of the merit of authorship, and has not cared to distinguish his own from that which he has taken from other sources" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Preface].

The preface adds that the teachings "are not sacramental" beyond morality, and that "Every one is entirely free to reject and dissent from whatsoever herein may seem to him to be untrue or unsound" [same]. Roscoe Pound quotes this preface and draws the consequence: "we must discriminate closely between what is really Pike and what is not ... We may refute almost any page by any other page" [Pound, Lectures on the Philosophy of Freemasonry, #87767, ch. IV]. According to René Guénon and Chris Hodapp, as reported on the reference shelf, much of the unmarked borrowing is from Eliphas Levi's *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*; the same article notes that Pike took even more from Orville Dewey, Theodore Parker, George Oliver, Dupuis and Jacques Matter [Wikipedia: Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry]. Pike's sentence "all the Masonic associations owe to it [the Kabbalah] their Secrets and their Symbols" (Degree XXVIII) is quoted by the Romanian compilation published under Grigorian Bivolaru's name, which gives it as Levi's own words from *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* (Paris, 1854): "Toate Asociatiile Masonice datoreaza Cabalei secretele si simbolurile lor" [Pike, #378717, Degree XXVIII; Bivolaru, Francmasoneria, #14138, "Cabala și magia", from Toma Petrescu, *Conspirația lojilor*, 1941]. Levi's role is examined in Chapters 112 and 119.

Zoroaster and the two principles

Pike treats Zoroaster as a historical prophet and the source of a tradition. "Zoroaster, like Moses, claimed to have conversed face to face, as man with man, with the Deity; and to have received from Him a system of pure worship, to be communicated only to the virtuous" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree XXIV]. He takes the Chaldean Oracles as Zoroastrian. After quoting the Oracles on the "Father-begotten Light", he concludes: "Such was the language of Zoroaster, embodying the old Persian ideas". He follows it with Ormuzd's speech "to Zoroaster, in the Boundehesch: 'I am he who holds the Star-Spangled Heaven in ethereal space; who makes this sphere, which once was buried in darkness, a flood of light' " [same, Degree XXVIII "Knight of the Sun"]. In the Master of the Symbolic Lodge he gives Zoroaster an ethical maxim: "more than three thousand years ago, ZOROASTER said: 'Be good, be kind, be humane,

and charitable; love your fellows; console the afflicted; pardon those who have done you wrong' " [same, Degree XX].

The dualism runs through the whole book. In Degree XXIV Pike follows Plutarch's claim that the doctrine of two principles is universal. In support of it Plutarch "cites … the famous Mystic Egg of the disciples of Zoroaster and the Initiates in the Mysteries of Mithras" [same, Degree XXIV]. In the serpent-lore of the Brazen Serpent degree: "The Persians represented Ormuzd and Ahriman by two serpents, contending for the mundane egg. Mithras is represented with a lion's head and human body, encircled by a serpent." Aurelian's spoils from Zenobia included "Persici Dracones", and the Sadder rules that killing serpents while reciting the Zend-Avesta earns the merit of killing "so many devils" [same, Degree XXV]. As shown in Chapter 110, Pike carries the same pair into lodge symbolism: the Duad is "Ormuzd and Ahriman, Osiris and Typhon" (Degree II), and the black-and-white pavement alludes to "the two Principles of Zoroaster and Manes" (Degree XXX).

Mithras in Morals and Dogma

Pike's Mithras comes from the solar mythologists of his century. Pike gives several Mithrases in different degrees:

- **A deified man**. "MITHRAS, a Median reformer, was deified after his death, and invested with the attributes of the Sun; the different astronomical phenomena being figuratively detailed as actual incidents of his life; in the same manner as the history of BUDDHA was invented among the Hindūs" [Pike, #378717, Degree XXVI "Prince of Mercy"].
- **A solar god born in a cave**. "MITHRAS was the Sun-God of the Persians; and was fabled to have been born in a grotto or cave, at the Winter Solstice … This was the great Feast of the Magian religion" [same, Degree XXVIII].
- **A dying and rising god**. On the authority of Julius Firmicus, "a corpse … was shown the Initiates, representing Mithras dead; and afterward his resurrection was announced", and his birth was celebrated "under the emblem of an infant, born on the 25th of December". This is set beside Thammuz-Adoni in Phoenicia and the death of Bakchos at the hands of the Titans [same, Degree XXIV].
- **The ladder of the soul**. "The Ladder by which it reascends, has, according to Marsilius Ficinus, in his Commentary on the Ennead of Plotinus, seven degrees or steps; and in the Mysteries of Mithras … the ladder, with its

seven rounds, was a symbol referring to this ascent through the spheres" [same, Degree I]. Elsewhere, following Celsus as quoted by Origen, the Persians "erected in their holy caves ... a high ladder, on the Seven steps of which were Seven gates" [same, Degree XIV].

- **An emblem of Masonry itself.** Masonry "is the Hercules, the Osiris, the Apollo, the Mithras, and the Ormuzd, at everlasting and deadly feud with the demons of ignorance, brutality ... intolerance, superstition, tyranny" [same, Degree XIV].

The Triads follow the same pattern. The Brahmins' TRIMURTI of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva was "received" by the Persians and changed into "a principle of Life ... individualized by the Sun, and a principle of Death". It reappears among the Ethiopians as "NEPH-AMON, PHTHA, and NEITH" [same, Degree XXVI]. Pound saw this as the core of Pike's system: "Pike starts with a triad ... He finds a triad everywhere in ancient thought" [Pound, #87767, ch. IV].

Pike's Mithras beside the scholarship

Question	Pike (1871)	Manly P. Hall (1928)	J. H. Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism (1913)
Who is Mithra?	A "Median reformer" deified after death; the Sun-God	The sun "rising over the horizon" at the vernal equinox; notes John O'Neill's objection to the solar theory	An Aryan god, "pre-eminently god of Compacts, an exceedingly ethical deity"
Relation to Zoroaster	Part of the Ormuzd/Ahriman legend	Persian cult transmitted to later orders	Wholly absent from the Gathas and early royal inscriptions until "his sudden reappearance under Artaxerxes Mnemon"; restored by the Magi

Question	Pike (1871)	Manly P. Hall (1928)	J. H. Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism (1913)
Death and resurrection	Shown dead and resurrected (Firmicus); born 25 December	"According to Dupuis, Mithras was put to death by crucifixion and rose again on the third day"	Not part of the Iranian Mithra; Plutarch makes him a *mesites*, "intermediary", between Light and Darkness
Link to Masonry	Masonry is "the Mithras" fighting the demons	The "Lion's Paw" grip and seven-runged ladder "may easily have originated from this cult"	None claimed

Sources: [Pike, #378717, Degrees XIV, XXIV, XXVI]; [Hall, The Secret Teachings of All Ages, #45649, "The Ancient Mysteries and Secret Societies"]; [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, on Mithra and Plutarch]. Moulton's reading belongs to the scholarship presented in Chapters 19-20. The Roman mysteries, with their cave, bull-slaying and seven grades, are covered in Chapters 22-23. On the evidence of those chapters, Pike and Hall have merged the Iranian god of the contract, the Roman mystery god and the eighteenth-century solar theory of Dupuis into one figure.

"Truth for the time": relativism and politics

Pike's relativism is stated in the Fellow Craft lecture, not, as is sometimes said, in the Knight of the Sun. "All truths are Truths of Period, and not truths for eternity". "The doctrines of ZOROASTER were the best which the ancient Persians were fitted to receive; those of CONFUCIUS were fitted for the Chinese; those of MOHAMMED for the idolatrous Arabs of his age. Each was Truth for the time. Each was a GOSPEL, preached by a REFORMER". Those who remain behind "are to be pitied for it, and not persecuted" [Pike, #378717, Degree II].

The same early degrees contain his social and political doctrine. The Apprentice lecture condemns the commercial nation that "creates wealth rapidly, and

distributes it badly. Thence the two extremes, of monstrous opulence and monstrous misery; all the enjoyment to a few, all the privations to the rest … Privilege, Exception, Monopoly, Feudality". Such a nation "founds public power upon private misery" [same, Degree I]. The Fellow Craft lecture recalls that when "true Masonry … bore the banners of Freedom and Equal Rights", its lodges were proscribed by Holland (1735), by Louis XV (1737) and by Clement XII's bull of excommunication (1738) [same, Degree II]. The Knight of the East declares that Masonry "is engaged in her crusade,—against ignorance, intolerance, fanaticism, superstition", unheard amid "the tumult and uproar of politics" [same, Degree XV]. The Prince of Jerusalem gives up the rebuilding of the literal Temple: "To us the whole world is God's Temple … To establish all over the world the New Law and Reign of Love, Peace, Charity, and Toleration, is to build that Temple" [same, Degree XVI]. A Masonic introduction to Pike's *The Meaning of Masonry* sums up his position. For Pike, it says, Masonry is "not a religion, but a worship in which all good men can unite", and it quotes him: "Freemasonry is more ancient than any of the world's living religions … its symbolism is its soul" [Pike, The Meaning of Masonry, #72192, introduction].

Key points

- The Supreme Council of the 33rd degree opened in Charleston on 31 May 1801 (Wikipedia; Greer gives 1802), building on Morin's 25-degree Order of the Royal Secret. Pike transformed it after 1853.
- Greer and Wikipedia agree on Pike's career but differ on the Know-Nothings, his pardon, dates and above all the Klan. Greer says Pike had "nothing to do with the Klan"; Wikipedia reports both the accusers and Brown's denial.
- Pike's preface says he was "about equally Author and Compiler" and that the book was "not intended for the world at large". Guénon and Hodapp (via the reference shelf) and the Bivolaru compilation identify Levi as a major unmarked source.
- Zoroaster appears as prophet ("face to face" with God), as the voice of the Chaldean Oracles, and as the source of the Ormuzd/Ahriman dualism symbolised by the Mystic Egg and two serpents.
- Pike's Mithras is a "Median reformer" deified, a sun-god born in a cave at the winter solstice, a dying and rising god, and the patron of the seven-stepped ladder. Moulton's Mithra is an ethical god of compacts absent from the Gathas.

- The relativist maxim "Each was Truth for the time", covering Zoroaster, Confucius and Mohammed, is in Degree II.
- The early degrees carry a political doctrine: against "monstrous opulence and monstrous misery", for toleration, and opposed to the papal and royal proscriptions of the Craft.

Chapter 112.

Morals and Dogma II: Kabbalah, Lucifer, the Templars and the Secret of the High Degrees

A handful of passages in *Morals and Dogma* are quoted more often than the rest of its 800-odd pages together. They are the Lucifer sentence of the 19th degree, the Satan-as-Force passage of the 3rd, the admission that Masonry "uses false explanations", the statement that the Blue Degrees are "but the outer court", and the Kabbalistic and Johannite doctrine of the Knight Kadosh. This chapter gives each passage in full, as it stands in the Supreme Council's text, and identifies its sources where the library allows. It then follows the passages into Léo Taxil's Palladian hoax and into the anti-Masonic literature that grew from it. Critics and defenders are both reported with the texts they rely on.

The Lucifer passage of the Grand Pontiff (19°)

The 19th degree, "Grand Pontiff", is a commentary on the Apocalypse. It comes straight after an exhortation to the candidate: "Soldier of the Cross! Sworn Knight of Justice, Truth, and Toleration! Good Knight and True! be patient and work!" Then:

> "The Apocalypse, that sublime Kabalistic and prophetic Summary of all the occult figures, divides its images into three Septenaries … The Apocalypse is, to those who receive the nineteenth Degree, the Apotheosis of that Sublime Faith which aspires to God alone, and despises all the pomps and works of Lucifer. LUCIFER, the Light-bearer! Strange and mysterious name to give to the Spirit of Darkness! Lucifer, the Son of the Morning! Is it he who bears the Light, and

> with its splendors intolerable blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish Souls? Doubt it not! for traditions are full of Divine Revelations and Inspirations: and Inspiration is not of one Age nor of one Creed. Plato and Philo, also, were inspired. The Apocalypse, indeed, is a book as obscure as the Sohar" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, Degree XIX; index: "Lucifer, the Lightbearer, Son of the Morning, Spirit of Darkness, 321"].

The same degree states: "The Word, Λογος, is the Source of Logic. Jesus is the Word Incarnate" [same, Degree XIX]. Pike's own index gives the second meaning of the name: "Lucifer, the Evil Force or Devil represented by the false, 102" [same, index]. In context, the 19th degree "despises all the pomps and works of Lucifer". The question "Is it he who bears the Light …?" is answered "Doubt it not!", and the sentence goes on into a claim that inspiration is universal. How it is quoted varies. Cathy Burns gives "LUCIFER, the Light-Bearer!… Lucifer, the Son of the Morning!" and attributes it to "Eliphas Levi and Albert Pike" [Burns, Masonic and Occult Symbols Illustrated, #62278]. The text the library catalogues under David Icke ends the quotation at "Doubt it not!" [Icke, The Hidden Gears of Freemasonry, #38025].

Satan as a Force: the Pan and Phosphor passage (3°)

The page that index entry points to (102) is in the Master's degree:

> "The true name of Satan, the Kabalists say, is that of Yahveh reversed; for Satan is not a black god, but the negation of God. The Devil is the personification of Atheism or Idolatry. For the Initiates, this is not a Person, but a Force, created for good, but which may serve for evil. It is the instrument of Liberty or Free Will. They represent this Force, which presides over the physical generation, under the mythologic and horned form of the God PAN; thence came the he-goat of the Sabbat, brother of the Ancient Serpent, and the Light-bearer or Phosphor, of which the poets have made the false Lucifer of the legend. Gold, to the eyes of the Initiates, is Light condensed" [Pike, #378717, Degree III].

This vocabulary is Eliphas Levi's. In *Le Grand Arcane* (Romanian translation in the library) Levi calls the astral fluid "the light-bearer, or Lucifer" (*purtătorul de lumină sau Lucifer*), "because it is the distributing agent and specialist of the astral light". He calls it also "the angel of darkness", and notes the Jewish doctrine of a white and a black Samael. In the same book he holds that "a corporeal God necessarily projects a shadow, and this shadow is Satan" [Levi, Marele Arcan sau Ocultismul Revelat, #87970]. Pike, then, gives Levi's distinction between the

Devil as personified negation and Lucifer as a natural light-force. Levi's wider rehabilitation of Lucifer and Baphomet is treated in Chapter 119.

The doctrine of concealment (3°, 17°, 30°)

Three passages state that Masonry hides its meaning. In the Master's degree:

> "Masonry, like all the Religions, all the Mysteries, Hermeticism and Alchemy, conceals its secrets from all except the Adepts and Sages, or the Elect, and uses false explanations and misinterpretations of its symbols to mislead those who deserve only to be misled; to conceal the Truth, which it calls Light, from them, and to draw them away from it. Truth is not for those who are unworthy or unable to receive it, or would pervert it … Every age has had a religion suited to its capacity" [Pike, #378717, Degree III].

A few pages earlier Pike quotes Synesius, "a great Kabalist, but of doubtful orthodoxy": "Fictions are necessary to the people, and the Truth becomes deadly to those who are not strong enough to contemplate it" [same, Degree III]. In the 17th degree he speaks of "the present mutilated condition of the symbolic Degrees", where the ancient ideas "are disguised and overlaid with fiction and absurdity" [same, Degree XVII]. The fullest statement, set in square brackets in the Kadosh lecture, is:

> "[The Blue Degrees are but the outer court or portico of the Temple. Part of the symbols are displayed there to the Initiate, but he is intentionally misled by false interpretations. It is not intended that he shall understand them; but it is intended that he shall imagine he understands them. Their true explication is reserved for the Adepts, the Princes of Masonry … It is well enough for the mass of those called Masons, to imagine that all is contained in the Blue Degrees; and whose attempts to undeceive them will labor in vain, and without any true reward violate his obligations as an Adept. Masonry is the veritable Sphinx, buried to the head in the sands heaped round it by the ages.]" [same, Degree XXX].

Critics read this as proof of an inner, hidden religion. Pound reads Pike as "the apostle of liberty of interpretation", who "insisted … that no infallible authority … could bind the individual Mason to this or that interpretation" [Pound, Lectures on the Philosophy of Freemasonry, #87767, ch. IV].

The Kabbalah as source (28°)

Pike names the hidden doctrine:

> "All truly dogmatic religions have issued from the Kabalah and return to it: everything scientific and grand in the religious dreams of all the illuminati, Jacob Bœhme, Swedenborg, Saint-Martin, and others, is borrowed from the Kabalah; all the Masonic associations owe to it their Secrets and their Symbols. The Kabalah alone consecrates the alliance of the Universal Reason and the Divine Word" [Pike, #378717, Degree XXVIII].

His index lists further theses: "Kabalistic doctrine, like Masonry, tends toward spiritual perfection" (625), "the religion of the Sage and Savant" (625), "lost by the Pharisees at the advent of Christ" (727), "the dogma of the Magi and Hermes" (841) [same, index]. Bivolaru quotes the Masonic-associations sentence as Levi's own words from *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* (1854) [Bivolaru, Francmasoneria, #14138]. That makes it a second sign of Pike's dependence on Levi.

The Knight Kadosh: Templars, Johannites and Baphomet (30°)

The Kadosh lecture opens with the Templars' revenge in history: "The ghosts of the dead Templars haunt the Vatican and disturb the slumbers of the paralyzed Papacy" [Pike, #378717, Degree XXX]. Its core is a long passage in quotation marks, so presented as taken from another writer. In it, a sect of "Johannite Christians" held that the Gospel facts "are but allegories". Their pontiff Theoclet initiated Hugues de Payens, so that the Temple was "at its very origin devoted to the cause of opposition to the tiara of Rome and the crowns of Kings". "The Templars, like all other Secret Orders and Associations, had two doctrines, one concealed and reserved for the Masters, which was Johannism; the other public, which was the Roman Catholic". The aim, in the quoted text, was that "We shall constitute the equilibrium of the Universe, and be rulers over the Masters of the World" [same, Degree XXX]. Pike's own comment rejects the charge of idolatry: "It is absurd to suppose that men of intellect adored a monstrous idol called Baphomet, or recognized Mahomet as an inspired prophet … The symbols of the wise always become the idols of the ignorant multitude" (index: "Baphomet

adored as an idol by the Templars is an absurdity, 818") [same, Degree XXX and index].

Passage	Degree	Plain content	Used by critics as	Cited by defenders for
"LUCIFER, the Light-bearer!"	XIX Grand Pontiff	Apocalypse "despises … works of Lucifer"; universal inspiration	Masonic worship of Lucifer	Context; "Soldier of the Cross"; "Jesus is the Word Incarnate"
Satan = "Yahveh reversed"; Pan; Phosphor	III Master	Devil as negation; Levi's light-force	Satanic doctrine of the Craft	"False Lucifer of the legend"; source is Levi
"False explanations … to mislead"	III Master	Esotericism of all mysteries	Deception of members	Liberty of interpretation (Pound)
"Blue Degrees are but the outer court"	XXX Kadosh	High degrees hold the explication	Hidden inner religion	Bracketed commentary on Templar symbolism
Johannite Templars; Baphomet "absurd"	XXX Kadosh	Gnostic-Kabbalistic Templar doctrine	Anti-Church conspiracy	Denial of idol-worship

Taxil, the Palladium and the forged "Instructions"

According to Greer, Léo Taxil (Gabriel Jogand-Pagès), "a French hack writer and Freemason" who had written anti-Catholic and pornographic literature, announced his reconciliation with the Church shortly after Leo XIII's encyclical against Freemasonry (1884). Within months he began exposing the "Free and Regenerated Palladium". This was a supposed Satanist inner circle of Masonry "headed by Albert Pike, 'Sovereign Pontiff of Universal Freemasonry,' who ruled the world in secret from his headquarters in Charleston, South Carolina". Bishops rallied to him, and "in 1887 he received the honor of a private audience with the pope". Diana Vaughan, "descended from English alchemist Thomas Vaughan and a female demon", was added in the early 1890s. In 1897 Taxil took the stage

of a Paris hall in her place. He declared that the Palladium was his invention and that Vaughan was a typist, and he left "just in time to avoid the ensuing riot" [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Palladian Order"]. Greer adds that the press furor brought the word "Satanist" into English, and that Taxil's invented split between "Luciferians" and "Satanists" passed into later Satanism [same].

There is a dating problem in Greer. His "Pike, Albert" entry places the hoax in "the late 1870s and early 1880s" [Greer, #64911, "Pike, Albert"], but his own Palladian entry begins it after 1884. The reference shelf supports the later dating. *Humanum genus* is dated 20 April 1884. Taxil's conversion is given as "circa 1884" in one article and 1885 in another. *Le Diable au XIXe siècle* (1892, as "Dr. Bataille") made Pike the Palladists' head and Mazzini their founder. The confession came on 19 April 1897 at the Société de Géographie and was printed in *Le Frondeur* on 25 April. Before the confession, A. E. Waite's *Devil-Worship in France* (1896) had already exposed the story [Wikipedia: Taxil hoax; Wikipedia: Léo Taxil].

The most widely quoted text attributed to Pike comes from this circle. It purports to be "Instructions to the 23 Supreme Councils of the World, July 14, 1889": "The Masonic Religion should be, by all of us initiates of the high degrees, maintained in the purity of the Luciferian Doctrine … Yes, Lucifer is God, and unfortunately Adonay is also god" [Icke, #38025, citing A. C. De La Rive, *La Femme et l'Enfant dans la Franc-Maçonnerie Universelle*, p. 588]. The reference shelf records that the passage "was published by Abel Clarin de la Rive". It "does not appear in Taxil's writings proper, though it is sourced in a footnote to Diana Vaughan, Taxil's creation", and de la Rive was Taxil's partner in *La France chrétienne anti-maçonnique* [Wikipedia: Taxil hoax; Wikipedia: Léo Taxil]. Greer states that "the title and some of the writings Taxil forged and attributed to Pike are still circulated among opponents of Freemasonry, especially fundamentalist Christians" [Greer, #64911, "Pike, Albert"].

What the anti-Masonic texts rest on

- **Icke** (#38025) sets the 1889 "Instructions" next to the genuine Degree XIX passage, which it cites as "Morals and Dogma page 321", and treats them as one doctrine.
- **Texe Marrs** quotes the same "Luciferian doctrine" sentence as something Pike "once declared" [Marrs, Mysterious Monuments, #66353].

- **Cathy Burns** relies on the genuine Degree XIX text, cut down with an ellipsis, and on Pike's "generative principle" [Burns, #62278].
- **Grigorian Bivolaru** (1995) does not cite Pike by name in the text examined. His frame is the "24 protocols" of a supposed Masonic congress at Basel in 1897, which he calls "a monument of Satanic action". He also uses Levi's Kabbalah sentence and the Palladists ("Paladiștilor (a francmasonilor luciferieni)"), whose doctrine he describes as a Manichaean system of a double divinity. He quotes, without sources, degree speeches in which the Great Architect "is not God, it is the Angel of Luciferian Light" [Bivolaru, #14138].
- **Finney's reprint** (*Sign of Satan*) attacks the Royal Arch oath on civic grounds and does not draw on Pike [Finney, #70244].

Three Lucifers

Pike's Lucifer, read in his own text, has two senses. In the 19th degree it is the name for whatever "blinds feeble, sensual, or selfish Souls". In the 3rd degree it is Phosphor, "the false Lucifer of the legend", a misreading of the light-force of generation. Burns quotes Blavatsky going further: "Lucifer is divine and terrestrial Light, 'the Holy Ghost' and 'Satan' at one and the same time" [Burns, #62278, quoting Blavatsky]. Rudolf Steiner pairs Lucifer with Ahriman, the Persian name, as two opposed tempters: "while Lucifer reveals all that is unrevealed, Ahriman has a mission …" (*În timp ce Lucifer dezvăluie tot nedezvăluitul, Ahriman are o misiune…*), as the Romanian edition quotes him [Steiner, Păzitorul Pragului, vol. 3, #48649]. A lecture in *Disease, Karma and Healing* likewise separates Ahriman's influence from Lucifer's [Steiner, Disease, Karma and Healing, #69269, "Ahriman's Influence and Distinction from Lucifer"]. All three authors take the Zoroastrian Ahriman and the biblical Light-bearer of Isaiah 14 as material for a new esoteric theology. Part 12 follows how later Satanists and Luciferians used it (Chapters 116-122).

Key points

- The Degree XIX Lucifer sentence sits between "Soldier of the Cross!" and a claim that inspiration is universal. In context the degree "despises all the pomps and works of Lucifer". Critics usually quote it cut short.

- The Degree III passage defines Satan as "Yahveh reversed", a "Force" pictured as Pan, and calls Phosphor "the false Lucifer of the legend". Its vocabulary of astral light comes from Eliphas Levi.
- Pike states plainly that Masonry "uses false explanations" and that the Blue Degrees' initiate "is intentionally misled". Critics read this as deception and Pound as liberty of interpretation.
- Pike makes the Kabbalah the source of "all the Masonic associations"; Bivolaru gives the same sentence as Levi's (1854).
- The Kadosh degree presents the Templars as Johannite Gnostics with a secret doctrine opposed to "the tiara of Rome and the crowns of Kings", and calls Baphomet-worship "absurd".
- Taxil's Palladium (1884/85-1897) made Pike "Sovereign Pontiff of Universal Freemasonry". The "Luciferian doctrine" Instructions of 14 July 1889 came out of de la Rive's work in Taxil's circle and are still quoted by Icke and Marrs.
- Greer's dating of the hoax in his "Pike" entry ("late 1870s and early 1880s") conflicts with his own Palladian entry and with the reference shelf.

Chapter 113.

Lodges in Conflict: Grand Orient, Continental versus Anglo-American Masonry, the Papacy and the Bavarian Illuminati

Between the first grand lodge (London, 1717) and the end of the nineteenth century, Freemasonry split along ritual, religious and political lines. On the Continent, Templar "high degrees" multiplied, and Rome condemned the Craft again and again. A Bavarian society, the Illuminati, used the Masonic model for Enlightenment politics and afterwards became the centre of a durable conspiracy literature. In 1877 the Grand Orient of France dropped the Supreme Being, and "regular" and "liberal" Masonry parted. The sources here are Greer's encyclopedia, Le Forestier's documentary history, the conspiracy writers Robison and Webster, the Grand Orient insider Keghel, and Steiner [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Grand Lodge"].

Templar Degrees and the Strict Observance

Greer traces the high degrees to France in the late 1730s, when Jacobites (partisans of the exiled Stuarts) and Hanoverians fought for control of the French lodges. The catalyst was "the famous 1736 oration of the Chevalier Ramsay, in which he argued that Masonry could trace its roots back to the knightly religious orders of the Crusades". Ramsay was a Jacobite, and Greer says that most of the high degrees surfacing in the following two decades "had close connections to the Jacobite movement". More than 2,000 high degrees appeared within

Freemasonry over the following century [Greer, #64911, "High Degrees"]. Webster dates the oration to 1737. She opens her chapter "German Templarism and French Illuminism" with "the year after Ramsay's oration—that is to say in 1738": that year Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia was hastily initiated in a Brunswick hotel on the night of 14-15 August [Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, ch. VII]. The sources therefore disagree by one year on the date of the oration.

Webster's chronology runs from the oration through von Marschall's plan "for reviving the Templar Order" (1741) and von Hund's arrival in Paris (1743) to the Strict Observance (1751). Von Hund claimed he was directed by "Unknown Superiors". Webster notes that Prince Charles Edward "denied all knowledge of the affair" [Webster, #69057, ch. VII]. Le Forestier treats the same ground in Book Two ("The Strict Observance from 1751 to 1772"; "Greatness and Decline of the Strict Observance (1772–1780)"). He warns that, unlike the Illuminati papers, original documents on German Masonry "are either extremely rare or inaccessible". These chapters are "a compilation of secondhand works", and "the author absolves himself of any responsibility for the errors he may have committed in following them" [Le Forestier, The Bavarian Illuminati, #70667, "Note to the Reader"].

Rome against the Lodges

The papal ban opened with Clement XII's bull *In eminenti apostolatus specula*, issued on 28 April 1738. The reference shelf's article says the bull "arose from Jacobite-Hanoverian rivalry on the continent", since the lodge in Rome was Jacobite [Wikipedia: In eminenti apostolatus]. Later condemnations include *Providas Romanorum* (1751), *Ecclesiam a Jesu Christo* (1821), *Quo graviora* (1826) and *Qui pluribus* (1846) [Wikipedia: Humanum genus]. Leo XIII's *Humanum genus* (20 April 1884) followed the 1870 capture of Rome. It condemned naturalism, popular sovereignty, lay education and the separation of church and state, all of which it attributed to Masonry. It set the "kingdom of God on earth" against "the kingdom of Satan", which it said was "led on or assisted by that strongly organized and widespread association called the Freemasons". Its operative rule (HG 31) reads: "let no man think that he may for any reason whatsoever join the Masonic sect, if he values his Catholic name and his eternal salvation" [Wikipedia: Humanum genus].

Canon 2335 of the 1917 Code imposed excommunication *ipso facto* on those joining "a Masonic sect or other societies of the same sort, which plot against the Church". The 1983 Code dropped the explicit mention of Masonry. On 26 November 1983, however, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith under Cardinal Ratzinger declared that "the Church's negative judgment in regard to Masonic association remains unchanged" and that Catholic members "are in a state of grave sin and may not receive Holy Communion" [Wikipedia: Declaration on Masonic Associations]. Keghel, a French Grand Orient Mason, reads the 1983 change differently. In a speech reprinted in his book he says that "the Roman Catholic Church has lifted the excommunication of Freemasons, but Freemasons of different disciplines in fact excommunicate each other" [Keghel, American Freemasonry, #62774, appendices]. Greer explains the conflict as "the bitter culture of hostility that developed between the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the Freemasons from the early eighteenth century onwards". In his account, the Craft's "principles of religious tolerance" and "commitment to liberal social and political ideals" were "guaranteed to antagonize a church that remained wedded to a hard-line conservatism" [Greer, #64911, "Roman Catholic Church"].

Weishaupt's Order, 1776-1786

Greer dates the founding to 1 May 1776. On that day Adam Weishaupt, a professor at Ingolstadt, and four friends founded the order to promote French Enlightenment ideas in Catholic Bavaria, against "a clique of ex-Jesuits whose influence remained intact even after the Society of Jesus had been dissolved in 1773". Weishaupt had planned the name "Perfectibilists". In 1779 the order had 54 members "divided among five colonies"; by 1784 more than 650 had received the Illuminatus Minor degree. Members used code names: Weishaupt was Spartacus, Zwack Cato and Knigge Philo, and Ingolstadt was called Eleusis [Greer, #64911, "Bavarian Illuminati"]. Greer says Weishaupt "became a Freemason in 1774". Le Forestier's account differs. Weishaupt sought admission at Nuremberg and Munich, found the fees too high and the printed grades "deeply disappointing", and "abandoned his plan to solicit admittance into the society" in order "to found a model secret society himself". The statutes were drafted under the name "Order of the Perfectibilists", which Weishaupt soon changed because it "appeared to be too bizarre, or what is more likely, was not mysterious enough" [Le Forestier, #70667, Book One ch. 1].

Le Forestier says his documents "are abundant, and their authenticity is certain" [Le Forestier, #70667, "Note to the Reader"]. His Book Three describes Knigge's

reform, in which the Priest grade was to build an encyclopedic "Academy of Scholars" [Le Forestier, #70667, Book Three ch. 5]. In Book Four he attributes the Bavarian prosecutions "in large part" to the order's own indiscretion. Young Minervals boasted that the order would establish a *Sittenregiment* through a "commission of morals" deciding all nominations, so that sovereigns would become "despicable, impotent ghosts and crowned slaves" [Le Forestier, #70667, Book Four ch. 3]. Greer summarises the end: a Bavarian edict against secret organisations in 1784, another proscribing the Illuminati by name in 1785, and the 1786 police raid on Zwack's house, which seized "hundreds of the order's documents" [Greer, #64911, "Bavarian Illuminati"]. In Weishaupt's *Theory of the Secret Society* (Book Five), books cannot teach morality. A man had to be placed among "equals whose support he will be obliged to obtain through reciprocal favors" [Le Forestier, #70667, Book Five ch. 3].

The Making of the Illuminati Legend

Robison dated his dedication "Edinburgh, September 5, 1797". He had been initiated at Liège, and he says his inquiry began in 1795 with the German periodical *Religions Begebenheiten*. His conclusion is printed in capitals: "an Association has been formed for the express purpose of ROOTING OUT ALL THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS, AND OVERTURNING ALL THE EXISTING GOVERNMENTS OF EUROPE". He adds that it "has Lodges in Britain corresponding with the mother Lodge at Munich ever since 1784" [Robison, Proofs of a Conspiracy, #84234, Introduction]. Barruel's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme* is not in the library. Webster cites it (II.195, II.208, II.311), and so does Greer, who says it argued that the inner circle behind the Revolution "was none other than the Bavarian Illuminati". Greer judges that "despite the complete lack of evidence presented", the idea was "taken up enthusiastically by conservatives". In his account Robison sought "to protect British Freemasonry by distancing it from the political activities of Masons in France and Italy" [Greer, #64911, "Bavarian Illuminati"; Webster, #69057, Preface notes].

Webster defends the Barruel-Robison line. "The first Masonic body with which the Illuminati formed an alliance was the Stricte Observance", she writes. Knigge triumphed at Wilhelmsbad (1782), Bode and Busche brought Illuminism into the Paris lodge of the Amis Réunis in 1787, and "it was Illuminized Freemasonry that made the Revolution". She calls Illuminism "less an Order than a principle" that worked "under other names and other occupations", and promises "documentary evidence" that Weishaupt was active "twenty-five years later" [Webster, #69057,

ch. X]. She "always differentiated between British and Grand Orient Masonry". In a note she places the word "anti-Semitism" in inverted commas as "a misnomer coined by the Jews in order to create a false impression" [Webster, #69057, Preface and n. 10]. Le Forestier's Book Six treats all this as a legend with its own history. It began in German anti-revolutionary journalism, such as the Hamburg *Political Journal*'s 1790 story of a Paris society of "600 to 666 members". He quotes the 1796 rebuttal by Rebmann, who called the thesis "absurd" and mocked the idea that two men, Philo and Spartacus, pulled "an invisible string" behind everyone from Mirabeau to Robespierre [Le Forestier, #70667, Book Six ch. 2]. Greer also records a different source on Wilhelmsbad: the Illuminati "went away empty-handed" because Willermoz already knew of their plans [Greer, #64911, "Bavarian Illuminati"].

In America the legend arrived with Jedediah Morse's fast-day sermon of 9 May 1798. Morse told his congregation that the European association "had extended its operations to this side of the Atlantic" [Stauffer, New England and the Bavarian Illuminati (Gutenberg), Introduction]. The library's modern literature carries the story further. Springmeier writes of "13 Illuminati bloodlines" [Springmeier, Bloodlines of the Illuminati, vol. 1, #62948]. Icke describes the Illuminati as "genetic hybrids" of a "reptilian extraterrestrial race" and humanity [Icke, A Concise Description of the Illuminati, #6150]. Zagami presents an "Illuminati Network of the Satanic New Age" [Zagami, Confessions of an Illuminati, #367409]. Greer places such works at the end of a chain from Barruel and Robison through Webster and Robert Welch [Greer, #64911, "Bavarian Illuminati"].

Carbonari, Grand Orient and the Great Divide

Greer derives the Carbonari from the French *Charbonnerie*. In Naples, Pierre Joseph Briot "blended the rituals and traditions of la Charbonnerie with elements from Masonic sources". Members were "good cousins" who met in *venditas*, and each had to acquire "a rifle, fifty cartridges, and a dagger" [Greer, #64911, "Carbonari"].

The French grand lodge adopted the name "Grand Orient" in 1773. In 1877 its delegates "almost unanimously adopted a resolution removing belief in a Supreme Being from the requirements for membership". The United Grand Lodge of England and most other grand lodges "immediately withdrew recognition". Even so, the Grand Orient "remains the largest French Masonic jurisdiction today" [Greer, #64911, "Grand Orient"]. Keghel's timeline is longer. London-Paris recognition

talks had already failed in 1776, and the American break came from Scottish Rite quarrels, with "the definitive rupture" in 1859. Some grand lodges kept relations "until 1913" [Keghel, #62774, ch. 8]. Keghel's appendices reproduce later attempts at bridge-building, among them the Geneva Declaration of the Scottish Rite jurisdictions (7 May 2005) [Keghel, #62774, Appendix V]. Steiner gave these streams an occult role in the run-up to 1914. In a December 1916 lecture he said that public "moods" matter "when streams such as that of the 'Grand Orient de France' come into play and when occult impulses of this kind start to take a hold". In his account the "Massonieri" "know where the forces are of which they must make use" [Steiner, The Karma of Untruthfulness, Vol. 1, #64946, Lecture 5].

Issue	"Regular" (UGLE / American)	"Liberal" (Grand Orient de France)
Supreme Being	Required	Removed 1877 [Greer, #64911]
Politics and religion in lodge	Banned, per Robison's description of the English rule [Robison, #84234]	Discussed. Keghel calls it "secularism and full freedom of conscience" [Keghel, #62774]
Women	Excluded under Anderson's 1723 Constitutions [Keghel, #62774]	Mixed and female obediences recognised
Mutual status	Grand Orient "irregular" since 1877	Keghel calls for dialogue "without ritual"

Key points

- Greer dates Ramsay's crusader-origin oration to 1736 and Webster to 1737. Both make it the start of the Templar high degrees and of von Hund's Strict Observance (1751).
- The papal ban runs from *In eminenti* (28 April 1738) to *Humanum genus* (20 April 1884), canon 2335 (1917) and the 1983 Declaration, which keeps membership a "grave sin".
- Greer and Le Forestier agree that the Illuminati (founded 1 May 1776) were an Enlightenment society opposed to the ex-Jesuits. They disagree on whether Weishaupt himself became a Mason in 1774.

- Le Forestier calls the order's surviving documents "abundant" and certainly authentic. He treats the Revolution-conspiracy thesis as a legend born in German anti-Jacobin journalism.
- Robison (1797), Barruel (as cited by Webster and Greer) and Webster (1924) hold that "Illuminized Freemasonry" made the French Revolution and survived its suppression.
- In 1877 the Grand Orient removed the Supreme Being from its requirements. Greer dates the withdrawal of recognition to then. Keghel traces the American break to 1859-1913.
- Steiner, speaking in 1916, counted the Grand Orient de France among the occult "streams" that shaped the political moods before the Great War.

Chapter 114.

Freemasonry in Revolutions and Politics: America, France, Latin America and Romania

Whether the lodges *made* revolutions or merely *hosted* revolutionaries is a question the library's sources answer in sharply different ways. Masonic insiders such as Keghel and the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania's editor of Washington's letters stress a Craft that trained citizens and was then slandered. Historians such as Margaret Jacob and Le Forestier treat the lodges as schools of constitutional practice and dismiss the master-plot thesis. Robison, Webster, Stoenescu and the Romanian anti-Masonic writers see in Freemasonry the hidden "Centre of Power" behind the upheavals. Steiner and Eliade add esoteric and cultural-critical readings. This chapter sets these voices side by side for four settings: the American founding, the French Revolution, the Spanish-American wars of independence, and the Romanian lands from 1848 to the present.

America: Founders, Morgan and the Anti-Masonic Party

Keghel, a past master of a Grand Orient lodge in Washington, writes that American Masonry "honors French Masonic heroes such as Lafayette and remembers that it was the French Masonic community that was instrumental in obtaining French support for the American Revolution" [Keghel, American Freemasonry, #62774, appended speech]. Levenda focuses on the Paris Lodge of the Nine Sisters, where Franklin led the frail Voltaire to his initiation on 7 April 1778. He writes that the lodge's official journal "even published the Declaration of Independence, as well as some of the state constitutions", and he quotes a historian who calls such activities a flagrant violation of "Masonic regulations" that the

Grand Orient never questioned [Levenda, The Secret Temple, #64792, "The Lodge of Nine Sisters"]. Washington's own Masonic correspondence, compiled from the Library of Congress papers by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania in 1915, records his attendance at military and civilian lodges between 1779 and 1797. It also prints his answer to the Illuminati scare. To the Reverend G. W. Snyder he wrote (24 October 1798): "It was not my intention to doubt that, the doctrines of the Illuminati, and principles of Jacobism had not spread in the United States. On the contrary, no one is more, fully satisfied of this fact than I am". He added that he did not believe "the Lodges of Free Masons in this Country had, as Societies, endeavoured to propagate the diabolical tenets of the first" [Washington's Masonic Correspondence (Gutenberg), 1798 letters to Snyder]. The editor notes that anti-Masons later "chiefly relied upon" these two letters [ibid.].

The decisive American crisis came in 1826. Keghel recounts how William Morgan, whose own initiation "remains" untraced, prepared an exposure of the rituals. He was jailed for a two-dollar debt on 11 September 1826, released, and "abducted on the spot by a small squad of Freemasons". An unidentified body was found near Fort Niagara on 7 October 1827. New York's 480 lodges in 1826 fell to "only seventy-five in 1835", and "for the first time in American history" a third national party appeared, the Anti-Masonic Party [Keghel, #62774, ch. 3]. The long-run statistics Keghel reproduces from the Masonic Service Association run from 3,077,161 Master Masons in 1924 to a peak of 4,103,161 in 1959 and a low of 1,161,253 in 2015 [Keghel, #62774, Appendix I]. Esoteric writers read the founding as a planned work. Manly P. Hall argues that "world democracy was the secret dream of the great classical philosophers" and links the reverse of the Great Seal to an "Order of the Quest" [Hall, The Secret Destiny of America, #51410]. Sora titles his chapter "The Rosicrucians and the American Revolution" [Sora, Rosicrucian America, #64376, ch. 11].

France: Training Ground or Conspiracy?

Margaret Jacob describes the eighteenth-century lodge as a miniature polity: "a system of constitutions, elections, majority rule, pluralities, annual assemblies, sealed ballots, even taxes and eventually 'courts' ". Lodges came to understand themselves "more self-consciously as schools of government where brothers learned to vote, give orations, live under constitutions and majority rule". In Catholic Europe they were "often very anti-Jesuit" [Jacob, The Origins of Freemasonry, #78059, ch. 3 "Schools of Government"]. Robison drew the opposite conclusion. "The most active leaders in the French Revolution were members of

this Association", he wrote, and "conducted their first movements according to its principles" [Robison, Proofs of a Conspiracy, #84234, Introduction]. Webster names "the old Illuminatus Mirabeau", whom she describes as a "Freemason and an Illuminatus". She concludes: "if it is said that the Revolution was prepared in the lodges of Freemasons … let it always be added that it was Illuminized Freemasonry that made the Revolution" [Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, ch. X].

Le Forestier's chapter "Illuminism and the French Revolution" reconstructs how this thesis was built in German journalism after 1792. The Vienna press claimed that the Illuminati spread their principles in France, "and it was their propaganda that led to July 14 and the entire rebellion". It also claimed that "the twenty founders of the Mainz Club … were all Illuminati". He sets against this the 1795 *Speech in Defense of the Illuminati*, which argued that the order "did not preach violence, did not speak of beheading kings but sought only to bind their hands" [Le Forestier, The Bavarian Illuminati, #70667, Book Six ch. 2]. Greer agrees with Le Forestier that Barruel's version came with a "complete lack of evidence" [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Bavarian Illuminati"].

Spanish America: Miranda and the Lautaro Lodges

Levenda calls Francisco de Miranda the "Father of Latin American Freemasonry". He writes that Miranda "is believed" to have been initiated in Philadelphia around 1783 with Lafayette as "his Principal Recommender", and that Bolívar, O'Higgins and San Martín all belonged to La Gran Reunión Americana and its "principle chapter the Lautaro Lodge". Bolívar is "believed" to have been initiated in 1803. Levenda also writes that "for a time, it was believed that Miranda himself had created the Lautaro Lodge in London in 1797". His conclusion is that Masonry caused these movements in "a qualified 'yes' " sense, since "Masons were found on both sides of the conflict" [Levenda, #64792, ch. 10]. The reference shelf records a revision. "Recent research suggests that the Lodge was founded in Cádiz, Spain, and that Miranda was not amongst its founders." Both lodges "had just a superficial compromise with freemasonry", using secrecy "as a tool to promote liberal agendas" [Wikipedia: Lautaro Lodge]. In Buenos Aires the Lautaro Lodge (from 1812) "exercised control over the Buenos Aires government" until 1815. Historians often treat the Chilean "Lautarine" lodges of 1817 as "political and independence-focused secret societies rather than Masonic lodges". Bolívar himself banned lodges in Colombia on 8 November

1828 [Wikipedia: Freemasonry in Latin America]. Fernando Alegría's novel *Lautaro* gives the popular version: San Martín "founded at Mendoza a secret organisation whose ramifications soon spread through almost all America", with a harsh code of officers' honour [Alegria, Lautaro (historical novel), #23994].

The Romanian Lands: 1848, the Union and Cuza

Neagu Djuvara states the Masonic thesis most directly. The young Romanians who had studied in Paris, "almost all (we have proof now, since the archives of Freemasonry were opened)", were "recruited to enter Freemasonry, and came back to our country as Masons". "The Revolution of 1848, like the Union of the Principalities of 1859, was the work of the young Masons. The truth must be told, if it is proved by documents" [Djuvara, O scurtă istorie a românilor povestită celor tineri, #18387, p. 169]. Alex Mihai Stoenescu builds a whole volume on it. Given the divergent interests of the Great Powers between 1821 and 1871, "that Centre of Power which ensured the unified implementation of the scenario for the Romanians cannot be other than Freemasonry" [Stoenescu, Istoria loviturilor de stat în România, vol. 1 "Revoluție și francmasonerie", #9603, Introduction]. Stoenescu separates authentic Masons from "Masonic-type" organisations; he finds "sufficient proof" against claims that Tudor Vladimirescu was a Mason. He quotes the letter of I. C. Brătianu and C. A. Rosetti to Edgar Quinet (26 June 1848): "every Romanian has two homelands: first the land where he was born and then France". On 1859 he notes that the Wallachian unionists thought a double election "impossible" and "chimerical" until the night of 23-24 January. He reports that Cuza was asked for an oath of his "provisional" reign, and that, "according to other sources", Cuza wished to lead national Freemasonry [Stoenescu, #9603, chapters on 1848 and "Complotul lui Grigore Sturdza"].

The Romanian Wikipedia chronology, based on Șerbănescu and Jacques Pierre, lists a first lodge at Iași in 1748 (Antonio Maria del Chiaro), Brașov 1749, Sibiu 1767 and Bucharest 1769. It names Paris initiates in the lodges *Athénée des Étrangers* and *La Rose du Silence*, among them Bălcescu, Cuza, Kogălniceanu, C. A. Rosetti and Alecsandri. It describes the 1850 Brussels lodge "Steaua Dunării" founded by the exiled forty-eighters, the closure of Masonry in 1938 by agreement between Carol II and Grand Master Jean Pangal, and the communist dissolution of 1948. Masonry was revived after 27 December 1989 through an Italian line (lodge "Concordia", 1991) and a French one [Wikipedia RO: Istoria francmasoneriei în România].

Hostile Readings: Paulescu, Rosu, Niculae and Eliade

The physiologist Nicolae C. Paulescu presents Freemasonry as a Jewish creation. In his account, in the eighteenth century "the Jews succeeded in introducing into England Freemasonry, a secret society that they imagined and built after the model of their Kahal". The English "then passed this baneful association into France", where it posed "falsely" as philanthropic [Paulescu, Spitalul, Coranul, Talmudul, Kahalul și Francmasoneria, #47481]. Viorel and Camelia Rosu describe Masonry as a "satanic" organisation co-opting judges, prosecutors and politicians on behalf of "the Zionist movement", and call for it to be outlawed [Rosu, Dezvăluiri cutremurătoare, #23839]. Cornel-Dan Niculae dates the post-communist revival to spring 1990, with articles by a "Paris Group" of 19 Masons, and says the "Concordia" lodge was founded in Bucharest in autumn 1990 "under the obedience of the Grand Orient of Italy". The Wikipedia chronology gives 1991 [Niculae, Războiul nevăzut al evreilor sioniști cu românii, #75037; Wikipedia RO: Istoria francmasoneriei în România]. The Romanian Orthodox Holy Synod anathematised Masonry on 11 March 1937, and the reference shelf lists the Nazi and communist bans [Wikipedia RO: Persecuția francmasoneriei].

Mircea Eliade's 1936 essay starts from ignorance: "I know no Freemason, and from all the books I have read I have understood nothing about Freemasonry". From that "deranged literature" he extracts a "Masonic mentality": "a simplistic way of seeing things, abstract criteria for judging history". A Marxist "exemplifies this Masonic mentality wonderfully", and Freud "laicises the Absolute". He cites "a whole series of books of the 'magister' Ragon" as evidence, and ends with "the history of Romanian politics from the forty-eighters to 1933", where "you meet nothing but abstract laws, Enlightenment facts, coarse thinking" [Eliade, "Mentalitatea francmasonică", Vremea, 10 Sept. 1936, #75659].

Steiner, the Western Brotherhoods and the Twentieth Century

Steiner's editor summarises the 1916 lectures this way: "the events of the war could not be understood without taking into account the existence and activities of elite brotherhoods in the West—mostly of a Masonic or semi-Masonic nature". The editor adds that "the whole of recent history" is "the struggle between the

ancient Roman-Latin element and that element that is to be made out of the English people" (lecture 11). The editor links these lectures to C. G. Harrison's 1893 forecast of "experiments in Socialism" in Russia [Steiner, The Karma of Untruthfulness, Vol. 1, #64946, Introduction]. In the lectures Steiner says that a "certain Jesuit influence was brought to play so that the Masonic and Jesuit influences met; for there are higher instances, 'empires', which can quite well make use of both". "It was then necessary to obliterate the tracks" [Steiner, #64946, lectures]. Italy shows the political line running from the Carbonari, whose economia gave birth to Mazzini's Young Italy [Greer, #64911, "Carbonari"], to P2. Greer describes P2 as a lodge founded in 1877 for secret parliamentary members. Under Licio Gelli it became a political secret society; in 1981 its seized records listed "3 Italian cabinet ministers, 43 members of the Italian parliament, the heads of all Italy's intelligence agencies". The Grand Orient of Italy had withdrawn its charter in 1974 [Greer, #64911, "P2 [Propaganda Due]"].

Setting	Masonic/academic reading	Conspiratorial/hostile reading
USA 1776-1830s	Lodges supported independence; Morgan case a local crime (Keghel)	Illuminati spreading; Anti-Masonic Party (Morse, Snyder)
France 1789	Lodges as "schools of government" (Jacob); legend built in German press (Le Forestier)	"Illuminized Freemasonry made the Revolution" (Robison, Webster)
Spanish America	Lautaro: political society using Masonic form (Wikipedia)	Masonic "temple" of the Liberators (Levenda, "qualified yes")
Romania 1848-1859	Lodges among Paris-trained elite (Wikipedia RO)	Masonry as the "Centre of Power" (Stoenescu); "work of the young Masons" (Djuvara)
20th century	Bans by Nazis, communists, Orthodox Synod 1937	P2 (Greer); Western brotherhoods and 1914 (Steiner)

Key points

- Keghel and Levenda show French lodges (the Nine Sisters, Lafayette) tied to American independence. Washington in 1798 accepted that Illuminati

doctrines had spread but denied that American lodges as societies propagated them.

- After the Morgan affair (1826) New York lodges fell from 480 to 75 and the Anti-Masonic Party arose. U.S. membership peaked at 4,103,161 in 1959 (Keghel, Appendix I).
- Jacob sees lodges as "schools of government". Robison and Webster see Illuminised lodges making the French Revolution. Le Forestier traces that thesis to anti-Jacobin journalism.
- Levenda credits Miranda and the Lautaro Lodge with the Liberators' networks. Wikipedia reports newer research placing its founding in Cádiz without Miranda.
- Djuvara calls 1848 and 1859 "the work of the young Masons", citing the opened archives. Stoenescu calls Freemasonry the only possible "Centre of Power" of 1821-1871.
- Paulescu, Rosu and Niculae read Freemasonry as a Jewish or Zionist instrument directed against Romania; Rosu calls for it to be outlawed. Eliade (1936) turns "Masonic mentality" into a critique of abstract, single-key thinking, with Marxism and Freudianism as his examples.
- Steiner and his editor hold that the Great War cannot be understood without the "elite brotherhoods in the West", mostly Masonic or semi-Masonic. Greer's P2 entry carries the theme of politicised lodges into the 1970s and 1980s.

Chapter 115.

The Occult Revival: Martinism, Theosophy, the Golden Dawn and Anthroposophy

The Revolution broke up most eighteenth-century occult societies, but the nineteenth century rebuilt them on a larger scale. Masonic high degrees, French Martinism, Kabbalah and the new interest in Asian religion merged into a few organisations that shaped Western esotericism down to the New Age. These were Papus's Martinist Order, Blavatsky's Theosophical Society, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and Steiner's Anthroposophical Society. Each recast the Christian Devil: Blavatsky's Lucifer is a "Harbinger of Light", and Steiner balanced Lucifer against the Persian Ahriman. This chapter follows the revival through Greer's encyclopedia, the founders' own texts in the library, and the reference shelf, and notes where the sources disagree on dates and facts.

Martinism: From the Elect Cohens to Papus

Greer traces Martinism to Martinez de Pasqually (1727-1774), whose Order of Elect Cohens (*Ordre des Élus Coens*) "taught a system of ceremonial magic rooted in Freemasonry". Pasqually's rites, "evasively called *La Chose* ('The Thing')", were performed at the equinoxes "to conjure the intelligences of the spiritual realm into visible appearance". Success was shown by "passes", mysterious lights and sounds [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Elect Cohens"]. His pupil Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803) mastered the system but "turned away from ceremonial magic and embraced the Christian mystical teachings of the German visionary Jakob Böhme". According to Greer, Saint-Martin's ideas spread through the Strict Observance into Germany and Russia. The Asiatic Brethren "made his book *Des Erreurs et de la Vérité* (About

Errors and the Truth, 1775) a textbook for initiates". In 1884 Papus (Gérard Encausse, 1865-1916) "launched a revived Martinist Order" with "only secondhand links" to the original. It borrowed one degree from Cagliostro's Egyptian Rite and another from Willermoz, and it "became the fount from which essentially all later Martinist orders descend". More than 20 such orders are active today [Greer, #64911, "Martinism"]. Blavatsky herself names "the followers of the Marquis de St. Martin — the Martinists" as the people who called the great magic agent "astral light", the force "which the Church calls Lucifer" [Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, vol. II, #80385, p. 511].

Eliphas Lévi, the Hinge

Greer dates "the great revival of occult studies" from "the 1845 publication of Eliphas Lévi's *Doctrine and Ritual of High Magic*" [Greer, #64911, "Martinism"]. The reference shelf gives a different date. *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* "appeared in two volumes between 1854 (Dogme) and 1856 (Rituel)", each in 22 chapters paralleling the tarot. The Baphomet image appeared in the 1856 volume [Wikipedia: Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie; Wikipedia: Baphomet]. Greer's "1845" therefore does not match the dates of the book he names. Lévi's influence on the next generation is documented in the library. Greer says *Isis Unveiled* drew "especially" on "the writings of Eliphas Lévi and P.B. Randolph" [Greer, #64911, "Theosophical Society"], and the Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor's correspondence course used material "ranging from Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516) to Eliphas Lévi (1810–75)" [Greer, #64911, "Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor"]. In *The Secret Doctrine* Blavatsky quotes Lévi's *Histoire de la Magie* at length: "Lucifer, the Astral Light ... is an intermediate force existing in all creation, it serves to create and to destroy". She also cites his maxim that "for the initiates ... the devil is not a person but a creative Force, for Good as for Evil". But she says Lévi's "genius and crafty intellect had to submit to a certain compromise dictated to him from Rome" [Blavatsky, #80385, pp. 510-511]. The library holds his *Elements of the Qabalah* [Lévi, Elements of the Qabalah, #77581].

Theosophy: Blavatsky, the Masters and Lucifer

The Theosophical Society was founded in New York in 1875 by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Col. Henry S. Olcott "and a handful of other students of the occult". According to Blavatsky, it was "sponsored and supported by the Brotherhood of

Luxor". For a time it "operated as a secret society with its own passwords and grades of initiation". *Isis Unveiled* (1877) was "the largest and most comprehensive occult critique of religious orthodoxy and scientific materialism in its time". In India (Adyar, 1879-1884) Blavatsky worked with the Arya Samaj "against the British colonial government". She then attributed her teachings to the Mahatmas Koot Hoomi and El Morya, whom K. Paul Johnson has identified with Indian political and religious leaders. The Society for Psychical Research investigation, built on the housekeeper Emma Coulomb's testimony that the "miracles" were "sleight-of-hand tricks", made headlines "on five continents". *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) set out seven "rounds" and seven "root races", with Indo-Europeans placed in "the fifth, or Aryan root race" [Greer, #64911, "Theosophical Society"]. The Society's public creed, in *The Key to Theosophy*, is "to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, colour, or creed". In the same book Blavatsky claims that America's Bellamyite "Nationalist clubs and party … were started in the first instance by Theosophists" [Blavatsky, The Key to Theosophy, #51074, sect. 3].

Blavatsky's revaluation of Lucifer is explicit. Reading Genesis against the "Elohim" who barred man from the tree of life, she writes that it is "but natural … to view Satan, the Serpent of Genesis, as the real creator and benefactor, the Father of Spiritual mankind. For it is he who was the 'Harbinger of Light,' bright radiant Lucifer, who opened the eyes of the automaton created by Jehovah … [and] can only be regarded in the light of a Saviour" [Blavatsky, #80385, p. 243]. Later: "Lucifer is divine and terrestrial light, the 'Holy Ghost' and 'Satan,' at one and the same time". The "Fallen Angel" "had become from that day his Manas, Mind and Self-consciousness", so that Lucifer "is in us: it is our Mind — our tempter and Redeemer" [Blavatsky, #80385, p. 513]. Her monthly journal was named *Lucifer*. It first appeared in London in September 1887, co-edited with Mabel Collins and later with Annie Besant, and ran to twenty volumes until August 1897 [Wikipedia: Lucifer (magazine)]. Her metaphysics of darkness belongs to the same reading: "Darkness is the one true actuality, the basis and the root of Light … Light is Matter, and Darkness pure Spirit" [Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, #84896, "Cosmic Evolution"]. Elsewhere she writes: "The Zohar speaks of 'Black Fire,' which is Absolute Light-Wisdom … Esoteric philosophy admits neither good nor evil per se, as existing independently in nature" [Blavatsky, The Secret Doctrine, #78362]. She rejects the Manichaean "King of Light" against "King of Darkness" picture as exoteric [Blavatsky, #80385, p. 509]. That rejection sets her against the Zoroastrian dualism discussed in Chapters 11 and 16, and against the Christian dualism she accuses Rome of preserving.

After Blavatsky's death (1891), Greer writes, Annie Besant turned *The Secret Doctrine* "into an orthodoxy", allied the Society with Co-Masonry and the Liberal Catholic Church, and in 1911 founded with Leadbeater the Order of the Star in the East to proclaim Jiddu Krishnamurti the coming World Teacher. The Order "collapsed overnight in 1929 when Krishnamurti courageously disavowed the claims made about him and disbanded it" [Greer, #64911, "Theosophical Society"].

The Golden Dawn

Greer calls the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn "the most influential magical secret society of modern times". He dates its founding to 1887 by three Freemasons, William Wynn Westcott, Samuel Liddell Mathers and William Robert Woodman. The founding story centres on a cipher manuscript and a German adept. "The cipher manuscript actually existed, but the letters from 'Fraulein Sprengel' … are clumsy fakes written by someone with little knowledge of German". The likeliest source is Kenneth Mackenzie, whose papers reached Westcott and whose "draft rituals for the Hermetic Brotherhood of Egypt" probably "provided the template". "Unlike the Masonic secret societies of the time, it admitted women as well as men", and it offered "a complete course of instruction". The order split by 1903 into the Stella Matutina, Waite's Holy Order and Mathers' Alpha et Omega. Regardie, a Stella Matutina member in 1933-1934, began publishing its papers in 1937. Greer judges that Golden Dawn practice remains "fundamental to more than half of all occult secret societies active today" [Greer, #64911, "Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn"]. Regardie's compilation preserves its Kabbalistic curriculum: the ten Sephiroth are divided into "the right-hand Pillar of Mercy … the left-hand Pillar of Judgment … and the middle Pillar of Mildness", and "in their totality and unity the ten Sephiroth represent the archetypal man". The grades run from Neophyte to Adeptus Minor [Regardie, The Complete Golden Dawn System of Magic, #43635]. In *My Rosicrucian Adventure* Regardie describes how the Stella Matutina temples each appointed their own chiefs, which "began the downfall of organised magical instruction" [Regardie, My Rosicrucian Adventure, #64107]. Mathers' translation of the Zohar texts links the order back to the Jewish Kabbalah [Mathers, The Kabbalah Unveiled, #77911].

Steiner and Anthroposophy

Greer dates the Anthroposophical Society to 1912 at Dornach. Steiner, General Secretary of the German Theosophists, broke with Theosophy "over the latter's promotion of Jiddu Krishnamurti", and "more than 90 percent of German Theosophists followed him". Steiner "obtained a charter for a lodge of the Rite of Memphis and Misraim … from German Masonic promoter Theodor Reuss". The Society nonetheless "abandoned the secret society tradition in favor of a public teaching organization" [Greer, #64911, "Anthroposophical Society"]. The editor of *The Karma of Untruthfulness* adds that in 1904-1906 Steiner "spoke positively" about Freemasonry (*The Temple Legend*, GA 93). After 1914 "Steiner never again had anything really positive to say about Freemasonry as a spiritual stream" and turned to "the role that western Freemasonry (French as well as British) and occult groups had played in bringing about the war" [Steiner, The Karma of Untruthfulness, Vol. 1, #64946, Introduction].

Steiner's demonology has two poles. In *Disease, Karma and Healing* he places "Lucifer in the sentient soul, Ahriman in the mind soul". He teaches that at Golgotha Christ "appeared in the world beyond, in the realm of shades, and laid Ahriman in chains". Without that deed, he says, humankind "would gradually have become shrouded in darkness" between death and rebirth, with an "infinite isolation and accentuation of human egotism" [Steiner, Disease, Karma and Healing, #69269]. His mystery dramas stage the same polarity: characters wander into "the domain of Lucifer" or "the sphere of Ahriman", and Johannes Thomasius stands between them [Steiner, Păzitorul Pragului, #48649]. Steiner thus takes the Persian adversary Ahriman, under that name, into a Christ-centred scheme that he also presented as Rosicrucian Christianity [Steiner, #69269; Steiner, Cunoașterea lui Hristos: Antroposofie și Rosicrucianismul, #48586]. In December 1916 he devoted part of a lecture to "the destiny of H. P. Blavatsky" [Steiner, #64946, lecture 11 contents].

The German Scene and the Road Ahead

McIntosh describes how Theosophy took root in German-speaking lands: Friedrich Eckstein founded "the first Austrian lodge of the Theosophical Society" in 1887. He also describes a völkisch current that sought light "from the Germanic past and the heritage of the Volk". One figure in it was Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (1874-1954), "a former Cistercian monk" from Heiligenkreuz

[McIntosh, Occult Germany, #64182]. Greer adds that Hitler read Lanz's "virulently racist Ariosophical magazine" *Ostara* [Greer, #64911, "Hitler, Adolf"]. Baron Rudolf von Sebottendorff presented Turkish dervish exercises as "the Practice of Ancient Turkish Freemasonry" and "the key to the understanding of alchemy". Its signs of recognition match "the three signs … employed by modern Freemasons: sign, grip, and word" [Sebottendorff, Secret Practices of the Sufi Freemasons, #82052]. Sebottendorff's later role in the Thule milieu belongs to a later Part of this study.

Movement	Founded (per source)	Masonic link	Attitude to Lucifer / evil
Martinist Order	Pasqually's Cohens 18th c.; Papus 1884 (Greer)	Masonic rite of ceremonial magic	Astral light, which Blavatsky says the Church calls Lucifer
Theosophical Society	New York 1875 (Greer)	Later alliance with Co-Masonry	Lucifer "Harbinger of Light"; no good or evil *per se* (Blavatsky)
Golden Dawn	1887 (Greer)	Founded by three Freemasons; admitted women	Kabbalistic pillars of Mercy and Judgment (Regardie)
Anthroposophy	Dornach 1912 (Greer)	Memphis-Misraim charter (Greer)	Lucifer and Ahriman as twin dangers, balanced by Christ (Steiner)

Key points

- Greer traces Martinism from Pasqually's Elect Cohens (ceremonial magic, *La Chose*) through Saint-Martin's turn to Böhme and his *Des Erreurs et de la Vérité* (1775) to Papus's revived order of 1884.
- Greer dates Lévi's *Dogme et Rituel* to 1845. The reference shelf dates it to 1854-1856. Blavatsky quoted and corrected Lévi on Lucifer as the "Astral Light".
- In Greer's account, the Theosophical Society (1875) began as a secret society, worked with Indian anti-colonial movements, and gave modern occultism its "root races" and Masters.

- Blavatsky makes Lucifer the "Harbinger of Light", "the 'Holy Ghost' and 'Satan,' at one and the same time", and identifies him with human Mind. Her journal *Lucifer* ran from 1887 to 1897.
- Greer calls the Sprengel letters behind the Golden Dawn (1887) "clumsy fakes" and traces the rituals to Mackenzie's papers. The order admitted women, and its Kabbalistic system survives through Regardie.
- Steiner left Theosophy over Krishnamurti in 1912, taking over 90 percent of German members. He held a Memphis-Misraim charter and turned against Western Masonry after 1914.
- Steiner's Lucifer-Ahriman polarity brings the Zoroastrian adversary into Christian esotericism. McIntosh and Sebottendorff lead on to the völkisch occultism treated in a later Part.

Part XII.

Satanism, Luciferianism and Modern Occultism

Chapter 116.

The Adversary Takes Shape: From Angra Mainyu to Satan, Lucifer and Iblis

Every chapter in Parts 12 to 17 relies on a small set of names: Satan, the Devil, Lucifer, Ahriman, daeva, jinn, Iblis, shaytan. They were not coined together. Each comes from a different language, scripture and century, and later writers have repeatedly merged them into one figure, "the Adversary." This chapter follows that figure from the Iranian Angra Mainyu through the Hebrew *ha-satan*, the fallen Watchers and the demon Asmodaios, to the New Testament Devil and the Qur'anic Iblis. It sets out the scholarly argument for Zoroastrian influence on Jewish, Christian and Islamic demonology, and the opposing view that the Devil is essentially a Jewish development. It then turns to three non-mainstream readings, those of Mehran Keshe, Jakob Lorber and the modern Left-Hand Path, each given in its own words [Davidson, A Dictionary of Angels, #38612, Introduction].

1. Angra Mainyu and Ahriman: the Iranian Evil Spirit

James Hope Moulton's Oxford lectures of 1912 already found the earliest evidence awkward. He notes that the Achaemenid inscriptions of Darius name Auramazda but say nothing of "Zarathushtra himself, Angra Mainyu, and the Amesha Spenta." His explanation is philological. He accepts the "usual answer" that Zarathushtra's doctrine is carried by "the frequent mention of 'the Lie' (drauga)," and then states plainly: "it is actually not true that Angra Mainyu was Zarathushtra's name for the Evil Spirit. … The name for the Evil Spirit in

the Gathas is nearly twenty times Druj, 'the Lie' " [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, "Before Zarathushtra", p. 49]. Moulton also reports a dispute over terminology. Dr Casartelli kept the word "dualistic" for the Parsi system "on the ground that the Parsi Evil Spirit is independent, and can create," while Moulton had rejected it "since it seemed to me inconsistent with an optimist outlook on the future" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011].

Maneckji Nusservanji Dhalla, a Parsi high priest writing as a theologian, describes the fully developed system. He reports the classical testimony that the Good Spirit ruled for three thousand years and "the Evil One for another three thousand years. At the expiration of six thousand years, they entered into a conflict which still goes on, and which will end in the final annihilation of the fiend," and he adds that "Diogenes confirms this statement" [Dhalla, Zoroastrian Theology, #55113, ch. "Evil"]. In Plutarch's version, as Dhalla gives it, Areimanios's opposition "extended also to the physical world, for in opposition to the creation of good animals and plants by Oromazdes, he brought forth noxious creatures and poisonous plants". This opposition lasts "up to the end of time, when he will be defeated and be made to disappear." In the Pahlavi books Ahriman's counter-creation becomes concrete: "his creation of biting and venomous creatures, such as the snake, scorpion, frog, lizard, and many others, in so great a number that the noxious creatures did not leave an empty space." Dhalla also records that "the Magi held it a virtue to kill noxious creatures," and that the tyrant Azhi Dahaka was "sent to this world by the arch-fiend as the apostle of destruction and death" [Dhalla, Zoroastrian Theology, #55113]. The Iranian Evil Spirit therefore has a timeline, a counter-creation, human agents, and a defeat already fixed in advance.

2. The Zoroastrian-influence thesis

Several authors in the library hold that this Iranian figure helped shape the Jewish, and through it the Christian and Islamic, Adversary. Werner Sundermann tests the idea on one name. The demon Asmodaios "makes his first appearance in one of the loveliest legends of the Old Testament as told in the Book of Tobit." He later becomes Ashmedai of the Talmud, Solomon's "unwilling helper in building the temple," and "Asmedai" in Christian lore, down to the *Malleus maleficarum*. Sundermann considers the objections: the Jews may have read the name through their own verb *šmd*, "to destroy," and the Aramaic fragments of Tobit call the creature simply *šedā*, "demon." He still concludes: "Both the similarity of the names Aēšmō daēuuō and Asmodaios and the role they play as

enemies of marital union lead me to conclude that the assumption of an Iranian origin of the Jewish demon Asmodaios is correct" [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067, "Zoroastrian Influence on Early Jewish Demonology: The Case of Asmodaios"].

George William Carter places the borrowing in its historical setting. In his account "the Babylonian exile represented a fundamental transformation in the political, social and religious life of the people," and contact with the empires helped Judaism move toward universalism. On demonology he writes: "Satan is the head and ruler of the evil spirits. The beginning of all evil is ascribed to these evil angels. They bring only ruin and death to men. The parallel between Satan and Ahriman or Angro-Mainyu is obvious." He then sets a limit: "the Jews conceived of Satan as a fallen creature. … The archdemon is far from being equal to Him" [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114, "Satan"]. Michael Faust is more direct: Zoroastrianism is "dualistic because under [Ahura Mazda] are two equal and opposed forces: Spenta Mainyu … and Angra Mainyu," and "Angra Mainyu is the prototype for the Judaeo-Christian Satan" [Faust, Kabbalah, Hermeticism and M-theory, #81417, "Zoroastrianism"]. Gustav Davidson's dictionary takes the same line, calling Ahriman "a kind of ur-Satan (since Ahriman antedates by 1,000 years the Judaeo-Christian image of a prince regent of evil)" and the "prototype of the Christian Satan" [Davidson, A Dictionary of Angels, #38612, "Ahriman"].

These authors give the thesis a political side. Carter's Satan takes shape in the decades of exile under Babylonian and then Persian rule, and Dhalla's three-thousand-year scheme comes from the Pahlavi literature of the Sasanian and early Islamic period, when Zoroastrianism was the doctrine of an imperial church. On this reading, the cosmic dualism of "Good Religion" against "the Lie" served as the theology of a state that defined its enemies as servants of Ahriman. This is the interpretation of the influence authors, not a consensus [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114; Dhalla, Zoroastrian Theology, #55113].

3. The counter-thesis: a Jewish or Egyptian Devil?

Denis de Rougemont opens *La Part du Diable* with a deliberately provocative sentence: "Mai întâi, Diavolul este o invenţie iudaică. Adică, Diavolul este iudeu, aşa cum automobilul este american sau cum Panzerdivisionul este german" ("First, the Devil is a Jewish invention; the Devil is Jewish the way the automobile is

American or the Panzerdivision German"). The very next lines concede the Persian background: "the initial idea of the Devil was inspired in the Jews by the Orient and its dualist mysteries when Israel was captive in Babylon. But it was the rabbis who knew how to profit from the legend of Ormuzd and Ahriman and from those winged angels or demons whose model they found in Assyria" [de Rougemont, Partea Diavolului, #12312, opening chapter]. De Rougemont's "invention" is therefore a claim about who developed the figure, not a denial that it was borrowed.

Lynn Picknett points to Egypt instead. "Traditionally," she writes, "the Hebrew Shaitan – who acted as arch-tempter in the Book of Job – is seen as deriving from the ancient Egyptian god Set." She observes that "Set combined the characteristics of both Yahweh and Lucifer, especially his association with lightning," and that the pharaohs "descended into the earth as the serpent Sata, father of lightning," which she connects with Jesus' words "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" [Picknett, The Secret History of Lucifer, #64661, "Chapter One: Satan: An Unnatural History"]. Persian derivation, Jewish development and Egyptian roots therefore stand side by side in the library, each with its own philological or mythological evidence.

4. From prosecutor to rebel prince

The Hebrew Bible's *ha-satan* is a title, "the adversary." Carter lists the passages in which the satan "develops into a distinct personality": 1 Kings 22, Zechariah 3:1-2, Job 1:6-12 and 2:1-7, and the shift from 2 Samuel 24:1, where God incites David, to 1 Chronicles 21:1, where Satan does [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114, "Satan"]. Rosemary Ellen Guiley describes the figure shared by "all three religions": "a disobedient angel, an adversary of God – a satan in Hebrew." In Job he "smites Job with 'loathsome sores'," but Job "only curses the day of his birth, and not God" [Guiley, The Encyclopedia of Angels, #42228, "Satan"].

The rebel prince appears in the intertestamental literature. Davidson notes that in 1 Enoch Azazel is "one of the chiefs of the 200 fallen angels," who "taught men to fashion swords and shields." Revelation then names "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan," bound for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-2, following the fall of the dragon in Rev. 12) [Davidson, A Dictionary of Angels, #38612, "Azazel"; "Apollion"]. Davidson quotes Bernard Bamberger's warning

that "the classic expositions of the Jewish faith have implicitly or explicitly rejected the belief in rebel angels and in a Devil who is God's enemy," which places the "transformation of ha-satan in the Old Testament into Satan in the New" mainly on the Christian side [Davidson, A Dictionary of Angels, #38612, Introduction]. Picknett adds that God's opposite becomes "a Satan, an 'obstructor' of his will – which becomes, in New Testament Greek, diabolos, the Devil" [Picknett, The Secret History of Lucifer, #64661, Chapter One].

5. Lucifer, the light-bearer

"Lucifer" is the Latin rendering of the "day-star, son of the morning" (*Helel ben Shahar*) of Isaiah 14:12, a taunt against the king of Babylon. Picknett quotes the verse and explains that the name means " 'Light-bringer', and therefore by extension is associated with the radiant Morning Star," the planet Venus [Picknett, The Secret History of Lucifer, #64661, "Do What Thou Wilt"]. Guiley records that Augustine, joining Isaiah 14:12 to Ezekiel's "Thou hast been in Eden," read both as the fall of the Devil [Guiley, The Encyclopedia of Angels, #42228, "Lucifer"]. Davidson says that in Isaiah Satan is "Lucifer (or, rather, mistakenly identified as Lucifer)" [Davidson, A Dictionary of Angels, #38612, Introduction]. The occultist Eliphas Levi, quoted in Picknett's introduction, rejected the identification outright: "What is more absurd and more impious than to attribute the name of Lucifer to the devil, that is, to personified evil?" [Picknett, The Secret History of Lucifer, #64661, Introduction]. The separation of a light-bringing Lucifer from Satan returns in the Promethean and Steinerian readings of Chapters 118 and following.

6. Iblis and the shaytan

The Qur'an tells the story through a refusal. Guiley and Imbrogno quote Sura 15: "So, the angels prostrated themselves, all of them together. Except Iblis (Satan), he refused to be among the prostrators. … Iblis said: I am not the one to prostrate myself to a human being, whom you created from sounding clay of altered black smooth mud" (15:30-33). In their summary, God "cursed Iblis and all the djinn who followed him," then "relented and gave him and all the disobedient djinn until Judgment Day," and Iblis "obtained permission from God to 'prove' that humankind was unworthy of His love." Iblis claimed "that the djinn, made of smokeless fire, were superior to humans, made of mere clay" [Guiley &

Imbrogno, The Vengeful Djinn, #72540, "Dealing with the Djinn"]. Iblis is thus placed among the jinn, a third order of creation, rather than among the angels.

Rumi turns the story inward. In Book One of the *Masnavi*, Adam "felt self-important and proud of himself, / And he smiled at the actions of cursed Iblis," and God rebukes him: "If I were to blab the faults of the unfortunate, / I should … convert a hundred fresh Iblises into Mosalmans" [Rumi, Masnavi i Ma'navi, #45921, Book One, "God's rebuke to Adam for scorning Iblis"]. A. Helwa gives a devotional reading: "The Shaytan has no power, except for what Allah allows him to have (38:82-83). Even though the Shaytan is considered a 'clear enemy to man' (17:53), his creation still has a holy purpose". Like the hole in a leaking boat, he "shows us where our hearts are not in alignment" [Helwa, Secrets of Divine Love, #65220, "Chapter 12—The Mysteries of Heaven and Hell"].

7. Readings outside the mainstream

Keshe. In Knowledge Seekers Workshop 641 Mehran Keshe treats Satan as interior. The workshop summary reads "Lot about idea of Satan; Inner weakness – fears are our Satan – lack understanding," and in the session Keshe says: "It's because of our own weakness inside. Our fears are our Satan's, they are fears. Lack of understanding becomes our own enemy." He ties this to upbringing: "something you call it darkness, we call it Satan, whatever, yeah? Get your children or your grandchildren to walk with you in the dark. What they fear most" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 641, #378353, "The Nature of Satan, Ignorance, and the Limits of Academic Education"]. In KSW 208 he says of such constructs: "whatever you call it, we created that ourselves to not allow our beauty to manifest itself out of fear of our own weakness" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 208, #377851]. On jinn, Keshe says in KSW 598 that such entities "create a seed in your mind that you feed through your belief," that "certain collective beliefs … get started and take a life of their own," and that "these things lives on the weaknesses of a Man in dimension of physicality". Of one such practice he says, "I don't believe in it … that's their problem, not mine" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 598, #378310]. In KSW 380 he makes them morally relative: "it's bad for who, and good for who. … Jinn are the same thing, they can be doing that but they can do the opposite" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 380, #378092].

Lorber. In the *Great Gospel of John* as dictated to Jakob Lorber, a converted Pharisee asks "who is Satan, who are the devils, and where do they dwell?" (ch. 34).

The answer (chs. 35-36) is that "this primordial Satan in person, together with the individualised primordial devils, existed nowhere else than in the judged matter of the world." Satan stands for the union of devils "not only on this earth, but in all the worlds of the infinite space of Creation." The Satan who tested Job "is in fact the judged spirit of his flesh, that is, his countless desires" [Lorber, Marea Evanghelie a lui Ioan, vol. 8, #15582, chs. 34-36, "Satana ca materia judecată"]. Keshe and Lorber both deny an external personal Devil. Keshe puts evil in fear and ignorance, Lorber in matter that has not yet evolved.

The Left-Hand Path. Michael W. Ford claims a genealogy for his own tradition: "One may refer to the name of Ahriman or Angra-Mainyu for a source of the Adversary on earth," and "no matter what name the Adversary has been called by, from the ancient Persian cult of Yatukih sorcerers Ahriman or Angra Mainyu, his Bride Jahi or Az, to the Hebrew Samael and Lilith," the essence is one. He draws Tiamat's brood from the *Enuma Elish* into the same "primal Abyss," and his *Luciferian Witchcraft* promises "the True Path of Ahriman and Lilith-Az" [Ford, The Abyss and Tabaet, #85558, "The Origins of the Adversary"]. This is the practitioners' own reading. The book returns to it in the chapters on modern Luciferianism.

Figure	Nature	Origin (as sources present it)	Freedom of action	Final fate	Source
Angra Mainyu / Ahriman	Independent creative principle (Casartelli); Moulton doubts "dualism"	Later Avesta and Pahlavi; Gathas use *Druj*	Counter-creates noxious beings; 3,000-year assault	Annihilated at the end of time	Moulton #55011; Dhalla #55113
ha-satan	Member of God's court, accuser	Job, Zechariah, Chronicles	Acts only with God's leave	Not addressed	Carter #55114; Guiley #42228
Satan / Devil	Fallen creature, prince of demons	Enoch's Watchers; NT; Persian parallel or Egyptian Set	Tempts and rules "the air"	Bound, then defeated (Revelation)	Davidson #38612; Picknett #64661
Lucifer	Morning star; equated with Satan via Isaiah 14:12	Latin Bible, Augustine	Fall through pride	Cast down; occultists separate him from Satan	Picknett #64661; Levi in Picknett
Iblis / shaytan	Jinn of smokeless fire, not an angel	Qur'an 15:30-33	Reprieved until Judgment Day; power only as God allows	Hell after Judgment	Guiley & Imbrogno #72540; Helwa #65220

Key points

- Moulton holds that the Gathas call the Evil Spirit *Druj*, "the Lie," almost twenty times, and that "Angra Mainyu" was not Zarathushtra's own term. Dhalla describes the later millennial scheme and Ahriman's counter-creation of venomous animals [#55011; #55113].
- Sundermann argues that the demon Asmodaios of Tobit comes from Aēšma-daēva. Carter sees an "obvious" parallel between Satan and Ahriman but stresses that the Jewish Satan is a fallen creature. Faust and Davidson call Ahriman the "prototype" or "ur-Satan" [#55067; #55114; #81417; #38612].
- De Rougemont's "the Devil is a Jewish invention" itself grants a Babylonian-exile inspiration from Ormuzd and Ahriman. Picknett points instead to the Egyptian Set and the serpent Sata [#12312; #64661].
- *Ha-satan*, a prosecutor in God's court, becomes the rebel prince by way of Enoch's Watchers and Revelation's "old serpent"; Bamberger, cited by Davidson, says classical Judaism rejected the rebel Devil [#55114; #38612].
- "Lucifer" comes from the Latin rendering of Isaiah 14:12. Davidson calls the equation with Satan a mistaken identification, and Eliphas Levi called it "absurd and impious" [#38612; #64661].
- The Qur'anic Iblis is a jinn of fire who refuses to bow to Adam, is reprieved until Judgment Day, and in Helwa's reading acts only as God allows and for a divine purpose [#72540; #65220].
- Keshe treats Satan as human fear and ignorance and jinn as belief-fed entities, Lorber treats Satan as judged matter, and Ford claims Ahriman, Lilith and Tiamat as the Luciferian "Adversary" [#378353; #15582; #85558].

Chapter 117.

The Hammer of Witches: Demonology, the Malleus Maleficarum and the Great Witch Hunts (c. 1300-1750)

The previous chapter followed the Adversary as a theological figure. This chapter follows his supposed human allies. Between roughly 1400 and 1750, according to the editor of the library's main primary-source collection, "more than 100,000 people – mainly women – were prosecuted for witchcraft in Europe and colonial America," and in those centuries "the prominent stereotype of the witch as an evil magician and servant of Satan emerged. Catholics and Protestants alike feared that the Devil and his human confederates were destroying Christian society" [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, back-cover summary]. The chapter draws mainly on the documents Brian Levack collected: canon law, the papal bull, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the demonologists, the trial transcripts and the skeptics. It then sets them beside later authors who disagree about the scale, the motives and the meaning of the persecution.

1. Medieval foundations: from ritual magician to diabolical witch

Levack's Part II traces how the witch was assembled out of earlier categories. In the 1324 trial of Dame Alice Kyteler at Kilkenny, the bishop of Ossory found that there had long been "very many heretical sorceresses" in the town. Dame Alice and her associates "were accused of sacrificing animals to a demon and using powders, ointments" and similar means. Levack calls the case "one of the milestones in the development of the early modern stereotype of the witch," though

it still "conforms in its essential elements to that of ritual magicians prosecuted for performing maleficium" [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, ch. 10]. Nicholas Eymeric (1376) classed demonic magic as heresy. In September 1398 the theology faculty of Paris "approved a set of twenty-eight articles condemning the practice of ritual magic," rejecting even the claim "that such magical arts of any kind can lead us to a vision of the Divine" [ibid., chs. 11-12].

The decisive change, in Levack's account, is that by the fifteenth century the witch's alleged activities involved "collective Devil-worship, the murder and cannibalistic consumption of infants, copulation with demons, and the widespread destruction of life and property by occult means" [ibid., Part II introduction]. Johannes Nider's *Formicarius* (1435) gives one of the first sabbath narratives. An inquisitor told him that "in the duchy of Lausanne he had seen some witches cooking and eating their own children," and that at "a fixed meeting place" they "would see the demon in the assumed likeness of a man," and their disciples "had to promise to abjure Christianity, never to reverence the Eucharist" [ibid., ch. 13].

2. The papal bull and the *Malleus Maleficarum*

In the first year of his pontificate, Innocent VIII issued *Summis desiderantes* (1484). According to Levack, "its main purpose was to give jurisdictional authority to two inquisitors, Heinrich Kramer (identified in this document by his Latin name, Institoris) and Jacob Sprenger, to prosecute witches in various parts of Germany," where they had met resistance from secular authorities and bishops. Levack stresses that "there was nothing special about this papal bull". It defined witchcraft "exclusively in terms of maleficia, especially the impeding of fertility," said nothing about the sabbath, and noted "simply that people of both sexes were guilty." The bull's notoriety comes from the fact that "Kramer published it two years later as a preface to his witchcraft treatise" [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, ch. 24].

On authorship Levack writes that the *Malleus maleficarum* (1486) "was primarily the work of Heinrich Kramer." Sprenger is named as co-author, but "it is unclear how much of a role, if any at all, Sprenger had in the production of the book; Kramer may have simply added his name to a document to which Sprenger had objected." The book "went into fifteen printings between 1486 and 1520 and another nineteen printings between 1569 and 1669, which was the most intense

period of witch-hunting" [ibid., ch. 14]. Levack identifies three themes. The first is a refutation of skepticism: Part I, Question I asks "whether the belief that there are such beings as witches is so essential a part of the Catholic faith that obstinacy to maintain the opposite opinion manifestly savours of heresy". The second is that the Devil needs both witches and God's permission. The third is "the highly misogynistic argument that witchcraft was practised mainly by women" [ibid.].

The full Summers translation in the library shows these themes in the text. Part I, Question VI asks "Why is it that Women are chiefly addicted to Evil superstitions?" and concludes: "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable." Question XVI ranks witchcraft above "the other practices of Magicians and Diviners" because "there are fourteen species of magic, springing from the three kinds of Divination." Part II includes chapters "Of the way by which a formal pact with evil is made" (ch. 2) and "How witches impede and prevent the power of procreation" (ch. 6) [Kramer & Sprenger, The Malleus Maleficarum, #45629, Part I Q. VI, Q. XVI; Part II chs. 2, 6]. Part III, Levack notes, rests on the assumption "that witchcraft is a crimen exceptum," an excepted crime for which Kramer "is willing to countenance just about any practice that would succeed in convicting the witch," including stripping and searching the accused for hidden charms before torture [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, ch. 25].

3. The demonologists of the confessional age

The literature of the following century was written by Catholics and Protestants alike. Lambert Daneau (1574) gave a Calvinist account, and William Perkins (1608) wrote on "good and bad witches." Nicolas Remy (1595) described the Devil's mark and flight to the sabbath, and Martín Del Rio (1600) catalogued maleficia. Henri Boguet (1602) wrote on "the threat of witchcraft" and set rules for a secular judge. Francesco Maria Guazzo (1608) described the pact, and Pierre de Lancre (1612) described "dancing and sex at the sabbath." Cotton Mather (1692) placed witchcraft within the apocalypse [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, Part III, chs. 15-23]. Jean Bodin, a secular jurist, argued in 1580 that witchcraft was an excepted crime: "Whatever lawful means may be used to bring a person guilty of treason against the king to a confession, the same is necessary to bring a witch to confession." James VI of Scotland (1597) discussed swimming witches and pricking them for the Devil's mark [ibid., chs. 26, 28]. Levack's introduction to Part IV states the legal consequence: judges violated

the rules on torture "on the grounds that witchcraft was an exceptional crime that had to be prosecuted at all costs," and "without torture, courts would never have been able to convict the large numbers of witches" [ibid., Part IV introduction].

4. The trials in their own words

The transcripts show the procedure in operation. In 1628 Johannes Junius, burgomaster of Bamberg, wrote secretly to his daughter. A guard had told him: "for God's sake confess something, whether it be true or not. Invent something, for you cannot endure the torture." When he could not name accomplices he was told to "take one street after another; begin at the market," and he named people under threat of the executioner. He closed: "Now, dear child, here you have all my confession, for which I must die. And they are sheer lies and made-up things, so help me God … I have taken several days to write this: my hands are both lame." He added that six people who had denounced him had done so "all false, through compulsion" [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, ch. 39].

At Eichstätt in 1637 an unnamed woman of forty, mother of eight, "laughs heartily at the charge," says "I am not a witch, as true as Christ was tortured," and is found to have an insensitive Devil's mark. On the strappado she confesses, retracts, is pulled higher, and confesses again, and the court then catches her in a contradiction of dates [ibid., ch. 40]. Levack also prints the confession of Niclas Fiedler at Trier (1591), a Russian trial at Lukh (1657) and the Salem documents of 1692 [ibid., chs. 35, 42, 43]. David Goss's collection gives the Salem record in greater detail: Ezekiel Cheever's "Examination of Tituba" of 1 March 1692, depositions such as Mary Walcott's against Wilmot Redd of Marblehead, and Samuel Sibley's document showing John Proctor openly doubting "those providing spectral evidence" [Goss, Documents of the Salem Witch Trials, #63474, docs. 4-10 and passim]. Possession cases ran alongside the trials, including Loudun (1634) and Mather's Goodwin children (1688) [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, Part VI].

5. Politics, confession and the contested toll

Several authors connect the scale of the hunts to political and confessional rivalry. Martin Donnelly writes that "by 1530, Catholics and Protestants were competing not only for the hearts and minds of Christian Europe, but also to see who was most efficient at exposing the army of the damned," and that "by the mid-point in Europe's religious wars – commonly referred to as the Thirty Years War – witches were no longer being burnt a few at a time, but by the dozens and hundreds." He adds that Luther "was convinced that the Devil made compacts with anyone and everyone" [Donnelly, The Big Book of Pain, #33280, ch. 8, "The Rise of the Malleus Maleficarum"]. Helen Ellerbe gives a political reading: "Any threat to social uniformity, any questioning of authority, and any act of rebellion could now be attributed to and prosecuted as witchcraft. Not surprisingly, areas of political turmoil and religious strife experienced the most intense witch hunts". She concludes that "witch-hunting secured the conversion of Europe to orthodox Christianity" [Ellerbe, The Dark Side of Christian History, #6699, "The Witch Hunts"]. Theodore Millon adds that " 'Witch Finders' soon became prominent guardians of the faith, prompted by religious authorities who sought to undo the political powers of their ostensible enemies" [Millon, Masters of the Mind, #29163, ch. 2].

The library's sources give very different figures, and each is reproduced below with its basis. Michael Kerrigan, writing of Joan of Arc's era, cautions that "few in the Church at this time took the idea of witchcraft seriously," which makes the attempt to brand her a witch "unusual" [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131, "The War on Witchcraft"].

Source	Estimate or evidence	Basis given
Levack (Sourcebook)	"more than 100,000 people … prosecuted" (1400-1750)	Academic synthesis of trial records
Donnelly	Burnings "by the dozens and hundreds" at the peak; "tens of thousands" of victims of the Spanish Inquisition in general	Narrative history of torture

Source	Estimate or evidence	Basis given
Ellerbe	Trier 1586: "the entire female population of two villages was wiped out … except for only two women"; c. 1600: "Germany is almost entirely occupied with building fires for the witches"	Chronicler of Treves via Barbara Walker; a contemporary letter
Online editor of the *Malleus*	"Estimates of the death toll during the Inquisition worldwide range from 600,000 to as high as 9,000,000" over its 250-year course (a figure for the Inquisition as a whole, not witch trials alone)	Introduction to the online edition
Jensen	"Millions of women – up to twenty percent in many communities – were tortured and killed on the pretense that they were witches"	Cultural critique; no count basis given in the passage

[Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807; Donnelly, #33280; Ellerbe, #6699; Kramer & Sprenger, #45629, "Introduction to Online Edition"; Jensen, A Language Older Than Words, #70407]

6. The skeptics and the end of prosecution

The skeptical tradition runs through the period alongside the demonologists. Johann Weyer (1563) treated accused witches as melancholics, and Millon quotes him: "There are more superstitions in the Roman Church than in all these poor women and presumed witches" [Millon, Masters of the Mind, #29163, ch. 2]. Reginald Scot (1584) argued for "the unreality of witchcraft." The Spanish inquisitor Alonso de Salazar Frías (1612) documented "the unreliability of confessions." Hobbes (1651) wrote on the nature of demons and Spinoza on "the non-existence

of the Devil," and John Webster (1677) and Balthasar Bekker (1695) completed the "disenchantment of the world" [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, Part VII, chs. 51-57]. The Jesuit Friedrich Spee, a confessor of condemned witches, described in his *Cautio Criminalis* (1631) how a tortured woman "is forced to accuse others whom she does not know, whom her questioners not infrequently place in her mouth or the torturer suggests," and how, if she died under torture, "they say that the devil broke her neck." Levack credits his book with "a significant decline in the number of convictions" [ibid., ch. 29].

The legal endgame followed. Louis XIV's edict of July 1682, issued "mainly in response to … the Affair of the Poisons," reclassified witchcraft as "practical superstition and pretended magic." It kept the death penalty only for sacrilege and poisoning, though sorcerers could still be tried for profaning the host, as at Marseilles in 1693 [ibid., ch. 32]. Christian Thomasius demanded in 1701 and 1705 that witch trials and torture end, and Prussia ended witch prosecutions fourteen years later. In 1736 a British statute repealed the English and Scottish witchcraft acts [ibid., chs. 33-34]. Donnelly records the last English execution, of "Mary Hicks and her ten-year-old daughter," in 1716. He also records a mob at Wickham Skeith, Suffolk, swimming the peddler Isaac Stebbing as late as 1825 [Donnelly, The Big Book of Pain, #33280, ch. 8].

7. Later interpretive frameworks

Psychiatric histories read the craze as mental illness misunderstood. Andrew Sims, a psychiatrist, writes that the Roman-era accusations against Christians of "ritual killing and devouring of infants" were "adopted by the new, Christian establishment and directed against" despised groups, and that authorities found "mentally-ill people, predominantly women, guilty of witchcraft and persecuted them" [Sims, Is Faith Delusion?, #65574, ch. 3]. Millon frames the period as the eclipse of Hippocratic medicine by "superstition, demonology, and exorcism," followed by the "resuscitating" of scientific thinking through Vives and Weyer [Millon, Masters of the Mind, #29163, ch. 2, "Medieval Madness, Witch Hunts, and the Rise of Scientific Reason"].

Esoteric and feminist writers go further. Tricia McCannon calls the *Malleus* "one of the greatest abominations these sadists foisted on the European populace," compiled by Kramer and Sprenger under "the papal decrees of Pope Innocent VIII" [McCannon, Return of the Divine Sophia, #62332, "Chapter 23: A Return to the Circle"]. The online editor of the *Malleus* argues that its definitions "came to

be widely regarded as irrefutable truth," and that "those beliefs are held even today by a majority of Christians in regard to practitioners of the modern 'revived' religion of Witchcraft, or Wicca" [Kramer & Sprenger, The Malleus Maleficarum, #45629, "Introduction to Online Edition"]. That claim leads into the following chapters on modern witchcraft and Satanism.

Key points

- Levack's Sourcebook traces the witch from ritual magician (Kyteler 1324, Paris 1398) to Devil-worshipping, child-eating sabbath-goer (Nider 1435), and counts more than 100,000 prosecutions between 1400 and 1750 [#76807].
- *Summis desiderantes* (1484) was, in Levack's words, a routine grant of jurisdiction to Kramer and Sprenger. It became notorious because Kramer printed it as the preface to the *Malleus* [#76807].
- Levack considers the *Malleus* (1486) mainly Kramer's work, with Sprenger's role unclear. Its key claims are that denying witches is heresy, that "all witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable," and that witchcraft is a *crimen exceptum* that justifies torture [#76807; #45629].
- Bodin, Remy, Boguet, Guazzo, de Lancre and James VI built the procedural and doctrinal case, and the Bamberg and Eichstätt transcripts show how torture produced confessions and lists of accomplices [#76807].
- Donnelly and Ellerbe link the hunts to Catholic-Protestant competition and political turmoil. Estimates of the toll range from Levack's 100,000 prosecutions to the "millions" given by Jensen; the Malleus online editor gives 600,000 to 9,000,000 for the death toll of the Inquisition worldwide [#33280; #6699; #45629; #70407].
- Weyer, Scot, Salazar, Spee, Hobbes, Spinoza and Bekker built the skeptical case. Prosecution ended in steps: Louis XIV in 1682, Thomasius in 1705, the British repeal in 1736. Donnelly gives Mary Hicks (1716) as the last English execution and records a swimming ordeal as late as 1825 [#76807; #33280].
- Sims and Millon read the craze as misunderstood mental illness. McCannon and the Malleus editor see it shaping Christian hostility to modern Wicca [#65574; #29163; #62332; #45629].

Chapter 118.

Selling the Soul: Faustian Pacts, the Black Mass and the Hellfire Clubs

Early modern Europe produced three images of people who chose the Devil deliberately: the scholar who signs a pact, the renegade priest who says Mass over a woman's body, and the aristocratic rake who mocks God over claret in a cave. All three later became material for modern Satanists and for conspiracy writers. For this period, however, the gap between accusation and documentation is unusually wide, and the sources in the library divide sharply over it. Per Faxneld and Jesper Aa. Petersen open their academic volume with a warning: "Early modern 'witches', abortionists and poisoners close to the court of Louis XIV, certain English rakes, and many others, have been slandered as Devil-worshippers. On closer inspection, none of these seem to actually have been Satanists, with the French seventeenth-century example as a possible exception (Medway 2001: 70–99)" [Faxneld & Petersen (eds.), The Devil's Party, #87532, "Introduction: At the Devil's Crossroads"]. This chapter sets out the pact, the Black Mass and the club, each with the claims made about it and the authors who make them.

1. An analytical frame: two kinds of discourse

Faxneld and Petersen organise their study around "a distinction between discourse on the satanic and satanic discourse." The first consists of "cultural stereotypes" and accusations made by outsiders. The second consists of "self-ascribed satanic identities," which they describe as "a move from a negative other to a positive self" [Faxneld & Petersen (eds.), The Devil's Party, #87532, Introduction]. In their view, almost everything before the nineteenth century belongs to the first category. The volume does allow exceptions. Mikael Häll's contribution on early modern Sweden, where "a Satanist (old Swedish: Sathanist)" designated

"a person actually in league with the Devil," finds that "some individuals clearly maintained worldviews ... in which [the Devil] constituted the major supernatural principle – a prince by whose name lesser spirits could be summoned, a god of the outsiders and the dispossessed." The editors' introduction to Part One suggests calling this "a form of 'folk Satanism', on a highly individual basis" [Häll, in Faxneld & Petersen (eds.), The Devil's Party, #87532, Part One]. The frame explains why this chapter deals mostly with accusations. It will be used again for the modern Satanist movements in later chapters.

2. The pact: from Simon Magus to Doctor Faustus

The theology of the pact was examined in Chapter 117. The *Malleus Maleficarum* has a chapter "Of the way by which a formal pact with evil is made," and Guazzo's *Compendium maleficarum* (1608) treats the pact with the Devil at length [Kramer & Sprenger, The Malleus Maleficarum, #45629, Part II ch. 2; Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, ch. 20]. Lynn Picknett traces the literary figure much further back. Of Simon Magus, the Samaritan wonder-worker of Acts, she writes: "The Magus was also known as 'Faustus' – 'the favoured one' – in Rome, giving his name to the overweeningly ambitious Renaissance legend Dr Faustus, whose pact with the Devil went oh-so-predictably wrong." She also argues that the witch-hunters' pact was mostly a fiction: "most of the accused were completely innocent of trafficking with the Devil" [Picknett, The Secret History of Lucifer, #64661, "Chapter Five: Pacts, Possession and Seance Rooms"]. Tracy Twyman and Alexander Rivera begin their *Baphomet* with a chapter titled "Pacts with the Devil," which they open with the Templar trials. Quoting Hammer-Purgstall, they cite the charges of "apostasy, idolatry and pederasty" as "foundation teachings of the Ophitic doctrine" [Twyman & Rivera, Baphomet, #80137, "Chapter 1: Pacts with the Devil"].

The historical figure behind the legend is described on the reference shelf as Johann Georg Faust (c. 1480 or 1466 – c. 1541), "a German itinerant alchemist, astrologer, and magician of the German Renaissance," who "appeared as physician, doctor of philosophy, alchemist" across southern Germany from 1506 onward. Chapbooks spread his legend "beginning in the 1580s," and it passed through Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* (1588-1592) to Goethe's *Faust* [Wikipedia: Johann Georg Faust]. Asenath Mason, writing as a practitioner of Draconian magic, records two etymologies for the name of Faust's demon. Mephistopheles comes "either ... from the Hebrew words mephitz – 'distributor' and tophel – 'slanderer' or from Greek me as a negation, phos – 'light,' and philis – 'loving,' meaning 'not

loving light' or 'fleeing from light.' " For Mason he is positive: "a personification of the Adversary in the Western culture … the spirit of eternal progress and movement" [Mason, Draconian Ritual Book, #80454, "Mephistopheles"].

Esoteric and psychological readers each took Goethe's pair in their own direction. Rudolf Steiner's Berlin lecture of 1 January 1909 asks "Who is Mephistopheles?" He compares the "Prologue in Heaven" of *Faust* with the Book of Job, and he sets "the influence upon us of Lucifer and his associates" against "the influence upon us of Ahriman and his associates," with reference to "Zarathustra and ancient Persian culture." In his anthroposophy, Mephistopheles is Ahrimanic, not Luciferic, which ties this chapter back to the Iranian Adversary of Chapter 116 [Steiner, Disease, Karma and Healing, #69269, Lecture 12, "Mephistopheles and Luciferic Influence in Human Evolution"]. C. G. Jung recalled reading *Faust* as a young man. He wrote that Mephistopheles "remained for me a wonderful and mysterious experience," and that he had found "confirmation that there were or had been people who saw evil and its universal power, and more important the mysterious role it played in delivering man from darkness and suffering" [Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections, #39972]. The historian of science Jimena Canales starts from the moral of the legend, "signing a pact with the devil in exchange for unlimited knowledge could have dire consequences". Her book follows a series of thought-experiment "demons," from Descartes's evil genius and Laplace's intelligence to Maxwell's demon, as the working metaphors of modern physics [Canales, Bedeviled, #62157, chs. 1-3]. This Promethean reading of the bargain returns in the chapter on Romantic Luciferianism.

3. The Affair of the Poisons and the Black Mass (1670s-1682)

Ben Hubbard's history of poisoning gives the standard narrative. The Marquise de Brinvilliers poisoned "her husband, father and brothers to inherit their estates". Before her execution she "implicated other nobles at court. The Affair of the Poisons had begun." Louis XIV, whose court "had been struck by several mysterious deaths," then "immediately established a commission," the *Chambre Ardente*. La Voisin (Catherine Monvoisin) "told the Chambre Ardente that de Montespan had been buying aphrodisiacs from her for many years and even performed black magic rituals to secure the king's favour." After news of Mademoiselle de Fontanges' pregnancy, "de Montespan had offered to pay La Voisin a small fortune to murder both the mistress and the king". The method was to be

"a poisoned dress and a pair of poisoned gloves" for Fontanges and a poisoned petition for the king. Hubbard reports that "Étienne Guibourg confirmed that he had been present at the ritual with de Montespan and La Voisin; a crucifix was held on de Montespan's naked stomach as the infant was disembowelled" [Hubbard, Poison, #64244, "The Affair of the Poisons"].

Hugh Urban, a historian of religion, calls this "the second, no less infamous story of sexual magic and the black arts," after the Templar trials. It was "a scandal of epic proportions, which involved allegations of abortions, child sacrifice, and poisoning," in which "black magic and political intrigue became deeply entangled." He places it within a longer history of the Eucharist being used "to cause disease or to obtain love, or even to procure abortion or death" [Urban, Magia Sexualis, #43699, ch. 7, "The Age of Satan"]. Nesta Webster, writing in the conspiratorial secret-society tradition, dates the "first act" of the affair to 1666, when Brinvilliers began "her amazing career of crime in collaboration with her lover Sainte-Croix." She mentions La Voisin's alleged attempt "on the life of the King." To explain the "craze for magic in Western Europe" she cites Deschamps on "the Cabala, 'that science of demoniacal arts, of which the Jews were the initiators,' " and adds her own view that "the influence of the Jewish Cabalists cannot be ignored" [Webster, Secret Societies and Subversive Movements, #69057, Part I].

Leo Lyon Zagami, writing as a self-described former insider, goes furthest. He writes that "Guibourg performed a series of Black Masses with Catherine Monvoisin," and that "upon the arrest of La Voisin, investigators discovered the corpses of 2,500 infants buried in her yard, most likely all sacrificed during the Black Mass rituals." He calls Guibourg's Masses of the 1670s "the first of their kind," representing "the apogee of crime and blasphemy in Satanism," and he traces them to an earlier "so-called Medici Mass" [Zagami, Confessions of an Illuminati, #367409, vol. 6.66]. None of the other library sources that narrate the affair repeats the figure of 2,500. As noted above, Faxneld and Petersen treat the French case as the single possible instance of genuine pre-modern Satanism, citing Medway (2001) [Faxneld & Petersen, #87532].

Politics and chronology. The affair was a struggle at court involving a royal mistress, her rival, a king, and a police lieutenant (La Reynie) who arrested La Voisin, according to Hubbard [#64244]. The Witchcraft Sourcebook confirms the link to the law. Louis XIV's edict of July 1682 was issued "mainly in response to a scandal, known as the Affair of the Poisons, which had rocked the highest levels of Parisian society, including the royal court, between 1676 and 1681." The affair, which "centered on the activities of a widow known as La Voisin,"

involved "poison, infanticide, and alleged child-sacrifice" and "the saying of amatory masses." The edict reclassified witchcraft as "practical superstition and pretended magic" and reserved death for sacrilege and poisoning [Levack (ed.), The Witchcraft Sourcebook, #76807, ch. 32]. The scandal that produced France's most notorious Black Mass narrative is therefore also the event that, in Levack's account, led the crown to stop treating witchcraft as a diabolical reality.

4. The Hellfire Clubs

The reference shelf separates several clubs. The "first official Hellfire Club" was founded in London in 1718 by Philip, Duke of Wharton. According to Blackett-Ord, as cited there, it was a satirical club where "the supposed president … was the Devil, although the members themselves did not apparently worship demons," and it was suppressed in 1721 by a bill "against 'horrid impieties' " pushed by Wharton's political enemies. Wharton then "became a Freemason, and in 1722 he became the Grand Master of England." Sir Francis Dashwood founded his Order of the Knights of St Francis in 1746. It met at Medmenham and in the West Wycombe caves until around 1766. Further clubs arose in Ireland, including the one on Montpelier Hill [Wikipedia: Hellfire Club].

Peter Levenda reports the reputation and marks how uncertain it is: Dashwood's "libertines, according to the popular histories, and meetings of the 'Knights of St. Francis' or 'the Medmenham Friars' … were believed to involve sexual orgies and Black Masses." He notes that the motto *Fay ce que voudras*, "the Rabelaisian 'Do what thou wilt'," would become the slogan of Aleister Crowley [Levenda, The Secret Temple, #64792].

Conspiracy authors take these meetings as proof of a political project. James Shelby Downard describes "the Hell-Fire Club (Monks of Medmenham Friars of St. Francis)" as "a society of ruffians and drunkards who engaged in sexual orgies … They also engaged in political agitation and conspiracy. They were dedicated to the destruction of the Catholic Church," with a statue of Harpocrates, god of silence, at the entrance [Downard, King Kill 33, #71364, "Set I: The Hell-Fire Club"]. David Icke writes that Benjamin Franklin "was a member of Freemasonic networks in France, like the Nine Sisters and the San Juan Lodges, which helped to manipulate the French Revolution in 1789," and "also a member of the Satanic Hellfire Club" [Icke, The Biggest Secret, #68245]. Zagami holds that "it is the Illuminati elite of the aristocracy that will eventually create the foundation of modern Satanism, beginning with the infamous Hell Fire Club founded

in England in 1719." In another passage of the same work he places the club in "the 19th century." He describes today's rulers as "the Satanic ruling elite" who "continue to enjoy the involvement in organizations similar to The Hellfire Clubs all around the world" [Zagami, Confessions of an Illuminati, #367409]. Faxneld and Petersen count "certain English rakes" among those "slandered as Devil-worshippers" [#87532].

5. Comparison and legacy

Element	Pact	Black Mass	Hellfire Club
Form	Individual contract, often "in blood"	Liturgical inversion of the Catholic Mass	Social and libertine fraternity
Purpose (as claimed)	Knowledge, power, love (Faust; Malleus)	Love, the king's favour, death of rivals (Montespan)	Pleasure, mockery of religion, politics
Key period	16th-17th c. legend; trials	1670s-1682 Paris	1718-1766 Britain and Ireland
Documentary status	Accusation and literature (Picknett: most accused "innocent")	Confessions to the Chambre Ardente; Faxneld & Petersen's "possible exception"	Satire and rumour; Levenda's "believed"
Strongest claim	Mason: Mephistopheles as spirit of progress	Zagami: 2,500 infants; "first of their kind"	Downard, Icke, Zagami: a Satanic ruling elite
Later reuse	Romantic and Promethean Satanism	19th-c. Huysmans; modern Satanic liturgy	Crowley's "Do what thou wilt"

Urban follows the Black Mass forward: "by the nineteenth century, these narratives of Black Masses and sexual perversion had entered fully into the European popular imagination," with Huysmans's *Là-bas* as "the most famous literary rendition" [Urban, Magia Sexualis, #43699, ch. 7]. Modern Satanic organisations later drew their liturgies from this literary stock, a step that belongs to the period of "satanic discourse" in Faxneld and Petersen's sense and is treated in the chapters on the Church of Satan.

Key points

- Faxneld and Petersen separate outsiders' "discourse on the satanic" from self-declared "satanic discourse." They hold that early modern witches, Louis XIV's poisoners and English rakes were "slandered as Devil-worshippers," with the French case as "a possible exception" [#87532].
- Picknett traces the name "Faustus" to Simon Magus and calls most accused pact-makers innocent. The historical Johann Georg Faust (d. c. 1541) was an itinerant alchemist and astrologer whose chapbook legend passed to Marlowe and Goethe [#64661; Wikipedia: Johann Georg Faust].
- Mason gives two etymologies for Mephistopheles ("distributor/slanderer" or "not loving light") and calls him a spirit of progress. Steiner treats him as Ahrimanic as distinct from Luciferic. Jung saw him as revealing evil's role in "delivering man from darkness" [#80454; #69269; #39972].
- Hubbard narrates Brinvilliers' confession, the Chambre Ardente, La Voisin's testimony against Montespan and Guibourg's admission of a Mass over Montespan's body. Urban calls it the second great story of sexual black magic [#64244; #43699].
- Zagami's claim of 2,500 infant corpses and of Guibourg's Masses as "the first of their kind" is not repeated by the other sources. Webster attributes the magic craze in part to Jewish Cabalists, citing Deschamps [#367409; #69057].
- The Sourcebook confirms that Louis XIV's 1682 edict answered the Affair of the Poisons (1676-1681) and reclassified witchcraft as "pretended magic" [#76807].
- Levenda reports the Medmenham orgies and Black Masses only as "believed" and links *Fay ce que voudras* to Crowley. Downard, Icke and Zagami present the clubs as instruments of anti-Catholic, revolutionary or elite Satanic politics [#64792; #71364; #68245; #367409].

Chapter 119.

Lucifer Rehabilitated: The Gnostic Serpent, Romantic Satan, Eliphas Levi and Baphomet

Modern Satanism rests on a long reversal. Through most of Christian history Satan was the enemy of humankind, a label pinned on others, not a figure anyone claimed. Over many centuries the Eden serpent, the fallen archangel and the "Light-bringer" became symbols of knowledge, liberty and progress. Ruben van Luijk describes this as a move from "attribution" (accusing others of Satanism) to "identification" (claiming Satan for oneself), and dates the turning point to the nineteenth century [van Luijk, in Faxneld & Petersen, The Devil's Party, #87532, "Sex, Science, and Liberty"]. This chapter follows the main links: the Gnostic sects, the Romantic poets, socialist rhetoric, and Alphonse-Louis Constant, who as Eliphas Levi created the vocabulary and the Baphomet image of modern occultism.

The Gnostic serpent

Issitt and Main summarise Hippolytus of Rome: the "Ophite Gnostics and the Naassenes" both "developed heretical views regarding the serpent in the garden of Eden, hence the name 'Ophite,' which is derived from the Greek root meaning 'snake' ". The Naassenes took their name "from the Hebrew word 'nashah,' which translates to 'serpent,' " used the serpent "to represent self-creation", and claimed to follow James the Just [Issitt & Main, Hidden Religion, #66220, "Secrets of the Naassenes"]. Gregory Lessing Garrett notes that "in The Hypostasis of the Archons among the Nag Hammadi texts, the serpent is the agent of Sophia,

urging Adam and Eve to disobey". He retells how Sophia, acting without her consort, brings forth an offspring "with the head of a lion and the body of a serpent. She names him Yaldabaoth. He is also called Saklas (in Hebrew, the fool)" [Garrett, The Age of Mask Deception, #64597, Ch. 1]. In this myth the creator of matter is an ignorant lesser power, and the serpent who offers knowledge serves the higher Wisdom. Garrett writes from a Christian standpoint opposed to this tradition.

Even the name is disputed. Twyman and Rivera quote G.R.S. Mead: "The term 'Ophite' is exceedingly erroneous; it does not generally describe the schools of which we are treating; it was not used by the adherents of the schools themselves" [Twyman & Rivera, Baphomet: The Temple Mystery Unveiled, #80137, Ch. 5 "Divine Knowledge"].

Picknett's "Light-bringer" thesis

Lynn Picknett states the modern Luciferian counter-history most directly. Satan is "a potent metaphor for the worst of the worst", while Lucifer "is emphatically not the Evil One, but the spirit of human progress, the fight to learn and grow, to be independent and proud, but also spiritually free. 'Lucifer' simply means 'the Light-bringer' " [Picknett, The Secret History of Lucifer, #64661, Introduction]. She says the Gnostics went as far as "daring to reverse the usual role of God and Satan" [ibid., Part One]. Her line of "intellectual and spiritual Luciferanism" runs through Leonardo ("the ultimate Luciferan hero"), John Dee, Isaac Newton and the Freemasons, whom she calls "still routinely accused of worshipping a satanic Lucifer" [ibid., Introduction]. Chapter Three, "A Woman Called Lucifer", links the title to goddess epithets ("Diana Lucifera", "Isis Lucifer") and to the "Mary Lucifer" of Magdalene devotees in southern France [ibid.]. Picknett frames the thesis politically: she attacks "the insidious fascism of political correctness" and argues that belief in Devil-worshippers "has caused more agony, terror and evil in the world than even any true Satanism" [ibid.].

Romantic Satanism: sex, science and liberty

Van Luijk traces the literary reversal to radicals around the publisher Joseph Johnson. For them, Milton's Satan, in rebelling "against absolute, 'divinely ordained' authority", became "a hero instead of an object of horror". Godwin's

Political Justice (1793) praised a Satan who "saw no sufficient reason, for that extreme inequality of rank and power, which the creator assumed". Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (c. 1790) "could be considered the first 'satanic' Bible in history". Shelley took up the theme, and Byron's Lucifer in *Cain* (1821) stands with those "who dare look the omnipotent tyrant in His everlasting face / and tell him that His evil is not good!" In France, George Sand's Satan calls himself "the archangel of legitimate revolt", and Hugo made Liberty Satan's daughter, born at the fall of the Bastille. The hostile term "Satanic School" came from Robert Southey [van Luijk, in The Devil's Party, #87532]. Van Luijk groups the themes as sex (earth, nature, "the flesh"), science (progress and critical thought) and liberty. He also insists that "Romantic Satanism is a term of literary history, not of religious studies": none of these writers held rites [ibid.]. The editors agree that they were "purely literary Satanists" whose leanings "seldom extended beyond occasional outbursts in a text or two". Their exception is Stanislaw Przybyszewski (1868-1927) [Faxneld & Petersen, The Devil's Party, #87532, Introduction, p. 5].

The political Satan

Faxneld and Petersen record that "Satan was also popular among nineteenth-century socialists as a symbol of revolt against capitalism and the bourgeoisie, with some reds using the figure in a fairly sustained and consistent manner" [The Devil's Party, #87532, Introduction, pp. 5-6]. Richard Wurmbrand makes the stronger claim that Marx himself was a Satanist. He contrasts the schoolboy's essay on union with Christ with Marx's student poems, for example "I shall build my throne high overhead", which he likens to Lucifer's boast in Isaiah 14. He reads the drama *Oulanem* as an inversion of "Emanuel", and "The Fiddler" (a sword "the prince of darkness / sold to me") as an allusion to a satanic blood-pact initiation [Wurmbrand, Marx și Satan, #20684]. Faxneld and Petersen treat Satan here as a political metaphor; Wurmbrand alleges a personal cult.

Mitchell Heisman supplies a philosophical frame for such revaluations. He argues that Judaic ethics were "at least in part, the inversion of the values of politically powerful oppressors": "from the perspective of Egyptian values, the entire slave revolt was immoral and wrong" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II]. In his reconstruction of Hitler's view, "Christianity is a rebellion against natural law, a protest against nature" [ibid.]. On this reading, the Romantic and Satanist praise of the rebel is one more inversion of who counts as "good".

Eliphas Levi: from abbé Constant to magus

Alexandrian gives the biography. The former abbé Constant took over *La Revue progressive* in 1853; his patron, the old Marquis de Montferrat, seduced his wife, who left with him. Levi then stayed in London "from May to August 1854", where the novelist Bulwer-Lytton, "passionate about theurgy", persuaded him to evoke spirits with the *Clavicule de Salomon.* In sessions from 20 to 26 July, Apollonius of Tyana appeared to him [Alexandrian, Istoria filozofiei oculte, #9675, ch. 8 "Magia sexuală"; #38980]. After this Levi wrote only on occultism: *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* (Alexandrian cites Germer Baillière, 1856, "a classic book of occultism"), *Histoire de la Magie* (1860) and *La Clef des grands Mystères* (1861) [ibid.]. Alexandrian's verdict is critical. Levi uses his documents "with a lyricism that carries him beyond the truth. He never doubts a forgery if it suits his wishes", and "his interpretation of the tarot is folly". Like Michelet's history, the *Histoire de la Magie* must be read "with countless precautions" [ibid.].

Levi's doctrine drew sharp lines: "there is a true and a false science, a divine and an infernal… magic… we must distinguish between a magician and a sorcerer, between an adept and a charlatan" [Alexandrian, #38980, quoting Levi]. Ritual magic, he taught, works through the "Astral Light", which he called "a natural and divine" agent [Twyman & Rivera, Baphomet, #80137]. Of Satan he wrote: "You have only one excuse, O prince of Darkness, that of not existing!" [Alexandrian, #9675]. He also reclaimed the name Lucifer: "The intellectual Lucifer is the spirit of intelligence and love; it is the paraclete, it is the Holy Spirit, while the physical Lucifer is the great agent of universal magnetism" [Picknett, #64661, Introduction]. Greer notes that his 1860 *Histoire* "argued that the Templars were Gnostic sorcerers practicing the true, magical Christianity of Jesus", building on French neo-Templar claims of Gnostic descent made by 1828 [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Templars"].

Baphomet

Twyman and Rivera derive "Mauffe" from a French "alteration of Mahomet… which supposedly morphed into the word Baphomet", with variants "Maufe", "Mauffez" and "Maphumet" [Twyman & Rivera, Baphomet, #80137, Ch. 1 "Pacts with the Devil"]. The Templar confessions "described Baphomet mainly as a head", and Levi drew on Hammer-Purgstall's *Mysterium Baphometis Revelatum*

[ibid.]. His goat-headed, winged androgyne "looks like the Devil himself" because the Rider-Waite Devil card copied it, so "the modern conception of the Devil has been influenced by Levi's illustration". Yet "Levi repeatedly stated that Baphomet was not the same as the Devil", and "towards the end of his life… had come to question his dabblings in the occult" [ibid.]. The date of *Dogme et Rituel* differs by source. Alexandrian gives 1856. The library copy of Greer says "By 1845, when Eliphas Lévi's *Dogme et Rituel*… took the occult scene by storm and reinvented magic for the modern world" [Greer, #64911], which conflicts with Alexandrian's chronology. The goat later became the Church of Satan's sigil (Chapter 121).

Bridges to organised Satanism and the conspiracy reading

Faxneld and Petersen list the precursors. Blavatsky praised Satan in *The Secret Doctrine* (1888), but "these ideas are peripheral" to her system. "The first person to construct an entire esoteric system, if a rather miniscule one, around Satan was the obscure Danish occultist Ben Kadosh (Carl William Hansen, 1872-1936)". The Fraternitas Saturni of 1920s Germany "celebrated Luciferian masses". Maria de Naglowska's " 'satanic' temple" in 1930s Paris sought "an integration of Satan and God". None founded a lasting tradition [The Devil's Party, #87532, Introduction, p. 6].

Conspiracy authors read the same lineage as the secret religion of elites. Texe Marrs writes that "according to occultists, their guiding angel, their deity, is Lucifer, the Morning Star, god of liberty, bearer of the light", and sees him in the torch of the Statue of Liberty [Marrs, Mysterious Monuments, #66353, ch. 18]. The Vigilant Citizen holds that "modern Luciferianism takes its roots from Gnostic teachings as well as ancient Egyptian and Babylonian paganism", with Lucifer "the savior of humanity by giving it the gift of knowledge" [The Vigilant Citizen, 2024 vol. 4 – Sinister Sites, #70345]. Picknett, Marrs and the Vigilant Citizen accept the same lineage and differ only in their verdict on it. The academics see such lineages as identity built "retroactively" from historical material [Faxneld & Petersen, #87532, Introduction, p. 5].

Stage	Figure / text	Role of Satan/Lucifer	Assessment in sources
2nd-3rd c.	Ophites, Naassenes, Hypostasis of the Archons	Serpent as Sophia's agent against Yaldabaoth	Known via Hippolytus; "Ophite" a misnomer (Mead)
c. 1790-1840	Godwin, Blake, Shelley, Byron, Hugo	Hero of liberty, sex, science	Literary, no rites (van Luijk)
19th c.	Socialists; Marx	Emblem of revolt / alleged cult	Faxneld & Petersen vs Wurmbrand
1850s-60s	Eliphas Levi	Lucifer as intelligence and "universal magnetism"; Baphomet	Influential; credulous with forgeries (Alexandrian)
1888-1930s	Blavatsky, Ben Kadosh, Fraternitas Saturni, Naglowska	Initiator, Light-bearer	Precursors without lasting tradition

Key points

- According to Hippolytus, the Ophites and Naassenes revalued the Eden serpent. The *Hypostasis of the Archons* makes it Sophia's agent against the lion-headed Yaldabaoth, and Mead calls "Ophite" a misnomer.
- Picknett's revisionist thesis separates Lucifer, "the spirit of human progress", from Satan, "the worst of the worst".
- Romantic Satanism recast Satan as a hero of sex, science and liberty, but stayed literary (van Luijk; Faxneld & Petersen).
- Socialists used Satan as a symbol of revolt; Wurmbrand argues from Marx's poems that Marx was personally a Satanist.
- Alexandrian documents Levi's London evocation of Apollonius (20-26 July 1854) and judges that he "never doubts a forgery if it suits his wishes".
- Levi called Lucifer "the great agent of universal magnetism" and created the goat-headed Baphomet that shaped the modern image of the Devil. The sources give different dates for *Dogme et Rituel*.

- Blavatsky, Ben Kadosh, Fraternitas Saturni and Naglowska were precursors of organised Satanism, while Marrs and the Vigilant Citizen read the lineage as an elite conspiracy.

Chapter 120.

Do What Thou Wilt: Aleister Crowley, Thelema and the Ordo Templi Orientis

Eliphas Levi rehabilitated Lucifer in theory (Chapter 119). Aleister Crowley (1875-1947) built a religion, a set of initiatory orders and a body of sexual magic around a revelation he said he received in Cairo in 1904. The Deep State Encyclopedia says he "might have had more of an impact on the counterculture movements of the 20th century than anyone else, earning him the titles of 'Wickedest Man in The World' and a 'Master of Darkness' " [The Deep State Encyclopedia, #71726, "Aleister Crowley"]. This chapter sets out Crowley's own account of Thelema, the history of the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) and its American lodge, and the scholarly, initiate and conspiracy readings of his legacy.

From Cambridge to the Golden Dawn and the East

John Michael Greer gives the outline. "In 1895 he matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and briefly pursued chemistry, but left without a degree. Money inherited from his father, who died when Crowley was five, enabled him to pursue the lifestyle of a bohemian poet and self-publish two books of poetry, including a pornographic volume entitled *White Stains*". Like many fin-de-siècle writers he was drawn to the occult [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Crowley, Aleister"]. Greer gives his Golden Dawn membership as 1898-1900 and says he was "a Mathers loyalist until 1904"; from 1909 he printed the order's rituals in his magazine *The Equinox* [ibid., "Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn"].

Crowley's travels in Mexico, Ceylon and India gave rise to claims that he had learned Tantra. Hugh Urban reports Sutin's suggestion "that Crowley may have

first been introduced to the more radical left-hand (vamachara) form of Tantra in Ceylon as early 1901". He concludes, however, that "Crowley's actual knowledge of Tantra was fairly rudimentary and largely colored by the Orientalist biases of his era", and that "there is little concrete evidence that Crowley had any extensive knowledge of Indian Tantra, apart from the common association of Tantra and sex in the Western imagination". In Urban's account, the stronger Tantric reputation came mainly from early biographers such as John Symonds and Kenneth Grant [Urban, Magia Sexualis, #43699, Crowley chapter].

The Cairo revelation in Crowley's own words

In *The Equinox of the Gods* Crowley states: "On April 8, 9 and 10, 1904 E.V., this book was dictated to 666 (Aleister Crowley) by Aiwass, a Being whose nature he does not fully understand, but who described himself as 'the Minister of Hoor-Paar-Kraat' (the Lord of Silence)". He gives the times exactly: "Chapter I was written between Noon and 1 p.m. on April 8, 1904. Chapter II between Noon and 1 p.m. on April 9, 1904. Chapter III between Noon and 1 p.m. on April 10, 1904. The writing began exactly on the stroke of the hour, and ended exactly an hour later" [Crowley, The Equinox of the Gods, #75609, "Genesis Libri AL"].

His wife Rose (née Kelly) acted as the first intermediary, and Crowley's own diary was dismissive of her: "March 16. Tried to shew the Sylphs to Rose. She was in a dazed state, stupid, possibly drunk; possibly hysterical from pregnancy. She could see nothing, but could hear. She was fiercely excited at the messages, and passionately insistent that I should take them seriously. I was annoyed at her irrelevance" [ibid., p. 115]. The book ends with the "Comment": "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. The study of this Book is forbidden. It is wise to destroy this copy after the first reading. Whosoever disregards this does so at his own risk and peril" [ibid.].

The text of *Liber AL vel Legis* has passages with obvious political meaning: "Let my servants be few & secret: they shall rule the many & the known. These are fools that men adore; both their Gods & their men are fools" (AL I:10-11) [Crowley, The Equinox of the Gods, #75609]. John Carter, writing on the American lodge, explains the central formula ("Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law") through the Greek words *thelema* (will) and *agape* (love), "each have numerical values of 93". He stresses that the phrases "carry with them a great duty

to live deliberately, to find one's True Will and then do it and nothing else. Outsiders often interpret them as invitations to 'free love' " [Carter, Sex and Rockets, #64435].

The Aeon of Horus and the A.·.A.·.

On Crowley's reading the revelation opened a new age, the Aeon of Horus, replacing the Aeon of Osiris. Greer writes that the A.·.A.·. "(Latin for 'silver star') was created by Crowley in 1908 following the instructions of the Book of the Law, the revelation Crowley believed he had received in 1904". The Book "instructed him to salvage what he could from the rituals of the previous Aeon of Osiris; in Crowley's view, these included those of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn" [Greer, #64911, "A.·.A.·."]. Jason Newcomb describes how the three bodies fitted together: "the Astrum Argentinum was a training order in Magick, the O.T.O. taught a religious system of Sexual Sorcery and the Gnostic Catholic Church was a religious application of the teachings of both" [Newcomb, Sexual Sorcery, #49284].

The OTO: Kellner, Reuss and Crowley

Newcomb dates the OTO's origin: "The Order of the Temple of the East was formed in 1902 c.e. by Karl Kellner, it was based on the Tantrick arcanum as outlined in the works of Randolph Paschal". It had a ten-degree system in which "the first six were Masonic, with sexual teachings only being revealed in the last four grades and even then, primarily in theoretical form" [Newcomb, Sexual Sorcery, #49284, "Aleister Crowley and the O.T.O."]. The sources give different dates for Crowley's entry. Greer: "1910 Crowley was accepted into Reuss's Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO) and Yarker's Rite of Memphis and Misraim" [Greer, #64911]. Carter: "1912 Reuss conferred the 9th degree of the Ordo Templi Orientis upon Aleister Crowley, claiming that Crowley already knew the occult secret of that degree", after Crowley had published *The Book of Lies*; Reuss "later appointed Crowley his successor as Outer Head" [Carter, Sex and Rockets, #64435].

Leo Lyon Zagami, who presents himself as a former insider of Masonic and occult orders, writes that "Crowley was the head of an esoteric Order, the Ordo Templi Orientis, which had, and has, a series of rituals involving sex-magic and a theology based upon Crowley's Book of the Law" [Zagami, Confessions of an

Illuminati, #367409]. Zagami presents this on the strength of his own claimed experience inside such orders.

Magick and the Levi connection

Crowley defined his art in *Magick in Theory and Practice*: "MAGICK is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will" [Crowley, Magick in Theory and Practice, #38069]. He wrote himself into a line of succession from Levi. Writing of himself in the third person, he notes that "the formula which Aleister Crowley supposed to be his original idea is mentioned by Levi", and that "Eliphas Levi had a striking personal resemblance to Aleister Crowley's father" [ibid.]. The wider claim that Crowley was Levi's reincarnation, often repeated about him, rests on statements of this kind.

Urban places Crowley at the centre of modern sexual magic: "Crowley in many ways represents the culmination of this (con)fusion of Tantra and sexual magic", and the OTO's "secret of sexual magic" was presented as "the sexual-religion of the future" [Urban, Magia Sexualis, #43699].

America: Agape Lodge, Parsons and the Babalon Working

Carter reconstructs the American branch. Wilfred T. Smith met Crowley in 1915; "in 1930, Crowley sent Smith to Los Angeles with the express intent of opening another lodge, also to be called Agape Lodge. The lodge was incorporated April 4, 1934, and its first meeting was held on September 21, 1935 in Hollywood". Smith became "Head" for the United States with the X° name "Ramaka". In 1941 Grady McMurtry (1918-1985) "was first initiated into the OTO by Wilfred Smith at Agape Lodge No. 2" [Carter, Sex and Rockets, #64435]. The lodge later centred on the rocket scientist Jack Parsons's house at 1003 S. Orange Grove in Pasadena. McMurtry inspected it there in January 1946 on Crowley's behalf "to see if there was any way to fix the mess he had been hearing about" [ibid.].

The "Babalon Working" of early 1946 was Parsons's operation with L. Ron Hubbard. On 2 March Hubbard returned with "a vision he had that evening of a savage and beautiful woman riding naked on a great cat-like beast". Parsons reported to Crowley: "First instructions were received direct, further through Ron

acting as seer. I have followed them to the letter. There was a desire for incarnation. I was the agency chosen to assist the birth, which is now accomplished" [Carter, Sex and Rockets, #64435, ch. 6]. Carter argues that the purpose of the Working "has been underemphasized": it was "a preparation for what was to come: a thelemic messiah", a female one [ibid.].

Thomas Horn gives the conspiracy reading. Parsons and Hubbard devised "the infamous 'Babalon Working' that allegedly opened a gate that fueled the modern UFO era and maybe played a role in the birth of Hillary Clinton. I say this with a strong emphasis on maybe". He writes that "the Working explicitly stated the goal of transforming traditional values", aiming at "incarnating the archetypal divine feminine and changing culture through her influence". He ties it to modern feminism and to the "spirit cooking" events in the same chapter, "The Deep Occultism of the Deep State" [Horn, Saboteurs, #72784, ch. 6].

Thelema, Satanism and the later reception

Crowley himself rejected the label "Satanist". Rob Skiba, writing from an evangelical Christian standpoint, quotes him: "The Devil does not exist. It is a false name invented by the Black Brothers to imply a Unity in their ignorant muddle of dispersions… 'The Devil' is, historically, the God of any people that one personally dislikes… This serpent, SATAN, is not the enemy of Man, but He who made Gods of our race, knowing Good and Evil; He bade 'Know Thyself!' " [Skiba, Babylon Rising, #76360]. The passage reads Satan as the Gnostic serpent, the bringer of knowledge, as in Chapter 119. The introduction to Carter's book likewise states: "I do not regard Parsons and Crowley as Black Magicians or Satanists", and treats magick as "a dramatized system of 'psychology' " for breaking out of "the cage of the socially conditioned ego" [Carter, Sex and Rockets, #64435, introduction].

Robert Anton Wilson, writing as a sympathetic commentator, warns against the Crowley legend: of one well-known story he notes that "Crowley never even had a son named MacAleister", and he says he "could regale you with a hundred similar Crowley stories" that have made him "the most infamous sorcerer of the twentieth century" [Wilson, Lion of Light, #70341]. Gary Lachman traces Crowley's political afterlife through his spelling. Chaos magick "adopts the spelling favored by Aleister Crowley, the most famous magician of the twentieth century", and "the 'magic' end of meme magic comes from its link to what is known as 'chaos magick' " in the politics of the Trump era [Lachman, Dark

Star Rising, #63636]. Urban documents the influence on Wicca: Gardner "had great admiration for Crowley and drew freely from his poetry and rituals". His *Book of Shadows* "bears strong influences from Crowley, the OTO, Golden Dawn, Freemasonry", and Hutton notes that its consecration of the wine was "probably modeled upon the sixth degree initiation of the OTO itself" [Urban, Magia Sexualis, #43699]. Crowley's influence on LaVey is treated in Chapter 121.

Aspect	Levi (Chapter 119)	Crowley / Thelema	LaVeyan Satanism (Chapter 121)
Central principle	Astral Light; divine vs infernal magic	True Will; "Do what thou wilt"	Carnal self; Satan as symbol
Satan/Lucifer	Lucifer = intelligence, "universal magnetism"	"The Devil does not exist"; Satan as serpent of self-knowledge	Satan as symbol of man's carnal nature
Source of authority	Kabbalah, tradition	Revelation by Aiwass, 1904	Self-declared, rationalist
Sexuality	Theoretical	OTO sexual magic (IX°)	"Sexual freedom" as requisite
Organisation	None	A∴A∴ (1908), OTO, Gnostic Catholic Church	Church of Satan (1966)

Key points

- In Greer's account, Crowley studied at Trinity College, Cambridge (1895) without taking a degree, lived on inherited money, published *White Stains* and joined the Golden Dawn (1898-1900).
- Crowley's own account dates the dictation of *Liber AL* by Aiwass to noon-1 p.m. on 8, 9 and 10 April 1904 in Cairo; his diary disparaged Rose's state as "possibly drunk; possibly hysterical from pregnancy".
- Greer says Crowley founded the A∴A∴ in 1908 on the Book of the Law's instruction to salvage Golden Dawn ritual from the old Aeon of Osiris.
- Newcomb dates the OTO to Kellner, 1902, "based on the Tantrick arcanum". Greer dates Crowley's entry to 1910; Carter dates the IX° conferred by Reuss to 1912.
- Urban judges Crowley's Tantra "fairly rudimentary" and places him at the culmination of Western sexual magic.

- Carter documents Agape Lodge (incorporated 4 April 1934; first meeting 21 September 1935) and Parsons's Babalon Working with "Ron acting as seer"; Horn reads it as Deep State occultism.
- Crowley denied the Devil's existence and recast Satan as the serpent of self-knowledge. Wilson disputes many of the Crowley legends, while Lachman and Urban trace his influence on chaos magick, "meme magic" and Wicca.

Chapter 121.

The Black Pope: Anton LaVey and the Church of Satan

Faxneld and Petersen write that "an enduring and public tradition of Satanism was first instated in 1966, with the founding of the Church of Satan"; earlier "Satanists" had mostly been figures of accusation, and the precursors of Chapter 119 founded no lasting tradition [Faxneld & Petersen, The Devil's Party, #87532, Introduction, pp. 5-6]. Its founder, Anton Szandor LaVey (1930-1997), turned the Romantic Satan of liberty and the flesh into an atheist and elitist philosophy wrapped in theatrical ritual. This chapter reconstructs his life and contested legend, mainly through Doug Brod's 2024 biography *Born with a Tail*. It then sets out the doctrine of *The Satanic Bible* and the movement's political and philosophical genealogy, and closes with the scholarly and hostile readings of LaVey.

The Black House and the first Satanic wedding

Brod's "Invocation" opens on a staged rite in "a black Victorian house on an otherwise ordinary residential street in San Francisco". On the fireplace mantel "a red-tressed woman lies face-up, barely covering her nakedness", lit by candles in human skulls. Above hangs "a goat's head inside an inverted pentagram whose five points hit on the Hebraic letters lamed, vav, yod, tav, and nun, spelling out 'Leviathan'… It's the sigil of Baphomet… whose two upward points symbolize the duality that sustains natural processes… and three downward points represent the rejection of Christendom's Holy Trinity". In the yard "a real, live five-hundred-pound lion named Togare" roars. The minister rings to "the four cardinal points of the compass: Satan meaning fire, Belial meaning earth, Lucifer meaning air, and Leviathan meaning sea and water" [Brod, Born with a Tail, #62663, "Invocation"]. The goat sigil goes back to Levi's Baphomet of Chapter 119.

The event was the "first Satanic wedding", of journalist John Raymond and Judith Case, held on 31 January 1967 at 6114 California Street before "more than fifty journalists and photographers". LaVey performed the fifteen-minute ceremony "no fewer than five consecutive times that night" for the cameras. He explained that the naked woman was not on the altar: "She is the altar", because the altar should be "a symbol of enthusiastic lust and indulgence" [ibid.]. In 1998, Brod reports, Raymond confessed that the wedding "was a sham, a put-on, a stunt" devised to publicise "the nascent church" [ibid.]. Brod dates the founding to Walpurgisnacht, 30 April 1966, which LaVey proclaimed "Anno Satanas, Year One on the Satanic calendar", at first for the "First Church of Satan" [ibid., ch. III "6114: House Number of the Beast"].

A self-made legend: what Brod documents

Faxneld and Petersen summarise the problem: "LaVey claimed a colourful background as a former police photographer, carny, and lover of the young Marilyn Monroe. Most of this was challenged later, and some of it disproven. Regardless, LaVey had a highly charismatic personality" [Faxneld & Petersen, The Devil's Party, #87532, Introduction, p. 6]. Brod checks the claims one by one in chapters I-II. LaVey "claimed to have spent some time playing the midways" of West Coast carnivals and told of an affair with the young Monroe. By 1949 the census listed him "as unemployed" in his parents' house. His story of attending criminology classes is contradicted by a 1991 profile: "the college had no evidence of his enrollment". On the police job, Brod writes that LaVey "claimed to have parlayed his talent for picture-taking… into a job as a photographer for the San Francisco Police Department". He supposedly concluded from the crime scenes that "There is no God.… Man must be taught to answer to himself", but "the SFPD later said no one with his name ever worked for the department", and LaVey "reckoned that documentation of his employment was likely expunged" [Brod, #62663, ch. I "A Dark Star Is Born"]. The record shows a working organist (musicians' union, 1 November 1955). In 1956 his parents bought the house at 6114 California Street for $9,500, which LaVey then painted black [ibid., chs. I-II]. Asbjørn Dyrendal's chapter in *The Devil's Party*, drawing on Petersen (2011), frames the invented autobiography as method and warns against reading LaVey too literally: LaVey's "'materialist magic' included inventing an autobiography" and using his texts as tools "to 'challenge the self-evident and decondition the self'" [The Devil's Party, #87532, Dyrendal chapter "Hidden Persuaders and Invisible Wars"].

Celebrity, cinema and the media Devil

Greer calls the late 1960s and early 1970s "the glory days of the Church of Satan, as LaVey attracted celebrities such as Jayne Mansfield and Sammy Davis Jr.… and performed Satanic weddings, baptisms, and funerals in a glare of media publicity". He adds that 1969 brought *The Satanic Bible* and a *Tonight Show* appearance, and that membership "peaked in the 1970s and began an inexorable decline" [Greer, The Element Encyclopedia of Secret Societies, #64911, "Church of Satan"]. Faxneld and Petersen say that these celebrities were only "briefly attracted to the Devil's congregation" [The Devil's Party, #87532, p. 6]. LaVey traded on *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) with buttons reading "Pray for Anton LaVey". Brod rejects LaVey's boast of having played the Devil in the film ("No way LaVey was the Devil") and names the actor Clay Tanner in connection with the role [ibid.]. Greer gives the outsider's verdict: "Satanist-showman Anton Szandor LaVey's Church of Satan titillated audiences in the 1970s with a version of the old ritual designed to play down the religious elements" [Greer, #64911].

The doctrine: carnal self, elitism and ritual as psychodrama

Faxneld and Petersen summarise *The Satanic Bible* (1969): "Satan, to him, was a symbol of man's carnal nature, and LaVey's Satanism was a blend of Epicureanism, elitism, and streetwise cynicism. He once himself described it as 'Ayn Rand with trappings' (Klein 1970: 20). In LaVey's more or less atheist and materialist system, ritual and magic mostly function as theatre, psychodrama, and self-therapy". They also note "an unresolved tension… between ideas based strictly on the natural sciences and notions inspired by fringe science and 'rejected knowledge', such as the theories of Wilhelm Reich and the fiction of H. P. Lovecraft". *The Compleat Witch* (1971) and *The Satanic Rituals* (1972) followed [The Devil's Party, #87532, pp. 6-7]. Brod calls *The Satanic Bible* "a startling concoction, blending the rational self-interest of Ayn Rand with the godless self-realization of Nietzsche" [Brod, #62663, ch. V "The Cold Testament"]. LaVey wrote in *Playboy* (1969): "Man does need religion… but he needs a religion based on what he is, not on what he can never hope to be" [ibid.]. On sex he was explicit: "Sexual freedom… is something we feel is very important, as a necessary requisite of the Satanic Church" [ibid.].

In Faxneld and Petersen's reading, the church's black masses resembled the mythic ones "in form and content but not in function", because the ceremonies praised the self-realisation of the Satanist [The Devil's Party, #87532, Part Two].

Political genealogy: Rand, Redbeard, Nietzsche and the "honor game"

The library's sources place LaVey on the elitist, social-Darwinist wing of modern thought. A work on veganism and animal rights in the library calls Ragnar Redbeard's "POWER IS REASON" [*Might Is Right*] "an example of Social Darwinism… on which Anton Szandor LaVey based his writing on 'The Satanic Bible' " [Veganism, Animal Rights and the Environment, #60177]. Dyrendal's chapter in *The Devil's Party* documents "LaVey's connections with individuals and groups on the Far Right", which make "the lines of convergence social, as well as ideological and textual". He also cites a letter to Michael Aquino in which LaVey intended that neo-Nazis flirting with Satanism should "become stooges for the Church of Satan". LaVey nonetheless "continued to criticize the simplistic racism, the naïve romanticism, and the conspiracism of extremists he dallied with", becoming "more isolationist and individualist, rather than activist" [The Devil's Party, #87532, Dyrendal, "Hidden Persuaders and Invisible Wars"]. Faxneld and Petersen describe the 1980s as "the age of satanic avant-garde artistic and (ambiguous) political provocation, courtesy of Church of Satan members like noise musician Boyd Rice" [ibid., Introduction, p. 7].

Heisman offers a contrasting frame. Judaeo-Christian ethics arose as an inversion of master values: the Exodus revalued slaves whom Egypt held "worthless in themselves and valuable only as means". On this view, "when liberals and traditional Jews give charity to help the poor, they are working against the natural justice of natural selection" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II]. Read through Heisman's terms, LaVeyan Satanism inverts the inversion: it returns to the "natural" valuation of strength that Heisman attributes to the master morality, and to Hitler's charge that Christianity was "a rebellion against natural law" [ibid.]. This is an analytical comparison drawn from Heisman, not a claim that LaVey drew on him.

	Romantic Satanism	Crowley's Thelema	LaVey's Church of Satan
Satan	Rebel hero of liberty	Serpent of self-knowledge; "the Devil does not exist"	Symbol of carnal nature
Metaphysics	Literary	Theistic revelation (Aiwass)	Atheist-materialist, with "rejected knowledge"
Politics	Radical, anti-tyranny	"Few & secret… rule the many"	Elitism; "Ayn Rand with trappings"; social Darwinism
Ritual	None	Ceremonial and sexual magick	"Theatre, psychodrama, and self-therapy"

Sexual revolution and its limits (Urban)

Hugh Urban, in "The Age of Satan", argues that "the Church of Satan needs to be understood in the context of 1960s American culture amid the social trends variously called the countercultural revolution, the sexual revolution". LaVey "reflects both the larger preoccupation with sexual liberation during this period and the tendency of sexual liberation to be co-opted by the forces of consumerism" [Urban, Magia Sexualis, #43699, ch. 7]. Urban quotes the lust ritual of *The Satanic Bible* ("In the name of the great god Pan, may my secret thoughts be marshaled into the movements of the flesh of that which I desire!") as an example of sexual magic aimed at the practitioner's own desire [ibid.].

Organisation, schism and sanitisation

After only a few years, Faxneld and Petersen write, LaVey "grew tired of being in the spotlight and stopped hosting public rituals". The "grotto" system "was also disbanded after administrative troubles started growing". In 1975 Michael Aquino and other high-ranking members left to form the theistic Temple of Set. LaVey returned to the public in the 1990s with two books and several interviews,

died in 1997, and was succeeded by Peter H. Gilmore, "who has further emphasized the rationalist and atheist elements" [The Devil's Party, #87532, p. 7]. Brod quotes LaVey's own reframing as he dismantled the grottos: "The new type of Satanist is not the ostentatious or garish type, but a substantial, responsible citizen" [Brod, #62663]. Brod also cites an FBI file in which LaVey allegedly said most church members were "fanatics, cultists, and weirdos", and that his interest was "strictly from a monetary point of view" [ibid.].

Petersen calls this strategy "sanitization", which effectively cleanses "the satanic of any unwanted connotations, practices, or aspects". Rivals within the milieu turn the charge around: they see "the sanitizing strategies of the organized rationalist and esoteric groups as weak attempts at explaining the true force of the satanic away, namely the satanic itself: evil, transgressive, and grotesque". LaVey's "law-and-order" line is one of their targets [The Devil's Party, #87532, Petersen, "Sanitization and 'satanization' "].

On numbers, the 2001 UK census "indicated about 1,600 Satanists" and the 2006 Australian census 2,247. Chris Mathews makes "a very tentative estimate at 30,000-100,000 Satanists worldwide", which the editors find "quite reasonable (but see also Evans 2009 for some cautionary remarks)" [ibid., Introduction, p. 5].

Hostile and conspiracy readings

Outside the academy, LaVey appears as a figure of menace. The evangelical author Russ Dizdar files him under "Popular Satanism": "The man [sic] figure was Anton LaVey who was the founder of the Church of satan and author of the satanic bible", with "thousands of web sites dedicated to Anton" [Dizdar, The Black Awakening, #71487, ch. 8]. David Shurter, who presents himself as a survivor of satanic ritual abuse, calls LaVey "a notorious cult figure" who "started the social experiment known as the Church of Satan" to "mock Christianity and the Bible" [Shurter, Rabbit Hole, #73043, ch. 15]. Leo Lyon Zagami claims that "despite the conception of Church of Satan devotees as modern atheists with no real belief system", the church was created by "a bunch of Crowleyan Theosophists preparing for the advent of the dark side" [Zagami, Confessions of an Illuminati, #367409]. These authors present their accounts as testimony and disclosure. The academic editors place such accounts within the "SRA scare, a rumour panic fired

by fundamentalist Christians and dubious psychotherapists" of the 1980s, during which Aquino was briefly suspected and then "soon acquitted" [The Devil's Party, #87532, p. 7].

Key points

- The Church of Satan (San Francisco, 30 April 1966, "Year One") was, per Faxneld and Petersen, the first "enduring and public" Satanist tradition; its 1967 wedding was, per Raymond's later confession, "a stunt".
- Brod documents the theatre at 6114 California Street: the naked woman as altar, the Baphomet sigil spelling "Leviathan" (two points up for duality, three down rejecting the Trinity), the four crown princes and the lion Togare.
- LaVey's legends (carny, police photographer, Monroe's lover, the Devil in *Rosemary's Baby*) were "challenged later, and some of it disproven"; the SFPD said no one by his name had worked there.
- *The Satanic Bible* makes Satan "a symbol of man's carnal nature" in "a blend of Epicureanism, elitism, and streetwise cynicism" ("Ayn Rand with trappings"), with ritual as "theatre, psychodrama, and self-therapy".
- Sources connect LaVey to Redbeard's social Darwinism and to Far Right contacts, while Dyrendal records LaVey's criticism of their racism. Heisman's master/slave analysis offers a philosophical frame.
- Urban sees the church as mirroring the sexual revolution and its co-option by consumerism.
- The grottos were disbanded and Aquino founded the Temple of Set in 1975; LaVey died in 1997 and Gilmore stresses rationalism. Petersen's "sanitization" names the respectability strategy that rivals call diluting.
- Census figures (UK 2001 ~1,600; Australia 2006: 2,247) and Mathews' estimate of 30,000-100,000 worldwide contrast with the large role hostile authors (Dizdar, Shurter, Zagami) give LaVey.

Chapter 122.

Schisms of the Left-Hand Path: Temple of Set, Order of Nine Angles, Theistic Luciferianism and The Satanic Temple

After LaVey founded the Church of Satan in 1966, organised Satanism did not stay a single movement. It split into currents that disagree on almost everything except their use of the Adversary as a symbol. Some are theistic and some atheistic. Some are initiatory academies, some are insurrectionary cells, and some run legal campaigns. Faxneld and Petersen describe the result as "a heterogeneous assortment of ideas and practices tying into popular culture, esotericism, and diffuse religiosity, developing in many mutually incongruent ways" [Faxneld & Petersen, The Devil's Party, #87532, "Introduction"]. This chapter follows the main branches: Michael Aquino's Temple of Set, the Scandinavian orders, the Order of Nine Angles (ONA) and its "Sinister Tradition", Luciferian witchcraft, and The Satanic Temple (TST). It also follows the scholarly argument over whether "Satanism" is the right name for any of them.

The Temple of Set: Theism, Initiation and the Military Founder

Faxneld and Petersen give the founding account: "In 1975, LaVey's right-hand man Michael Aquino and other high-ranking members left the church and formed the splinter group Temple of Set. Their focus was openly theistic, and they distanced themselves from the figure of Satan, claiming he was a later corruption of the 'original' Prince of Darkness, the Egyptian god Set." They describe Aquino as "a high-ranking military officer and assistant professor

in political science". In their account he built "an esoteric academy, in sharp contrast to the deliberately seedy satanic carnival LaVey had set up". The Temple modelled itself on "fin-de-siècle initiatory orders" and "postulated self-deification as the ultimate goal of the practitioner" [Faxneld & Petersen, The Devil's Party, #87532, "Introduction", pp. 7-8].

The theological break turns on whether Satan exists. The post-1975 Church of Satan says it "has always understood Satan as a symbol rather than a real being". Aquino replies that the early church "did in fact treat Satan as an actually existing entity". In the Temple, Set is "regarded as a real being, and, as written in The Book of Coming Forth by Night, the only god not created by humans" [The Devil's Party, #87532, Part Four, Granholm chapter]. That founding text records Aquino's visionary contact with Set, and its supernatural source "is not left to any doubt" [The Devil's Party, #87532, Part Two]. On organisation, the same volume (citing Aquino 2010) says the Temple "is registered as a nonprofit organization and is thus entitled to tax benefits". It is "officially led by a high priest/priestess who is the public face and spiritual leader", and that person is "elected from among fourth or higher degree members by the chairman of a ruling council" [The Devil's Party, #87532, Part Four].

Aquino was also a public figure. According to Faxneld and Petersen, he "filled LaVey's role as America's number one mass media Satanist in the 1980s, with appearances on talk shows like Oprah and Geraldo. Though soon acquitted, he was for a short time suspected of so-called Satanic Ritual Abuse (SRA) of children". They place this within "the SRA scare, a rumour panic fired by fundamentalist Christians and dubious psychotherapists" [The Devil's Party, #87532, "Introduction", p. 7].

Conspiracy authors tell a very different story, and what follows is their allegation. David McGowan writes that "one of the names that surfaced at the Bonacci trial was that of Michael Aquino, the 'High Priest' and chief executive of the Temple of Set". He states that a victim's mother and Paul Bonacci identified Aquino as "the Colonel", and he quotes a photographer, Rusty Nelson, linking Aquino to the Contra trafficking network. McGowan then turns to the Presidio Child Development Center case (1986-88). He reports that on 14 August 1987 a search warrant was served on the Aquinos' home and that "neither of the Aquinos was charged with any crimes, nor have they been to this day—a fact that Aquino points to as proof of his innocence". He also quotes a court finding of "probable cause to title Aquino with offenses" while noting that the San Francisco police "closed its investigation and filed no charges" [McGowan, Programmed to Kill, #71652, Chapter 3 "Uncle Sam Wants Your Children"]. Leo Zagami adds a later

allegation: "Robert Bigelow, has been working for years with members of the Temple of Set, like Col. John B." [Zagami, Confessions of an Illuminati, #367409, vol. 6.66]. Chapter 124 returns to the Presidio affair.

The Left-Hand Path as a Category: Granholm and the Tantric Term

Kennet Granholm studied Dragon Rouge and the Temple of Set through fieldwork, and he argues that "Satanism" is the wrong analytical label for them. His chapter "argues against the use of the label Satanism to categorize groups like Dragon Rouge or the Temple of Set, which, though they may display a fairly prominent use of satanic symbolism, are also highly eclectic and do not self-designate as Satanists". He proposes "Left-Hand Path" and "post-Satanism" instead [Granholm, in The Devil's Party, #87532, "The Left-Hand Path and Post-Satanism"]. The editors summarise his definition. The term "derives from Indian Tantra, and in the Western esoteric context typically signifies an ideology of antinomianism, self-deification, and individualism, which views man as a psychophysical totality and celebrates life in the here-and-now". They add that Dragon Rouge, "founded in 1989, is an influential contributor to the Left-Hand Path current", but that Granholm "has argued fiercely against putting them in the Satanist category" [The Devil's Party, #87532, "Introduction", p. 8].

A practitioner essay in the library, signed "RtM", traces the term's history from inside the milieu. It says Hindu Tantra divides into "the Vamamarga (or vamacara or vamachara) or 'Left Hand Path' or red tantra and the Dakshinachara or 'Right Hand Path' ". It claims the Western term "first appears as a perjorative" in Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* (1888), and that LaVey "probably smiled and recognized himself in that role". The author still separates the two: Vamachara Tantra "strictly requires its initiates to study under the tutelage of a Tantrik guru", which keeps it from being "Satanic". Readers who need a guru "are better suited to study Setianism or Tantra rather than Satanism" [Satanism, Tantrism and the Left-Hand Path, #377421]. The text therefore takes the Church of Satan's side against the Temple of Set's initiatory model.

The Sinister Tradition: The Order of Nine Angles and David Myatt

Faxneld and Petersen count the Order of Nine Angles, "founded in the UK in the 1970s", among the "more obviously satanic groups" [The Devil's Party, #87532, "Introduction", p. 8]. According to the editors' summary of Jacob C. Senholt's chapter, "Secret Identities in the Sinister Tradition: Political Esotericism and the Convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism, and National Socialism in the Order of Nine Angles", describes a submilieu that is "explicitly political and extreme in its esoteric pursuits". Through "insight roles" the order "advocates continuous transgression of established norms, roles, and comfort zones". The example given is founder David Myatt, "also known as Anton Long", and his "progression from National Socialism and Satanism to radical Islam (and possibly back again)" [Faxneld & Petersen, The Devil's Party, #87532, "Introduction", p. 12, summarising Senholt's chapter]. The editors state: "The ONA despises ethical behaviour, and its main ideologist David Myatt has actively participated in violent neo-Nazi and Islamist terrorist groups. The motivation for those acts is a wish to bring down the 'old order'. The fact that a manual on Aryan revolution written by Myatt seems to have inspired nail-bomber David Copeland's deeds drew massive media attention" [The Devil's Party, #87532, Part Four].

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke places Myatt in the British Nazi underground. He calls him "a longtime devotee of right-wing extremism and satanism" who "had begun elaborating a 'religion of National-Socialism' in the early 1990s", advertising in John Cato's *The Oak* and seeing Combat 18 "as the street army from which an Aryan revolutionary movement could be built". Goodrick-Clarke says Myatt advocated "sabotage of basic services including water, sewage and electricity". In another passage he calls him "another violent former BM activist and Nazi satanist" who promoted an Essex "East Saxon Kindred" as an "Aryan republic". The same chapters cover Troy Southgate's National Revolutionary Faction and the C18 milieu, where the "14 Words" of David Lane served as a masthead motto [Goodrick-Clarke, Black Sun, #76349, ch. 2 "The British Nazi Underground"]. On Copeland, Goodrick-Clarke's emphasis differs from Faxneld and Petersen's. He records that Copeland joined Myatt's NSM in late 1998 and became an area leader. He also says Copeland was "allegedly inspired by The Turner Diaries" and "acted as a lone wolf and had little involvement with the NSM". He reports that three Soho deaths and scores of injuries followed the April 1999 bombings [ibid.]. For the earlier American scene, Goodrick-Clarke describes James Madole's post-war circle, in which "the medley of Theosophy,

popularized Vedic Hinduism, hostility toward Christianity and the neopagan posturing of satanism provided a composite doctrine of racial superiority" [Black Sun, #76349, ch. 4].

Other Currents: Scandinavia, Reds and the Internet

The same introduction names further branches. These are the Swedish Temple of the Black Light; the American Satanic Reds, "which combines their syncretistic dark doctrines with dialectical materialism"; and online theistic Satanism in the 1990s, "with ideologists like Diane Vera of New York City propagating their interpretation of Satanism primarily online". It also covers Scandinavian black metal, whose rivalry in being "evil" "led to several murders and anti-Christian acts of terrorism like church burnings (Moynihan and Søderlind 1998)". The editors judge that bands "like Sweden's Watain, are, in fact, Satanists in deadly earnest—not just as part of a stage show" [The Devil's Party, #87532, "Introduction", pp. 7-8].

Luciferianism as Practised

Fredrik Gregorius treats Luciferian witchcraft as a milieu "between the satanic and esoteric Left-Hand Path milieux", working with Lucifer, Lilith and Cain. He traces it through Leland's *Aradia* (1899), Robert Cochrane, and the writings of Michael Ford, Andrew Chumbley and Michael Howard [Gregorius, in The Devil's Party, #87532, "Luciferian Witchcraft"]. Ford's own essay says his *Luciferian Witchcraft* and *Liber HVHI* "provide a foundation of sorcery which incorporates an interwoven praxis of antinomianism and self-deification". It describes *Liber HVHI* as exploring "the Qlippothic Spheres, Ritual Sorcery based on the ancient cults mentioned in the Avesta of Yatuvidah, daeva-yasna (demon-worshippers)". Ford takes his Adversary from Zurvanite myth, in which Ahriman is the first-born son of Zurvan. He states that "the Adversary is no Christian creation", and he quotes the ONA on Baphomet as "the mistress (or mother) of blood" [Ford, The Abyss and Tabaet, #85558, "Introduction"; "Sorcery and Ahriman"]. This brings the Zoroastrian dualism of Part 2 back, reversed, as a practitioner's source. *Apotheosis*, a beginner's manual, says that "for experienced and knowledgeable Black Adepts, Lucifer and Satan can be considered the same Deity". In its scheme Lucifer stands "for illumination and knowledge" and Satan "for challenging, strife and transformation", and the deity names function as

"Deific Masks" that allow either an atheistic or a theistic approach [Apotheosis, #39258]. Asenath Mason's *Draconian Ritual Book* (2018) presents the Adversary as dragon and serpent. The figures it treats "became patron deities of the Left Hand Path, especially in regard to the Typhonian/Draconian Tradition" [Mason, Draconian Ritual Book, #80454].

The Satanic Temple: Symbol as Litigation

The reference shelf describes TST as "a non-theistic new religious movement, founded in 2012". It was active by January 2013 and co-founded by Lucien Greaves and Malcolm Jarry "in response to the 'intrusion of Christian values on American politics' ". It treats Satan as "the eternal rebel" and follows seven tenets, beginning "One should strive to act with compassion and empathy toward all creatures in accordance with reason". It received IRS church status in April 2019 [Wikipedia: The Satanic Temple]. Its bronze Baphomet was crowdfunded in 2014 as a counter-monument to the Ten Commandments monument at the Oklahoma capitol. After the Oklahoma Supreme Court ordered that monument removed in 2015, TST withdrew its request and turned to Arkansas, where a privately funded Ten Commandments monument was installed in 2018 [Wikipedia: Statue of Baphomet]. The *Synarchy* guide gives the facts and then a polemic. It describes the statue as "8.5 feet tall", featuring "a prominent pentagram", "unveiled in Detroit in 2015", and claims that "Pope Francis' staff resembles the symbolism on the Baphomet statue" [Synarchy: The Complete Guide to the Elite Groups that Rule, #67074, "Vatican"]. Zagami quotes Greaves from "a recent documentary that premiered this year at the Sundance Film Festival": "This is the infancy of The Satanic Temple" [Zagami, Confessions of an Illuminati, #367409, vol. 6.66]. The film is *Hail Satan?* (dir. Penny Lane, released January 2019) [Wikipedia: Hail Satan?].

Group	Founded	View of Satan/Set	Political posture (as the cited sources characterise it)
Church of Satan	1966	Symbol of carnal nature	Elitist; "Ayn Rand with trappings"; "law-and-order" stance noted by Petersen [#87532]

Group	Founded	View of Satan/Set	Political posture (as the cited sources characterise it)
Temple of Set	1975	Real being, Set	"Esoteric academy"; military-officer founder [#87532]
Order of Nine Angles	1970s, UK	Sinister, transgressive	Insurrectionary; "insight roles" in neo-Nazi and Islamist groups [#87532; #76349]
Satanic Reds	US	Syncretistic dark doctrine	Marxist "dialectical materialism" [#87532]
The Satanic Temple	2012-13	Literary rebel, non-theistic	Secular-liberal church-state litigation [Wikipedia]

A Counterpoint: Keshe's Rejection of Symbol

The Left-Hand Path depends heavily on symbols: Set, Baphomet, the qliphoth, the dragon. Mehran Keshe rejects symbolic religion altogether. In KSW 518 he argues that "with the coming of Christianity we became one step more mature. Now we carry the statue around our neck". He says the cross, "Allah and the Moon" and "the Jewish star" are the "same Pagan worship in different D[imension]", and that "we haven't reached point to put these things away" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 518, #378230]. In KSW 629 he asks: "do we need religions? Or are the religions just made up to abuse the Man, because it's a profitable market" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 629, #378341]. Keshe's critique therefore covers both the mainstream faiths and the Satanists who invert their symbols, since both work through physical emblems.

Key points

- In 1975 Aquino and other senior members left the Church of Satan to found the theistic, initiatory Temple of Set, which treats Satan as a corruption of the Egyptian Set and makes self-deification its goal [#87532].
- Faxneld and Petersen say Aquino was briefly suspected in the SRA scare and "soon acquitted". McGowan alleges a pattern of cover-up around the Bonacci and Presidio cases, while also recording that no charges were brought [#87532; #71652].
- Granholm rejects the label "Satanism" for Dragon Rouge and the Temple of Set and prefers "Left-Hand Path", a term taken from Tantra and defined by antinomianism and self-deification [#87532; #377421].
- The ONA's "Sinister Tradition" joins Satanism, National Socialism and radical Islam. Goodrick-Clarke calls David Myatt a "Nazi satanist" inside the C18 milieu [#87532; #76349].
- Luciferian practitioners (Ford, *Apotheosis*, Mason) build an Adversary theology partly from Zoroastrian and Zurvanite sources [#85558; #39258; #80454].
- The Satanic Temple uses Satanic imagery for secularist litigation, most visibly through the 8.5-foot Baphomet statue [Wikipedia; #67074].
- Keshe's teaching rejects all religion built on physical symbols, which sets it apart from both the mainstream faiths and their Satanic inversions [#378230; #378341].

Chapter 123.

The Old Gods Return: Wicca, Neopaganism, Ásatrú, Rodnovery and Chaos Magic

The twentieth century produced the Satanist, and it also brought back the pagan. The new pagans presented themselves as survivors or restorers of pre-Christian religions. The movements that followed range widely. At one end is a nudist witch-cult in Hertfordshire, at another are Germanic and Slavic "native faiths" bound up with national identity, and at a third is "chaos magic", which treats belief itself as a tool. This chapter follows these currents as the library's sources describe them, from Margaret Murray's thesis to the "meme magic" of 2016, and pays attention throughout to how far the revival of old gods has carried political projects with it.

Murray's Thesis and the Birth of Wicca

Nevill Drury, in the *Handbook of Contemporary Paganism*, gives Margaret Murray (1862-1963) as the source of the modern witch-cult narrative. Her "controversial book *The Witch-cult in Western Europe* (1921)" argued that "as a broad-based fertility religion, the roots of pagan medieval witchcraft could be dated back to Paleolithic times". In *The God of the Witches* (1933) she focused on "the figure of the Horned God whom she believed to be the oldest male deity known to humanity" [Drury, in Pizza & Lewis (eds.), Handbook of Contemporary Paganism, #43393]. Margot Adler describes Murray as "foremost an Egyptologist and secondarily a folklorist and anthropologist". She also records the historian Norman Cohn's dismissal of the thesis: Cohn argued that Frazer's *Golden Bough* "launched a cult of fertility cults" and was "completely contemptuous of Murray" [Adler, Drawing Down the Moon, #66021]. Hugh Urban says that "although

Murray's accounts are not taken very seriously by most modern historians, Murray provided the basic narrative that underlay much of the neo-pagan revival" [Urban, Magia Sexualis, #43699].

The Handbook dates Gerald Gardner's initiation to "the New Forest in September 1939". There Gardner "was told by his initiators 'The law has always been that power must be passed from man to woman or from woman to man, the only exception being when a mother initiates her daughter or a father his son' ". In a note, Patricia Crowther, "a friend of Gardner's", suggests that if the rite fell on the first new moon after the outbreak of war, Gardner "would have been initiated on 13 September 1939" (citing Heselton, *Wiccan Roots*). Drury adds Heselton's view that Gardner "may have met [Murray] in late 1938 or early 1939" [Handbook, #43393, Drury, notes 156, 171, 181]. Carr-Gomm and Heygate locate the first coven: "in a reconstructed Elizabethan cottage in the grounds of the Five Acres Country Club", the Bricket Wood naturist resort that Gardner partly owned. "From the 1940s right through into the 1960s, the club attracted not only witches, but Druids in the shape of Ross Nichols, founder of the Order of Bards, Ovates and Druids, and a leading Sufi, Idries Shah, who wrote Gardner's biography" [Carr-Gomm & Heygate, The Book of English Magic, #63013].

How Original Was the "Old Religion"?

The academic and practitioner-historian sources cited here treat Wicca as largely assembled in the modern period. Carr-Gomm and Heygate quote Ronald Hutton, author of "the definitive history of modern pagan witchcraft, *The Triumph of the Moon*": "No academic historian has ever taken seriously Gardner's claim to have discovered a genuine survival of ancient religion." They also cite Justine Glass on Gardner: "Some view Gardner as a rogue – and he certainly was cavalier with the truth. Others believe that he was an inspired genius" [Carr-Gomm & Heygate, #63013]. Urban writes that Gardner "had great admiration for Crowley and drew freely from his poetry and rituals". He says *The Book of Shadows* is "essentially a ritual guide which bears strong influences from Crowley, the OTO, Golden Dawn, Freemasonry, and other esoteric traditions". In his account the consecration of the wine was, in Hutton's words, "probably modeled upon the sixth degree initiation of the OTO itself" [Urban, #43699]. Urban also quotes Crowley's 1914 call to "be the founder of a new and greater Pagan cult", and says that "Gardner and others would soon take Crowley up on this call" [ibid.].

Adler reports the inside debate. Aidan Kelly's manuscript questioned "the Wiccan movement's claim to historical continuity". In reply, in "the summer 1985 issue of *Iron Mountain*", Doreen Valiente "said that she did contribute many things to the present-day Book of Shadows… but she said her contribution was by no means as extensive as Kelly believed. She said she was not the first Gardnerian priestess and that Gardner already had a working coven when she was initiated in 1953" [Adler, #66021]. Adler also notes that Robert Graves always treated *The White Goddess* as "poetic metaphor" and that "certain members of the Craft have interpreted Graves too literally" [ibid.].

Theology, Sex and Seasons

Urban places Wicca within the history of sexual magic. He quotes Gardner's *Witchcraft Today*: "Ours is a religion of love, pleasure and excitement… comfort on earth, not in some far-distant paradise beyond the grave". The goddess "of the witch cult is obviously the Great Mother, the giver of life, incarnate love". Urban says that Gardner, "an enthusiastic nudist himself", made "nudity and ritualized sexual intercourse in the form of his 'Great Rite' key parts of his ritual practice". The energy theory behind this comes from Dion Fortune, whom Urban quotes: in sexual union "a whirlpool or vortex is set up: this vortex extends up the planes". The section opens with a Wiccan declaration: "Witchcraft does not need to apologize for involving sex magic. It is other religions which need to apologize for the miseries of puritanical repression they have inflicted on humanity" [Urban, #43699, "The Goddess and the Great Rite"]. Urban also links Wicca's goddess emphasis to second-wave feminism, while criticising its "highly essentialist and narrow construction of female (and male) gender" [ibid.]. The ritual year is the eight-festival wheel. Mike Nichols' *Eight Sabbats of Witchcraft* explains Samhain, "summer's end", as the counterpart of Beltane in "their ancient two-fold division of the year", and calls Halloween "Beltane's dark twin" [Nichols, Eight Sabbats of Witchcraft, #79373].

Heathenry, Ásatrú and the "Folkish" Question

Germanic revivalism split early over method and over ethnicity. Robert Sass distinguishes "Heathenry (reconstructionist Germanic Heathenry)" from "Asatru (neo-pagan tradition involving the Germanic Gods)", and states plainly: "in the book I teach that Asatru and Heathenry are two different paths". He insists that

"family ritual comes first" and that his book concerns "a historical religion, not a religion with modern or made up holidays" [Sass, Heathenry: The Old Ways for Today, #43492]. Adler records Stephen McNallen's theology of the gods as models and personifications, but also as "a numinous logic-defying reality, something apprehended only by means of symbols". She quotes Ben Waggoner of the Troth on the ethnic dispute: "Some 'folkish' types say that Heathenry can only be practiced by those of northern European descent. Others say that it comes most naturally to those of European descent, but that non-Europeans are capable of being Heathen if they choose" [Adler, #66021]. E. S. Wynn reconstructs Norse star-lore, including a "Sun-Hart" stag constellation that, he suggests, "may even go back to a common paleolithic root from which the antlered goddess (and later, antlered god) sprung" [Wynn, Sky Wolves, #87384].

Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke describes the racial edge of the same revival. In the United States, Britain, Germany and Scandinavia, "racial pagan groups ponder runes, magic and the sinister mythology of the Norse gods Wotan, Loki and Fenriswolf", and "the runes are celebrated as magical signs of ancestral heritage and a mystical blood loyalty". As a parallel he gives Christian Identity, which "mixes motifs of heretical Christian dualism with a vicious theology of anti-Semitism, which regards the Jews as the 'spawn of Satan' " [Goodrick-Clarke, Black Sun, #76349, "Introduction"]. He records that British C18 magazines carried "the '14 Words' of David Lane, a member of The Order now serving a life sentence for his part in the murder of a Jewish radio commentator in Denver" as a masthead motto [Black Sun, #76349, ch. 2]. He frames the whole phenomenon as a "neo-völkisch revival" acting "as a defensive ideology of white identity against multiculturalism", and he anticipates that his study "may well offend politically correct sensibilities" [ibid., "Introduction"].

Rodnovery: The Slavic Native Faith

The reference shelf defines Rodnovery as "a polytheistic religion" that scholars class as a new religious movement. Its organisations "often characterise themselves as ethnic religions", which "frequently manifests as nationalism and racism" [Wikipedia: Slavic Native Faith]. Its theology centres on Rod, "the absolute, primordial God, supreme ancestor of the universe". Rod expresses itself as Prav, "Right" or "Order", which the article compares with the Vedic Ṛta. Prav works through the duality of Belobog and Chernobog and gives rise to "the world in its three qualities, Prav-Yav-Nav", namely "the world of bright gods, the world of mankind, and the world of dark gods". The movement draws on

borrowings from “Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Germanic Heathenry”, which is one more echo of Part 1 [ibid.]. The scholar Schnirelmann argues that it was “built up artificially by urbanised intellectuals who use fragments of early pre-Christian local beliefs” [ibid.].

Among its founders the article names Volodymyr Shaian in Ukraine, Lev Sylenko, whose *Ridna Vira* (1964) first used the term, Valery Yemelyanov, “one of the founders of Russian neopaganism”, and Alexey Dobrovolsky (Dobroslav). Dobroslav “denounced the ‘Judeo-Christian obscurantism’ ” and prophesied that “the Yarilo-Sun would soon burn” those most sensitive to ultraviolet light, “to which he attributed primarily the Jews”. Rodnovers call Christianity and its secular offspring (Marxism, capitalism, Enlightenment rationalism) “mono-ideologies”. The article records church vandalism in Russia and Belarus. It describes a “politicised current” ranging “from extreme right-wing nationalism and racism, to Stalinism”, and it states that “Rodnovery has a significant role in the War in Donbas”, where Rodnovers formed the Svarozhich Battalion and the Rusich Company. Some strains support Eurasianism, “the dominant ideology of the Russian central state under Vladimir Putin” [ibid.]. Population figures are uncertain. Aitamurto thought “several tens of thousands” of active practitioners in Russia plausible, while the 2012 Sreda Arena Atlas counted 1.7 million self-described “Pagans” or followers of traditional religions. Ivakhiv estimated 5,000-10,000 practitioners in Ukraine in 2005 and later reported surveys suggesting 90,000 [ibid.].

Chaos Magic: Belief as Instrument

Jimmy Lee Shreeve traces chaos magic back to Austin Osman Spare, who treated the subconscious as the “greatest magickian”. Shreeve quotes Spare’s *Book of Pleasure* (1913): “All desire, whether for pleasure, knowledge or power, that cannot find ‘natural’ expression, can by sigils and their formula find fulfilment from the subconscious” [Shreeve, Blood Rites, #75608, ch. 4]. Gary Lachman adds Spare’s “death postures” and the “Neither-Neither” [Lachman, Dark Star Rising, #63636]. Peter Carroll’s *Liber Null & Psychonaut* says that “the magic of the IOT is an intensely practical, personal, experimental art”, based on the idea “that altered states of consciousness are the key” and that magical abilities “can be developed without any symbolic system except reality itself”. In Carroll’s text “the death posture is chief among the rites of Thanateros” [Carroll, Liber Null & Psychonaut, #45278]. In “Paradigm Shifts and Aeonics” Carroll argues that “all the philosophies, creeds, dogmas and beliefs that humanity has

evolved are variants of three great paradigms, the Transcendental, the Materialist and the Magical" [Carroll, Paradigm Shifts and Aeonics, #82831]. Lachman names "the Deptford Olympic Goat Roast, coinciding with the 1976 Montreal Olympics" as chaos magic's "foundational" event. He quotes Dave Evans that a history of chaos magic is "oxymoronic", because like postmodernism it "affects an atemporal, ahistorical character" and treats "truth" as "anathema" [Lachman, #63636].

Lachman's political thesis follows from this. After Trump's 2016 victory, Richard Spencer said the National Policy Institute had "dreamed" Trump into office. Lachman writes: "When it comes to the alt-right 'magicians' who willed and dreamed Trump into the White House, the meme in question is a frog who goes by the name of Pepe". He says the "magic" end of meme magic "comes from its link to what is known as 'chaos magick' ". One "Pepe/Kek devotee" claimed that an Egyptian statuette of the frog goddess Heqet showed a figure before "what looks like a computer screen" [ibid.].

Current	Core claim	Relation to history	Political edge (per cited sources)
Wicca	Great Mother and Horned God; "Old Religion"	Survival claim rejected by Hutton; debts to Crowley/OTO [#63013; #43699]	Feminist and sexual-liberation reading [#43699]
Heathenry / Ásatrú	Germanic gods as "numinous" reality	Reconstruction versus neo-pagan practice [#43492]	"Folkish" debate; racial paganism [#66021; #76349]
Rodnovery	Rod; Prav-Yav-Nav	"Invented tradition" per Schnirelmann [Wikipedia]	Nationalism, Donbas units, Eurasianism [Wikipedia]
Chaos magic	Belief as tool; three paradigms	Ahistorical by design [#63636]	Alt-right "meme magic" [#63636]
Keshe	Enlightenment through the soul	Mitra's birth as inner event [#378123]	Rejects symbol-worship [#378230]

Keshe's Counterpoint

Mehran Keshe's KSW 411 (16 December 2021) turns the winter-solstice birth of Mitra from Part 1 into an inner event: "What we call, the birthday of Mitra in coming days, is the enlightenment of the man… in the essence of the confirmation of the Soul of the Man, not the Soul of Physicality". Those "expecting to see the physical D[imension] of the birth will have a lot to learn" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 411, #378123]. Taken with KSW 518's charge that modern believers remain "Pagans worshipping statues" [Keshe, KSW 518, #378230], this sets him against every revival in this chapter. The neopagans try to restore rite, festival and image, while Keshe says maturity lies in giving them up.

Key points

- Margaret Murray's 1921 witch-cult thesis supplied the founding story of neopaganism. Adler records Norman Cohn's contempt for it, Urban says most modern historians do not take it seriously, and Hutton (quoted by Carr-Gomm and Heygate) says no academic historian has accepted Gardner's survival claim [#43393; #66021; #43699; #63013].
- The Handbook dates Gardner's initiation to the New Forest in September 1939, with 13 September proposed by Crowther. His first coven met at the Five Acres naturist club [#43393; #63013].
- Urban traces the Book of Shadows to Crowley, the OTO, the Golden Dawn and Freemasonry. Valiente's 1985 reply limited Kelly's claims about her own authorship [#43699; #66021].
- Heathens divide over reconstruction versus neo-pagan practice and over "folkish" ethnicity. Goodrick-Clarke documents racial paganism and David Lane's "14 Words" [#43492; #66021; #76349].
- According to the reference shelf, Rodnovery joins Rod-centred theology to anti-Christian "mono-ideology" critique, and in some branches to militant nationalism, including in Donbas [Wikipedia].
- Chaos magic, from Spare's sigils to Carroll's IOT, treats belief as a tool. Lachman links it to the alt-right's "meme magic" of 2016 [#75608; #45278; #63636].
- Keshe reads the birth of Mitra as inner enlightenment and calls symbol-worship paganism, which rejects the revivalist project as a whole [#378123; #378230].

Chapter 124.

Satanic Panic: Ritual-Abuse Fears, Law Enforcement and the Politics of Fear (1980-Today)

For most of the history traced in this Part, the "Satanist" was a figure other people accused. Faxneld and Petersen list early-modern "witches", "abortionists and poisoners close to the court of Louis XIV" and "certain English rakes" as people "slandered as Devil-worshippers", none of whom "seem to actually have been Satanists" [Faxneld & Petersen, The Devil's Party, #87532, "Introduction"]. By the 1970s real, self-declared Satanists existed (Chapters 121-122). In the 1980s accusation returned on a mass scale, aimed mostly at daycare workers, parents and alleged elites, and seldom at those organised Satanists. This chapter sets out the two bodies of literature in the library. One is the sceptical and scholarly account of a "satanic panic". The other is the testimony of self-described survivors and the authors who believe them, presented here in their own terms.

Origins: Michelle Remembers and the Recovered-Memory Model

The Repressed Memory Epidemic traces the template to *Michelle Remembers*, "a 1980 account of how Michelle Smith, a depressed young woman of 27, sought therapy with psychiatrist Lawrence Pazder in the wake of three miscarriages". In the book's account, "with the publication in 1980 of *Michelle Remembers*… the element of satanic ritual abuse was added, along with the possibility of demonic possession". It adds in a note that the book "fails to mention Michelle's two sisters, neither of whom recalled any abuse", and it places the episode within

"the satanic ritual abuse (SRA) moral panic of the 1980s and early 1990s" [The Repressed Memory Epidemic, #53072, ch. 1]. The same chapter traces the export of the scare to Britain "largely through training seminars offered in 1988 in England by U.S. 'experts' such as Pamala Klein and Chicago police detective Jerry Simandl", followed by a 1989 television programme that "appeared to substantiate alarming claims" [ibid.]. Tavris and Aronson list the assumptions they say the episode left "embedded in popular culture": "If you were repeatedly traumatized in childhood, you probably repressed the memory of it. If you repressed the memory of it, hypnosis can retrieve it for you. If you are utterly convinced that your memories are true, they are" [Tavris & Aronson, Mistakes Were Made (but Not by Me), #64090, ch. 4].

McMartin and the Daycare Trials

Tavris and Aronson summarise the founding case. In 1983 McMartin teachers "were accused of committing heinous acts on the toddlers in their care, such as torturing them in satanic rituals in underground chambers, slaughtering pet rabbits in front of them". Similar accusations followed at the Little Rascals centre, against Kelly Michaels at Wee Care in New Jersey, against the Amiraults, against Dale Akiki and against others [#64090]. Randall Sullivan describes the process. Hundreds of parents contacted the LAPD. The district attorney "referred the parents to the Children's Center, a private therapy center", where the interviews were conducted "mostly… with a social worker named Kee MacFarlane" [Sullivan, The Devil's Best Trick, #64665]. Will Sommer adds that police "sent hundreds of families whose children had attended McMartin a letter" asking parents to question their children about "otherwise-innocuous events that police said could indicate 'sodomy' ". He records the outcome: the first trial ended in 1990 with Ray Buckey's mother acquitted on all counts and Buckey himself acquitted of most charges, the jury deadlocked at Ray Buckey's second trial, and the case cost "$16 million" and remains "the most expensive, longest criminal" trial of its kind [Sommer, Trust the Plan, #69120, ch. 8 "Those Who Know Can't Sleep"]. By 1987, Sullivan writes, followers of the case had heard stories "of children witnessing the mutilation of a corpse and the slow slaughter of a horse, of devil worshippers drinking blood and sacrificing a baby in a church". In his judgement "the slow collapse of the McMartin prosecution… was what most deflated the satanic panic" [#64665]. Tavris and Aronson add an experiment by Sena Garven and colleagues that reused interview techniques

taken "from the actual transcripts of interrogations of children" in such cases [#64090].

Media, Police and the Name "Satanic Panic"

Sullivan states that the phrase was "coined by sociologist Jeffrey Victor, drawing on the 'moral panic' theories of Stanley Cohen". He dates the panic's "apogee and its nadir" to "October 1987, when NBC broadcast a special hosted by Geraldo Rivera that was titled *Devil Worship: Exposing Satan's Underground*" [#64665]. He also follows a later local outbreak in Childress, Texas, which the *Amarillo Globe-News* ranked as the top story of 1991 [ibid.]. Michael Shermer, in the Romanian edition of his work, calls Victor's *Satanic Panic: The Creation of a Contemporary Legend* (1993) "the best analysis so far". He lists the Procter & Gamble "satanist" logo rumour, the ritual-abuse scare "triggered in England", claims that the Mormon Church had been infiltrated by abusing Satanists, and the San Diego ritual-abuse panic [Shermer, De ce cred oamenii în bazaconii, #17912].

The primary police document in the library is Gayland W. Hurst and Robert L. Marsh's *Satanic Cult Awareness*. The text carries no publication date. The National Criminal Justice Reference Service copy is stamped as acquired on 27 January 1993, and Hurst gives a Little Rock, Arkansas address. It credits Dale Griffis, Detective Sandi Gallant of San Francisco and investigators from the U.S. Defense Investigative Service. It opens by calling "the occult explosion" "a new police problem". It quotes Henry Lee Lucas: "I belong to a cult… it was a devil's organization. For initiation, you would have to go out and kill a person". It gives a calendar of "sabbats" on which "there should be a significant amount of activity", rating Halloween the "First Highest Satanic holiday" and listing dates for "sacrifice". It includes symbol sheets for "Ozzy Osbourne, madman of Heavy Metal" and "Kiss", and an "inverted cross of Satanic Justice" said to be "often found carved into victim's chest". It also lists seventy-five "identity groups that share same ideas", among them the Posse Comitatus, Aryan Nations, The Order and the John Birch Society [Hurst & Marsh, Satanic Cult Awareness, #68641]. The reference shelf records that Kenneth Lanning of the FBI took part in a two-year investigation which, "finding no evidence of organized criminal activity by Satanist groups, turned the tide of law enforcement" [Wikipedia: Donald H. Frew]. The same shelf cites a 1994 *New York Times* report that "of the more than 12,000 documented accusations nationwide, investigating police were not able to substantiate any allegations of organized cult abuse" [Wikipedia: Satanic panic]. Tavris and Aronson describe how believers responded: "When the FBI and other

investigators failed to find any evidence whatsoever… believers in these cults were unfazed. The absence of evidence, they said, was confirmation of how clever and evil the cult leaders were; they were eating those babies, bones and all" [#64090].

Organised Satanism Under Suspicion: Aquino and the Presidio

The panic reached organised Satanism through Michael Aquino. Faxneld and Petersen say that "though soon acquitted, he was for a short time suspected of so-called Satanic Ritual Abuse", and they call the scare "a rumour panic fired by fundamentalist Christians and dubious psychotherapists" [#87532]. David McGowan argues the opposite. He cites medical evidence of abuse among Presidio children, the identification of the Aquinos' home by a child, the August 1987 search, arson at the daycare buildings, and a court finding of "probable cause to title Aquino". He concludes that the lack of prosecutions reflects a cover-up rather than innocence, while recording that "neither of the Aquinos was charged with any crimes" [McGowan, Programmed to Kill, #71652, ch. 3].

The Believers' Corpus

The survivors' literature rejects the sceptics' framework outright. Fiona Barnett lists, as a tactic of abusers' defenders, efforts to "label concern about, and investigation of, pedophilia and ritual abuse crimes 'Moral Panic' or 'Satanic Panic' ". She alleges that in Australia "a tightly organised, mafia-style, hierarchically structured crime syndicate has infiltrated every aspect of Australian government and society" [Barnett, Eyes Wide Open, #68782]. David Shurter's *Rabbit Hole*, with a foreword by James Randall Noblitt, describes torture "whether under the CIA's Artichoke/MK-ULTRA program, ritual abuse, or satanic ritual abuse", and asks "why so much time and money has been invested in discrediting satanic ritual abuse" [Shurter, Rabbit Hole, #73043]. Cathy O'Brien writes of "decades of MK Ultra mind control and resultant PTSD" and of being told "There is no such thing as mind control" [O'Brien, PTSD: Time to Heal, #69722]. Fritz Springmeier and Cisco Wheeler set out an alleged twelve-part "Illuminati mind-control formula" [Springmeier & Wheeler, Deeper Insights into the Illuminati Formula, #65326]. Kerth Barker claims that "MK Ultra's real purpose was to

take traditional Satanism and turn it into a scientific method. So it's really the science of Satanic Ritual Abuse" [Barker, Cannibalism, Blood Drinking & High-Adept Satanism, #69929]. Leo Zagami's section "Satanic Ritual Abuse and the Vatican's hidden agenda" begins: "Back in 1984, allegations of sexual abuse at California's McMartin preschool…". He notes that FBI agent Kenneth Lanning held a 1985 seminar on "Day Care Center and Satanic Cult Sexual Exploitation of Children", and he places clerical abuse inside a conspiracy aimed at "a One World Religion and a One World Government" [Zagami, Confessions of an Illuminati, #367409, vol. 6.66]. The reference shelf records, for the other side, a 2020 Dutch radio investigation in which 140 people described ritual abuse, and a parliamentary motion forcing an inquiry. That inquiry reported in 2022 that "victims are the only primary source reporting this type of abuse" [Wikipedia: Satanic panic].

Real Crimes and Documented Cases

Jimmy Lee Shreeve's *Blood Rites* covers ritual killings that did happen. It opens with the torso found in the Thames on "Friday, 21 September 2001" and the hunt for "juju killers". It also reports a sceptics' group (SAFF) alleging that some who pushed the ritual-killing theory "were previously involved in promoting the now discredited" SRA scare. Its chapter "Satan Loves You" covers the Ruda couple in Germany, who believed "that the Devil was real and that they were his tools". Shreeve writes: "I make a distinction between Satanists who kill or indulge in antisocial behaviour, and those that are members of the Church of Satan" [Shreeve, Blood Rites, #75608, chs. 1, 4]. The reference shelf notes that the 1989 Matamoros killings by Adolfo Constanzo's gang "produced the bodies of 12 adults who were ritually sacrificed… but did not involve children or sexual abuse" [Wikipedia: Satanic panic]. Traian Tandin, a former Romanian police colonel, wrote *Secte criminale* (2008) on Waco, Jonestown, Satanist murders and Haitian vodou from a police perspective [Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557].

The Revival: Pizzagate and QAnon

Sommer writes that "QAnon's focus on the concept of 'Satanic ritual abuse' can seem absurd, but it is not unprecedented". He adds that "just as parents in the McMartin case… focused on tunnels, QAnon believers have their own special fixation on such secret pathways" [#69120]. James Ball says that "like almost

every component of the evolved QAnon ideology, the idea of ritual or satanic child abuse conducted by secretive and powerful cabals was hardly a new one – even when divorced from the millennium-old concept of blood libel" [Ball, The Other Pandemic, #62315]. Thomas Horn's *Saboteurs* promises "WikiLeaks Revelations About Satanism in the US Capitol" and ties "Witchcraft, the Babalon Working, Spirit Cooking, and the Fourth Turning" together [Horn, Saboteurs, #72784]. *Pizzagate for Dummies* describes Marina Abramović's "Spirit Cooking" as "a mock-satanic ritual involving blood, semen and breast milk" attended by "the Podestas" [Pizzagate For Dummies, #78536].

Stage	Who is "Satanist"	Mechanism	Source
Early modern	Witches, poisoners, rakes	Accusation, confession	[#87532]
1966-1990s	LaVey, Set, ONA	Self-identification	[#87532]
1980-1995	Daycare staff, parents, Aquino	Recovered memory, child interviews, police seminars	[#53072; #64090; #68641]
2016-	Political and cultural elites	Online "research", WikiLeaks readings	[#69120; #62315; #72784]

Analysis: The Circle of Demonology

Petersen's chapter in *The Devil's Party* gives a framework that covers both sides. In it, society "negotiates values by acting on the side of 'goodness', illustrating the circular structure of demonological discourse" [Petersen, in The Devil's Party, #87532]. In that reading the imagined Satanist and the self-declared one feed each other. Mehran Keshe gives a third, non-academic account. In KSW 641 he says that for earlier humans "darkness was the worst thing to them, it was their biggest fear", and his summary states: "Inner weakness - fears are our Satan - lack understanding" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 641, #378353]. For Keshe, collective fear of Satan is something taught. The sceptics explain it through memory and interview technique, and the survivors explain it as a real conspiracy.

Key points

- *The Repressed Memory Epidemic* identifies *Michelle Remembers* (1980) as the book that added SRA to recovered-memory narratives, noting that Smith's two sisters recalled no abuse [#53072].
- McMartin produced no convictions after years of trials, at a cost Sommer puts at $16 million. Sullivan says its collapse "most deflated" the panic, and Tavris and Aronson analyse interview technique and confirmation bias [#64665; #69120; #64090].
- Hurst and Marsh's police manual (NCJRS copy acquired 1993) lists satanic "sacrifice" dates, heavy-metal symbols and far-right "identity groups" [#68641].
- Faxneld and Petersen say Aquino was "soon acquitted" in a "rumour panic". McGowan alleges a cover-up [#87532; #71652].
- Self-described survivors (Barnett, Shurter, O'Brien) and authors who credit such testimony (Barker, Springmeier and Wheeler, Zagami) reject the "panic" label and link SRA to MK-Ultra and elite networks [#68782; #73043; #69722; #69929; #65326; #367409].
- Documented ritual crimes (the 2001 Thames torso, the Rudas, Matamoros) keep the debate going, though Shreeve separates criminal "Satanists" from organised churches [#75608].
- Sommer and Ball trace QAnon's satanic-abuse narrative back to McMartin and older blood-libel themes [#69120; #62315].
- Across this Part, the Satanist moves from accused figure to self-declared believer and back to accused figure, which matches the "circular" demonology Petersen describes [#87532].

Part XIII.

New Religious Movements and Cults

Chapter 125.

What Is a Cult? Sect, Cult, New Religious Movement and the Brainwashing Debate

Part 13 deals with groups that critics call "cults", members call churches, foundations or movements, and academic specialists call "new religious movements" (NRMs). The choice of word already takes a side. This chapter sets out the vocabulary used in the rest of Part 13 and the dispute behind it. On one side stand the "destructive cult" and "mind control" model, running from Cold War "brainwashing" through Robert Jay Lifton, Margaret Singer and Steven Hassan, and the sociologists of religion who reject coercive persuasion as an explanation. On the other side is the political use of the label "cult" by states, churches and the accused groups themselves.

The word and its senses

Jim Willis opens *American Cults* with the Oxford definition: "a system of religious veneration and devotion directed toward a particular figure or object; a relatively small group of people having religious beliefs or practices regarded by others as strange or sinister". He then adds a caution: "One person's cult is another person's religion. It is best to tread lightly" [Willis, American Cults, #63203, Introduction "Crystal Balls and Conspiracies"]. Arthur Goldwag notes that the dictionary sense is "a system of worship", but that in practice the word marks a movement "out of the mainstream": "Christianity, for example, began as a cultic offshoot of Judaism, enjoying a similar status to the Essenes… or the Samaritans" [Goldwag, Cults, Conspiracies, and Secret Societies, #73961, "What Makes a Cult Cultish?"]. His legal example is *Pleasant Grove City v. Summum*. Summum is "a tiny sect founded in 1975 by Claude Nowell" whose members mummify their pets and themselves, and it sought to place its "Seven Aphorisms" beside a Ten

Commandments monument in a public park [Goldwag, #73961]. Willis applies the same logic to American history. He writes that Joseph Smith, Charles Taze Russell and Ellen G. White "founded movements that were, in the beginning, cults but went on to establish themselves as Christian religious denominations", and he describes the separatist Puritans in cultic terms [Willis, #63203, "In the Beginning: Why Is America Such a Fertile Field for Cults?"].

The anti-cult checklist and the American seedbed

Willis's working criteria are blunt: "Cults begin with a founder who is at least narcissistic and usually psychopathic. Cults develop a top-down hierarchy. Cults tend to separate followers from the world… The easiest way to spot a cult is to identify an obsession with crystal balls and conspiracies" [Willis, #63203]. His archetype is Shoko Asahara's Aum Shinrikyō and its subway attack. Citing Library of Congress–sponsored research, he counts "between 3,000 and 5,000 active groups defined as cults" in the United States [Willis, #63203]. He attributes the American abundance to several factors. "Lip-service religion" promises a "Christian nation" that fails to deliver, although the Founders were largely Deists. "America was born in rebellion… and cults have long capitalized on that fact", with Jemima Wilkinson, the "Publick Universal Friend", as an early case. He adds entrepreneurship, religious freedom, social media and conspiracy culture. On recruitment, he cites AARP fraud research to argue that "it isn't who you are that matters, but how you are when the pitch gets made" [Willis, #63203, Prologue; "Lip-Service Religion"; "Rebelliousness"].

From Pavlov to Korea: the genealogy of "brainwashing"

Joel Dimsdale traces the idea to the Soviet Union. There, sleep therapy "with sedatives like bromides and barbiturates was popular", and "some historians trace the unusual confessions made during Stalin's show trials to the shadowy influence of Pavlov". The confessions divided Western observers: "The American ambassador Joseph E. Davies believed that the trials demonstrated proof of treason", while the diplomat Charles Bohlen found them unconvincing [Dimsdale, Dark Persuasion, #62993, Part I]. The word itself came from the Korean War, when POWs "returned home, scarred by their immersion in Korean and Chinese

'thought reform' camps". Dimsdale also records that experts "hated the term brainwashing, resenting its lurid imagery" and saw continuity with older interrogation methods [Dimsdale, #62993, Part I]. The reference shelf adds that the term first appeared in print in 1950 in an article by Edward Hunter, described by John Marks as "a CIA propaganda operator". A 1956 US Army report found not "even one conclusively documented case" among American POWs. The CIA's MKUltra programme, by Marks's account, "found no reliable way to brainwash another person" [Wikipedia: Brainwashing].

Lifton's eight criteria and their heirs

Lifton interviewed repatriated POWs and Chinese ex-prisoners. He likened thought reform to dying and rebirth, and he described the confessions as "ecstatic repentance and histrionic remorse" [Dimsdale, #62993]. His *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism* (1961) set out eight criteria that later anti-cult writers all reuse:

Lifton's criterion	Gloss in the library's sources
Milieu control	"Control of an individual's communication with the external world" [Taylor, Brainwashing, #77532]
Mystical manipulation	Appeal to "fate, the hand of history, or God" [Taylor, #77532]; "planned spontaneity" [Hassan, Combatting Cult Mind Control, #64506]
Demand for purity	Built on "binary oppositions… Party/non-Party… good/evil" [Taylor, #77532]
Cult of confession	"Obsessive demands for confession"; "symbolic self-surrender" [Ross, Cults Inside Out, #62875, ch. 5]
Sacred science	The doctrine treated as beyond question [Ross, #62875; Taylor, #77532]
Loading the language	"Clichés substitute for analytic thought" [Ross, #62875, citing Ofshe]
Doctrine over person	Experience subordinated to doctrine [Hassan, #64506]

Lifton's criterion	Gloss in the library's sources
Dispensing of existence	Outsiders as "inferior and not worthy of respect"; the line "between those whose right to existence can be recognized and those who possess no such right" [Ross, #62875]

Each writer uses the list differently. Hassan, a former Unification Church member, writes that he "was eventually able to see that the Moon organization uses all eight of those elements" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 4]. Rick Alan Ross calls the result "an intentional transformation of individuals through manipulation and control" that breaks down "critical and independent thinking" [Ross, #62875, ch. 4]. Kathleen Taylor shows that the themes also fit open societies, where "milieu control becomes milieu standardization" [Taylor, #77532, Part I].

Unfreezing, refreezing and the BITE model

Ross quotes Singer's three phases. The first is "unfreezing". The second is "changing", which means "getting the person to drastically reinterpret his or her life's history and radically alter his or her worldview". The third is "refreezing": "Put forth a closed system of logic; allow no real input or criticism" [Ross, #62875, ch. 5]. Stella Morabito quotes Singer's definition of thought reform as "the systematic application of psychological and social influence techniques in an organized programmatic way within a constructed and managed environment". She extends the concept to politics, calling political correctness "an instrument of thought reform that uses social pressure to extract conformity" [Morabito, The Weaponization of Loneliness, #65893]. Hassan uses the same three steps. He divides mind control into behaviour, information, thought and emotional control, the components later abbreviated BITE. Thought control, in his account, makes members "internalize the group doctrine, incorporate a new language system, and use thought-stopping techniques" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 4]. His typology has four kinds: "religious cults, political cults, psychotherapy/educational cults, and commercial cults. Religious cults are the best known and most numerous". He warns that some lobby, electioneer and try "to influence United States foreign policy" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 3]. Ross narrows "destructive" cults to those that "deliberately mandate harm, which is then practiced systemically". His examples

are faith-healing churches that prohibit "professional medical treatment and prescribed medications", the Children of God and polygamist groups [Ross, #62875, ch. 4].

Taylor and Levine: ordinary psychology

Taylor, a neuroscientist, compares cults and regimes directly. Of psychopathic groups and totalitarian governments, she writes: "Both prefer absolutes and tend to see the world in black and white terms, both espouse the doctrine that the end justifies the means". In cohesive groups the leader "takes on the role of supernatural protector and relieves the individual of the need to make his own decisions". Yet she concludes that "there does not seem to be a particular process called 'brainwashing' which is distinct from" group cohesion, bonding and diffusion of responsibility [Taylor, #77532, Part I]. Robert Levine admits that he once "shared the common stereotype that most joiners were psychological misfits or religious fanatics" and found it false. Cults are "some of the most effective exploiters of the reciprocity of liking rule". For Unification Church recruits, joining "had little to do with Moon's ideology" and followed three steps: "the pickup, the first date, and the love bomb" [Levine, The Power of Persuasion, #60339].

The scholarly counter-position

Most sociologists of religion reject coercive persuasion. In 1983 the American Psychological Association asked Singer to chair the DIMPAC task force. On 11 May 1987 its Board of Social and Ethical Responsibility rejected the report as lacking "the scientific rigor and evenhanded critical approach necessary for APA imprimatur". The external reviewer Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi called "brainwashing" "not a recognized theoretical concept" [Wikipedia: APA Task Force on Deceptive and Indirect Methods of Persuasion and Control]. Eileen Barker studied the Unification Church for nearly seven years for *The Making of a Moonie: Choice or Brainwashing?* (1984). She rejected the theory because it cannot explain why most people who attend recruitment meetings never join, or why so many members leave of their own accord. James Richardson noted that groups with real brainwashing powers should grow fast, and most do not. Bromley, Shupe, Robbins, Introvigne, Dawson and J. Gordon Melton likewise argued that no accepted scientific theory supports brainwashing [Wikipedia: Brainwashing].

The courts followed. *United States v. Fishman* (1990) excluded Singer's and Ofshe's testimony under the Frye standard, *Kropinski*, *George v. ISKCON* and *Ryan v. Maharishi* went the same way, and Singer's suit against the APA failed in 1994 [Wikipedia: APA Task Force…]. The debate is not closed. Benjamin Zablocki argued that the concept had been "blacklisted" despite a large body of testimony. Philip Zimbardo held that mind control "is neither magical nor mystical" but a combination of ordinary social-influence principles. The APA itself declined to take "a position on this issue" [Wikipedia: Brainwashing].

The politics of the label

Willis argues that broad First Amendment protection leaves American law unable to separate "legitimate religion" from dangerous groups. He cites the Supreme Court's protection of Jehovah's Witnesses who refused the flag salute, and observes that "laws are designed by people… And people are flawed" [Willis, #63203]. In Romania, Bogdan Papadie, whose *Războiul spionilor* surveys the SRI intelligence service (its roster of former officers includes one promoted to head a "cults-sects" sector of the SRI's Constanța section), describes sects as having an exoteric doctrine "for recruitment" and secret levels that are "often… illegal, anti-state". He cites Belgium's 1998 law against "harmful sects" [Papadie, Războiul spionilor, #10897]. The retired police officer Traian Tandin offers his *Secte criminale* as an "alarm signal" that "satanism in particular" had reached Romania [Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557]. The opposite critique comes from Gabriel Andreescu. He describes the Orthodox hierarchy's "visceral fear" of other confessions and asks whether a State Secretariat for Cults headed by an Orthodox theology professor can defend the equality of all recognised denominations [Andreescu, Polemici neortodoxe, #13658].

Accused groups also answer back. Mehran Tavakoli Keshe rejects the label outright: "We are a scientific organization and not a cult. The cult of stealing, and thieving, and killing has been the manner of the man". In the same workshop he calls Mitra "the essence of the 'love of the Creator,' and it's not a religion" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 447, #378159]. To his own followers he says: "As long as we don't become a cult, .. a sect, as long as we stay a knowledge based organization…". He adds that "when we separate ourselves to be unique and elite, that is the time the whole downfall of the knowledge comes… be a KS, but don't become arrogant" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 354, #378066, "Don't Create Elite Clique of Knowledge Seekers"]. This is Keshe's description of his own organisation.

Key points

- "Cult" has a neutral sense (a system of veneration) and a pejorative one (a small group "regarded by others as strange or sinister"). Goldwag and Willis note that Christianity and several US denominations began as cults [Willis, #63203; Goldwag, #73961].
- Willis's checklist names a narcissistic or psychopathic founder, hierarchy, separation and conspiracism. He explains America's 3,000–5,000 cults by lip-service religion, rebelliousness, entrepreneurship, freedom and social media [Willis, #63203].
- "Brainwashing" grew out of Pavlov-era Soviet practice, the show trials and the Korean War POW panic. The Army found no documented case, and MKUltra found no reliable method [Dimsdale, #62993; Wikipedia: Brainwashing].
- Lifton's eight criteria are the shared core of Hassan, Ross and Taylor. Singer's unfreeze–change–refreeze model and Hassan's BITE components build on them [Ross, #62875; Hassan, #64506].
- Taylor and Levine explain cult influence through ordinary group psychology. Levine found that joiners are generally not "misfits" [Taylor, #77532; Levine, #60339].
- NRM scholars reject brainwashing. The APA did not endorse DIMPAC, and courts since *Fishman* have excluded such testimony, while Zablocki and Zimbardo defend the concept [Wikipedia: Brainwashing].
- The label works politically. Romanian security writers use it against sects, Andreescu accuses the Orthodox establishment of using the state, and Keshe calls his foundation "a scientific organization and not a cult" [Papadie, #10897; Andreescu, #13658; Keshe, #378159, #378066].

Chapter 126.

The American Prophet: Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon and the Latter-day Saint Kingdom

Willis lists the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints among the movements that began as "cults" in nineteenth-century America and became an established denomination [Willis, American Cults, #63203]. Its history is also, from the start, a political history: a prophet who was also mayor and militia general, a theocratic territory, a federal army, a massacre, and a doctrine of marriage that the United States made the price of statehood. This chapter follows the founding story as believers tell it and as critics retell it, keeping the two kinds of account apart.

Vision, plates and a new scripture

FLDS schooling, as Rebecca Musser recalls it, kept the core LDS narrative: "the United States was the Promised Land as foretold in the Book of Mormon, and… in 1820, God and Christ visited fourteen-year-old Joseph Smith in a sacred grove of trees" [Musser & Cook, The Witness Wore Red, #66381, ch. 4]. Willis gives the same sequence from the outside. Smith, confused by the revivals of the Erie Canal country around Palmyra, asked "Who of all these parties are right; or, are they all wrong together?" He then met the angel Moroni on Hill Cumorah, who showed him golden plates in "Reformed Egyptian Hieroglyphics" and "translating spectacles". The church was organised at Fayette, New York, on 6 April 1830 [Willis, American Cults, #63203, "Into the Universe: Latter-day Saints and the Colonization of the Cosmos"].

The book's own title page, reproduced by Van Voorst, calls it "an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites—Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel", intended for "the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD", and it adds: "if there are faults they are the mistakes of men" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, "Book of Mormon, original title page"]. In 3 Nephi 11, the multitude at the temple in the land Bountiful sees "a Man descending out of heaven… clothed in a white robe", who says: "Behold, I am Jesus Christ, whom the prophets testified shall come into the world" [Van Voorst, #63227, "The Coming of Jesus Christ in 34 C.E. to the New World"]. The narrative begins with Lehi sailing from Jerusalem "some 600 years before the birth of Christ" [Willis, #63203]. It ends with the Nephites destroyed by the Lamanites in 385 CE and Moroni burying the plates near present-day Palmyra [Van Voorst, #63227, "Destruction of the Nephites"].

Hostile readers take the same text very differently. The Romanian police expert Traian Tandin calls the Book of Mormon "a distortion of the Bible in the sense of covering the aspirations to easy living and unearned gains" of its followers [Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557]. Alexander Campbell argued as early as 1832 that the book answered "just about every error and truth discussed in New York for the last ten years" [Willis, #63203]. Issitt and Main note that the book's swords, chariots, cattle, goats and sheep in pre-Columbian America are "not supported" by archaeology [Main & Issitt, Hidden Religion, #66220]. Edward Simon places the event in comparative perspective: "Not since the Prophet Muhammad acted as Gabriel's scribe in recording the Qur'an has so influential a scriptural work seemed to arrive as if by lightning". Part of Smith's reputation "as being an 'American Muhammad' " came from his prophetic claims and from polygamy [Simon, Elysium, #70742].

Freemasonry and the endowment

Peter Levenda sets the plates in a Masonic landscape. William Morgan, who threatened to expose Royal Arch secrets, was kidnapped on 11 September 1826 "only a few miles away from Palmyra, New York and the Hill Cumorah". The scandal produced the Anti-Masonic Party (1828), which ran William Wirt for president in 1832 and later merged into the Whigs [Levenda, The Secret Temple, #64792, ch. 8 "Magic and Mormonism"]. Levenda reads Helaman 6:22, on "secret signs… and secret words" by which "a brother who had entered into the

covenant" was recognised, and the "Gadianton robbers" and their "secret murder", as possible allusions to the Morgan affair. He adds that Morgan's widow Lucinda later married the Mason George Harris, joined the church, and was taken by Smith "in a plural marriage ceremony" while remaining with her legal husband [Levenda, #64792].

According to Levenda, Smith was initiated an Entered Apprentice at Nauvoo on 15 March 1842 and raised a Master Mason the next evening. Hundreds of Mormons followed, until Nauvoo had more Masons "than there were in all the lodges in the rest of the state of Illinois combined", and the Grand Lodge was asked to investigate a "Masonic diploma mill". On 4 May 1842 Smith gave the first Nauvoo endowment, to men who "were themselves all Freemasons", Brigham Young among them. The rite involved washing and anointing, a white garment, a new name as password, a dramatised Adam and Eve, "secret gestures" and oaths, which Levenda finds parallel to Royal Arch work. He concludes that Mormonism is in a sense "an unrecognized Masonic Lodge that went its own way". He adds that Smith died making "the Masonic signal of distress" [Levenda, #64792]. These are Levenda's interpretations. He notes that Mormon apologists explain the similarities as universal symbolism rather than borrowing [Levenda, #64792].

Kirtland, Missouri, Nauvoo: a kingdom at war

From the beginning Smith and his followers "sought to assemble together in a theocratic community under Smith's leadership, or 'Zion' ", first in Kirtland, Ohio, then in Independence, Missouri. A mob destroyed their press there in 1833 [Wikipedia: Nauvoo Expositor]. Krakauer describes the Missouri war ending at Far West, where Smith told the Saints, "I shall offer myself up as a sacrifice to save your lives and save the Church" [Krakauer, Under the Banner of Heaven, #68073, Part II]. At Nauvoo Smith was mayor and lieutenant general of the Nauvoo Legion. In June 1844 dissidents printed the *Nauvoo Expositor*, which exposed secret polygamy and the teaching that men may become gods. The city council ordered the press destroyed, and Smith declared martial law. Jailed at Carthage on a treason charge, he and Hyrum were killed by a mob on 27 June 1844 [Wikipedia: Nauvoo Expositor]. Krakauer describes the exodus that followed: more than six hundred Saints died in the first winter after leaving Nauvoo, and "Brigham proved to be a masterful manager of men" [Krakauer, #68073, Part III].

Deseret, the Utah War and Mountain Meadows

In Utah, Krakauer writes, Brigham Young built “a legal system of their own singular design” that ensured God’s law prevailed. The Mormon legislature expanded the powers of probate courts, mostly run by bishops, “thereby usurping the jurisdiction of the federal government” [Krakauer, #68073, Part III]. Krakauer, following Will Bagley, presents President Buchanan’s decision as partly a political diversion from slavery, citing Robert Tyler’s advice to “supersede the Negro-Mania with the almost universal excitements of an Anti-Mormon Crusade”. “Alleging that the Mormons had committed a long list of treasonous acts, in May 1857 Buchanan dispatched” a replacement governor escorted by “twenty-five hundred heavily armed soldiers” [Krakauer, #68073, Part III]. Young’s response was to stockpile arms, drill the Nauvoo Legion and, in Bagley’s words, try “to rally Utah’s Indians to the Mormon cause”, in the belief that the Lamanites would join the Saints “to vanquish the Gentiles” as the Book of Mormon foretold [Krakauer, #68073, Part III].

Into this atmosphere came the Baker–Fancher wagon train from Arkansas, about 140 people. It was attacked at Mountain Meadow on 7 September 1857 by Paiutes and by “Mormons from nearby settlements who had simply painted their faces to look like Indians”, commanded by John D. Lee. On 11 September Lee offered a false truce under a white flag. Once the emigrants were disarmed, Major Higbee ordered “Halt!… Do your duty!” and each guard shot his captive. “The slaughter was over in a matter of minutes, leaving an estimated 120 emigrants dead”; only seventeen children aged five or under were spared [Krakauer, #68073, Part III, chs. 18–19]. Krakauer records the dispute over responsibility as the participants themselves voiced it. Haight told Colonel Dame, “You ordered it done”. Lee later wrote, “I was guided in all that I did which is called criminal, by the orders of the leaders” of the church. Young eventually stopped blaming the Indians and offered “his adopted son as a scapegoat”. Lee was tried before an all-Mormon jury screened by the First Presidency and was shot on the meadow on 23 March 1877, declaring, “A victim must be had, and I am the victim” [Krakauer, #68073, Part III]. Tandin, writing from Romania, simply repeats Lee’s claim that the Mormons acted “on the order of Brigham Young” [Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557]. Krakauer also notes that modern forgers targeted this history: Mark Hofmann, an atheist ex-missionary, produced forgeries “intended to discredit Joseph Smith”, and more than four hundred of them were bought by the LDS church [Krakauer, #68073].

Plural marriage: from secret to doctrine to Manifesto

Krakauer's account of the private beginnings centres on Fanny Alger. She entered the Smith household in Kirtland as a servant "by the winter of 1833, when Fanny was sixteen", until Emma "discovered Joseph and Fanny flagrante delicto" and expelled her in 1835 [Krakauer, #68073, Part II]. The revelation on celestial marriage was dated 12 July 1843 and shown to a small inner circle, and Emma was "foremost among those who objected" [Krakauer, #68073]. Loue gives the formal history: "In 1852, Brigham Young announced that plural marriage would be the official doctrine of the Church". She quotes Young that God introduced it "for the express purpose of raising up to His name a royal Priesthood, a peculiar people", and "if any of you will deny the plurality of wives… you will be damned" [Loue, Sexual Partnering, #32580, ch. 2].

The sources disagree on the numbers:

Claim	Source
Smith had "no fewer than fifty wives (50!!!)"; Young 27 wives and 56 children	[Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557]
Smith had "as many as thirty or more 'wives' ", some still living with legal husbands	[Levenda, #64792]
Most historians: 30–40 wives; Jenson's 1887 list named 27 besides Emma; current list 49	[Wikipedia: List of Joseph Smith's wives]
"Nearly fifty wives" (estimate)	[Wikipedia: Nauvoo Expositor]
Between 3% and 30% of Mormon men ever practised polygamy; most took one extra wife; mostly upper strata	[Loue, #32580, citing Kephart and Zellner]

Federal pressure ended open polygamy. Krakauer reports John Taylor's 1880 defiance: "I defy the United States; I will obey God". Then came the Edmunds Act (1882), with some one thousand Saints jailed in "cohab hunts", the Edmunds–Tucker Act (1887), and the 1890 Supreme Court ruling that allowed church property to be seized. Wilford Woodruff, after a night in which he "struggled all night with the Lord", issued the Manifesto of 6 October 1890: "my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land" [Krakauer, #68073, Part III ch. 20]. Parson calls it the price of "a quest for statehood", which Utah achieved in 1896 [Parson, Polygamy, Women, and Higher Education, #74491, ch. 2]. Loue adds that Utah wrote a ban into its

constitution "in exchange for Utah's statehood". Because secret plural marriages continued, Congress in 1904 refused Senator Reed Smoot his seat until a Second Manifesto was issued [Loue, #32580].

Cosmology and modern political weight

LDS cosmology differs sharply from Nicene Christianity. Musser describes the expectation that the faithful "become joint heirs of God with Jesus Christ, being able to rule and reign in their own worlds as gods and goddesses" [Musser & Cook, #66381]. Issitt and Main describe couples who "continue to have 'spirit children' after death while residing in one of the three cosmic kingdoms of the Mormon afterlife", and say plural marriage was promoted "as a way of building their numbers" [Main & Issitt, Hidden Religion, #66220]. Willis cites the church's reply to Broadway satire, that "the expectation of exaltation is more figurative and ambiguous than boiling it down to living on one planet" [Willis, #63203]. On race, Krakauer notes that Young made Utah a slave territory and that Black men were barred from the priesthood until Spencer W. Kimball's 1978 revelation [Krakauer, #68073]. Issitt and Main see "the Mormon focus on family values" as the bridge to "other conservative Christian sects" [Main & Issitt, #66220]. Willis records both views: evangelical critics who call the church "a dangerous cult", and Palmyra townspeople "unanimous in their praise" of Mormon visitors [Willis, #63203].

Key points

- The LDS story runs from the 1820 First Vision through Moroni and the plates to the church's founding in 1830. The Book of Mormon tells of Israelite migrants, Christ's appearance in the New World and the Nephites' destruction [Willis, #63203; Van Voorst, #63227; Musser, #66381].
- Critics from Campbell to Tandin read the book as a reworking of the Bible and of contemporary ideas, and Issitt and Main note the archaeological problems [Willis, #63203; Tandin, #23557; Main & Issitt, #66220].
- Levenda links Smith's 1842 Masonic initiation and the Royal Arch parallels in the endowment to the 1826 Morgan affair and the Anti-Masonic Party [Levenda, #64792].

- Mormonism was a political kingdom from the start: Zion, the Nauvoo Legion, the *Expositor* affair, Smith's murder in 1844, and Deseret's bishop-run courts [Wikipedia: Nauvoo Expositor; Krakauer, #68073].
- The 1857 Utah War and the Mountain Meadows massacre (about 120 dead) raise the question of the hierarchy's responsibility, which Krakauer presses and Lee's last words dramatise [Krakauer, #68073].
- Plural marriage began privately and became public doctrine in 1852. Counts of Smith's wives range from about 30 to 50 depending on the source [Krakauer, #68073; Loue, #32580; Tandin, #23557; Wikipedia].
- The 1890 Manifesto and 1896 statehood were a negotiated political settlement, and the Smoot hearings exposed continued secret practice [Krakauer, #68073; Loue, #32580; Parson, #74491].

Chapter 127.

The Principle Lives On: Mormon Fundamentalism and the Polygamous Offshoots

The 1890 Manifesto ended plural marriage in the official church. It did not end what believers called "the Principle". Mormon fundamentalists hold that Woodruff suspended, but could not revoke, Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants. They built a chain of priesthood authority outside the LDS church, settled on the remote Utah–Arizona border, and repeatedly clashed with the state. This chapter follows the lineages, the raids of 1953 and 2008, Warren Jeffs's rule and conviction, the Lafferty murders, and the testimony of women who left. Throughout, it sets out the legal conflict between religious liberty and child protection as each side presents it.

The 1886 revelation and the lineages

Krakauer traces fundamentalism to a revelation John Taylor reportedly received on 26 September 1886 while hiding from federal marshals in the home of John W. Woolley: "I have not revoked this law nor will I for it is everlasting". Lorin Woolley later recounted seeing a light under Taylor's door and hearing three voices, Taylor's, Joseph Smith's and Christ's. Taylor then set apart five men, including the Woolleys and Samuel Bateman, to keep performing plural marriages "that no year passed by without children being born in the principle". Krakauer notes that the authenticity of this meeting "has been angrily disputed by LDS General Authorities ever since" [Krakauer, Under the Banner of Heaven, #68073, Part III ch. 20]. Parson describes the same origin from the fundamentalist side. Lorin Woolley's "Council of Friends", including John Y. Barlow, Joseph Musser, Charles Zitting and Louis Kelsch, is the body from which "most fundamentalist

Mormon groups derive their authority" [Parson, Polygamy, Women, and Higher Education, #74491, ch. 2].

The movement then split. Parson reports that after raids on Salt Lake City and Short Creek, in which "15 Council of Friends leaders and their wives were taken into custody", some men signed renunciations of polygamy and others refused. After Barlow's death in 1949, Musser brought in Rulon C. Allred, and their followers became the Allred Group or Apostolic United Brethren (AUB) on the Wasatch Front. The others followed Charles Zitting and Leroy S. Johnson and became the FLDS at Short Creek [Parson, #74491, ch. 2]. Krakauer records the violence among the splinters. Rulon Allred was shot dead in 1977 by women of Ervil LeBaron's sect, whose leader was one of three LeBaron brothers to claim to be the "One Mighty and Strong" [Krakauer, #68073, Part IV].

Group	Leadership line (as given)	Base	Character
FLDS	Zitting, Leroy S. Johnson (d. 1986), Rulon Jeffs (d. 2002), Warren Jeffs	Colorado City, AZ / Hildale (Short Creek), UT; Bountiful, BC; YFZ, Texas	"Distinctive appearance and practices"; land held by the UEP trust; about 12,450 members [Parson, #74491]
AUB (Allred Group)	Rulon C. Allred (murdered 1977), Owen Allred, LaMoine Jensen, Lynn Thompson (2014–)	Wasatch Front, Utah; Montana	Assimilated, "not easily discernible"; about 7,500 members; recent abuse allegations against leadership [Parson, #74491]
Latter-Day Church of Christ (Kingston)	Paul Kingston	Utah	About 2,000 members; alleged intermarriage [Parson, #74491]
Second Ward / Centennial Park	Marion Hammon faction (1986 split)	Across the highway from Colorado City	Closer to AUB in practice [Krakauer, #68073; Parson, #74491]

Parson cites estimates of at least 15,000 independent polygamists and 30,000–100,000 polygamists in Utah overall, but warns that "the actual number is unknown" [Parson, #74491, ch. 2].

Short Creek 1953: the raid that backfired

The Arizona raid of 1953 is remembered by all sides. Rebecca Musser, raised in the FLDS, calls it "the largest mass arrest in modern American history, in which the entire community was taken from their homes". She writes that "outsiders saw photos of children being ripped from their mothers' arms. It was a public relations fiasco for Arizona governor Pyle, and it caused his campaign to backfire" [Musser & Cook, The Witness Wore Red, #66381, ch. 10]. Parson agrees that media coverage "turned public opinion against government action", and that the raid drove the community "even deeper into secrecy but also emboldened fundamentalist church leaders". Polygamous communities "were not seriously legally threatened again until 2008" [Parson, #74491, ch. 2]. Krakauer's verdict is that "paradoxically, the Short Creek raid proved to be a huge boon to the FLDS Church" [Krakauer, #68073].

The political result, Musser says, was a town ruled by the church. "Every town official, municipal director, and police officer was FLDS, subject to the Prophet's rule, not to state or federal laws… We literally became a law unto ourselves". She also describes the economic doctrine of "bleed the Beast". Celestial wives, "not considered legal wives", applied for welfare in their maiden names, and "subsidies accounted for millions of dollars—much of the community's income" [Musser & Cook, #66381, ch. 10]. Parson records the later state response. Government offices were searched in 2010. In 2014 Arizona moved to dissolve the Colorado City police department as "the enforcement wing of the FLDS Church". That motion failed, but an order to reform the department was upheld [Parson, #74491, ch. 2].

Doctrine in the classroom

Musser attended Alta Academy, where Warren Jeffs was principal. She preserves what the "Priesthood History" curriculum taught: "You only get to Heaven through the living Prophet in your time. Because of this great power our living Prophet holds, he is everything to us". The class taught that "even

Jesus Christ engaged in plurality", and that the 1890 document meant "the Mormons had sold out to the federal government". The line of true prophets ran from John Taylor through John W. Woolley, Lorin C. Woolley, John Y. Barlow and Leroy S. Johnson to Rulon T. Jeffs, and "the entire history of the world had led to this one point". Government was presented as corrupt throughout: "it had not only been improper but immoral for Lincoln to have fought for the rights of slaves. Mr. Jeffs had a particular dislike for blacks and considered them lower than whites". The 1993 Waco siege was screened daily in class as a warning that "governments regularly lied, terrorized, and exterminated people like us" [Musser & Cook, #66381, ch. 4].

From Rulon to Warren Jeffs

Musser became a plural wife of the ageing prophet Rulon Jeffs. She recalls that the "eighty-nine-year-old Seer and Revelator had prophesized to us that he would live for 150 years" [Musser & Cook, #66381, ch. 9]. As he declined, Warren "acted more boldly in the name of his father". He controlled access to the prophet and, by late 2000, was performing "as many as twenty marriages or more per week". Brides as young as twelve were married off, and some unions were "deliberately staged to breed out rebellion" [Musser & Cook, #66381, ch. 10]. Rulon died on 8 September 2002, leaving "an estimated seventy-five bereft wives". Warren, whom a sibling described as "a fanatic. Everything is black and white to him", took control and removed Winston Blackmore as bishop in Bountiful, British Columbia [Krakauer, #68073, Part IV]. The reference shelf adds that within a week Warren married all but two of his father's widows. One of the two, Rebecca Wall (Musser), fled [Wikipedia: Warren Jeffs].

Parson summarises the legal sequel. Jeffs called himself the FLDS "Godhead", fled, and was found "in a red car" despite having banned the colour red. He was imprisoned in 2007, and his Utah accomplice-to-rape conviction was later overturned [Parson, #74491, ch. 2]. The reference shelf states that he was then convicted in Texas in 2011 of sexually assaulting a 15-year-old and a 12-year-old "child bride" and sentenced to life plus twenty years [Wikipedia: Warren Jeffs]. Musser herself became a witness against Warren Jeffs, the role that gave her memoir its title. Parson notes that the UEP trust, worth an estimated US$100 million, had been used by Jeffs to remove families who fell out of favour, until Utah took control and began selling the land to its residents [Parson, #74491].

Texas 2008: the YFZ raid

The second great raid divides the sources. Willis writes that police acted on a call from "Sarah", supposedly a 16-year-old member, who "turned out… was, in fact, woman named Rozita Swinton, who later swore she had placed the call as a joke". He says 412 children were taken into custody, and that "there were no signs of sexual abuse in any of the children" before the Texas Supreme Court ordered them returned. He concludes that "governments and individual citizens tend to assume the worst when it comes to cults" [Willis, American Cults, #63203]. Parson likewise calls the raid "predicated on a hoax call" and says it was widely seen as "handled poorly". She counts 437 children removed and adds that "the investigation revealed that allegations of sexual abuse and underage marriage were true", with 11 FLDS members convicted of bigamy or sexual assault and the ranch seized in 2014 [Parson, #74491, ch. 2]. The two books thus agree on the hoax and disagree on what the investigation found.

Violent faith: the Lafferty murders

Krakauer's book is built around a different case. On 24 July 1984, Brenda Wright Lafferty, 24, and her 15-month-old daughter Erica were killed in American Fork, Utah, by Brenda's brothers-in-law Ron and Dan Lafferty [Krakauer, #68073, Prologue]. Ron, a former city councilman, had moved "from an active Mormon and conservative Republican to a strict constitutionalist and excommunicated fundamentalist" who believed in "a return to the gold standard, strict constitutionalism and obedience only to 'righteous laws' " [Krakauer, #68073, Prologue, quoting the *Salt Lake Tribune*]. Ron's "removal revelation" declared: "It is My will and commandment that ye remove the following individuals in order that My work might go forward". It named Brenda, Erica and two others as "obstacles in My path" [Krakauer, #68073, Part II]. Krakauer explains the brothers' logic: "In the fundamentalist worldview, a sharp dividing line runs through all of creation", so those God commanded to be removed "must, a priori, be wicked" [Krakauer, #68073, Part II]. Before the murders the brothers had toured polygamist communities, visiting the independent leaders Alex Joseph and John Bryant, both former followers of Rulon Allred [Krakauer, #68073, Part IV].

Krakauer also treats the later prosecutions as a test of the state's will. In October 2002 the Utah attorney general's office charged the FLDS member Holm with "felony bigamy and three counts of unlawful sex" for his relationship with a girl

named Ruth. Krakauer notes that since the Kingston and Tom Green prosecutions, fundamentalists "have received support from the American Civil Liberties Union". To the Barlow he quotes, "the Holm case is disturbingly reminiscent of the 1953 raid on Short Creek" [Krakauer, #68073].

Women, schooling and exit

Parson's study follows three women, Emma, Mary and Sarah, through their exit into higher education. Mary's schooling ended when "FLDS prophet Warren Jeffs banned members from attending the public schools" and later closed the private schools as well. Emma left school in tenth grade to avoid contact with a boy. Sarah finished an AUB private school without a diploma. In each case "a formal education was not viewed as a priority for polygamous women", and church-controlled curricula valued literacy chiefly for reading church texts [Parson, #74491, ch. 6]. More broadly, Parson reports that leavers' life stories show "a general lack of formal education; prevalence of sexual, emotional, and physical abuse; an absence of personal autonomy". She notes that "fear of 'eternal damnation,' 'blood atonement,' " and family pressure make leaving "virtually impossible" for some [Parson, #74491, ch. 2].

Liberty, harm and comparison

The sources frame the conflict differently. Ross classes "polygamist groups" with faith-healing churches as destructive cults that "deliberately mandate harm, which is then practiced systemically in the group" [Ross, Cults Inside Out, #62875, ch. 4]. Tandin, the Romanian police writer, describes the Kingston clan's John Daniel Kingston as a polygamist businessman employing 1,500 family members and later brought before the courts [Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557]. On the other side, Parson notes that Utah has long declined to prosecute secret polygamy "for consenting adults", the Tom Green trial being an exception. Willis stresses that the LDS church excommunicates polygamists, and that fundamentalism is a familiar pattern: "There are fundamentalists in every religion who believe their church has become too liberal" [Parson, #74491; Willis, #63203]. Loue gives the comparative and legal frame. Utah law bans plural marriage and most marriages under 16. Her cross-cultural survey, which ranges from Yoruba women who favoured polygyny for shared labour to Kuwaiti psychiatric data on distressed co-wives, concludes that women's

experience “can only be understood within a particular sociocultural and personal context” [Loue, Sexual Partnering, #32580, ch. 2].

Key points

- Fundamentalism rests on John Taylor’s disputed 1886 revelation and Lorin Woolley’s Council of Friends, from which the FLDS, the AUB, the Kingstons, Centennial Park and the violent LeBaron sect descend [Krakauer, #68073; Parson, #74491].
- The 1953 Short Creek raid backfired politically. Musser calls it the largest mass arrest in modern US history, and Krakauer calls it a “huge boon” to the FLDS [Musser, #66381; Krakauer, #68073; Parson, #74491].
- Musser describes a church-run town where officials and police obeyed “the Prophet’s rule” and welfare fraud was justified as “bleeding the Beast” [Musser, #66381].
- FLDS schooling taught salvation “only… through the living Prophet”, a plural-marrying Christ, and anti-government history, including the claim that Lincoln acted immorally [Musser, #66381].
- Warren Jeffs multiplied underage marriages and used the UEP trust as an instrument of control. He was convicted in Texas in 2011 and sentenced to life plus twenty years [Musser, #66381; Parson, #74491; Wikipedia: Warren Jeffs].
- On the 2008 YFZ raid, Willis (412 children, no abuse found) and Parson (437 children, abuse confirmed, 11 convictions) agree that a hoax call triggered it and disagree on what followed [Willis, #63203; Parson, #74491].
- Krakauer presents the 1984 Lafferty murders as “violent faith”. Ross and Parson stress harm to women and children, while others stress religious liberty and consenting adults [Krakauer, #68073; Ross, #62875; Parson, #74491; Loue, #32580].

Chapter 128.

Counting the Days: Millerites, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Christian Science

The religious ferment of nineteenth-century America produced two kinds of movement that went on to become worldwide denominations. One kind counted the days: it read the prophetic numbers of Daniel and Revelation as a timetable and announced when Christ would return. The other kind healed: it said that sickness was a product of mind and could be undone by right belief. The first line runs from William Miller through Ellen G. White's Seventh-day Adventism, and from there to Victor Houteff's Davidians and Waco. The Bible Student movement of Charles Taze Russell, later the Jehovah's Witnesses, belongs to it as well. The second line runs from the mesmerist Phineas Quimby to Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science and the New Thought churches. Both lines grew out of a Protestant culture that, in Negru's analysis, was under strong pressure from revivalism, from science and from social crisis [Catalin Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, "The Third Great Awakening"]. Both also became entangled with the American state, through conscientious objection, flag-salute litigation and medical exemptions.

William Miller and the Great Disappointment

Negru reconstructs Miller's system as a chronology built on Daniel 8:14 ("unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed"), counted from Artaxerxes I's decree to Ezra, which Miller dated to 457 BC. Miller concluded that 1843 would be the year of the "cleansing of the sanctuary", that is,

the purification of the earth by fire and the Second Coming. His first calculations fixed the date at 21 March 1843 [Negru, #62383]. Miller went public in 1831 with eight articles in the *Vermont Telegraph*, lectured from 1834 to 1839, and published *Evidence from the Scripture of the Second Coming of Christ, about the year 1843* (1836) [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, "Second Great Awakening"]. Negru's picture of Miller is unusually sympathetic. In his account Miller claimed no revelations, invited people to check his figures, and printed arguments for and against him in Joshua Himes's *Signs of the Times*. Millerism "was not a sect in the real sense of the word" because it had no hierarchy, rituals or required lifestyle [Negru, #62383].

The chronology then failed four times in a row. The first failure was 21 March 1843. The second was the window "between March 21st, 1843, and March 21st, 1844, according to the Jewish mode of computation". The third was 18 April 1844, reached after the Millerites blamed the Rabbinic calendar and switched to the Karaite one. In May 1844 Miller wrote: "I confess my error, and acknowledge my disappointment; yet I still believe that the day of the Lord is near, even at the door." In August 1844, at a camp meeting in Exeter, New Hampshire, Samuel Snow's "seventh-month message" set the return on the Day of Atonement. By the Karaite reckoning that fell on 22 October 1844. Negru writes that converts gave away their property, left their jobs and fields, and closed their shops, and that "around 50,000 believers scrutinized the sky for a sign" that morning [Negru, #62383].

The day "remained known in history as the 'Great Disappointment.' " Negru lists a range of internal reactions. Some believers "continued to watch daily for Parousia, or they made plans for different future dates: April, July or October 1845. Others said that the world entered the seventh millennium, of the Great Sabbath, and from that point on those saved no longer had to work." Others imitated children (Mark 10:15), or held, like O. J. D. Pickands, that Christ sat on a white cloud and had to be implored to descend. Most abandoned the cause, joined the Shakers, or returned to the churches they had called "synagogues of Satan." Outsiders responded with mockery and violence. A meeting place was burned in Ithaca, a group was tarred and feathered in Toronto, and children shouted "Have you a ticket to go up?" Negru adds that, theologically, the Disappointment "caused a shock to historicism, it favored postmillenarism and prepared the ground for the spreading of dispensationalism" [Negru, #62383, "Great Disappointment"].

Ellen G. White and Seventh-day Adventism

Two theories turned the failure into doctrine. In January 1845 Joseph Turner proposed the "shut-door" theory: the heavenly door had closed on 22 October and the period of probation was over. Hiram Edson, working with O. R. L. Crosier and F. B. Hahn, concluded that the "sanctuary" of Daniel 8:14 was in heaven, so something real had happened on 22 October, only in the heavenly realm. Both ideas were published in *Day Dawn* in early 1845 and were "validated through the revelations of Ellen White" [Negru, #62383, "Ellen White and the Adventist Vision of the End"]. Joseph Bates brought Sabbath-keeping into the group. Negru reports that the Whites "quickly accepted to keep the Sabbath as Bates advised them". He also reports that Bates came to accept White's visions after an 1846 trance at Topsham, Maine, in which she described the moons of Jupiter and Saturn [Negru, #62383]. The Seventh-day Adventist Church was formally organised in 1863 and, according to Browne, has "more than twelve million" members worldwide [Sylvia Browne, End of Days, #42246].

The sources assess White very differently. Willis gives the denominational outline. White (1827–1915) was disfigured in an accident at the age of nine, and from the age of seventeen had "some 2,000 recorded dreams and visions" which she believed came from God. Adventists accept her writings as inspired but not equal to the Bible. Willis identifies four distinctive Adventist doctrines: the authority of White's writings, a literal heavenly sanctuary in which Christ ministers as high priest, the seventh-day Sabbath ("God's commandment to the Jews to keep the seventh day… was never rescinded"), and the imminent Advent [Jim Willis, American Cults, #63203, "David Koresh and the Branch Davidians"]. Negru, by contrast, follows the ex-Adventist critic Dudley Canright. He suggests that the stone that broke White's nose damaged her temporal lobe and that her trances may have been epileptic. He lists failed predictions: a coming in June and then September 1845, the shut-door end in October 1851, and Civil War visions. He also repeats charges of plagiarism and calls her one of the "cheap prophets of the American religious awakenings" [Negru, #62383]. Negru points out a contradiction in Adventist teaching. The church now condemns date-setting, yet White called Millerism a "glorious manifestation of the power of God" and said that the Lord's hand "hid a mistake" in the 1843 chart [Negru, #62383].

Adventist apologetic literature explains the Sabbath itself. The tracts appended to Vance Ferrell's health publications argue that the Sabbath was given "when our world was first created (Genesis 2:1-3) 2,000 years before the first Jew (Abraham) was born" and so is not "Jewish". They also argue that Sunday observance

is a later ecclesiastical imposition. To support this they quote Arthur Weigall: "The Church made a sacred day of Sunday… largely because it was the weekly festival of the sun". They also quote a Catholic challenge: "Prove to me from the Bible alone that I am bound to keep Sunday holy… It is a law of the holy Catholic Church alone" [Vance Ferrell, Gerson Therapy Cancer Remedies, #62233, appended Sabbath tracts]. White's health visions turned into a dietary code. A standard nutrition textbook summarises it as follows: many members are lacto-ovo vegetarians; they "avoid pork and shellfish", "prohibit coffee, tea, and alcohol", drink water before and after meals but not during them, and avoid highly seasoned foods and eating between meals [Karen Eich Drummond & Lisa M. Brefere, Nutrition for Foodservice and Culinary Professionals, #69952, ch. 13].

The Davidian Offshoot: Toward Waco

The road to Waco started inside Adventism. The sources disagree on the year: Browne says that "in 1919, a man named Victor Houteff joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church," while Willis says that in 1918 the Bulgarian Houteff (1885–1955) left the Bulgarian Orthodox Church for Adventism [Browne, End of Days, #42246; Willis, American Cults, #63203]. Willis continues the story. Houteff taught Sabbath classes in Los Angeles and issued the *Shepherd's Rod* tracts. At the 1929 annual meeting he denounced worldliness in the denomination, and he taught that 144,000 purified believers had to gather before Christ would return. After his message was rejected, he founded Mount Carmel near Waco in 1935 with 37 members. In 1942 he named the group the General Association of Davidian Seventh-day Adventists and later used the "Davidian Seventh-day Adventists" name to secure conscientious-objector status. After his death his widow Florence predicted the kingdom for 22 April 1959; some 900 people sold their property and gathered, and "nothing happened." Vernon Howell (David Koresh) emerged from what was left of the group [Willis, #63203]. The Branch Davidian siege is treated in Chapter 133.

The Watch Tower: Russell, Rutherford and Moving Dates

Willis dates the movement to shortly before 1872, when Russell, "a Congregationalist by religion and haberdasher by trade," began meeting with a Bible-study

group after an Adventist preacher revived his faith. Willis says Russell published *Food for Thinking Christians* in 1879 and that his followers had formed the Zion's Watchtower Society by 1884 [Willis, #63203, "The Watchtower Society and Jehovah's Witnesses"]. Browne describes the Watchtower Society as "founded in the early 1870s by Charles Taze Russell". In her account Russell never claimed to found a religion but believed he had been given divine permission to understand the Bible. She says he combined Daniel 4 with the Great Pyramid: "Using 607 BCE as a start date and adding 2,520 years, Pastor Russell arrived at the conclusion that TEOTWAWKI would happen in October of 1914" [Browne, End of Days, #42246].

Negru gives the full sequence of dates. Russell "stripped" 1844 of its meaning and moved it to 1874, which he counted as 6,000 years from the expulsion from Paradise. When 1874 passed, he said the return had been invisible, and that a forty-year harvest would end with Christ's visible appearance in 1914 [Negru, #62383]. Russell died in 1916 according to Browne and Negru, and in 1917 according to Willis. Browne says his successor J. F. Rutherford "decided to make a few adjustments in Pastor Russell's calculations"; the movement had accepted it as fact "beyond a doubt" that Christ appeared in 1874 [Browne, #42246]. According to Negru, Rutherford's *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* (1920) predicted that 1925 would see "the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob". After that failure the presence of Christ was moved to 1914, and the "generation of 1914" became the limit for the end. Negru lists further dates that carried expectation: 1915, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1935, 1941, 1957, 1975 and 1994. The 1975 expectation was based on Nathan Knorr's 1966 chart showing "6,000 years of man's existence end in 1975" [Negru, #62383]. Willis credits Rutherford with coining the name "Jehovah's Witnesses" in 1931 [Willis, #63203].

Neutrality, the Flag and the Supreme Court

The Witnesses' politics consists of refusing to take part. Willis writes that they "don't stand for the national anthem or salute the American flag—or any flag… They don't vote in elections or serve in the military," because "their actual government is in heaven." The early message, he notes, cast Satan's power as "the religious, commercial and political combine" [Willis, #63203]. When municipalities "passed laws to constrict what were considered challenges to American ideals… the Supreme Court tended to strike down such laws". The movement's door-to-door work ended in a final victory: "In June 2002 the Supreme Court

of the United States ruled that, irrespective of local bylaws, the Jehovah's Witnesses have the right to ring every doorbell in the country" [Willis, #63203]. The reference shelf records the flag cases. In 1935 Rutherford told a convention that saluting an earthly emblem was unfaithfulness to God, and expulsions of Witness children followed. In *Minersville School District v. Gobitis* (1940) the Court upheld compulsory salutes, a decision that "led to increased persecution of Witnesses". The Court reversed itself in *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* (1943) [Wikipedia: Minersville School District v. Gobitis]. Witness litigation strengthened, among other things, "the right to abstain from patriotic rituals and military service" and "the right of patients to refuse medical treatment" [Wikipedia: Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States].

On the name, Willis explains that YHVH, vocalised with the vowels "a, o, e," gives "Yahoveh". The Hebrew "Y" became "J" and the vowels shifted, so that "Christian academics coined the spelling 'Jehovah' long ago". The name "Witnesses" comes from Isaiah's "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah" [Willis, #63203].

The Romanian Confessional Critique

Romanian-language confessional literature rejects the Witnesses as a heresy; the two works below write as Christian critics, not as neutral describers. Şerban Constantinescu's *Năzbâtii teologice* (1990) is subtitled "the false witness of the so-called Jehovah's Witnesses". It opposes the Witness teaching that "the man Jesus Christ died and remains dead as a man" and criticises their refusal of blood transfusions, which rests on the belief that "the soul of man is his blood". It also reports a Witness telling him that Armageddon "should have happened in 1975, when 6,000 years were completed from Adam, who… was created in 4026 BC." Against the Witness hope of a battle, the author sets Titus 2:13: the believer's hope "is a Person, not a battle". He closes with the question "Whom do you believe, Jesus or Russell?" [Şerban Constantinescu, Năzbâtii teologice, #21647]. Fritz Ridenour gives three reasons the Witnesses are "a challenge for Christians": "they have registered a phenomenal growth"; "their teachings stand in clear opposition to the Gospel"; and "they are declared enemies of the Christian Church." He also notes Knorr's *New World Translation*, which he says was made to "serve the society's doctrines better", and the Witness reading of Armageddon as a "worldwide thermonuclear devastation" [Fritz Ridenour, De Fapt Care Este Diferenta?, #13640, ch. "Martorii lui Iehova"].

Quimby, Eddy and the Mind-Cure Churches

The healing line began with mesmerism. Whorton describes Phineas Quimby working with the entranced youth Lucius Burkmar from 1843 to 1847. He then gave up magnetism, concluding that "the cure is not in the medicine, but in the confidence of the doctor," and finally called his method the "Science of Health" and even "Christian Science" [J. Whorton, Nature Cures, #29919, "Magnetism and Mind: From Mesmerism to Christian Science"]. In October 1862 Mary Baker Patterson, aged forty-one and a chronic invalid, came to him in Portland. After Quimby's death, Whorton writes, "she first disavowed any debt to her mentor," called his views "scribblings," and even claimed to have written his manuscripts. By her own account she discovered "the Christ Science" in February 1866, two weeks after his death, when she recovered from a fall on the ice while reading of Christ's healings [Whorton, #29919, "Mary Baker Patterson and the Development of Christian Science"]. Regardie accepts that Quimby "played a tremendous part in the subsequent shaping of her creed". He also observes: "Had there not been this furore about the possible antecedents of Christian Science and Mary Baker Eddy, no one to-day I am sure would even know of the former existence of Quimby" [Israel Regardie, The Romance of Metaphysics, #44119, Quimby/Eddy chapters]. Harrington calls Eddy the most visible woman leader in mind-cure, "born on a farm in Bow, New Hampshire, in 1821," and "raised in the strict Congregationalist Church" before rebelling against it [Anne Harrington, The Cure Within, #65907, "The Power of Positive Thinking"].

The doctrine, as Whorton summarises *Science and Health* (1875), went beyond Quimby. Since "God is All" and "Mind is All-in-all," matter and the body are illusions of "mortal mind". Since God is good, "evil is but an illusion," and "what is termed disease does not exist". Eddy charged $100 and later $300 for twelve lessons. She founded the Church of Christ, Scientist, in 1879. Membership was about 9,000 by 1890 and over 200,000 by about 1925, when it was the "fastest-growing denomination in the United States," with nearly two-thirds of members women. She left over two million dollars at her death in 1910 [Whorton, #29919, "Growth of Christian Science"]. Negru places Eddy's "complete, coherent, verifiable and demonstrable science" in the Third Great Awakening's answer to Darwin [Negru, #62383]. The dissident mind-healers of New Thought, Unity and Religious Science acknowledged Quimby openly. Shealy writes that William James classed them as "mind-cure" religions, the product of religion as "a cry for help" [C. Norman Shealy, Sacred Healing, #62835, "New Thought and Mind-Cure Religions"]. Kugelmann treats them as part of an American "shadow culture" or "unchurched spirituality". In his account this current runs from Transcendental-

ism, Swedenborgianism and mesmerism to New Thought and Christian Science, and on into today's New Age, with an unconscious understood as a "higher self" rather than Freudian drives [R. Kugelmann, Psychology and Catholicism, #32134, sections 58–59].

Movement	Founder(s) / date	Type	Key texts	Political-legal stance
Millerites	William Miller, 1831–1844	Date-setting	*Evidence from Scripture…* (1836), *Signs of the Times*	None as a sect; persecuted by outsiders
Seventh-day Adventists	E. G. White, J. White, J. Bates; organised 1863	Prophetic, health reform	Bible + White's "testimonies"	Conscientious objection; Sabbath laws
Davidian SDA	V. Houteff, 1929–1935	Prophetic, communal	*Shepherd's Rod*	Name used to secure C.O. status
Jehovah's Witnesses	C. T. Russell (1870s); J. F. Rutherford	Date-setting (1874, 1914, 1925, 1975)	*Watch Tower*; *New World Translation*	No flag salute, voting or military; Gobitis/Barnette; Stratton (2002)
Christian Science	Mary Baker Eddy, 1879	Healing	*Science and Health* (1875)	Reliance on prayer instead of medicine
New Thought / Unity	Quimby's heirs, Fillmores	Healing, metaphysical	various	Unchurched, non-political

Key points

- Negru reconstructs the Millerite chronology from Daniel 8:14 and 457 BC. It failed four times (March 1843, March 1844, April 1844, 22 October 1844). After the "Great Disappointment" some believers set new dates in 1845, and others declared that the Great Sabbath millennium had begun [Negru, #62383].
- Seventh-day Adventism arose from Turner's shut-door theory, Edson's heavenly-sanctuary reading and Bates's Sabbath, all confirmed by Ellen

White's visions. Willis presents her as a prolific visionary; Negru, following Canright, presents her as a failed prophet [Willis, #63203; Negru, #62383].

- Adventist tracts argue that Saturday is the Sabbath and that Sunday is a later Roman-Catholic institution. Adventist diet avoids meat, pork, shellfish, coffee, tea and alcohol [Ferrell, #62233; Drummond & Brefere, #69952].
- Houteff's *Shepherd's Rod* split (he converted in 1918 or 1919, depending on the source) produced Mount Carmel and, in time, the Branch Davidians [Willis, #63203; Browne, #42246].
- Russell's dates (1874, 1914) were revised by Rutherford (1925) and later leaders (1975). Negru counts at least nine charged years between 1914 and 2000 [Negru, #62383; Browne, #42246].
- Witness refusal of flag salutes, voting and military service led to landmark Supreme Court cases, from Gobitis/Barnette to the June 2002 doorbell ruling [Willis, #63203; Wikipedia: Minersville School District v. Gobitis].
- Christian Science came out of Quimby's post-mesmeric mind-healing. Eddy denied the debt and claimed an 1866 revelation; her doctrine holds that disease and evil are illusions of mortal mind [Whorton, #29919; Regardie, #44119].
- Kugelmann's "shadow culture" connects mind-cure and New Thought to the modern New Age, and Romanian-language confessional authors judge the Witnesses by Christ's divinity and failed prophecy [Kugelmann, #32134; Constantinescu, #21647; Ridenour, #13640].

Chapter 129.

Voices from Beyond: The Spiritualist Movement and the Mediumistic Century

The Millerites had looked for Christ in the sky over the "burned-over district" of upstate New York. Four years after the Great Disappointment, the same region produced a different promise. The dead, it was said, could be reached directly, at a kitchen table, through knocks. Modern Spiritualism dates its birth to 31 March 1848 at Hydesville. Within a decade it had congresses, thousands of mediums, trance lecturers and a press of its own, and it had close ties to abolitionism, women's rights and utopian socialism. The reference shelf notes that Spiritualism "first appeared in the 1840s in the 'Burned-over District'… where earlier religious movements such as Millerism and Mormonism had emerged," though neither of these associated itself with it [Wikipedia: Spiritualism (movement)]. This chapter follows the movement from the Fox sisters to psychical research and the confessions. It sets out the believers' and the sceptics' cases side by side. It also treats Spiritualism as the ancestor of later channeling and of the Theosophical "Masters" discussed in Chapter 135.

Hydesville, 31 March 1848

Theresa Cheung's encyclopedia gives the founding account. "Three New York sisters, Maggie, Kate and Leah Fox… are credited historically with the birth of Spiritualism… when they discovered they could communicate with spirits by rappings. On the night of 31 March 1848, Maggie, aged 15, and Kate, 12, who were living with their parents in Hydesville, first discovered that if they clapped their hands raps would answer back." [Theresa Cheung, The Element Encyclopedia of the Psychic World, #53445, "Fox sisters"]. Cheung writes that when the press "went into a frenzy," the elder sister Leah, "living in Rochester in poverty after

her husband had deserted her, seized the opportunity to manage her younger sisters." She arranged "fee-charging public demonstrations," and the performances "grew to include object" movements and other effects [Cheung, #53445]. Cheung's entry has a coda that has fed the dispute ever since: "In 1904 school children discovered a skeleton behind the cellar door in the Hydesville house... Spiritualists hailed it as proof that the sisters were genuine mediums but sceptics were convinced that the skeleton had been deliberately put there" [Cheung, #53445]. The sources disagree on the sisters' ages. Cheung's dates for the two girls (Kate 1841, Margaretta 1838) differ from the reference shelf (Margaretta 1833, Catherine 1837) [Wikipedia: Fox sisters].

The reference shelf adds the social setting. During the excitement the girls were sent to Rochester, where "Amy and Isaac Post, a radical Quaker couple and longstanding friends of the Fox family, invited the girls into their Rochester home." The Posts were "immediately convinced of the genuineness of the phenomena" and spread the word among radical Quakers, "who became the early core of Spiritualists." The article continues: "In this way, the association between Spiritualism and radical political causes developed, such as abolition, temperance, and equal rights for women" [Wikipedia: Fox sisters]. The sisters' first paid public demonstration took place at Corinthian Hall, Rochester, on 14 November 1849. Their New York séances of 1850 drew Horace Greeley, James Fenimore Cooper, Sojourner Truth and William Lloyd Garrison [Wikipedia: Fox sisters].

A Mass Movement in Four Years

The anonymous Romanian-language exposé *Magicienii* (subtitled *Les faiseurs de miracles*) stresses how fast the movement spread. "Soon the whole of America is seized by an enormous passion: to communicate with the spirits. The Fox sisters quickly become famous, organise shows in the theatres of the largest cities and, in 1852, only four years after the first communications with the spirit of Rosna, the city of Cleveland hosts the first congress of spiritism. At that moment, in the United States there are more than ten thousand mediums" [Anonymous, Magicienii, #45579, ch. 19 "Raşid şi materializarea sacră"]. The book's narrator writes as a Sorbonne-trained student of psychology and a conjurer. He follows the movement's European offshoots and the investigations of the physical mediums. One example is the 1922 tests of "Eva C." under "the strictest control" at the Sorbonne's physiology laboratory, by Professors Georges Dumas, Louis

Lapicque, Henri Piéron and Henri Laugier. Another is Arthur Conan Doyle's lecture tours from 1917 onward, which continued despite repeated failures [Magicienii, #45579].

The reference shelf describes a movement that "flourished for a half century without canonical texts or formal organization, attaining cohesion through periodicals, tours by trance lecturers, camp meetings, and the missionary activities of accomplished mediums." It traces the movement's background to Swedenborg, who "has some claim to be the father of spiritualism," and to Mesmer's trance technique. Andrew Jackson Davis combined the two in his "harmonial philosophy," and his trance-dictated *The Principles of Nature* (1847) "became the nearest thing to a canonical work" [Wikipedia: Spiritualism (movement)]. Kugelmann describes the same synthesis. Davis (1826–1910) "launched a career in Spiritualism after experiencing animal magnetism and communicating with Emanuel Swedenborg," and the movement promoted "progressive social mores, including balancing male and female imagery for God and accepting the inner divinity of the person" [R. Kugelmann, Psychology and Catholicism, #32134, section 59 "Nineteenth-century Spiritualism and Mind Cure"].

Politics, Reform and Grief

Spiritualism's political connections are well documented. Kugelmann cites Ann Braude's study: "While not all feminists were Spiritualists, all Spiritualists advocated women's rights." He adds that many converts "came from religious denominations that already stressed individual freedom, such as the Quakers," or from liberal Protestant bodies such as the Universalists [Kugelmann, #32134, ch. 10 "Crossings"]. The reference shelf names trance lecturers who held abolitionist and women's-rights views, among them Achsa Sprague and Cora L. V. Scott, and the mixed-race abolitionist medium Paschal Beverly Randolph. It also records the activism of Spiritualists on behalf of Native Americans, whose "Indian spectres" at séances were read as "a symbol of the sins and subsequent guilt of the United States." It notes that "after 1848, many socialists became ardent spiritualists," including the utopian socialist Robert Owen, who was converted in 1854. Not every reformer joined: "among the skeptics was abolitionist Frederick Douglass" [Wikipedia: Spiritualism (movement)]. One figure links this chapter to the previous one. Moses Hull, the Adventist whom Ellen White warned that "God's hand will arrest you" if he left the faith [Catalin Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383], later became a Spiritualist lecturer, a Greenback-Labor organiser and a Socialist Party candidate for Congress [Wikipedia: Moses Hull].

Grief drove the movement as much as reform did. "Many families during the time of the American Civil War had seen their men go off and never return". Mary Todd Lincoln held séances in the White House, which the President attended. The reference shelf calls the surges of Spiritualism after the Civil War and the First World War "a direct response to those massive battlefield casualties" [Wikipedia: Spiritualism (movement)]. Jerry Kantor places the period's new institutions "amid this panoply of 'isms,' the cataclysmic grief and roiling madness of post–Civil War America" [Jerry M. Kantor, Sane Asylums, #64394].

Europe: Kardec's Spiritism and the Road to Theosophy

In France the phenomenon became a doctrine. Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail (1804–1869), an educator trained under Pestalozzi and a practising mesmerist, met the medium Madame de Plainemaison in May 1855. There, by his own account, a spirit named "Zephyr" "gave him the mission of being the spokesman of the Dead." Under the pen-name Allan Kardec he wrote the five books of the "Spiritist Codification" [Wikipedia: Allan Kardec]. Kugelmann describes French Spiritism as an attempt "to integrate Enlightenment ideals of reason and science into a traditional religious framework" [Kugelmann, #32134, section 59]. The reference shelf treats Kardecism as separate from Anglo-American Spiritualism ("Not to be confused with Kardecist spiritism") [Wikipedia: Spiritualism (movement)]. Spiritualism has a direct line to later occultism. Cheung's encyclopedia records that the Fox sisters "first brought public attention to channelling in 1848" [Cheung, #53445]. In the same tradition, Dion Fortune claimed in 1923–4 to have contacted "three great masters," Socrates, Lord Erskine and a war-dead officer, who "dictated her magical writings" [Cheung, #53445]. This is the pattern of communication with discarnate teachers that Theosophy turned into the Mahatmas and Ascended Masters (Chapter 135).

The Case For: Inglis and the "Pagan" of Science

Brian Inglis presents the believers' case openly as a partisan. He writes that "by taking the evidence for the supernatural seriously... a writer immediately identifies himself as a partisan." He describes his book as a fight against two "seedy

giants": "Pope," meaning superstition and religious dogma, and "Pagan," meaning "the dogmas and evasions of materialist science, refusing to credit what it cannot quantify" [Brian Inglis, Natural and Supernatural, #66356, Introduction]. For Inglis the Fox rappings belong to a long series of earlier cases. At Samuel Wesley's Epworth rectory, "Old Jeffery" would answer the children's raps "by rapping back the same number of times". Priestley blamed the servants, Coleridge hallucination and Southey the devil [Inglis, Natural and Supernatural, #66356]. In the Cock Lane case of 1759–62 he concedes that the raps "ceased if sceptics were present". He argues all the same that "there are features… which make the fraud diagnosis implausible," because the haunting began before the dispute between Parsons and his lodgers and was heard by people outside any conspiracy [Inglis, #66356]. His son's foreword to the reissue places the book of 1978 as "a counterpunch against the emerging sceptical backlash" of CSICOP, whose members included Martin Gardner, Carl Sagan and James Randi. For Inglis, it says, "the evidence… for the paranormal was overwhelming and the onus was on sceptics to disprove it" [Neil L. Inglis, foreword, in Inglis, #66356].

The Case Against: Exposures and the 1888 Confession

The sceptics' case built up from 1850. In 1851 investigators from the University at Buffalo concluded that the raps came from cracking joints and stopped when the girls' feet rested on cushions. A relative, Mrs Norman Culver, signed a statement that she had helped produce the raps. A Boston committee of 1857 and the Seybert Commission of 1887 reached similar verdicts [Wikipedia: Fox sisters]. *Magicienii* describes the climax. "In 1888, the two Fox sisters put an end to the polemic by revealing the trick: on 24 September Kate declares to the *New York Herald*: 'Spiritism is a fraud from…' ". A month later, at the New York Academy of Music, "Margaret finally makes the confession: 'There is no manifestation of spirits.' " She demonstrated raps made with her big toe, and Kate told how as a child she had frightened her parents by dropping an apple on a string [Magicienii, #45579]. The reference shelf puts the audience at 2,000 and says doctors came on stage to verify that the sound came from her toe joints [Wikipedia: Fox sisters].

The believers' reply also appears on the record. Conan Doyle argued that the raps continued at Hydesville on 31 March "in the girls' absence," on the testimony of the neighbour Duesler. On 20 November 1889 Margaret retracted her

confession in the *New York Press*. She said it had been extracted for money "under the strong psychological influence" of Spiritualism's enemies, and that the newspaper had not paid the promised sum. Sceptics in turn saw in "this constant reversal of testimony" proof that the sisters "were manipulators willing to say anything for monetary gain" [Wikipedia: Fox sisters]. As the reference shelf puts it, "despite their loss of credibility, the Spiritualism movement continued to grow" [Wikipedia: Fox sisters].

Church, Science and the Surrogate

Spiritualism faced resistance from two directions at once. Kugelmann describes the Catholic neoscholastic psychology of Cardinal Mercier's school (1890s–1960s). It held the soul to be "an immaterial gift" and defended that view against reductionist experimental psychology on one side and Spiritism on the other. Charles Bruehl (1920) distinguished the Catholic teaching on survival from Spiritism's "fantastic and grotesque embroideries" [Kugelmann, #32134, section 57 "Neoscholastic Psychology and Spiritualism"]. On the scientific side, the Society for Psychical Research (London, 1882) took up the phenomena. "By the end of the nineteenth century, the skeptics had the upper hand." The American Society's findings came to support mainly "the reality of the unconscious," though "Spiritualism never died out; it continues to this day" [Kugelmann, #32134, ch. 10]. Kugelmann places Spiritualism and mind cure together in the American "unchurched spirituality" that runs on into the New Age (see Chapter 128).

The sociologist John Schumaker explains why such movements survive. "Mysticism is especially well suited to the conditions of modernity since this type of religious experience tends to be internal, free-floating, subjective, and relatively tolerant of rationalism and scientism. It responds well to the breakdown of traditional religious structures by releasing individuals to their inner freedoms." He argues that religious decline is regularly followed by "invisible religion". He cites research showing that "nonreligious paranormal beliefs and rituals (e.g., clairvoyance, witches, ghosts, ESP…) serve as functional equivalents to mainstream religion," with greater paranormal belief among the less religious. In the United States today, he adds, "UFOlogy is the religion growing most rapidly" [J. Schumaker, The Age of Insanity, #33227, ch. 7 "Spiritual and Existential Health"].

Keshe's Teaching on the Soul Beyond Physicality

Mehran Tavakoli Keshe's workshops answer the Spiritualist question of survival without séances and without spirits who speak through raps. In his account the soul is a field-structure that the body trains for independent existence. In Knowledge Seekers Workshop 569 (19 December 2024) Keshe states that "in the old age we gradually prepare the body to mature the Soul for it to be to take its position in the Universe." The transcript adds: "We don't just get thrown out into the Universe as a Soul, or a collection of fields… We are trained how to feed ourselves through the Universal Energy. This is why we dream, it's part of the training to connect and be ready to live without attachment to Physicality" [Mehran Tavakoli Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 569, #378281, "Soul Preparation and UFO Phenomena"]. He compares this to the womb, where the mother prepares the child's digestion before birth. Keshe claims that new "emotions from the Universe" will be felt "in the Soul" though "the body [does] not show" them, and the same workshop's index refers to experiencing "Beings" through field devices. The workshop also says the "KF [is] not [a] Cult; Don't follow teacher – apply knowledge" [Keshe, #378281]. Spiritualism takes as proof a communication received through a medium. Keshe instead claims a developmental physics of the soul that the practitioner is to apply himself.

	Fox / American Spiritualism	Kardecist Spiritism	Catholic neoscholastic view	Keshe (KSW 569)
Survival of the person	Spirits persist and progress through spheres	Spirits persist; reincarnation	Immaterial soul, God's gift	Soul as field-structure "trained" to live without physicality
Mode of contact	Raps, séance, trance lecture	Medium, codified doctrine	Prayer, sacraments; séance rejected	Dreams, field "connection"; no medium
Authority	Phenomena; no canon	Kardec's five books	Church, Thomism	"Apply knowledge"; disclaims cult
Social politics	Abolition, women's rights, socialism	Reformist, educational	Defence against modernism	Claims of world economic change

	Fox / American Spiritualism	Kardecist Spiritism	Catholic neoscholastic view	Keshe (KSW 569)
Critics' charge	Fraud (1851, 1857, 1888)	Credulity	(Church as critic)	Unverified physics claims

Key points

- Cheung and the reference shelf date Spiritualism to Maggie and Kate Fox's raps at Hydesville on 31 March 1848. Their sister Leah managed them, and the Quaker abolitionists Amy and Isaac Post spread the movement [Cheung, #53445; Wikipedia: Fox sisters].
- According to *Magicienii*, by 1852 Cleveland hosted the first Spiritualist congress and the United States had more than ten thousand mediums [Magicienii, #45579].
- Spiritualism was closely tied to abolition, women's rights and socialism (Braude, quoted by Kugelmann), and it surged after the Civil War and the First World War as a response to mass grief [Kugelmann, #32134; Wikipedia: Spiritualism (movement)].
- Inglis, writing openly as a partisan, places Hydesville in a line with Epworth and Cock Lane and accuses materialist science of "refusing to credit what it cannot quantify," against CSICOP sceptics such as Randi and Sagan [Inglis, #66356].
- The 1888 toe-joint confession at the New York Academy of Music and its 1889 retraction leave a disputed record, but the movement continued to grow [Magicienii, #45579; Wikipedia: Fox sisters].
- Kardec's Spiritism systematised spirit communication in France, and channelled "masters" connect Spiritualism to Theosophy [Wikipedia: Allan Kardec; Cheung, #53445].
- Catholic neoscholastics defended the immaterial soul against both laboratory psychology and Spiritism. Schumaker treats modern mysticism and paranormal belief as "functional equivalents" of declining religion [Kugelmann, #32134; Schumaker, #33227].
- Keshe (KSW 569) claims that ageing and dreaming prepare the soul to exist apart from the body, a doctrine of survival without mediums [Keshe, #378281].

Chapter 130.

From Dianetics to the Sea Org: L. Ron Hubbard and the Church of Scientology

Christian Science (Chapter 128) located illness in "mortal mind". Spiritualism (Chapter 129) claimed that personality survives the body. In the mid-twentieth century a pulp-fiction writer combined both themes, a mental cause of suffering and an immortal spiritual being, into a technique sold as science. Within three years he had reorganised it as a church. The Church of Scientology became the best-known example of a movement whose relationship with the state was itself a doctrinal and institutional issue. It fought tax authorities, infiltrated government agencies, campaigned against psychiatry, sought celebrities, and won or lost recognition as a religion from one country to the next. This chapter sets Hubbard's own texts and the church's self-presentation beside its critics, chiefly the ex-member Bent Corydon and Hubbard's estranged son L. Ron Hubbard Jr. Each claim is attributed to its source.

Hubbard's System in His Own Words

Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health (1950) presents itself as a discovery about the structure of the mind. Hubbard distinguishes an "analytical mind", which perceives, remembers and computes, from a "reactive mind", which records without understanding during moments when the analytical mind is shut down. "The engram is a moment of 'unconsciousness' containing physical pain or painful emotion and all perceptions, and is not available to the analytical mind as experience." "The action of the analytical mind during a moment of intense pain is suspended." [L. Ron Hubbard, Dianetics, #7456]. His standard example is: "A woman is knocked down by a blow. She is rendered 'unconscious.' She is kicked and told she is a faker… A faucet is running in the

kitchen. A car is passing in the street outside. The engram contains a running record of all these perceptions" [Hubbard, #7456]. Later words, sounds or smells similar to those in the engram "restimulate" it and produce aberration or illness. Hubbard holds that the reactive mind had survival value for the fighter "half out on his feet" or "the burned man who drags himself out of the fire" [Hubbard, #7456]. Therapy, called auditing, takes the patient back through engrams until they lose their charge. The goal is the "Clear", defined in *Dianetics: The Original Thesis* as "an individual who has been cleared of all engrams and engram chains and who has achieved a general Tone 4". In a Clear, Hubbard says, "there are no pain-inducing memories" [Ron Hubbard, Dianetics: The Original Thesis, #63451, glossary; Hubbard, Dianetics, #7456].

The church's edition of *The Original Thesis* closes with a hagiographic "About L. Ron Hubbard". It opens: " 'To really know life,' L. Ron Hubbard wrote, 'you've got to be part of life. You must get down and look, you must get into the nooks and crannies of existence. You have to rub elbows with all kinds and types of men before you can finally establish what he is.' " The same back matter promotes later programmes such as the "Purification Program", presented as Ron's "major discovery" that drug residues "remained in a person's body long after ingested" [Hubbard, Dianetics: The Original Thesis, #63451, "About L. Ron Hubbard"]. A Romanian reader, Alexandra Beatrice Kiseleff, describes Dianetics as "a kind of psychoanalysis that allows someone to exercise a talent without any prior training". She adds that "the general theory of dianetics admits, like Freud, the existence of the subconscious, but while the Freudian subconscious is extremely cunning, being copied from the devil, Hubbard's subconscious is made only of recordings and therefore incapable of understanding the meanings of human actions" [Alexandra Beatrice Kiseleff, Sfidarea Paranormalului, #9649].

From Bestseller to Church, 1949–1953

Corydon's book opens with a compressed history: "In 1949 a broke middle-aged science fiction writer authored a book which became a best seller… Mail arrived at his doorstep by the sack-load, and the money rolled in. In 1952 that author, L. Ron Hubbard, unveiled a more spiritually oriented subject, Scientology. One year later, he founded the Church of Scientology, using his Dianetic following as a base" [Bent Corydon & L. Ron Hubbard Jr., Hubbard, Messiah or Madman?, #5642, Part I]. Willis fills in the gap. After his divorce Hubbard "was broke and desperate. Dianetics had provided his 15 minutes of fame, but it was beginning to fade… He had a book but did not yet have a religion to go with it. Then,

in 1952, Hubbard even lost the rights to Dianetics in bankruptcy proceedings. Thus it was that Scientology was born." Citing Russell Miller, Willis says that Hubbard "first pitched Scientology to 38 people gathered in a room" who, "upon payment of a fee," could rise through levels of teaching [Jim Willis, American Cults, #63203, "The Church of Scientology"].

The commercial side runs through all the critical sources. Goldwag writes: "to argue about whether Scientology is a mental health regimen or a religion is to miss the point. It's a business. By the end of 1950, when Dianetics had sold more than half a million copies, Look magazine noted that Hubbard was charging $500 for the one-month course that auditors were required to take" [Arthur Goldwag, Cults, Conspiracies, and Secret Societies, #73961, "Scientology"]. His entry comes directly after his entry on Anton LaVey's Church of Satan. Breitbart and Ebner call auditing "essentially a confessional" and say Scientology is "the sect that began calling itself a church at conveniently the same time the Internal Revenue Service started demanding tax payments" [Andrew Breitbart & Mark Ebner, Hollywood, Interrupted, #71622, Part III]. Cordon's encyclopedia calls it "the most successful psychotherapy-themed cult of all" and "surely the world's costliest religion". It notes that Hubbard places up to 200 engrams before birth, in a womb he saw as "a very frightening, dangerous place". It sets the official biography against the record. Hubbard is said to have been "trained as a nuclear physicist" and to have "served in all five theaters of the war, winning many medals… crippled and blinded" in 1944, while "[The U.S. Navy says that he saw no combat.]" [L. Cordon, Popular Psychology: An Encyclopedia, #31458, "Dianetics/Scientology"].

The Sea Org and Life Ashore

Willis writes that "by the late 1960s, the IRS was looking into Hubbard's finances. He responded by moving offshore," creating the Sea Organization, "a sort of floating boot camp for what was to become Scientology's clergy". When Mediterranean ports closed to his ships, "he snuck back to Florida and, practically speaking, hid from the IRS for the rest of his life" [Willis, #63203]. Corydon notes that Sea Org recruits "were (and still are) required to sign a billion-year contract." In "The Sea Org Goes Ashore" he describes the move to Clearwater, Florida. The Fort Harrison hotel was bought under the cover name "United Churches". When the *St Petersburg Times* exposed the arrangement, Mayor Cazares opened hearings [Corydon & Hubbard Jr., #5642, ch. 10]. Ashore, the disciplinary "Rehabilitation Project Force" continued, together with an "RPF's RPF" in the hotel's

boiler rooms. Corydon reproduces Tonja Burden's sworn account. She joined at thirteen, was paid "between $2.50 a week and $17.50 a week," described the RPF as a "concentration camp" for "security threats," escaped through an air duct in November 1977, and was later billed "$58,000.00 for auditing" [Corydon & Hubbard Jr., #5642, ch. 10]. In "Souls Turned Inside Out" Corydon examines the E-meter and auditing. "The E-meter is a tool, as are the actions of basic auditing. They can be used as tools to help others… Or they can be used as bait, to lure another into a trap" [Corydon & Hubbard Jr., #5642, ch. 12].

The Guardian's Office, Fair Game and Operation Snow White

The church's intelligence arm, the Guardian's Office (GO), carried out a policy that critics trace to Hubbard's own words. Staton reproduces the HCO policy letter of 18 October 1967: "A suppressive person becomes fair game," and an "enemy may be deprived of property or injured by any means by any Scientologist without any discipline of the Scientologist… may be tricked, sued, lied to, or destroyed" [Jerry Staton, Hollywood, Satanism, Scientology and Suicide, #71559]. Corydon quotes Guardian Order GO 121669 MSH on "Internal Security". Its "Major Target" was "to use any and all means to detect an infiltration, double agent or disaffected staff member… and by any and all means to render null" them [Corydon & Hubbard Jr., #5642, ch. 13].

Corydon's chapter 13, "Snow White and the Scientology 11", relies on an FBI statement drawn largely from the testimony of the operative Michael Meisner. Mary Sue Hubbard and other GO officials later stipulated to it as true. In 1974 Guardian Order 1361 declared "full-scale war on the IRS". Its covert weapons were "the penetration of the IRS Intelligence Division, the IRS Special Services Staff, and the Chief Counsel's Office". The plant Gerald Wolfe ("Silver") took a clerk-typist job. Meisner and another operative "placed the bugging device in a wall socket" of an IRS meeting room and taped "the big pow wow about what to do about us." In the first five months of 1975 the documents copied "totalled some ten feet in height". The operatives forged IRS identity cards and copied files from the office of Assistant U.S. Attorney Nathan Dodell. On 25 May 1975 Mary Sue Hubbard wrote that the strategy was "to use any method at our disposal to win the battle and gain our non-profit status" [Corydon & Hubbard Jr., #5642, ch. 13]. Corydon notes that "among the files stolen were those on then California governor Edmond Brown Jr., Los Angeles mayor Tom Bradley, singer

Frank Sinatra, John Wayne and others". He reports Hubbard's denial, "I learned about it like everyone else, after the fact", and adds that the FBI had labelled Hubbard an "Unindicted Co-conspirator". The church's own commissioned account, Omar Garrison's *Playing Dirty*, portrayed the operation as the work of "freedom fighters". According to Garrison, a government official remarked that it "would have done credit to the intelligence service of a major country" [Corydon & Hubbard Jr., #5642]. After the 1977 FBI raids, "in 1979… 11 senior people in the organization were convicted of obstruction of justice, burglary of government offices, and theft of documents and government property" [Willis, #63203].

The Confidential Cosmology: OT III and Beyond

Above "Clear" lie the "Operating Thetan" (OT) levels. Willis summarises the teaching that humans are immortal "Thetans" who have lived many past lives, and that before arriving on earth they were extraterrestrials. "Some 70 million years ago, Xenu was the ruler of a confederation of planets and was responsible for bringing billions of alien beings to Earth. They were then killed by thermonuclear weapons." This material was disclosed only by former members [Willis, #63203]. Staton's compilation gives the defectors' version of OT III: "75 million years ago, the solution to overpopulation in a space confederacy" was carried out. Staton claims that each leaf on the Sea Org emblem represents one of its planets. The surviving disembodied "body thetans" (bts) and "clusters" attach to human bodies, and "the purpose of auditing at the OT III level… is to contact and audit the bts and clusters so that [they] leave the body." Within the same compilation the figures vary (26 or 76 planets, 75 or 76 million years). Staton states that the church "steadfastly stonewalled and denied OT 3 was OT 3" until court filings in the Fishman/Geertz litigation showed that the "OT 3 that they had denied for 30 years was in fact their real OT 3." He also discusses a disputed "OT 8" document, whose authenticity the church denies [Staton, #71559]. Staton's text must be read on its own terms. It is an anonymous internet compilation titled "The Fable", whose authors state that "no claim is made… that any statement in this fable… is factual" and present it as "allegory". Its value here is as a record of the defector literature and of documents that circulated in litigation [Staton, #71559, "Special Disclaimer"].

Psychiatry, the State and Hollywood

Scientology's hostility to psychiatry has had legislative effects. Abrams's standard ECT textbook cites Burton (1991): "Scientology's vitriolic attacks on psychiatry, psychopharmacology, and ECT are financially motivated." He illustrates "the disproportionate effectiveness of the anti-ECT lobby" with the passage of "the highly restrictive Assembly Bill 4481 for legislating ECT use in California" and the FDA's failed attempt to reclassify ECT devices [R. Abrams, Electroconvulsive Therapy, 4th ed., #37660, ch. 1]. The movement also reached the post-Soviet world. The Russian healer Serghei Lazarev describes taking a Moscow car whose friendly driver promoted Dianetics. He describes feeling his soul "run hopping after this man who promised me money, health, capacity and success". He places the episode in a discussion of "totalitarian sects", from which he says recovery takes "a year and a half" [Serghei Nikolaevici Lazarev, Indrumar de Supravieţuire, #61440, ch. 5].

The tax question was settled in the church's favour. Breitbart and Ebner write: "For decades Scientology fought the IRS, until an odd thing happened in 1993—the IRS capitulated and granted Scientology tax-exempt status after one of the group's high ranking officials had an unscheduled, closed-door meeting with the then head of the IRS" [Breitbart & Ebner, #71622]. Today, Willis notes, it is "a tax-exempt church" holding real estate "worth... hundreds of millions of dollars" under David Miscavige [Willis, #63203]. Its fight with critics continued. Staton reports that "Scientology's 'scorched earth' litigation tactics [Scientology filed 44 lawsuits] drove the Cult Awareness Network into bankruptcy," and that the church then sought to take over its assets (see Chapter 136) [Staton, #71559]. Europe has refused what the IRS granted. Willis notes that Germany calls it "an 'anti-constitutional sect' " and France "a dangerous cult" [Willis, #63203]. The reference shelf records that German domestic intelligence keeps it under observation as an "abusive business masquerading as a religion" [Wikipedia: Scientology in Germany]. In France a 1995 parliamentary report listed it as a cult, MIVILUDES classified it in 2006 as "a dangerous cult," and "seven officials... have been convicted of crimes such as embezzlement, and contribution to suicide" [Wikipedia: Scientology in France].

The celebrity strategy is central to most accounts. Breitbart and Ebner quote John Travolta: "I would say that Scientology put me into the big time." They also report criticism from dyslexia experts of Tom Cruise's public statements on dyslexia [Breitbart & Ebner, #71622]. Staton's compilation discusses Cruise's OT III auditing, and its opening chapters are devoted to "Why Scientology Pursues

Celebrities" [Staton, #71559]. Willis ends with the case for and against: "Some very successful people declare that Scientology is a life-saving religion. Others call it a business. Still others swear it is a cult" [Willis, #63203].

Element	Church's self-presentation	Critics' account
Origin	Research-based "science of mental health" (Hubbard)	Broke sci-fi writer; bankruptcy 1952 (Corydon, Willis)
Hubbard's record	War-wounded explorer, nuclear physicist (official bio)	Navy says no combat (Cordon)
Church status	Religion; IRS exempt since 1993	Took church form to evade tax (Breitbart & Ebner); "a business" (Goldwag)
Discipline	Ethics, RPF as rehabilitation	"Concentration camp" testimony (Burden, in Corydon)
Opponents	Defence against persecution (*Playing Dirty*)	Fair Game, Snow White, CAN litigation (Staton, Corydon)
Cosmology	Confidential OT levels, long denied	Xenu/body thetans per defectors (Willis, Staton)
State recognition	Recognised in the U.S.	"Anti-constitutional sect" (Germany); "dangerous cult" (France)

Key points

- Hubbard's *Dianetics* (1950) holds that engrams recorded by the reactive mind during "unconsciousness" cause aberration, and that auditing produces a "Clear" free of them [Hubbard, #7456; #63451].
- Corydon and Willis trace the move from a bestseller (1950) to Scientology (1952) and a church (1953), after Hubbard lost the Dianetics rights in bankruptcy in 1952 [Corydon & Hubbard Jr., #5642; Willis, #63203].
- Goldwag, Cordon and Breitbart and Ebner stress the commercial side: the $500 auditor course, "the world's costliest religion", and church status adopted when the IRS sought taxes [Goldwag, #73961; Cordon, #31458; Breitbart & Ebner, #71622].

- The Sea Org, with its billion-year contracts and the RPF, appears in Corydon's sources as a regime of strict control [Corydon & Hubbard Jr., #5642].
- Operation Snow White infiltrated the IRS and the Justice Department, bugged an IRS meeting and stole files on public figures. Eleven officials were convicted in 1979, and the FBI called Hubbard an unindicted co-conspirator [Corydon & Hubbard Jr., #5642; Willis, #63203].
- Fair Game (1967) and the confidential OT III cosmology (Xenu, body thetans) come down through defectors and litigation. The church long denied OT III's content, and Staton's compilation describes itself as a "fable" [Willis, #63203; Staton, #71559].
- Scientology campaigned against psychiatry and ECT (Abrams), won U.S. tax exemption in 1993, drove the Cult Awareness Network into bankruptcy, and is treated as a dangerous or anti-constitutional organisation in France and Germany [Abrams, #37660; Breitbart & Ebner, #71622; Staton, #71559; Willis, #63203].

Chapter 131.

Messiahs of the Cold War and the Jesus Revolution: The Unification Church and the Children of God

Two of the best-known new religious movements of the post-war decades took shape at opposite ends of the Pacific world and in very different registers. Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church came out of the divided Korea of the 1950s. It joined a messianic reinterpretation of the Bible to a militant anticommunism, and its critics describe it as a political and business network as much as a church. David Berg's Children of God arose in the hippie communities of late-1960s California. It turned the Jesus Movement's countercultural Christianity into an apocalyptic, anti-American sect whose sexual teachings became its defining controversy. Both centred on a leader who claimed an exceptional role in the end-time drama. Both drew recruits from the same generation of young Westerners. Both met organised opposition from parents, ex-members and governments. This chapter sets out what the library's sources report about each, including an ex-member's insider account, congressional findings, journalists' and encyclopedists' surveys, and scholars who reject the "brainwashing" model. It closes by setting both against Mehran Keshe's claim that the age of messiahs is ending.

The Lord of the Second Advent: Moon's vision and the Divine Principle

The sources differ slightly over the founding vision. Sylvia Browne gives the legend as follows: "one day in 1936, on a Korean mountainside, Jesus Christ appeared to a sixteen-year-old boy and gave him the news that he'd been chosen

by God to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth". Moon "proclaimed himself the messiah, the Second Coming, and/or the Lord of the Second Advent, and, in 1954, established" the church [Browne, End of Days, #42246, "The Unification Church: Sun Myung Moon"]. Jim Willis, following Moon's official biography, dates the vision to "sometime around Easter of 1935". He records that Moon was born in January 1920, joined the Presbyterian Church at ten, studied electrical engineering at Waseda University in Japan from 1941, and founded the Kwang-Ya Church in Pyongyang in 1946. Communist authorities imprisoned him there. According to the official account, UN forces freed him in 1950, after which he walked about 320 miles to Pusan and later founded the Unification Church in Seoul [Willis, American Cults, #63203, "Sun Myung Moon and the Unification Church"]. Willis adds that Moon put off the formal announcement of his messiahship until 1992, when he and his wife Hak Ja Han, whom he had married in 1960, proclaimed themselves the "True Parents" [Willis, American Cults, #63203].

Browne reports that by 1957 Moon had written the 536-page *Divine Principle*, which "he claimed was directly communicated to him by Jesus Christ" and which followers regard as "the third testament of the Bible". Her summary of its Christology is blunt: "Jesus Christ, according to Divine Principle/Sun Myung Moon, was not the son of God or the result of a virgin birth. Jesus's intended purpose was to father perfect children through an approved marriage, but he was crucified before he could accomplish that purpose. Rather than symbolizing redemption for Christians, the cross is actually a symbol of failure, and Jesus never experienced a physical resurrection" [Browne, End of Days, #42246]. She also quotes Moon on himself: "Master here ... is more than any of those people and greater than Jesus himself ... I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end" [Browne, End of Days, #42246].

Willis reconstructs the underlying cosmology. Adam and Eve were to pass through stages of "responsibility" and "perfection" before marrying. Lucifer, jealous, "sexually seduced Eve, who then coerced Adam into premarital sex", so that every later generation inherited a "fallen nature". In Divine Principle's account, John the Baptist failed to proclaim Jesus clearly, and Jesus "was murdered on the cross before he could get married". Numerological parallels then placed the birth of the Lord of the Second Advent in Korea between 1917 and 1930, and Moon was born in 1920 [Willis, American Cults, #63203]. The ritual consequence was the Blessing. The reference shelf describes it as a mass wedding or rededication through which members believe a couple is "removed from the lineage of sinful humanity and engrafted into God's sinless lineage". The first was held for 36 couples in Seoul in 1961, the first large one outside

Korea at Madison Square Garden in 1982, and in 1988 a ceremony matched 2,500 Korean with Japanese members. Many partners met only on the day [Wikipedia: Blessing ceremony of the Unification Church]. Willis notes that ten thousand couples took part at one Seoul event in 2009, and that from the 1990s the Blessing was extended to non-members and even to the dead, among them Confucius, Jesus, Muhammad, Hitler, Stalin and Kim Il Sung [Willis, American Cults, #63203].

Recruitment by concealment: Hassan and Levine

Steven Hassan's *Combatting Cult Mind Control* is the library's main insider source. Hassan was recruited through the "One World Crusade", a front group, and spent two and a half years in the movement as a leader. He describes a 1974 seven-day fast in front of the United Nations during the vote on withdrawing troops from South Korea: "We were personally instructed by Sun Myung Moon not to tell anyone that we were members of the Unification Church or had any political motivation. We established a front group called The American Committee f[or]..." [Hassan, Combatting Cult Mind Control, #64506, ch. 2 "My Life in the Unification Church"]. He also records Moon's failed timetables: the old world was to end and the movement take over in 1960 and then 1967, and World War III was predicted for 1977. "When that didn't happen, all eyes were on 1981 ... When 1981 produced nothing more dramatic for the Unification Church than President Ronald Reagan's inauguration (which Sun Myung Moon himself inexplicably attended), talk had already turned to dates farther ahead" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 5 "Changes in Time Orientation"].

The social psychologist Robert Levine, who calls the church "one of the most successful cults (or progressive religious movements, depending on your point of view)", describes the same concealment from the recruit's side. Of the groups that approached young people, "They didn't say it was the Unification Church of the Reverend Sun Myung Moon. They didn't even say it was a religious group" [Levine, The Power of Persuasion, #60339, "reciprocity of liking"]. He argues that joining "had little to do with Moon's ideology, or even religion at all". Former members described a sequence "more like a seduction": "the pickup, the first date, and the love bomb". He quotes a recruiter who boasted of a staff of "the best 'love-bombers' in the whole world" [Levine, #60339]. Levine places this under the "reciprocity of liking" rule of persuasion.

The political network: KCIA, Kodama and the Fraser Report

Hassan's central charge is that the church "is not only a body of believers but also a political organization with an active political agenda". He relies on the Fraser Report of 31 October 1978, issued by the House Subcommittee on International Organizations under Rep. Donald Fraser. He quotes its account of four English-speaking Korean army officers drawn to Moon in the late 1950s, among them Bo Hi Pak and men later tied to the KCIA. He also quotes "a February 1963 unevaluated CIA report" stating "that Kim Jong Pil had 'organized' the Unification Church while he was KCIA director and has been using the Unification Church as a 'political tool' ". Through Fred Clarkson, he adds the Report's caveat that "organized" is not to be confused with "founded" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 1 "The Many Faces of the Unification Church"]. Hassan writes that had he known of the KCIA connection "or that in 1967 Moon had forged an organizational link with Yoshi Kodama, a leader of the Yakuza, the Japanese organized crime network, I would have never become involved" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 1].

According to Hassan, the Report's eighty-page section on the Moonies found that the organisation "systematically violated U.S. tax, immigration, banking, currency, and Foreign Agents Registration Act laws, as well as state and local laws relating to charity fraud". It "called for an interagency task force to continue to gather evidence and to prosecute Moon and other Unification Church leaders" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 2]. Hassan says he gave the subcommittee *Master Speaks*, Moon's private speeches. One of them, from 1973, reads: "we must have an automatic theocracy to rule the world. So we cannot separate the political field from the religious ... Separation between religion and politics is what Satan likes most" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 1].

Hassan lists the wider empire: enterprises "ranging from ginseng exportation to the manufacture of M-16 rifles"; *The Washington Times*, which he says President Reagan called his favourite newspaper; and CAUSA, founded in 1980, whose antidote to communism, "Godism", Clarkson calls "the Unification Church philosophy without Moonist mythology". Citing a Knight-Ridder report, Hassan also mentions Japanese door-to-door sales of talismans that took in "at least $165 million between 1980 and 1987" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 1]. Willis adds the 1974 Watergate fasts for Nixon, the $42 million film *Inchon*, newspapers on several continents, the 2000 purchase of UPI, more than $1 billion in subsidies to the *Washington Times*, and the 2004 Dirksen Building ceremony at which Moon was crowned "humanity's savior" [Willis, #63203]. The tax case followed. Moon was

indicted on 15 October 1981, convicted in 1982 on false-return and conspiracy counts, and served 13 months of an 18-month sentence at FCI Danbury. Supporters, including Jerry Falwell, Joseph Lowery and a Senate subcommittee under Orrin Hatch, argued that the prosecution was politically motivated and discriminatory [Wikipedia: United States v. Sun Myung Moon].

Lifton's criteria, deprogramming, and the counter-case

Hassan left after a van accident: "After two and a half years as a member of that cult, I was deprogrammed after suffering a serious injury in a van accident" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 2 "Deprogramming: How I Found My Way Back to Myself"]. Reading Robert Lifton, he concluded that "the Moon organization uses all eight of those elements: milieu control, mystical manipulation or planned spontaneity", and the rest [Hassan, #64506, ch. 4 "Understanding Mind Control"]. He later developed non-coercive "exit-counseling" as an alternative to forcible deprogramming, while insisting he knew of no deprogramming "that involved any physical abuse such as beating or rape" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 7].

The opposing scholarly view is represented by Eileen Barker's *The Making of a Moonie* (1984), based on nearly seven years of fieldwork. Barker rejected brainwashing because it explains neither the many who attended and did not join nor voluntary departures: "Moonies are no more likely to stagnate into mindless robots than are their peers who travel to the city on the 8.23 each morning." Laurence Iannaccone summarises her figures. Of recruits who attended two-day retreats, fewer than 25% joined for more than a week and only 5% remained full-time a year later. "Of all those who visited a Moonie centre at least once, not one in two-hundred remained in the movement two years later" [Wikipedia: The Making of a Moonie]. Willis records the church's side as well: Moon "fought 'deprogrammers' who … kidnapped a number of" his followers [Willis, #63203].

David Berg: from Teens for Christ to "grown-up cult"

Willis titles his section "David Berg and the Family International: From Teens for Christ to Grown-up Cult". He describes a ministry begun in the late 1960s among hippies in Huntington Beach, California, "part of the Jesus People movement". In 1969 the group left California because Berg believed an earthquake was

coming. Berg took the name Moses David, and members "dressed in sackcloth and conducted demonstrations across the country, declaring that America had abandoned God" [Willis, #63203]. Goldwag lists the movement's many names, among them Children of God, Jesus Children, Jesus Movement, Revolutionaries for Jesus, Teens for Christ, The Family, The Family of Love and The Family International. He calls Berg "Pentecostalist and premillennialist" and says his teachings on sex "departed radically from his fellow fundamentalists"'. He quotes a Mo Letter: "The Devil hates sex! ... True sex, honest sex, Godly sex.... If you hate sex you are one of the Devil's crowd!" [Goldwag, Cults, Conspiracies, and Secret Societies, #73961, "The Family International"]. The reference shelf adds that Berg wrote nearly 3,000 Mo Letters over 24 years, called himself "King" and "The Last Endtime Prophet", and called the outside world "The System". By the mid-1970s the movement had colonies in an estimated 70 countries [Wikipedia: The Family International].

Flirty Fishing and the abuse allegations

Willis says that FREECOG, "the very first anticult organization in the United States", alleged child abuse and sexual recruitment. Both charges stemmed from "flirty fishing": Berg "encouraged female members of his following to use sex to entice lonely men into the fold". Willis adds that "the sexual freedom he preached drew a number of pedophiles to the group, who preyed upon members' children". In his account, child-protection rules came in by 1983 and Flirty Fishing ended in 1987, and in the 1990s "a series of investigations ... discovered no cases of abuse" [Willis, #63203]. The reference shelf dates the practice to about 1974 to 1987, taking its name from Matthew 4:19. Researcher Bill Bainbridge obtained TFI data giving 223,989 sexual contacts. The Family defended the practice as "bearing witness", while critics such as Susan Raine described its imagery ("HOOKER FOR JESUS") as "saturated with the rhetoric of prostitution". James Chancellor wrote that it became "a primary source of financial support and political protection" [Wikipedia: Flirty Fishing]. A 1994–95 British judgment by Lord Justice Ward found past "abusive sexual practices involving minors" but judged the group safe by 1995 [Wikipedia: The Family International]. Rick Ross offers the harshest assessment: destructive cults "deliberately mandate harm", and he names "the Children of God and polygamist groups, in which minor children have been sexually abused as part of their group beliefs and practice". He reports witnesses calling Berg "a pedophile and voracious sexual predator" and

notes that "The Family leadership has never officially denounced David Berg publicly" [Ross, Cults Inside Out, #62875, chs. 1, 4].

On Berg's death in 1994 his widow Karen Zerby ("Maria") succeeded him and introduced the Love Charter in 1995. The group took the name The Family International in 2004 [Willis, #63203; Wikipedia: The Family International]. Goldwag records the end of Zerby's son Ricky Rodriguez: in 2005 he killed a former caregiver and then himself, leaving a videotape that spoke of "a need for revenge" [Goldwag, #73961].

Comparative politics, and Keshe's counter-messianism

	Unification Church	Children of God / TFI
Founder's claim	Lord of the Second Advent; "True Parents" (1992)	End-time prophet, "Moses David", "King"
Political stance	Militant anticommunism; theocracy (*Master Speaks*)	Anti-American "System" rhetoric; flight from the U.S.
State ties alleged	KCIA, Kodama/Yakuza (Fraser Report via Hassan)	Flirty Fishing "to curry political favor" (Hiebert, via Wikipedia)
Media/economy	*Washington Times*, UPI, CAUSA, Japanese sales	Mo Letters; donations; "escort servicing"
Sexual doctrine	Fall as sexual sin; matched Blessing marriages	"Law of Love"; Flirty Fishing; sexual "sharing"
Main legal outcome	1982 tax conviction	Raids in several countries; 1994–95 UK ruling

The two movements took opposite sides in Cold War politics. Moon put his church at the service of the anticommunist West, which by his account would weaken and fall if it did not fight "the satanic forces of materialistic Communism" [Hassan, #64506, ch. 1]. Berg called on his followers to abandon a doomed America. Mehran Keshe rejects messianic leadership of either kind. In KSW 303 he predicts that religious leaders will "walk out of these bigger statues called, the churches and mosques", leaving "empty structures" kept "as a relic for man to understand how he was abused", and that there will be "no Vatican, Mecca,

or Jerusalem" as objects of worship. The same session summary says that "every individual is their own Messiah" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 303, #378015, "Soul Elevation and the End of Religious Structures"]. In KSW 618 he puts it directly: "We are all Messiahs … every one of us is Messiah of our own Soul" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 618, #378330].

Key points

- Browne dates Moon's vision to 1936 and Willis to Easter 1935. Both record the 1954 founding and Moon's claim to be the Lord of the Second Advent [Browne, #42246; Willis, #63203].
- According to Browne's summary of Divine Principle, Jesus was neither virgin-born nor physically resurrected. His mission was to father perfect children, and the cross is "a symbol of failure". The Blessing mass weddings are meant to graft couples into a sinless lineage [Browne, #42246; Wikipedia: Blessing ceremony of the Unification Church].
- Hassan says Moon personally instructed members to hide their church membership and political motives. Levine reports that recruiters did not even say they were a religious group [Hassan, #64506; Levine, #60339].
- Through the Fraser Report, Hassan alleges KCIA ties, a 1967 link with Yakuza leader Yoshio Kodama, and systematic violations of U.S. law. Moon was convicted of tax offences in 1982, and his supporters called the prosecution political [Hassan, #64506; Wikipedia: United States v. Sun Myung Moon].
- Hassan applies Lifton's eight criteria to the movement. Barker's figures, with fewer than 1 in 200 visitors remaining after two years, are the main counter-argument [Hassan, #64506; Wikipedia: The Making of a Moonie].
- Berg's Children of God went through many names. It is known above all for Flirty Fishing (about 1974–87) and for child-abuse allegations, which Ross places among practices that "deliberately mandate harm" [Goldwag, #73961; Willis, #63203; Ross, #62875].
- Karen Zerby succeeded Berg in 1994, and the movement became The Family International in 2004 [Willis, #63203; Wikipedia: The Family International].
- Keshe rejects messianic leadership outright: churches and mosques will become empty relics, and "every one of us is Messiah of our own Soul" [Keshe, #378015; #378330].

Chapter 132.

Jonestown: The Peoples Temple, Political Power and the White Night of 18 November 1978

On 18 November 1978, at a remote agricultural settlement in north-western Guyana, more than nine hundred followers of the Reverend Jim Jones died, most of them from cyanide mixed into a fruit drink. The reference shelf describes it as the largest loss of American civilian life in a deliberate act before 11 September 2001. A few hours earlier, Temple gunmen had killed Congressman Leo Ryan and members of his party at the Port Kaituma airstrip [Wikipedia: Jonestown]. Few events in the history of new religious movements have produced so many incompatible interpretations. In the dominant American reading, Jonestown is the definitive example of cult mind control and a leader's paranoia. Soviet authors writing in 1987 described a CIA massacre of a socialist commune that wanted to emigrate to the USSR. A third school, represented in the library by Michael Meiers, holds that the settlement was itself a CIA experiment in behaviour control. This chapter sets out these readings side by side, each with the evidence its authors give.

From Indianapolis to San Francisco: a Pentecostal-socialist church

The sources disagree on the founding date. An anonymous psychology handbook says Jones "started a church in 1954 called the Peoples Temple that stressed egalitarian ideals, providing for the poor, and integrating African Americans

into the congregation". It adds that healings and conferences "attracted thousands", and that "in 1960, the organization started a soup kitchen" [Anonymous, Unbrainwashing Yourself, #62457, "The Rise and Fall of the Peoples Temple and Cult Definitions"]. Ben Hubbard writes that "Preacher Jim Jones set up his first Peoples Temple in Indianapolis in 1955" [Hubbard, Poison, #64244, "The Jonestown Massacre"], and the reference shelf also gives 1955 [Wikipedia: Jonestown].

Jim Willis traces the religious genealogy. Jones was a Methodist minister friendly to the Latter Rain healing movement, and William Branham was often his guest at the Laurel Street Tabernacle. "One of Jones's backers for these meetings was the Reverend Orval Lee Jaggers, an editor for William Branham's books and publications. Jaggers ... wrote about the zodiac's influence on Christianity, for instance, and he believed strongly in UFOs. These were both doctrines that became part of the Peoples Temple dogmas" [Willis, American Cults, #63203, "Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple Full Gospel Church"]. Willis says Jones preached racial integration, directed the Indianapolis Human Rights Commission in the early 1960s, and moved the congregation to California in 1965 "because he thought God had told him a nuclear war was coming" [Willis, #63203]. Sylvia Browne describes the doctrinal end-point: "the more he rejected the Bible as a pack of lies and taught that he himself was the messiah, the Second Coming of Christ. Only he, he claimed, stood between his congregation and the imminent destruction of the world in a nuclear holocaust" [Browne, End of Days, #42246, "Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple"].

According to the reference shelf, the Temple practised what it called "apostolic socialism" and preached that "those who remained drugged with the opiate of religion had to be brought to enlightenment – socialism" [Wikipedia: Jonestown]. Its turnout helped George Moscone win the San Francisco mayoralty in 1975, and Moscone then appointed Jones chairman of the city Housing Authority. Jones gained access to Walter Mondale and Rosalynn Carter, and Governor Jerry Brown attended a 1976 testimonial dinner for him [Wikipedia: Jonestown]. Meiers devotes chapters to this period ("Moscone, Milk and Murder"; "Publicity, Provocateuring and Political Power"). He also argues that the Temple "was financed almost exclusively by agencies of the federal government through tax-funded jobs, poverty programs and give-aways" [Meiers, Was Jonestown a CIA Medical Experiment, #62471, Table of Contents; "A California Concentration Camp"]. The Romanian police author Traian Tandin likewise notes that Jones had enjoyed favour with the powerful and headed the "Comisia Locuinţelor" (Housing Commission) before resigning his posts and moving to Guyana [Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557, "Aprecieri nemeritate"].

Guyana, the Concerned Relatives and the "government campaign"

Willis writes that Jones, facing investigations into the diversion of members' income, moved the community in 1977 to Guyana. There he "confiscated their passports", controlled millions of dollars and "staged some rather bizarre rehearsals wherein the people practiced how to conduct a mass suicide" [Willis, #63203]. Browne describes the opposition group: "It was called the Concerned Relatives, and its purpose was to liberate loved ones from the 'concentration camp' of Jonestown and the grip of Jim Jones" [Browne, #42246]. The psychiatrist Joel Dimsdale reports the Temple's reply through its lawyer, Charles Garry: "This is an organized, orchestrated, premeditated government campaign to destroy a politically progressive church." Garry visited the settlement in November 1977 and reported favourably [Dimsdale, Dark Persuasion, #62993, Part II, "Jonestown"]. Dimsdale himself describes residents exhausted by all-night alarms and jungle labour and "required to attend socialism classes two nights a week and take weekly exams", leaving "no time to themselves for that precious and dangerous commodity—individual thought" [Dimsdale, #62993].

The Soviet journalists B. G. Antonov and A. N. Itskov reprint the case made by the Temple's other lawyer. They quote a *Sun Reporter* article of 5 October 1978 in which "Attorney Mark Lane says he has investigated the charges and found them to be false and part of a government-inspired plot to destroy this unique experiment in socialist living". They also reproduce the Temple's list of "reasons behind the conspiracy", including "smear articles", Treasury harassment and bribes offered by agents [Antonov & Itskov, The Jonestown Carnage, #64942, "Mark Lane: Conspiracy Against the Temple"; "Charged"].

The Soviet option

Antonov and Itskov print facsimiles of Temple letters to the Soviet embassy in Georgetown. One is headed "March 17, 1978 … URGENT APPEAL!" and another is dated "March 19, 1978". The Temple wrote that it was "seeking to transfer our endangered assets to a bank within the Soviet Union", so that its resources "would not be confiscated or otherwise expropriated by the enemies of the people". It also declared: "We look to the Soviet Union as our symbolic homeland" [Antonov & Itskov, #64942, "Peoples Temple and the USSR"; "Our Appeal for Help"]. The authors quote testimony that on 17 November a Temple member

"saw the Ryan visit as a method of preventing the emigration of the Jonestown commune to the Soviet Union". They argue that the killings came "43 days after the publication of a report about the forthcoming suit against the US government and about the negotiations on the community's emigration to the Soviet Union" [Antonov & Itskov, #64942, Introduction]. Their book announces itself as "strictly documentary" about "the murder, on November 18, 1978, of 918 US citizens by CIA agents". It refers to weapons "brought by the CIA murderers who had landed at Jonestown", and argues that "the intention of the Temple's members to resettle in the Soviet Union caused serious concern in Washington" [Antonov & Itskov, #64942, Introduction; "Mass Murder"].

18 November 1978

Ryan flew to Guyana on 14 November with his aide Jackie Speier, reporters and relatives [Dimsdale, #62993]. Willis says Jones, fearing their report, "ordered the assassination of the entire entourage, but only Representative Ryan and four others, three of them reporters, were killed" [Willis, #63203]. Antonov and Itskov describe the defectors who left with the party ("the Parks and Boggs families, Vernon Gosney, Monica Bagby, and Larry Layton") and write that on the second plane "Layton ... fired his pistol and killed Monica Bagby and Vernon Gosney" before the gun jammed [Antonov & Itskov, #64942, "With Exclusive Material"]. Here their text departs from the encyclopedic record, which lists the five dead at Port Kaituma as Ryan and four others, Temple defectors among the wounded [Wikipedia: Jonestown].

The means had been rehearsed. Hubbard writes that at earlier White Nights members "were given a red liquid to drink and told it contained a poison that would kill them in 45 minutes. When no one died, Jones explained it was just a rehearsal". He says Jones obtained potassium cyanide with a jeweller's licence, on the claim that he needed it to clean gold [Hubbard, Poison, #64244]. Willis stresses that the drink was "not Kool-Aid, as it happens, but Flavor Aid" [Willis, #63203]. The reference shelf records that Jones and others called the act a "revolutionary suicide" on the death tape, and that "seventy or more individuals at Jonestown were injected with poison". It adds that a third of the victims were minors and that armed guards had orders to shoot anyone who fled [Wikipedia: Jonestown].

Source	Death toll as stated	Characterisation
Willis	913 cultists incl. 304 children, plus Jones (gunshot); with airstrip dead, 918	Mass suicide ordered by Jones
Meiers	"913 former U.S. citizens"	"Mass suicide/murder ritual"; CIA field test
Antonov & Itskov	918 US citizens	Murder "by CIA agents"
Unbrainwashing Yourself	over 900	Massacre
Tandin	925, dated 29 November 1978	Collective suicide on Jones's order
Wikipedia: Jonestown	918 across three sites; 909 at Jonestown	Murder-suicide

Antonov and Itskov reprint a protest describing how officials first announced 409 dead and then "503 additional bodies, supposedly hidden under the 409". They also quote U.S. Air Force Captain John Moscatelli as saying that "it was possible that someone had rearranged the bodies" [Antonov & Itskov, #64942, "New Jersey Protests Against Cremating"]. Tandin, writing from a Romanian police perspective, calls Jones "the most tragic figure" among false prophets. He gives 925 dead on "29 noiembrie 1978" and refers to Ryan as a "senator" [Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557]. These figures and titles differ from the other sources and are reported here as he gives them.

Meiers: the CIA-experiment thesis

Meiers's book is organised as an argument: "Heil Hitler!", "Deep Cover", "From the Cradle to the Company", "Three Countries, Three Commissions", "A California Concentration Camp", "The 'H' File Homicides", "Moscone, Milk and Murder", "Publicity, Provocateuring and Political Power", "The Experiment", and "The White Night". His prologue sets the Nazi Kristallnacht beside the White Night and states the thesis plainly. "Jonestown was a medical field test in mind control designed to evaluate two auspicious behavior modification drugs on a representative cross-section of Black and Native American citizens". He describes three groups of about three hundred: drug A, drug B and a control. Jones then staged "the only definitive test of his control; he asked his followers to commit suicide". Meiers continues: "Jones and several of his top aides were in the

employ of the Central Intelligence Agency at the time of the experiment; making the White Night the first U.S. government sanctioned persecution of a native minority in peacetime" [Meiers, #62471, Prologue]. He gives the Layton family a central role: "No one, not even Jim Jones himself, contributed more to the Jonestown experiment than did the family of Lisa Philip Layton". He also points out that at Larry Layton's trial "defense lawyer, Tony Tamburello said he wanted to find out whether Dwyer was actually a CIA operative in Guyana" [Meiers, #62471, "Deep Cover"]. This is Meiers's thesis; none of the other sources cited in this chapter makes the same claim.

Mind control, memory and meaning

For the anti-cult movement, Jonestown was the decisive event. Hassan dates broad public awareness of cults to the middle and late 1970s and recalls Jonestown, where "Leo J. Ryan and others died". His book's foreword is signed by Margaret Singer, "Recipient of the Leo J. Ryan Memorial Award" [Hassan, Combatting Cult Mind Control, #64506]. Dimsdale treats the settlement as a case study in coercive persuasion within his history of brainwashing [Dimsdale, #62993, Part II]. Willis reads it as a lesson in unchecked charismatic authority: "It was not without reason that the American Founding Fathers built checks and balances" [Willis, #63203].

Catalin Negru's judgment of "revolutionary suicide" is direct: "What happened in Jonestown was not a revolutionary, respectable or inspiring death, but a waste of life and a suicidal massacre instrumented by a delirious mind". He then compares it with the Order of the Solar Temple [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, Part II "Christian Apocalyptic"]. The interpretations divide most sharply on who was responsible. The mind-control school places it with Jones. Antonov and Itskov place it with the U.S. state, which in their account was hostile to a pro-Soviet commune. Meiers places it with a CIA that he says employed Jones.

Key points

- The Peoples Temple began in Indianapolis (1954 in one source, 1955 in Hubbard and Wikipedia) as an integrated, healing-centred church. It later preached "apostolic socialism" and was described in Marxist terms [Unbrainwashing Yourself, #62457; Hubbard, #64244; Wikipedia: Jonestown].

- Willis traces Temple ideas about the zodiac and UFOs to Orval Lee Jaggers, Branham's editor. Browne says Jones came to call the Bible "a pack of lies" and himself the Second Coming [Willis, #63203; Browne, #42246].
- In San Francisco the Temple was a political force. It helped elect Moscone, and Jones chaired the Housing Authority [Wikipedia: Jonestown; Tandin, #23557].
- The Concerned Relatives called Jonestown a "concentration camp". Garry and Mark Lane described a government plot to destroy a progressive church [Browne, #42246; Dimsdale, #62993; Antonov & Itskov, #64942].
- Antonov and Itskov reproduce March 1978 letters to the Soviet ambassador and testimony linking Ryan's visit to the planned emigration. They attribute the 918 deaths to CIA agents [Antonov & Itskov, #64942].
- Willis counts 913 dead, including 304 children, plus Jones, for 918 with the airstrip dead. The drink was Flavor Aid, and White Night rehearsals came first [Willis, #63203; Hubbard, #64244].
- Meiers argues that Jonestown was a CIA behaviour-drug field test, and he raises the question of whether Dwyer was a CIA operative [Meiers, #62471].
- Negru calls the event "a suicidal massacre instrumented by a delirious mind", not a revolutionary death [Negru, #62383].

Chapter 133.

Waco: The Branch Davidians, the Federal Government and the Legacy of Rage

Mount Carmel, the Branch Davidian centre outside Waco, Texas, is the most politically contested case in this part of the study. Its story runs from an Adventist schism of the 1920s and 1930s through the Roden family's leadership to Vernon Howell, who as David Koresh claimed to be the Lamb able to open the Seven Seals of Revelation. It ends with an ATF raid on 28 February 1993, a 51-day FBI siege and a fire on 19 April 1993 in which some seventy-six people died [Guinn, #65191; Willis, #63203]. Two years later to the day, Timothy McVeigh bombed the federal building in Oklahoma City. The library's sources fall into four groups that disagree on almost every critical point: a reference history of the FBI, journalists' narratives (Jeff Guinn, Stephan Talty), the memoir of Koresh's mother Bonnie Haldeman edited by Catherine Wessinger, and conspiracy literature. They disagree over who fired first, how the gas assault was conducted, how the fire began and how the children died. This chapter sets them out side by side.

From the Shepherd's Rod to the Roden succession

Sylvia Browne writes that "in 1919, a man named Victor Houteff joined the Seventh-day Adventist Church" [Browne, End of Days, #42246, ch. 6 "Doomsday Cults"]. Jim Willis dates Houteff's adoption of Adventism to 1918 and gives the rest of the lineage. Houteff was a Bulgarian who left the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, taught Sabbath classes in Los Angeles and published tracts called *The Shepherd's Rod*. He was rejected at the 1929 Adventist convention, and in 1935 he settled 37 followers near Waco at a site they called Mount Carmel. He taught that 144,000 purified believers had to gather before Christ could return. In 1942

he named the group the General Association of Davidian Seventh-day Adventists, after the Davidic kingdom that had to be restored. After Houteff's death in 1955 his widow Florence moved the community to New Mount Carmel. Some 900 people gathered there for 22 April 1959 (Passover), "but nothing happened" [Willis, American Cults, #63203, "David Koresh and the Branch Davidians"].

Willis passes straight from the 1959 disappointment to Howell. The other sources include the Roden family, Benjamin and Lois Roden and their son George, whose Branch faction held Mount Carmel. Haldeman recalls Lois Roden inviting the young Vernon to study there in 1981. She remembers a 1983 visit when "George Roden was up on the podium in the church with a gun strapped to" him, and her memoir has a chapter titled "David Koresh's Shootout with George Roden at Mount Carmel" [Haldeman, Memories of the Branch Davidians, #70974, "David and the Core Group of Branch Davidians Leave Mount Carmel"; table of contents]. The anonymous *The Secret Terrorist* describes the 1987 incident as "a shoot out over the leadership of the Branch Davidians between David Koresh and his followers and George Roden and his followers". Koresh and seven others were tried for attempted murder, and the prosecutor, Vic Feazell, said: "We had no problems. We treated them like human beings rather than storm-trooping the place" [Anonymous, The Secret Terrorist, #79644, ch. 9 "The Waco Massacre"]. Browne describes Howell as "a twenty-two-year-old dyslexic high school dropout and failed rock star" who joined in 1981. By 1990 he "staged a heavily armed takeover of the Mount Carmel Center" and changed his name to David Koresh [Browne, #42246]. Haldeman's notes confirm the name change in 1990 [Haldeman, #70974].

The Lamb, the Seals and the "New Light"

The FBI reference history summarises Koresh's claim: "Howell changed his name to David Koresh, and the Branch Davidians came under his control since he claimed to be the Lamb that would usher in the second coming of Christ" [Anonymous, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, #75514, "Waco"]. Willis writes that Koresh studied the Seven Seals of Revelation and believed he held the key to "releasing fire, blood, and thunder upon the earth". He also records Koresh's sexual privilege: the group "were ordered to practice celibacy. But not Koresh. He was the only one permitted to procreate. ... At one point he had at least 20 wives" [Willis, #63203]. Haldeman's editor gives the doctrinal source: "In 1989 David revealed 'New Light' saying that even the married women of the community were his wives, that he was the only male in the community

who could propagate children, and therefore all the men should be celibate" (citing Wessinger, *How the Millennium Comes Violently*, 82–84). The memoir's appendix prints Koresh's poems [Haldeman, #70974, Notes; Appendix "Poems by David Koresh"]. Guinn reports that Koresh taught that his children "weren't children at all, but rather old, sacred souls from Heaven who returned to earth in the form of infants" [Guinn, Waco, #65191].

The investigation and the media frame

The Secret Terrorist quotes *Newsweek* of 15 March 1993: "officials of the Seventh-day Adventist church heard from colleagues in Sydney that the Branch Davidians were planning a mass suicide for Easter Sunday. About the same time the State Department got word from sources in Australia that Koresh's group was stockpiling arms and planning suicide. State passed it on to the ATF … which began its investigation in June [1992]." The book rejects these warnings as "malicious rumors". It quotes the Waco gun dealer Henry McMahon, who said that in July 1992 Koresh told him to invite the ATF agents out to inspect his purchases, "but the BATF agents declined" [Anonymous, The Secret Terrorist, #79644, ch. 9]. Haldeman's editor stresses the press: "the Waco Tribune-Herald editors were trying to publish their 'Sinful Messiah' series before the raid, and the ATF agents wanted to carry out the raid before the series came out". The series "painted David Koresh as a 'cult leader' and the Branch Davidians as a 'cult' " and "was the first reference for the hordes of reporters" who descended on Waco [Haldeman, #70974, editor's notes].

28 February 1993: the raid

Willis states the outcome: when the ATF tried to serve warrants "a gunfight broke out, resulting in the deaths of four government agents and six Branch Davidians" [Willis, #63203]. Talty's chapter "Hood" follows agent Todd McKeehan, one of the four [Talty, Koresh, #83771, ch. 35]. The 1993 Treasury "Blue Book", as Guinn summarises it, found that the raid "should not have proceeded after the element of surprise was lost". It also found that the raid commanders Phil Chojnacki and Chuck Sarabyn had altered key documents [Guinn, #65191, ch. 38 "After the Siege"]. *The Secret Terrorist* offers a radically different account. It says that "100 BATF agents stormed the compound" and that agents "opened fire with automatic weapons at the front door". It claims, on the basis of Linda

Thompson's video *Waco, the Big Lie*, that the four dead agents "were killed by their own people" and that all four had been Bill Clinton's bodyguards. It adds that Wayne Martin's 911 call ("We're getting shot at. We're getting killed") went unanswered [Anonymous, The Secret Terrorist, #79644]. In the Romanian literature, Traian Tandin describes the raiders as a local police team that expected a routine weapons check and found "infernul". In his account Koresh, warned by an anonymous telephone call, "decided to unleash the 'Apocalypse' " [Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557, "Secta davidienilor înfruntă America"].

The siege: negotiation versus pressure

Talty opens his book on 28 March 1993, when "David Koresh was in a bitter mood" [Talty, #83771, Prologue]. Willis describes the FBI's methods as cutting supply lines, "blasting loud rock music toward the compound all day and all night" and shining spotlights. He argues that this unwittingly re-enacted the signs Koresh had preached from Revelation 8 [Willis, #63203]. Haldeman's editor cites "an interpretive log of the siege events compiled by James Tabor", which "demonstrates that every time Branch Davidian adults came out, the FBI punished them by increasing the psychological warfare". She describes tanks making "menacing maneuvers", drivers making "insulting gestures" and electricity being cut [Haldeman, #70974, editor's notes]. Guinn quotes Jeff Jamar's later admission to *Time*: "There was never any real negotiations. We stayed in touch to avoid provocation" [Guinn, #65191, ch. 38]. The scholars Tabor and J. Phillip Arnold, whom Koresh trusted, received his unfinished Seven Seals manuscript. Willis reports *Newsweek*'s verdict that it was "a serious exegesis, carefully organized and reasoned" [Willis, #63203; Guinn, #65191, ch. 37].

19 April 1993: gas, fire and the dead

The FBI history gives the official sequence. "By early April, frustrated bureau officials concluded the standoff … could last indefinitely". They drafted a plan "to slowly inject the gas over forty-eight hours, allowing the Davidians to exit. Attorney General Janet Reno … initially rejected the plan but finally approved it on April 17". On 19 April "a bureau combat engineering vehicle began inserting the gas at 6:00 a.m." and "Davidians deliberately set fires and discharged guns" [Anonymous, The FBI, #75514]. Haldeman's editor adds that the plan gave on-site commanders "the discretion to speed up the assault" if fired upon. She also

quotes the FLIR soundtrack. At 12:35 p.m. HRT commander Dick Rogers radioed that agents were trying to reach the buried bus to rescue the children, and Jamar replied: "No one else, I hope." Several FLIR experts concluded that flashes on the film "indicated gunfire was directed toward the back of the residence" [Haldeman, #70974, Notes to p. 80]. Talty's chapter "Gas" draws on negotiation tape #245, which opens with "Steve? This is Byron Sage", and on Rogers radioing "his okay" to escalate [Talty, #83771, ch. 48].

Guinn reports that nine adults escaped, some "had traces of accelerant … on their clothes or shoes", and firefighters were held back about ten minutes. The Tarrant County autopsy found that Koresh died of a "gunshot wound of mid-forehead" and concluded "Schneider shot Koresh, then himself". "Some Branch Davidians died of gunshot wounds rather than burning or smoke inhalation. One child was stabbed to death." On the deaths he writes: "There is no way to be certain." He also suggests a theological motive for the fire: a "wall of fire round about" (Zechariah 2:5) as a holy barrier [Guinn, #65191, ch. 37 "To Die in Flames"].

Source	Toll inside, 19 April	Children	Cause of fire
Guinn	76 (53 adults, 23 children), plus 2 newborns; 82 Davidians in all with 28 Feb	14 of Koresh's own	Davidians, with possible scriptural motive; FBI pyrotechnics admitted 1999
Willis	76 incl. 25 children and 2 pregnant women	—	2000 Justice inquiry: sect started it; others call it biased
FBI history	—	—	"Davidians deliberately set fires"
Haldeman	Lost 14 grandchildren, incl. 2 in utero	—	FLIR gunfire claim; buried-bus rescue
The Secret Terrorist	"Nearly 100"	"burned black"	Government "murdered" them with tanks, flame-throwers, CS gas

Bonnie Haldeman "lost fourteen grandchildren in the fire at Mount Carmel on April 19, 1993, including two babies in utero" [Haldeman, #70974, editor's text].

The question of pyrotechnics changed the official record. Guinn writes that Reno had testified that she had "assurances that the [CS] gas and its means of use were not pyrotechnic", while Rogers, "the man who approved the use of combustible military rounds", sat behind her. In 1999 the Justice Department "first denied, then admitted" two pyrotechnic rounds. Special Counsel John Danforth's 2000 interim report then declared, "The blame rests squarely on the shoulders of David Koresh. This is not a close call", yet found the earlier failure to disclose the rounds "clearly negligent". Guinn concludes: "It has never been definitively resolved whether … the FBI fired guns into Mount Carmel or not" [Guinn, #65191, ch. 38]. Willis notes that the event is called " 'the Waco Siege' by some, 'the Waco Massacre' by others" [Willis, #63203].

Trials and the legacy of rage

Haldeman's memoir includes chapters on the "1994 Criminal Trial" and "2000 Civil Trial" [Haldeman, #70974, contents]. Guinn records the outcomes. In 1994 the jury acquitted all eleven defendants of conspiracy to murder federal agents. Judge Walter Smith nonetheless imposed forty-year sentences, which the Supreme Court later found excessive. In 2000 Smith dismissed the wrongful-death suit, holding that "there was nothing reasonable about the adult Davidians' behavior" [Guinn, #65191, ch. 38].

Guinn's photo caption makes the link to what followed: McVeigh, photographed on his car among protestors during the siege, "blew up a federal building in Oklahoma City" on 19 April 1995, "a lethal indication that events in Waco spawned a lasting legacy of rage". Guinn also reports McVeigh watching the fire on television and saying, "What is this? What has America become?" [Guinn, #65191, photo 16; ch. 37]. Willis connects Ruby Ridge and Waco to the bombing and to "the modern-day American militia movement" [Willis, #63203]. Elsewhere he recounts the 19 April 1985 federal siege of the Covenant, Sword, and the Arm of the Lord compound [Willis, #63203]. *The Secret Terrorist* goes furthest. It calls Bill Clinton a "Jesuit" and argues that "the Jesuits used their man, Bill Clinton, to instigate and carry out the destruction at Waco" so as to pass gun laws and warn people away from independent churches that identify the papacy as the Antichrist [Anonymous, The Secret Terrorist, #79644, ch. 9]. This is that book's own thesis, and it is reported here as such.

Key points

- Browne dates Houteff's Adventism to 1919 and Willis to 1918. The Shepherd's Rod led to the Davidians (1942) and, through the Rodens, to Howell. Howell's armed 1987 confrontation with George Roden preceded his 1990 renaming as David Koresh [Browne, #42246; Willis, #63203; Haldeman, #70974; The Secret Terrorist, #79644].
- The FBI history records Koresh's claim to be "the Lamb" who would usher in the Second Coming. Haldeman's editor dates the "New Light" plural-wives doctrine to 1989 [The FBI, #75514; Haldeman, #70974].
- *Newsweek*, as quoted in *The Secret Terrorist*, reported Australian warnings of a planned Easter mass suicide and of arms stockpiling, which the State Department passed to the ATF in June 1992. The "Sinful Messiah" series shaped how the press framed the siege [The Secret Terrorist, #79644; Haldeman, #70974].
- On 28 February four ATF agents and six Davidians died. Who fired first remains disputed, and *The Secret Terrorist* claims that the agents were killed by friendly fire [Willis, #63203; Guinn, #65191; The Secret Terrorist, #79644].
- Reno approved a 48-hour gas plan on 17 April, with discretion to accelerate. Insertion began at 6:00 a.m. on 19 April, and FLIR recordings and alleged gunfire remain contested [The FBI, #75514; Haldeman, #70974; Talty, #83771].
- Guinn counts 76 dead inside plus two newborns, some of whom died of gunshot wounds. Bonnie Haldeman lost fourteen grandchildren. Danforth blamed Koresh, but the FBI's pyrotechnic rounds were concealed until 1999 [Guinn, #65191; Haldeman, #70974].
- Waco fed the militia movement and McVeigh's Oklahoma City bombing on the second anniversary. *The Secret Terrorist* reads it as a Jesuit operation [Guinn, #65191; Willis, #63203; The Secret Terrorist, #79644].

Chapter 134.

Apocalypse Enacted: Aum Shinrikyo's War on Japan and the Transits of the Order of the Solar Temple

Most millenarian movements wait for the end of the world. Two movements of the 1990s acted on it instead. Shoko Asahara's Aum Shinrikyo built a counter-state, stood for parliament, made nerve agents and on 20 March 1995 released sarin on the Tokyo subway. The Order of the Solar Temple (OTS) of Joseph Di Mambro and Luc Jouret claimed Templar and Rosicrucian descent. Between 1994 and 1997 it ended in murders and suicides that its own texts called "transits." This chapter compares the library's accounts of both groups with a precedent: the Rajneeshee salmonella attack of 1984. The sources come from three directions. Cult studies supply Willis, Ross and Goldwag. The weapons and toxicology literature supplies Budowle, Gupta, the *Weapons of Mass Destruction* encyclopedia and Lax. Romanian police writing supplies Tandin. Their numbers differ, and the differences are recorded.

Asahara and the making of "Supreme Truth"

Willis begins with poverty: "Asahara was born into a very poor family. He was partially blind, and as a child he attended a boarding school that worked with students whose sight was impaired. While there, he gained a reputation as a bully who dominated other students and was involved in a series of scams." Afterwards he ran "an acupuncture salon that specialized in dubious cures," and "by 1986 he was traveling throughout the Himalayas, searching for enlightenment" [Willis, American Cults, #63203, Introduction]. Hubbard gives the civil identity:

"born Chizuo Matsumoto in 1955," he "founded the doomsday cult Aum Shinrikyo in 1987" [Hubbard, Poison, #64244, box "Shoko Asahara"]. A case study by Kaufmann and Keim in Budowle's *Microbial Forensics* adds more detail. Asahara had infantile glaucoma. He "purportedly felt abandoned by his family," which may explain the later Aum rule that members cut off their parents. His "stated ambitions included becoming the leader of a robot kingdom or the Prime Minister of Japan." He was arrested for selling a tangerine-peel "miracle drug," joined Agon Shu in 1981, and founded the yoga club Aum Shinsen in 1984. He renamed it Aum Shinrikyo after visiting India in 1986-87, and it was recognised as a religion in 1989 [Budowle (ed.), Microbial Forensics, #29475, ch. 1].

Willis treats the doctrine in layers. Asahara combined "mystical Buddhism and various forms of Hinduism" with "a dollop of regimented and vigorous yoga." Willis argues, however, that "only after he discovered Christianity and its doctrines concerning Armageddon ... his enterprise began to form into what can only be called a cult." It then sold "electrode caps and astral teleporters" and "Magic DNA" [Willis, #63203, Introduction]. Ross adds Nostradamus. He reports that in 1992 Asahara declared himself "Christ" and "Lamb of God." He also says Asahara warned of plots by "Jews, Freemasons, and rival Japanese religions" and named the United States as the "Beast" of Revelation [Ross, Cults Inside Out, #62875, ch. 1]. Goldwag calls Aum "a syncretic religion that mixed elements of Buddhism, Hinduism, and apocalyptic Christianity," whose founder "claimed to be the reincarnation of the god Shiva" [Goldwag, Cults, Conspiracies, and Secret Societies, #73961, "Aum Shinrikyo"].

The shadow state: elections, ministries, weapons

Kaufmann and Keim describe "a complex organizational structure consisting of 22 ministries." They conclude: "In effect, the Aum Shinrikyo assumed the form of a shadow government, which could supplant the existent Japanese government if Asahara's ambitions were fulfilled." In 1990, with "membership in the tens of thousands" and "300 million to a billion dollars," Aum fielded "25 candidates for the national elections." None succeeded, and Asahara "believed that the Japanese government had cheated him." After this defeat he "initiated development of chemical and biological weapons" to hasten the prophesied catastrophes [Budowle (ed.), #29475, ch. 1]. Lax independently describes structures "that mirrored the Japanese government" and an aim of "control of Japan and a place in world politics against the USA" [Lax, Toxin, #34188, "Deviant biology"]. The

WMD encyclopedia concludes that "Aum Shinrikyo blended a 'new religion' veneer with a political core that was characteristic of traditional terrorism." In its account the attacks were run by a small cadre "under the direct control of the central leadership," and the group also sought uranium and Russian laser technology [Croddy & Wirtz (eds.), Weapons of Mass Destruction, #363309, Part I].

The biological programme failed. In the Kameido incident of July 1993, Aum sprayed an anthrax aerosol from its headquarters roof, intending "to trigger an inhalational anthrax epidemic and a subsequent world war." Samples tested in 2000 matched the harmless Sterne vaccine strain [Budowle (ed.), #29475, ch. 1]. Lax adds that Aum sprayed botulinum toxin from trucks from 1990 onwards and sent a 1992 "African Salvation Tour" to Zaire, possibly to obtain Ebola. He cites Ian Reader's view that the authorities hesitated for fear "of being accused of persecuting religious groups" [Lax, #34188].

From Sakamoto to Kasumigaseki

Ross writes that "in 1989 Shoko Asahara, Aum's leader, had ordered the abduction and murder of an anti-Aum lawyer, his wife, and his infant son." He adds that in June 1994 sarin in Matsumoto killed seven residents [Ross, #62875, ch. 1]. The reference shelf names the lawyer, Tsutsumi Sakamoto, and says he had threatened a lawsuit that could bankrupt the group [Wikipedia: Aum Shinrikyo]. Kaufmann and Keim describe Matsumoto as an attempt on judges in a land dispute that doubled as a field test, with "311 known casualties … including seven deaths" [Budowle (ed.), #29475, ch. 1].

The toxicology handbook gives this outline of the Tokyo attack: "The attack took place during the morning rush hour, about 8:00 am, on March 20, 1995 … to distract police from carrying out a raid on the cult's headquarters. The terrorist target was government buildings in Kasumigaseki" [Gupta (ed.), Handbook of Toxicology of Chemical Warfare Agents, #27803, ch. 3]. Willis has five attackers boarding five trains that converged on Kasumigaseki [Willis, #63203, Introduction]. Hubbard gives the motive: "Asahara hoped to kill thousands of people and then implicate the United States military" [Hubbard, #64244]. The toll varies by source:

Source	Deaths	Injured
WMD encyclopedia (#363309)	eleven	—
Gupta (ed.) (#27803); Budowle (ed.) (#29475); Lax (#34188)	12	4,000 to 5,500+
Ross (#62875)	four "immediately"	thousands
Wikipedia: Aum Shinrikyo	13	up to 6,000 by some estimates

The encyclopedia notes that "some point to" Tokyo "as an example of the limits of WMD." It also records that "immediately following the sarin nerve agent attack ... cyanide binary devices were discovered in subway restrooms" [Croddy & Wirtz (eds.), #363309]. On treatment, the handbook reports that St Luke's Hospital treated 640 victims with "about 700 ampules of PAM and 2,800 ampules of atropine" [Gupta (ed.), #27803, ch. 4]. Hubbard says the May 1995 raids found a Russian military helicopter, millions in cash and enough sarin precursor "to kill over four million people" [Hubbard, #64244].

Willis counts 189 members indicted and Asahara and 12 others sentenced to hang [Willis, #63203]. Ross criticises the scholars J. Gordon Melton and James Lewis, who flew to Japan at Aum's expense and suggested the group was a victim of "religious persecution" [Ross, #62875, ch. 1]. The reference shelf records that the movement was renamed Aleph and split in 2007 with the creation of Hikari no Wa. Asahara and six followers were hanged on 6 July 2018 and six more on 26 July [Wikipedia: Aum Shinrikyo; Wikipedia: Hikari no Wa].

The Order of the Solar Temple

Tandin says the sect "was founded by Joseph Di Mambro and Luc Jouret in 1984 in the Canadian locality of St. Anne de Beaupré, near Québec." According to him, it was re-founded in Switzerland with Di Mambro, "a recidivist criminal." He alleges that the leaders ran "arms trafficking, clandestine border-crossing for emigrants, drugs, prostitution" [Tandin, Secte criminale, #23557, "Secta 'Templul Soarelui' "]. These are Tandin's allegations, and his chapter contradicts itself on whether the leaders died or fled. Negru places the founding in Geneva. He says the group "took the form of a secret society based on the ideas of the British

occult[ists]" and calls it, like Jonestown, "a suicidal massacre instrumented by a delirious mind" [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, Part II].

Prothero and Callahan describe "a New Age version of a revival of the Knights Templar, with a belief that Jesus would return as a solar god-king." In their account Di Mambro came from the Rosicrucian AMORC, and visions of Jacques de Molay were staged with projectors. Channelled "Polestar" messages told members to "root out their 'terrestrial attraction'," and the group's testament invoked a "Blue Star (related to Sirius' energy)." The authors read this as Marcionite dualism. They link it to Heaven's Gate's comet Hale-Bopp and to Dwight York's claim to have arrived on Comet Bennett [Prothero & Callahan, UFOs, Chemtrails, and Aliens, #73710, ch. 9].

According to the reference shelf, the Dutoit family, including their infant, was killed at Morin-Heights, Québec, on 30 September 1994. On 2-3 October, 23 people died by gunshot at Cheiry and 25 by poison at Granges-sur-Salvan, including Di Mambro and Jouret, 53 dead in all. The sites were then fired by "an automated ignition system triggered by telephone" [Wikipedia: 1994 Solar Temple massacres]. Prothero and Callahan add 16 bodies "arranged in a star formation" in the Vercors (December 1995) and five deaths by fire at Saint-Casimir, Québec (March 1997) [Prothero & Callahan, #73710, ch. 9]. Tandin describes chalets with "a special electronic system" igniting fire "from six different points." For the Vercors deaths, he writes that members "drank a cocktail with poison" and then soaked their clothes in petrol and set them alight. He lists among the dead two Paris policemen, one with his wife and two sons, and "Patrick Vuarnet (27), son of the 1960 Olympic ski champion Jean Vuarnet," who died with his mother Edith [Tandin, #23557].

Comparison with the Rajneeshees

Lax recounts how Ma Anand Sheela and the nurse Ma Anand Puja first poisoned two hostile Wasco County commissioners. Then, "to swing the vote," they spread *Salmonella typhimurium* on "10 salad bars in the Dalles. A total of 751 people became ill." In Lax's judgement Aum "made the Rajneeshees look almost amateurish" [Lax, #34188]. Ross calls Oregon "the first bioterrorism attack in modern American history" [Ross, #62875, ch. 1]. Willis treats it under "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh: Coming to America" [Willis, #63203].

	Rajneeshees (1984)	Aum Shinrikyo (1989-95)	Solar Temple (1994-97)
Doctrine	Neo-Hindu guru movement	Buddhism, yoga, Hinduism, Christian Armageddon	Neo-Templar, Rosicrucian, Sirius
Political aim	Win county elections	Supplant the state	Withdraw from the world
Means	Salmonella	Sarin, VX, anthrax, botulinum	Poison, guns, timed fires
Victims	751 ill	7-8 + 11-13 dead	74 dead, mostly members

Key points

- Willis describes Asahara as poor, partially blind, a school bully and scammer who ran a dubious acupuncture salon; Hubbard gives his birth name and the 1987 founding; Kaufmann and Keim add his glaucoma, his fraud arrest and his stated wish to rule "a robot kingdom." Willis dates the cult turn to his adoption of Christian Armageddon doctrine [Willis, #63203; Hubbard, #64244; Budowle (ed.), #29475].
- Kaufmann and Keim describe Aum as a "shadow government" of 22 ministries that turned to chemical and biological weapons after its 1990 electoral defeat [Budowle (ed.), #29475; Lax, #34188].
- Ross says Asahara ordered the Sakamoto family murders (1989), and Aum's sarin attack on Matsumoto (1994) came before Tokyo [Ross, #62875; Budowle (ed.), #29475].
- Tokyo, 20 March 1995: five trains, aimed at Kasumigaseki, to divert a raid. Sources give 11 to 13 deaths, and Hubbard says Asahara intended to blame the US military [Gupta (ed.), #27803; Willis, #63203; Hubbard, #64244; Croddy & Wirtz (eds.), #363309].
- The WMD literature uses Aum to show the "limits of WMD": its biological attempts failed, the Kameido anthrax being a harmless vaccine strain [Croddy & Wirtz (eds.), #363309; Budowle (ed.), #29475].
- The Solar Temple's neo-Templar, Sirius-oriented "transits" killed 74 people in four episodes; the criminal-enterprise charges are Tandin's [Prothero & Callahan, #73710; Wikipedia: 1994 Solar Temple massacres; Tandin, #23557].

- The Rajneeshee salmonella attack (751 ill) was the precedent for religious bioterror with electoral aims [Lax, #34188; Ross, #62875].

Chapter 135.

Gods from the Sky and Masters of the Inner Planes: Heaven's Gate, UFO Religions, the New Age, Channeling and the Ascended Masters

From the 1930s onward a family of movements moved the source of revelation away from the biblical God. In its place they put Ascended Masters, channelled entities and extraterrestrial creators: the I AM Activity, the Church Universal and Triumphant, Raël's Elohim, the Aetherius Society and the Crimson Circle's "Tobias." Most produced devotional or therapeutic practice. Heaven's Gate ended with 39 dead at Rancho Santa Fe in March 1997. This chapter sets the movements' own primary texts beside their critics: sceptical scientists, a Christian apocalyptic writer, a psychiatrist of "brainwashing" and a sociologist of millennialism. It closes by comparing them with the extraterrestrial cosmology of Mehran Keshe's Knowledge Seekers Workshops.

The Ascended Master lineage: I AM, Saint Germain and the decree

The I AM Activity describes itself in its own front matter as "the Original, Permanent, and Highest Source of the Ascended Masters' Instruction on the Great Laws of Life, as first offered to the western world by the Ascended Master Saint Germain, through His Accredited Messengers, Mr. and Mrs. Guy W. Ballard. In

the early 1930s the Ballards established Saint Germain Foundation and Saint Germain Press, Inc." It reports that "Hundreds of 'I AM' Temples and Sanctuaries exist throughout the world, where the Teachings are applied in 'I AM' Decree Groups." It says the 1938 discourses "were dictated by the Ascended Masters through Mr. Ballard." Mrs. Ballard's dedication links the practice to politics: "It is our duty to our Country, our Nation, and the world to demand the Sacred Fire's Purity … let us use that Sacred Fire to purify our Nation." The trademark list in the volume shows the vocabulary that later groups would borrow: "Beloved Mighty I AM Presence," "Violet Consuming Flame," "Unfed Flame," "Minute Men of Saint Germain" [Saint Germain Press, Voice of the I AM, #86322, front matter and Dedication].

The reference shelf traces the next branch. Elizabeth Clare Prophet (1939-2009) learned of "the Ascended Masters, Karma, and Reincarnation" from her mother's interest in "Theosophy, the I AM Activity, and Christian Science." She founded the Church Universal and Triumphant, which at its peak had "an estimated 30 to 50 thousand followers." In the late 1980s she predicted nuclear apocalypse, and members stockpiled firearms in a fallout shelter on the church's 30,000-acre Montana compound [Wikipedia: Elizabeth Clare Prophet]. Prothero and Callahan trace the lineage to Theosophy. In their account, Blavatsky and Besant "co-opted" the Buddhist Maitreya, and the figure passed from them to Benjamin Crème's Share International [Prothero & Callahan, UFOs, Chemtrails, and Aliens, #73710, ch. 9 "Praying to Aliens"].

The 1990s Ascension movement and the channelers

Joshua David Stone represents the 1990s "Ascension movement." In letters to students he writes: "The Masters have asked me to help you this day to get you straightened out. I am the Inner Plane Ascended Masters Point Man on Earth." He adds: "I have also been and am one of the Twelve Prophets of Melchizedek on Earth." He describes founding the "Melchizedek Synthesis Light Academy and Ashram" around 1996 [Stone, Initiation & Ascension, #63831, "Letters of Guidance"]. In his ray-psychology compilation, Stone sets the movements in a hierarchy: "Higher Expression: The Ascension Movement and New Age Movement guided by the Ascended Masters; Lower Expression: Churches and religious organizations." His stated goal is to "become the living embodiment of the Mighty I Am Presence on Earth … full-fledged Ascended Masters on Earth." His chapter 10, "Chakra Development and the Issue of Channeling," opens by saying there has been "such an incredible misunderstanding on how the process of

channeling works in the New Age Movement." He argues that an overactive or underactive chakra "skews the channeling process" [Stone, Esoteric Psychology … Vol. II, #62767, chs. 2 and 10].

The Crimson Circle's channelled "Tobias" speaks to followers he calls "Shaumbra." In a session of 4 August 2001 (Romanian translation), Tobias says that "about 2,500 years ago in your human time, the energies were appropriate to bring in what we call the seed of Christ consciousness." He adds that two thousand years ago the Shaumbra incarnated "in Jerusalem, England, Africa, Asia." Of these, "the one you know as Yeshua … received the most attention, but it is all of you who helped bring in the seed." Tobias also tells them, "You are the ones who founded the churches of the world" [Crimson Circle, Seriile Ascensiunii, #82131, "Lecția întâia"]. The Clarity Series ties the same community to Saint Germain, "a master in doing these things," and to an expected "quantum leap" in consciousness on 18 September 2007 [Crimson Circle, Seria Clarității, Shoud 1, #49241].

As a wider cultural current, the New Age is dated by an anonymous Taoist eyesight manual to the 1960s, when "the 'Age of Aquarius' had dawned, and the cultural phenomena were later dubbed 'New Age' "; the manual adds that, drawing on older philosophies and religions, "the New Age concepts in the sixties were hardly new" [Restoring Your Eyesight: A Taoist Approach, #79135]. Prothero and Callahan note how closely UFO religion overlaps with the New Age. Both rely on "extrasensory perception, particularly telepathy, and with it … trance states and channeling," and both are open to new revelation because, unlike Judaism, Christianity and Islam, they have no "completed and closed" canon [Prothero & Callahan, #73710, ch. 9].

Contactee religions: Raël, Aetherius, Unarius and others

Willis summarises Raëlism as "Intelligent Design for Atheists": "There is no God, only the Elohim. They are a group of extraterrestrial scientists who intelligently designed the human race." In 1973 one of them, Yahweh, revealed himself to the French sports-car journalist Claude Vorilhon (b. 1946) and named him Raël. According to Willis, the hybrid prophets include "the Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, and Joseph Smith," and Raël is the fortieth and last. The Elohim are expected to land at an embassy in 2035. In 2002 Clonaid announced a cloned baby "Eve"

who "has never been identified." Raël also tried to found a political party, "la Geniocratie" [Willis, American Cults, #63203, "Raëlians and the Elohim"].

Prothero and Callahan describe the Aetherius Society, whose founder George King channelled "the being Aetherius on Venus" and which places Jesus and the Buddha on Venus. They also cover Ernest Norman's Unarius and Dorothy Martin's "Seekers." They judge that these doctrines show "the same pervasive streak of scientific illiteracy found in popular UFO culture" [Prothero & Callahan, #73710, ch. 9].

Heaven's Gate: containers, vehicles and Hale-Bopp

Ross gives the doctrine in Marshall Applewhite's own words. Applewhite said he was a messenger from an "Evolutionary Kingdom Level Above Human" who had once been Jesus in an "away team." He had now been "incarnated again in ... [a] mature (adult) [body] that had been picked and prepped for [his] current mission." Applewhite told followers he would be "their pivotal link to this higher level," and that only through him could they "shed their human 'containers,' which were only temporary 'vehicles'." Ross lists the group's names in order: "The Two," "Human Individual Metamorphosis," "Te and Do," "Total Overcomers Anonymous," and finally "Heaven's Gate." He also notes that Applewhite and five male followers had themselves castrated, and that meals were called "fuel for the vehicle." Ross quotes the psychiatrist Louis Jolyon West, who judged Applewhite "delusional, sexually repressed and suffering from clinical paranoia" [Ross, Cults Inside Out, #62875, ch. 2].

In Willis's account, "Luciferians" (evil aliens) had corrupted every earthly religion. Hale-Bopp was identified in 1995, and "Applewhite saw the comet as physical proof that a spaceship was coming, hiding from view in the comet's wake." The group's "successful computer business, housed in an exclusive neighborhood in Rancho Santa Fe," produced the video "Beyond Human—The Last Call," with the motto "last chance to evacuate Earth before it's recycled." The bodies were found on 26 March 1997. Willis explains how the group could reject "suicide" and still kill themselves: "Real suicide would consist of not allowing your consciousness to leave your human body in order to ascend" [Willis, #63203, "Heaven's Gate: Help from Above?"]. Prothero and Callahan quote the group's final web statement: Hale-Bopp's approach was "the 'marker' we've been waiting for ... 'graduation' from the Human Evolutionary Level." They trace the founders' self-image to the two witnesses of Revelation 11 [Prothero

& Callahan, #73710, ch. 9]. Dimsdale, a psychiatrist who lived a few miles from the mansion, describes waves of suicide carried out "in an orderly fashion." In each wave, companions placed plastic bags over the heads of sedated members. He discusses the case under the heading "Heaven's Gate: Beliefs or Delusions?" [Dimsdale, Dark Persuasion, #62993, ch. 11].

Interpretive frames: sceptic, Christian, sociologist

Frame	Author	Reading
Sceptical science	Prothero & Callahan (#73710)	UFO religions are syncretic myth built on Theosophy and outdated astronomy; their telepathic revelations cannot be tested
Christian apocalyptic	Horn (#64138)	"UFO-ism … seems to be aimed at preparing the earth for an extraterrestrial 'visitation of the gods,' and, more importantly, at changing the world's religious beliefs"
Psychiatric	Dimsdale (#62993); West via Ross (#62875)	A question of coercive persuasion versus shared delusion
Sociological	Barkun (#63332)	"Improvisational millennialism" fed by a "self-perpetuating domain of stigmatized knowledge," including 1990s alien lore

Horn cites "the thirty-nine members of the Heaven's Gate cult, who committed suicide in Rancho Santa Fe … [and] believed they were being summoned by a UFO trailing the Hale-Bopp" comet as evidence for his thesis [Horn, Nephilim Stargates, #64138]. Barkun argues that because stigmatized knowledge is self-perpetuating, "the raw material for improvisational millennialism will remain plentiful," and he traces the process through the "increasingly bizarre

ideas about UFO aliens that sprang up in the 1990s" [Barkun, A Culture of Conspiracy, #63332].

Keshe's cosmology compared

The Knowledge Seekers Workshops offer their own extraterrestrial cosmology, and its claims are attributed here to Keshe. In KSW 611 (9 October 2025) he says that "this cycle repeats itself every around 3,000 years." In his account, a flying object, the interstellar "3I," which he calls "100% intelligent aircraft," visits the Solar System so that a "new cycle of life will start … The best candidate is and can be the Mars, the Earth and possible Venus." He describes it as a "space caravan" of many races, from which travellers "get on" and "get off" [Keshe, KSW 611, #378323, "Celestial Cycles and UFO Encounters"]. Like Raël, Keshe treats life as seeded from space. Unlike Applewhite, he presents the visitor as a periodic natural-technological event and not as a summons to leave the body.

On ascension, Keshe parts company with both the Ballard-Stone tradition and Heaven's Gate. In KSW 486 he presents the Christian Ascension as clerical invention, saying "people started making up things about him to gain reputation and notoriety." He also says his account "puts an end to the fallacy of ascension," and tells listeners that "every single one of you has a choice of transmutation or ascension" [Keshe, KSW 486, #378198, "Ascension of Christ and Soul Transmutation"; "Transmutation vs. Ascension"]. He does teach that the soul can leave physicality: "Now the soul is outside, and he tells the physicality what to do" [Keshe, KSW 439, #378151]. He frames this through a "Universal Council" and the diversity of UFO "versions" built by different civilisations [Keshe, KSW 433, #378145, "Universal Council, UFO Diversity, and Soul Travel"]. But he rules out what Heaven's Gate did: "Suicide is not allowed, because the soul hasn't reached its maturity … every minute of your life is needed for your Soul to reach its maturity … It's like cutting a flower before it blooms. What was the purpose of planting the flower? Suicide is forbidden" [Keshe, KSW 446, #378158, "Soul Maturity, Divine Punishment"].

	Heaven's Gate	Raëlians	Ascended Masters (I AM, Stone)	Keshe (KSW)
Source of revelation	"Level Above Human" via Ti and Do	Elohim scientists via Raël	Masters via messengers or channels	Keshe's teaching on soul and fields

	Heaven's Gate	Raëlians	Ascended Masters (I AM, Stone)	Keshe (KSW)
Body	"Container"/"vehicle" to shed	Immortality via cloning	Ascension of the purified self	Physicality as servant of the soul; transmutation
Craft	Ship behind Hale-Bopp	Elohim embassy, 2035	Not central	"3I," a 3,000-year cycle
Suicide	Redefined as not leaving	Not taught	Not taught	Expressly forbidden

Key points

- In their own texts, the I AM Activity (Saint Germain Foundation/Press, early 1930s) and Stone's 1990s Ascension movement place "Ascended Masters" above churches, which Stone calls the "Lower Expression" [Voice of the I AM, #86322; Stone, #62767; #63831].
- Channelled communities such as the Crimson Circle recast Christian history: Tobias says the "seed of Christ consciousness" came about 2,500 years ago and that the Shaumbra planted it [Crimson Circle, #82131].
- Raëlism, as Willis summarises it, is atheist intelligent design. Its cloning claim (Clonaid, 2002) has never been verified [Willis, #63203].
- Ross records Applewhite's doctrine of the human "container" and his own "picked and prepped" body. In Willis's account, Hale-Bopp became the sign of a hidden spacecraft, and "suicide" was redefined as failing to leave [Ross, #62875; Willis, #63203].
- Critics read the field in different ways: as myth (Prothero and Callahan), as spiritual deception (Horn), as persuasion or delusion (Dimsdale) and as improvisational millennialism (Barkun) [Prothero & Callahan, #73710; Horn, #64138; Dimsdale, #62993; Barkun, #63332].
- Keshe shares the seeding-from-space motif. He rejects traditional ascension as a clerical fallacy in favour of "transmutation," and he forbids suicide, which separates his teaching from Applewhite's [Keshe, #378323; #378198; #378158].

Chapter 136.

High Control in the Twenty-First Century and the Counter-Movement: NXIVM, Rajneeshpuram, the Anti-Cult Movement and Deprogramming

This final chapter of the part brings the story to the present and turns to the response to cults: parents' associations, deprogrammers, exit counsellors, courts, and the scholars who opposed them all. On the "cult" side the cases include a self-help company (NXIVM), a guru commune in county politics (Rajneeshpuram), a therapy commune, prosperity-gospel churches, QAnon and multi-level marketing. On the response side, coercive deprogramming gave way to voluntary exit counselling, the Cult Awareness Network was destroyed in court, and civil-liberties critics turned on the anti-cult movement itself. The chapter ends with the Keshe Foundation's own statements about religion and "cults," and with its accounts of its opponents.

NXIVM: "Vanguard," DOS and collateral

Jim Willis's account sets out how the company was built. Its Executive Success Program began in 1998 with "a five-day intensive workshop that cost … $2,700," and it "attracted more than 16,000 people over a five-year period" to study "rational inquiry." "Raniere was called 'Vanguard,' and anyone greeting

him had to kiss him on the mouth." Critics were labelled "suppressives" and "Luciferians." In 2017 Raniere created DOS (Willis renders it "Dominus Obsequious Sororium," "Lord over the obedient female companions"). DOS was "a classic pyramid-scheme style" hierarchy of "masters" and "slaves," with Raniere secretly at the top. Recruits had to give "collateral," "everything from nude photographs to damaging gossip." The actress Sarah Edmondson described being blindfolded, held down and told to say "Master, please brand me, it would be an honor." Willis reports that a Brooklyn jury convicted Raniere of "racketeering, sex trafficking, forced labor conspiracy, and wire fraud conspiracy," that Allison Mack and Clare Bronfman pleaded guilty, and that Raniere is "serving a 120-year sentence." He adds that the Dalai Lama "visited the cult in Albany in 2009 and gave it his recommendation" [Willis, American Cults, #63203, "Keith Raniere and NXIVM"].

The reference shelf dates the conviction to 19 June 2019. It records that DOS women "were branded, made to record false confessions, and made to provide nude photographs for blackmail purposes," and that Raniere has continued "to direct a small set of loyal members from his prison cell." It also notes a link with the anti-cult movement discussed below. In *NXIVM Corp. v. Ross Institute* (2003), NXIVM sued the cult investigator Rick Alan Ross for publishing a psychiatrist's assessment of its manual as "expensive brainwashing." The courts held Ross's criticism to be fair use [Wikipedia: NXIVM]. The conspiracy literature took the case up quickly. *Majestic Messages of Disclosure* writes of "violations that Allison Mack and Keith Raniere (Vanguard) were guilty of sex trafficking of Children" [Majestic Messages of Disclosure, #66594]. Fiona Barnett's *Eyes Wide Open* has a section headed "NXIVM = MK-ULTRA" and alleges links to leading politicians [Barnett, Eyes Wide Open, #68782]. These are the authors' own readings and go beyond the trial record.

Rajneeshpuram: a commune in county politics

Rajneeshpuram shows a religious commune entering electoral politics. According to Ross, Rajneesh moved "almost seven thousand" disciples to a ranch near The Dalles in 1981, and they "effectively took over the nearby small town of Antelope." "Hoping to exercise more political power in the region, the Rajneeshies planned to take over Wasco County judgeships and the sheriff's office." In Ross's account the 1984 salmonella poisoning "was part of an organized effort to incapacitate voters," a "preliminary test" before a planned attack on the water supply. Rajneesh was later "fined $400,000 for immigration fraud and deported"

[Ross, Cults Inside Out, #62875, ch. 1]. Lax adds the electoral mechanics: the group bussed in "thousands of homeless people from around the country to vote for their chosen candidates" and poisoned "10 salad bars," leaving 751 people ill [Lax, Toxin, #34188, "Deviant biology"]. Willis treats the episode under "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh: Coming to America" [Willis, #63203].

Willis's wider catalogue

Willis widens the category well beyond religion. In his account the Sullivanians (late 1950s to early 1990s) were a Manhattan psychotherapy commune of some 500 people where "therapists and patients slept together regularly," a "communal bulletin board advertised who the next sexual partners would be," and children were sent to boarding schools [Willis, #63203, "Sullivanians"]. His catalogue also covers Jane Whaley's prosperity-gospel Word of Faith Fellowship, Westboro Baptist Church, Roch Thériault's Ant Hill Kids, the Nuwaubians and QAnon ("a mysterious, cult-like internet presence"). He extends it to multi-level marketing ("Pyramids, Ponzis, and Profits"), "The Dogma of Politics" and "The Cult of Scientism" [Willis, #63203]. His conclusion turns the question round: "Most major world religions began as cults … at the root of every major tradition lies an original cult." If so, "virtually every human organization is, to at least some degree, a cult," and the real question becomes "What's Ahead for Individual Freedom?" [Willis, #63203, "Conclusions"].

Deprogramming: Ted Patrick and the courts

Ross wrote the history of cult intervention from inside it. "Ted Patrick was the first cult deprogrammer, and he originated the term deprogramming in the early 1970s." Patrick had infiltrated the Children of God in 1971 after the group tried to recruit his son. He compared his method to jump-starting a car: "Once we get the mind working, we keep it working long enough so that the person gets in the habit of thinking and making decisions again." "Eventually others copied or adapted Patrick's method … across the United States." Ross quotes Margaret Singer's definition: "Deprogramming is providing members with information about the cult and showing them how their own decision-making power had been taken away from them." Ross also records the legal costs. Court-ordered conservatorships ("kidnapping by court order") were ruled unconstitutional. Patrick was "repeatedly arrested, criminally prosecuted, and imprisoned

on kidnapping charges" and sued "two dozen times." The deprogrammer Galen Kelly was convicted in 1992 after seizing the wrong person, though the conviction was overturned on appeal [Ross, #62875, ch. 6 "History of Cult-Intervention Work"]. The reference shelf adds that Patrick was "charged at least thirteen times and convicted at least three times," including a 1980 conviction in which a Tucson family had paid him $7,500 [Wikipedia: Anti-cult movement].

From deprogramming to exit counselling

Steven Hassan, whom Ross describes as a "former cult deprogrammer," draws the line clearly. Families "think the only available option is 'deprogramming,' without knowing that deprogramming involves forcible a[bduction]." Hassan offers voluntary exit counselling instead, and he warns readers that "most cult groups fear exit-counseling" [Hassan, Combatting Cult Mind Control, #64506, ch. 7 "Exit-Counseling: Freedom Without Coercion"]. Ross records the change of names that followed: "exit counselor," "thought-reform consultant," and his own preferred "cult-intervention specialist." He quotes Conway and Siegelman: "the precarious deprogramming profession was largely eclipsed by … the new generation of cult 'exit counselors' " [Ross, #62875, ch. 6].

	Deprogramming (1970s-80s)	Exit counselling (1980s-)
Consent	Often involuntary; abduction and confinement	Voluntary, family-arranged
Legal status	Repeated prosecutions (Patrick, Kelly, Ross); conservatorships struck down	Lawful
Typical practitioners	Ted Patrick, Galen Kelly	Steven Hassan, Rick Ross (later), Carol Giambalvo
Content (per Singer)	Information about the group and its control methods	The same, without coercion

The word "deprogramming" has since spread into self-help. Richard Grannon applies "the process of deprogramming the cult-style brainwashing" to narcissistic relationships, whether with "a parent, a partner, a boss," and calls such a

relationship "a cult of one" [Grannon, A Cult of One, #63179]. The anonymous *Unbrainwashing Yourself* extends the frame to politics and business. It cites De Beers "effectively monopolizing" the diamond trade and warns that cults "assert control over even the non-moral parts of your life," giving the Yilishen Tianxi Group as an example of one "primarily interested in your money" [Unbrainwashing Yourself, #62457, "Politics"; "Relationships"].

The fall of the Cult Awareness Network

The reference shelf traces the institutional line from FREECOG (1971) through the Citizens Freedom Foundation to the Cult Awareness Network (1984). In 1996 CAN "was sued for its involvement in the deprogramming of a member of the United Pentecostal Church International named Jason Scott … this bankrupted the organization. A group which included a number of Scientologists purchased the 'Cult Awareness Network' name and formed the 'New Cult Awareness Network' " [Wikipedia: Anti-cult movement]. Ross gives the view from inside. In 1991 he took part in the failed attempt to deprogram Scott and was acquitted at the criminal trial. After that, "Kendrick Moxon, a lawyer closely associated with Scientology, reportedly recommended to Scott that he file a civil lawsuit," which produced a judgment of almost $3 million. Scott later said, "I was naïve. I just kind of rode the waves of what they wanted me to do" [Ross, #62875, ch. 6]. A 1990s internet protest file preserved by Jerry Staton urges readers to "keep in mind what Scientology is doing to the largest cult information organization in the United States, which is the Cult Awareness Network (CAN). Scientology has sued them 44 times and has driven them into bankruptcy" [Staton, Hollywood, Satanism, Scientology and Suicide, #71559].

The critics of the critics

The anti-cult movement has its own critics. The reference shelf records that "human-rights organizations (including the ACLU and Human Rights Watch) have criticized deprogramming." NRM sociologists coined "atrocity tales" for apostates' narratives, and Jeffrey Hadden attributed to secular opposition "the unannounced goal of disabling or destroying new religious movements." France's MIVILUDES was criticised for criteria that "could be applied to almost all religions" [Wikipedia: Anti-cult movement]. Ross replies that such scholars

defended Aum Shinrikyo, and that the Solar Temple and Heaven's Gate killed themselves although no one was "persecuting" them [Ross, #62875, chs. 1-2].

A fringe literature built on the brainwashing debate claims vast state programmes of "trauma-based mind control." Cathy O'Brien's *Trance Formation of America* claims she was a victim of "MK-Ultra Project Monarch trauma-based mind control" and asserts that psychiatrist Louis Jolyon West "had worked for the CIA in Project MK Ultra" [O'Brien, Trance Formation of America, #72019]. This is the same West whom Ross cites as an expert on Heaven's Gate. Lebreton presents MK-Ultra as a tool of a "Nameless Religion" [Lebreton, MK ULTRA: Ritual Abuse & Mind Control, #84346], and Jim Keith collects such cases [Keith, Mind Control, World Control, #61941]. These are the authors' claims. Dimsdale describes what is documented: CIA-funded LSD experiments, Frank Olson's death, and Ewen Cameron "drugging, shocking, and brainwashing patients." In his account these programmes produced litigation instead of a usable weapon, and he traces brainwashing's "beleaguered persistence" into the era of social media [Dimsdale, Dark Persuasion, #62993, Parts I and III].

The Keshe Foundation on religion, cults and its opponents

The Knowledge Seekers Workshops address the same debate from inside a new movement, and their claims are attributed here to Keshe. In KSW 303 he predicts that "with the flick of a finger there shall be no Vatican, Mecca, or Jerusalem," because "man stopped worshipping stones and statues," and true worship moves into an inner temple of the "Soul of the Man" [Keshe, KSW 303, #378015]. In KSW 403 he says that "if we are all Messiahs and we all teach the knowledge, … there is no more need for temples, no more need for Mosques, and … churche[s]." The session index summarises it as "We do not imprison soul, religions frighten man from God" [Keshe, KSW 403, #378115]. KSW 357 argues that the Foundation must not become a rigid religious organisation like Christianity or Islam [Keshe, KSW 357, #378069, "Critique of Religious Structures"]. KSW 477 is explicit: "We don't create a cult. We are not a religion. We are a scientific organization … it's your home. It's a home of knowledge" [Keshe, KSW 477, #378189].

Keshe also describes his opponents in terms that recall those of other new movements. In KSW 338 (23 July 2020), after a female staff member left, he warned that a group calling itself "sisters" was "a group of satanic" who had "infiltrated right at the top" and "brought a lot of damage to KF." He called it "a highly organized

satanic organization" and told men to protect their wives and bank accounts [Keshe, KSW 338, #378050, "Caroline and Satanic Cult 'Seven Sisters' "]. In KSW 450 he says that, since certain people left, "we don't see much of the pedophiles in the KF. We got rid of the root" [Keshe, KSW 450, #378162]. In KSW 303 he makes grave criminal allegations against a former associate, Alan Sterling, and against the "Red Circle" [Keshe, KSW 303, #378015]. The transcripts present these as Keshe's own statements and cite no supporting documents. Ross describes cult leaders who claim they are "persecuted," and NXIVM labelled defectors "suppressives" and "Luciferians." Keshe likewise frames defection and opposition as infiltration by hostile forces, even as he denies that his foundation is a cult.

Key points

- Willis records NXIVM as a self-help pyramid ("Vanguard," DOS, branding, "collateral") that ended in Raniere's 2019 racketeering and sex-trafficking conviction and 120-year sentence. Conspiracy writers later recast it as an MK-Ultra or trafficking network [Willis, #63203; Wikipedia: NXIVM; Majestic Messages of Disclosure, #66594; Barnett, #68782].
- Rajneeshpuram is the clearest case of a commune entering electoral politics. In Ross's and Lax's accounts the 1984 salmonella attack was meant to suppress voters in Wasco County [Ross, #62875; Lax, #34188].
- Ross calls Ted Patrick "the first cult deprogrammer." Coercive deprogramming produced repeated prosecutions and was replaced by voluntary exit counselling, which Hassan argues "most cult groups fear" [Ross, #62875; Hassan, #64506].
- The reference shelf and Ross record that the Jason Scott litigation bankrupted the Cult Awareness Network in 1996 and that its name passed to a group including Scientologists [Wikipedia: Anti-cult movement; Ross, #62875].
- Critics, including the ACLU, Human Rights Watch and NRM sociologists, charge the anti-cult movement with violating religious liberty. Willis asks whether "every organization" is a cult [Wikipedia: Anti-cult movement; Willis, #63203].
- The fringe mind-control literature (O'Brien, Lebreton, Keith) builds on documented CIA programmes that Dimsdale describes, but its claims go far beyond his record [O'Brien, #72019; Lebreton, #84346; Keith, #61941; Dimsdale, #62993].

- Keshe declares that his foundation is "not a cult" and that temples, mosques and churches will become unnecessary. He also describes his opponents as "satanic" infiltrators, a pattern seen in other new movements [Keshe, #378015; #378115; #378189; #378050; #378162].

Part XIV.

Religion and Politics

Chapter 137.

From God-King to Divine Right: The Sacral Theology of Rule

Every religious system examined in this book also answers a political question: who may command, and why must others obey? The earliest states placed the ruler inside the sacred order itself, as a god incarnate, a god's son or the chosen servant of the supreme deity. Later traditions made the link conditional (a mandate that Heaven may withdraw) or juridical (a right held from God alone). This chapter follows that line from the pharaoh to the divine right of kings, and it sets out the frame for Part 14. Mainstream historians, a specialist in biblical monotheism, the Traditionalist Julius Evola, the alternative historians Hancock and Bauval, and two unorthodox thinkers, Keshe and Heisman, are set side by side, each attributed.

Egypt: Horus and the son of Amon-Re

Roberts and Westad link royal theology to political unification: "there was something of a consolidation of cults under the god Amon-Re which reflected political consolidation". In this process "the cult of Horus was consolidated with that of Amon-Re, the sun god, of whom the Pharaoh came to be regarded as the incarnation". They add that "it was only under the New Kingdom that the title 'pharaoh' came to be applied personally to the king. Before that it indicated the king's residence and his court." Royal authority was nonetheless old, as the "exaggerated size" of kings on the earliest monuments shows [Roberts & Westad, The Penguin History of the World, #69765, ch. 3].

Hancock and Bauval open chapter 10 of their book, "The Quest of the Horus-King", with a quotation that states their position: "Pharaoh was not mortal but a

god. This was the fundamental concept of Egyptian kingship, that Pharaoh was of divine essence, a god incarnated … It is wrong to speak of the deification of Pharaoh. His divinity was not proclaimed at a certain moment" [Hancock & Bauval, The Message of the Sphinx, #87178, ch. 10]. For them divinity is essence, not promotion, and the idea feeds their alternative chronology of Giza. For Roberts and Westad it is the outcome of a historical merger of cults.

Evola: sacral kingship as the Traditional norm

Julius Evola treats sacred kingship as the norm of all "Traditional" civilisation and modernity as a fall from it. "According to a Far Eastern tradition, the king, as a 'son of heaven' who is believed to have nonhuman origins, enjoys the 'mandate of heaven' (tien ming), which implies the idea of a real and supernatural force" that "acts without acting (wei wu wei)" [Evola, Revolt Against the Modern World, #67630, ch. 2]. In "Initiation and Consecration" he describes the Egyptian rite as an initiation "aimed at arousing the dimension of transcendence in the man who was destined to be king", a "definitive consecration that sanctified this new immortalizing birth and his divine nature and by virtue of which the Egyptian king appeared as the 'son' of the same god". Wherever royal dignity depends on a separate priestly act, he says, "the regal idea occurs in an already weakened form" [Evola, #67630, ch. 10]. This is Evola's metaphysical thesis. Hancock and Bauval see divinity as innate; Evola sees it as a rebirth achieved through initiation.

Achaemenid Iran: by the grace of Auramazda

The Persian evidence links this chapter to the Zoroastrian chapters at the start of the study. Moulton's 1912 lectures take the Old Persian royal inscriptions as the main evidence for "the religion of the early Achaemenian kings". He calls Darius "a man for whom religion was obviously a very real experience" and judges that "if the religion of Darius suggests the Gathas of Zarathushtra, that of his son has its affinities in the 'Seven-chapter' " Yasna. Auramazda is "greatest of bagas" (gods). Later kings add other deities: Artaxerxes III prays "may A[uramazda] and the baga Mithra protect me", and Artaxerxes II at Susa says: "By the grace of Auramazda, Anahita, and Mithra I built this palace" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, pp. 52, 78]. Moulton also reports the objections.

Casartelli compared the absence of Zarathushtra's name from the royal inscriptions to "the entire omission of the name of Buddha in Asoka's Inscriptions", and Gray cited an Egyptian inscription "in which Darius calls himself son of the goddess Neit" [Moulton, #55011]. The Persian king ruled as Ahura Mazda's client at home and could present himself as an Egyptian goddess's son in Egypt.

Ugarit and Israel: the divine household

Mark S. Smith reads West Semitic myth as political ideology. At Ugarit "the divine family is modeled on the royal household in particular. The monarchy represents a royal version of the patriarchal household." Royal ancestor cult extended this status beyond death: "CAT 1.161 invokes blessing in a ritual context involving the deceased heroes and kings, also called 'god' or 'divine' ('il) in 1.113" [Smith, The Origins of Biblical Monotheism, #64008, ch. 3]. Smith cites Guthrie's view that "in Israel holiness attaches to the elite and the monarch … Holiness here is ideology, and designed to serve a particular social system". He qualifies the point, noting that the same mythology could "express political or communal weakness, even desperation", as in Psalm 74 [Smith, #64008].

The Mandate of Heaven: legitimacy that can be lost

In the Chinese doctrine, Heaven "bestows its mandate on a virtuous ruler, called the Son of Heaven". An overthrow showed that the dynasty "had lost the Mandate", and floods and famines were read as signs of Heaven's displeasure. The doctrine did not require noble birth: the Han and Ming were founded by commoners. Its corollary was "the right of rebellion against an unjust ruler", whose classical statement in the *Mencius* "was often edited out". It was first used to justify the Zhou conquest of the Shang [Wikipedia: Mandate of Heaven]. Evola reads *tien ming* as a supernatural force; the historical account describes a conditional grant that success confirms and disaster revokes.

Divine right and absolutism

Medieval kings ruled within the *Res publica Christiana*, where the Church judged whether a king kept natural law and excommunication could void a reign. The

Reformation and the Thirty Years' War "demoted the Church leadership from ultimate political authority and developed the idea of kings as rulers under the authority of God alone" [Wikipedia: Divine right of kings]. James VI wrote the Scottish textbooks of the doctrine in 1597-1598 (*The True Law of Free Monarchies*, *Basilikon Doron*), resting it on the father-child metaphor. As James I he told Parliament in 1610 that "kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself, they are called gods". Bossuet preached before Louis XIV that kings reign by Eternal Wisdom ("*Per me reges regnant*") and that the choice of the king's person "is an effect of its providence" [Wikipedia: Divine right of kings]. Filmer's *Patriarcha* (published 1680) became the target of Locke's *Two Treatises* [Wikipedia: Robert Filmer].

The *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* notes that "the term 'absolutism' first came into use in the nineteenth century". It names "a specific type of monarchy" of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, "the reality of which, however, is only conditionally" matched by the word, and one that dominated Central and Western Europe "(though not England)" [International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, Vol. A-B, #61165, "Absolutism, History of"]. Pels separates the theorists. Bossuet "went much further than Bodin or the Politiques in affirming the immediate divine investiture of absolute royal authority", yet civil law still limited royal discretion. Filmer defended divine right as "a most reasonable and safe theory of property", deriving rule and ownership from one divine right of primogeniture. Hobbes was "another champion of unconditional sovereignty—though not of divine right". Pels sets these against theories granting a "right of resistance and even deposition of the ruling sovereign" [Pels, Property and Power in Social Theory, #5212, ch. 5].

Model	Source of legitimacy	Can it be revoked?
Egyptian pharaoh	Incarnation of Horus / son of Amon-Re	No; divinity is innate (Hancock & Bauval)
Evola's Tradition	Consecration as initiatory rebirth	Only through the decline of Tradition
Achaemenid Persia	Favour of Auramazda (with Mithra, Anahita)	Implicitly, by loss of divine favour
Ugarit / Israel	Divine household; covenant	Prophetic critique could condemn a dynasty
China	Mandate of Heaven (*tianming*)	Yes; shown by rebellion and disaster
Stuart / Bourbon divine right	Direct grant from God	No earthly court may judge the king

Model	Source of legitimacy	Can it be revoked?
Hobbesian sovereign	Covenant of individuals	Not by subjects (unconditional sovereignty)
Popular sovereignty	Consent of the governed	Yes; by election or revolution

Heisman and Keshe: the end of the sacred sovereign

Mitchell Heisman sees the secular state as a new technology performing the old function. "The genealogy of the English-speaking world's political cyborg can be traced to Thomas Hobbes," a materialist "who concluded that life is nothing but motion of limbs" and so became "the architect of one of the earliest designs of a sociobiological cyborg: the Leviathan (1651)". Heisman notes that it appeared as the English Civil War ended [Heisman, suicide note, #38252, "part 945"]. He rejects the Hobbesian individual as a description of human nature: "Eleanor Searle's study of predatory Norman nepotism before 1066 helps demonstrate why Hobbesian theory, if taken as a description of human nature, is wrong" [Heisman, #38252, "part 545"]. The liberal subject, he writes, is " 'free' … when he or she is too scared to question obedience to the authority of the fear of death" [Heisman, #38252].

Mehran Keshe calls for the abolition of kingship as such. In KSW 380 he states: "End of kingship. End of one thinking he is higher than the other as we are all equal in the D of creation", because "the STM [Soul of the Man] is the same in all the dominions" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 380, #378092]. In KSW 198 he claims that "the end of a kingdom is a push from the soul of the man", that once people see "there are no kings, then many become the king of their own souls", and that "with the stroke of the pen I can change kingship … but in a few weeks time you'll find another king" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 198, #377841]. In KSW 428 he announces "the end of the battles of the religions, within one religion" and the "end of kingship … the end of anybody being higher than other", and he calls the British Privy Council an "instigator of many wars" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 428, #378140]. These are his claims as recorded in the workshop transcripts.

Key points

- Roberts and Westad link the pharaoh's status as solar incarnation to a merger of the Horus and Amon-Re cults that followed political consolidation, and note that "pharaoh" meant the palace before the New Kingdom [#69765].
- Hancock and Bauval hold that pharaoh was divine by essence and was never deified [#87178]. Evola holds that he was consecrated into divine sonship, and treats sacral kingship as the norm from which modernity fell [#67630].
- In Moulton's reading of the Achaemenid inscriptions, kings rule and build "by the grace of" Auramazda, later joined by Mithra and Anahita [#55011].
- Smith shows Ugaritic royal ideology modelling the divine household on the royal one, with dead kings called *'il* ("divine") [#64008].
- The Chinese Mandate of Heaven was revocable and carried a right of rebellion. Stuart and Bourbon divine right placed the king beyond every earthly judge [Wikipedia].
- Pels separates the divine right of Bossuet and Filmer from Hobbes's secular unconditional sovereignty. The encyclopedia calls "absolutism" a nineteenth-century label [#5212, #61165].
- Heisman reads Leviathan as the first secular "political cyborg" [#38252]. Keshe claims that all kingship, political and religious, must end because all souls are equal [#378092, #377841, #378140].

Chapter 138.

Pope and Emperor: Investiture, the Papal Monarchy and the Road to Westphalia

In the medieval West the question of who may command took the form of a contest between two institutions, each claiming to hold its authority from God. The papacy claimed supremacy over all Christians, kings included. Emperors and kings claimed that their power was sacred in its own right. From Gregory VII's *Dictatus Papae* of 1075 to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, the contest produced excommunications, depositions, anti-popes, crusades against Christian rulers and, in the end, a European order in which the ruler decided his subjects' religion. The backbone of this chapter is Anna Grzymała-Busse's argument in *Sacred Foundations* that the Church was both a rival of the territorial state and a template for it. Her account is set beside Maurois's history of England, Freeman's intellectual history, the *Encyclopedia of World History* and a Romanian historical sketch of the Thirty Years' War.

Gregory VII and the Dictatus Papae

According to Grzymała-Busse, "the arrival of Pope Gregory VII (r. 1073-1085) heralded a new era of intense reform". "In 1075, Gregory drew up the Dictatus Papae, a collection of twenty-seven papal privileges and prerogatives, including the exclusive right of the pope to use imperial insignia and the insistence that princes kiss the feet of the pope, and the pope's alone." She concludes: "the Dictatus declared that there were no limits to papal authority, either within or beyond the church, and that the papacy was the sole universal authority" [Grzymała-Busse, Sacred Foundations, #62062, ch. 2].

Charles Freeman calls it "the astonishing Dictatus Papae" and emphasises the material stakes, pointing to "Gregory's obsession with the control of church property, the right to which he claimed Constantine had given the church through his Donation". Yet Gregory also claimed "that the emperor had never had the right to the temporal powers he had apparently transferred" [Freeman, The Reopening of the Western Mind, #64786]. Freeman identifies the Donation of Constantine as "a document later discovered to have been forged in the eighth century" [Freeman, #64786]. The forgery was exposed in the fifteenth century by Lorenzo Valla [Wikipedia: Donation of Constantine].

The Investiture Conflict, 1075-1122

The quarrel turned on lay investiture, the right of kings to appoint bishops. The conflict "began after Gregory VII prohibited lay investiture in 1075", and the German king Henry IV "rejected Gregory's authority and insisted on naming his own bishops". There followed "nearly five decades of excommunications, denunciations, and mutual depositions ... spanning the reign of two emperors and six popes". The two sides read the same principles differently: "Gregory VII and his successors insisted this implied the primacy of the sacred, while Henry IV and his followers argued it meant distinct spheres of authority" [Grzymała-Busse, #62062, ch. 2].

The best-known events can be summarised as follows. In January 1076 Henry's bishops at Worms renounced obedience to Gregory and demanded his abdication. Gregory excommunicated and deposed Henry at the Lenten synod of 1076 and released the princes from their oaths. To avoid losing the throne, Henry crossed the Alps in winter and stood as a penitent at the gate of Canossa for three days until Gregory absolved him on 28 January 1077 [Wikipedia: Road to Canossa]. The reconciliation did not hold. "German dukes deposed Henry IV in 1077, and Germany descended into a civil war that spread into Italy in 1080 and lasted for two decades." When "Henry IV again began to name his own bishops ... Gregory VII again excommunicated and deposed him in 1080". Henry took Rome, his troops "pillaged it, and Gregory VII himself fled Rome only to die shortly thereafter". Henry "named a rival pope (the 'Anti-Pope' Clement III), who enthroned Henry as the emperor" [Grzymała-Busse, #62062, ch. 2].

The settlement came in 1122. The *Encyclopedia of World History* reprints both sides of the Concordat of Worms. The emperor declares: "I, Henry, by the grace of God august emperor of the Romans ... do remit to God, and to the holy apostles

of God, Peter and Paul, and to the holy catholic church, all investiture through ring and staff". Pope Calixtus II in turn grants "that the elections of the bishops and abbots of the German kingdom … shall take place in thy presence, without simony and without any violence" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Concordat of Worms"]. Grzymała-Busse summarises the terms: the emperor "could no longer formally invest bishops with their spiritual authority", but "could confer regalia with scepter and receive homage from the elect bishops". She calls it "a compromise, not a resolution" [Grzymała-Busse, #62062, ch. 2].

Grzymała-Busse's thesis: rival and template

Grzymała-Busse records that historians disagree about what the conflict was. Following Maureen Miller (2009), she distinguishes three interpretations. The first sees reform as an attempt to correct abuses, with the papal monarchy as its main result. The second sees lay influence in the Church as the reformers' central concern and the investiture crisis as "a struggle for the right order". A third reading centres on the Church itself [Grzymała-Busse, #62062, ch. 2, n. 12]. Her own argument is that the conflict had three side effects that shaped the European state. First, it made law a political weapon "in lieu of appeals to the divine", and popes and emperors "invested heavily in legal expertise" after the founding of Bologna in 1088. Second, it "empowered nobles against monarchs by affirming that elections, rather than divinely sanctioned ascension, were a legitimate mechanism of leader selection". Third, it fragmented the Holy Roman Empire. "Law, rather than charisma, would increasingly become the organizing principle of European governance. Election, rather than anointment, could legitimate rulers" [Grzymała-Busse, #62062, ch. 2].

On her account this fragmentation was "a deliberate policy of the medieval papacy". Where the Church and rulers fought hardest, in Germany and Italy, no central authority arose until the 1870s. "Where the state was already relatively powerful, and the papacy needed the king's acquiescence, if not support, as in England, state development unfolded with relatively little church" obstruction [Grzymała-Busse, #62062]. In the long run the Church paid for its victory: "when the opportunity of the Great Schism presented itself, the crown subordinated the episcopal mitre", and its ideas and institutions "were adopted enthusiastically and adapted opportunistically by secular rulers, and were then deployed against the church" [Grzymała-Busse, #62062].

England: king, archbishop and pope

André Maurois, in the Romanian translation of his *History of England*, describes the conflict between the Church "reorganised by Gregory VII" and the civil monarchies as inevitable. Gregory's aim was noble: "he wished to reform the Church so as to make it worthy of reforming the world" ("Dorea să reformeze biserica pentru a o face demnă ca ea să reformeze lumea"). Maurois weighs what each side stood to lose: "If the papacy had yielded on investiture, it would have risked seeing the Church in the hands of favourites of the civil power, perhaps even of simoniacs and heretics. If the king had yielded, he would have helped to establish in his own kingdom a rival power over which he would no longer have any authority" [Maurois, Istoria Angliei, #10017]. Grzymała-Busse notes that the papacy let William the Conqueror assert primacy over the English church in 1066 and conceded homage of ecclesiastics to Henry I. This allowed generations of English kings "to retain control over investiture" [Grzymała-Busse, #62062, ch. 2].

The struggle in England moved from appointments to jurisdiction. According to the *Encyclopedia of World History*, in 1163 at the Council of Westminster Henry II sought to try "criminous clerks" who had already been tried in church courts. He then imposed the Constitutions of Clarendon, to which Becket "orally agreed" and the quarrel escalated until 1170, when Becket excommunicated the bishops who had crowned Henry's son [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Becket, Thomas"]. It ended with the archbishop's murder in Canterbury Cathedral that December [Wikipedia: Thomas Becket]. Under the Tudors the Crown completed the subordination. Donnelly records that Henry VII had those granted benefit of clergy "branded on the thumb", and that Henry VIII "declared that anyone accused of murder on a public highway or in church could not claim benefit of clergy", later extending the exclusion to "all murder, piracy, rape, abduction and sacrilege" [Donnelly, The Big Book of Pain, #33280, ch. 8]. Henry VIII's break with Rome and the Acts of Supremacy place him among the rulers associated with the full form of the divine-right doctrine [Wikipedia: Divine right of kings].

Augsburg, the Thirty Years' War and Westphalia

The Reformation split the Empire along confessional lines. In 1555 "Augsburg established the principle of cuius regio, eius religio: a ruler's right to choose the

religious denomination for his people" [Grzymała-Busse, #62062]. The Calvinists were left out, and "for Reformed believers, recognition would come at the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204].

The historical sketch that introduces the Romanian edition of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, written by the editor Virgil Tempeanu, calls the war "the bloody war, apparently religious" ("în aparenţă religios"). It "broke out in Bohemia, where by order of the emperor the Protestant churches just built in the small towns of Braunau and Klostergrab were demolished, although the Protestant confession was legally recognised". Tempeanu stresses the political motives behind the confessional war. The Habsburgs pursued "a central and absolute authority in Germany", relying on the Church and the Jesuits. Catholic France under Richelieu financed Protestant Sweden against the emperor because it feared a united Germany. The peace "restored religious freedom" but confirmed the defeat of imperial unification and left German fragmentation in place until the nineteenth century [Schiller, Wallenstein vol. 1, #24835, introduction by V. Tempeanu]. The *Encyclopedia of World History* records that "the Treaty of Westphalia is signed at Münster on October 24, bringing to an end the Thirty Years' War" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, timeline 1648].

Stage	Date	Outcome for sacred vs secular authority
Dictatus Papae	1075	Papal claim to unlimited universal authority
Canossa	1077	Emperor submits as penitent; later re-deposed (1080)
Concordat of Worms	1122	Spiritual investiture to the pope, regalia and homage to the emperor
Clarendon / Becket	1164-1170	English crown claims jurisdiction over clergy
Henry VIII's supremacy	1530s	National church under the king
Peace of Augsburg	1555	*Cuius regio, eius religio* for Lutherans and Catholics
Peace of Westphalia	1648	Calvinists recognised; religion settled by treaty among sovereigns

Interpreting Westphalia

Two readings of 1648 compete. In "the conventional periodization", Grzymała-Busse writes, "the Treaties of Augsburg (1555) and Westphalia (1648) helped to establish the principle of sovereignty in international relations" [Grzymała-Busse, #62062]. Many scholars of international relations likewise date "Westphalian sovereignty" to 1648. Some historians reply that this view was formed only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries [Wikipedia: Peace of Westphalia]. Grzymała-Busse offers a third reading. The templates of sovereignty, representation and the rule of law were already forged in the medieval rivalry between popes and kings, so Westphalia completed a long subordination rather than inventing the secular state [Grzymała-Busse, #62062]. The *Wikipedia* account of divine right makes a related point. With the papal check removed, Protestant and Catholic kings alike became answerable only to God, and the national churches became instruments of the crown [Wikipedia: Divine right of kings].

Key points

- Grzymała-Busse describes the *Dictatus Papae* (1075) as twenty-seven prerogatives that declared "no limits to papal authority", including the pope's exclusive use of imperial insignia and the kissing of his feet by princes [#62062].
- The Investiture Conflict (1075-1122) set Gregory's "primacy of the sacred" against Henry IV's "distinct spheres of authority". It passed through Canossa (1077), a second deposition (1080), the anti-pope Clement III and Gregory's flight from Rome [#62062; Wikipedia].
- The Concordat of Worms, whose text the *Encyclopedia of World History* reprints, gave spiritual investiture to the pope and regalia and homage to the emperor. Grzymała-Busse calls it "a compromise, not a resolution" [#5204, #62062].
- Freeman ties Gregory's programme to control of church property claimed through the Donation of Constantine, a later-exposed eighth-century forgery [#64786].
- Grzymała-Busse argues that papal rivalry deliberately fragmented Germany and Italy, while England, where the pope needed the king, consolidated early [#62062]. Maurois sets out what pope and king would each have lost by yielding [#10017].

- English kings moved from Clarendon to the Tudor curbs on benefit of clergy and Henry VIII's royal supremacy [#5204, #33280].
- *Cuius regio, eius religio* (1555) and the Westphalian treaties (signed at Münster, 24 October 1648) subordinated confession to the sovereign. Tempeanu calls the war only "apparently religious" [#62062, #5204, #24835].

Chapter 139.

Cross, Crown and Conquest: Religion, Colonialism and the Missions

The papal claim to dispose of kingdoms, examined in the previous chapter, reached its widest extent when Europe crossed the oceans. A pope divided the newly found world between two Catholic crowns. Theologians debated whether its inhabitants were fully human. Missionaries followed the soldiers, and in some cases opposed them. This chapter sets the main sources of the LSN library against each other: an apologetic volume drawn from the Vatican Secret Archives, Michael Kerrigan's critical *Dark History of the Catholic Church*, an anthropological essay on papal bulls, Frank O'Collins's polemical *Almanac of Evil*, Jeff Fynn-Paul's revisionist *Not Stolen*, John Aberth's epidemiological history, the 1904 *Encyclopedia of Missions*, and reference works on Hinduism and African medicine. Casualty figures belong to whoever gives them, and are reported as such.

The bulls of donation

The *Vatican Secret Archives* volume presents the founding document as "Pope Alexander VI's bull Inter Caetera of May 3, 1493, which divided the spheres of influence in the New World between Spain and Portugal". On a 1502 map it shows the boundary drawn by Alexander VI running "about 342 miles west of the Azores", with Spain holding exclusive rights to lands discovered west of it [Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 5]. O'Collins dates the bull to 1493 without a day, and other accounts give 4 May. The discrepancy has a documentary explanation. The pope issued edicts dated both 3 and 4 May 1493, and the bull of 4 May set the line "100 leagues west and south of any of the islands of the Azores or the Cape Verde islands". It remained disputed "whether the pope intended a

'donation' of sovereignty or an infeudation or investiture". The Spanish crown and the conquistadors took it "in the widest possible sense" [Wikipedia: Inter caetera]. Spain and Portugal then moved the line by their own agreement in the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) and divided the world "into exclusive spheres of influence, trade and colonization" [Wikipedia: Christianity and colonialism].

O'Collins, an anti-clerical writer who frames papal history as a criminal indictment, gives the bull its most extreme reading. Entry 92, "Of crimes against humanity (1493)", states that a "papal bull declares church under king Ferdinand is entitled to all land in South America: 'If the Indians refuse, he may quite legally fight them, kill them and enslave them, just as Joshua enslaved the inhabitants of Canaan.' " Entry 93 charges that under Cortés "30,000,000 Aztecs and Mayans die over years" [O'Collins, The Almanac of Evil, #76627, ch. 15, entries 92-93]. These are O'Collins's own figures and characterisations; the entry gives no source reference for the words it quotes from the bull.

Contradictory doctrine: Ostia, Aquinas and Sublimis Deus

The essay on indigenous rights in *Polyphonic Anthropology* argues that papal doctrine pointed in two directions. One line ran from the thirteenth-century canonist known as Ostiensis, the Archbishop of Ostia and author of the *Summa Aurea*, who held "that the heathen peoples had only enjoyed sovereignty until Christ" came. This implied that the pope could distribute their lands. Against him, "the canonist pope Innocent IV, also in the XIII century, had argued that the papacy could not strip the faithful of their domains and jurisdictions ... [and] Thomas Aquinas argued against the Ostian that the coming of Christ had not annulled the chattels and sovereignty of the heathen peoples" [Canevacci (ed.), Polyphonic Anthropology, #31455]. The essay says that Indians were treated as sub-human until "it took a papal bull from Pope Paul III of 1537, Sublimis Deus, to say 'sunt vero homines' " (they are truly men). Another text of Paul III, "the Veritas Ipsa bull of June 9, 1537", placed "the Indians on the same level of humanity as other men, prohibiting slavery" [Canevacci (ed.), #31455].

The Spanish crown's legal instrument of conquest was the *Requerimiento* of 1513, drafted by the jurist Juan López de Palacios Rubios on behalf of Ferdinand II and Joanna of Castile. It declared "Castile's divinely ordained right to take possession of the territories of the New World and to subjugate, exploit and, when necessary, to fight the native inhabitants". It was read aloud to Native Americans, so that

those who resisted could be treated as "defying God's plan". Its precedent was Nicholas V's bull *Dum Diversas* (1452), which allowed Portugal to reduce war-conquered "Saracens, pagans and any other unbelievers" to hereditary slavery [Wikipedia: Spanish Requirement of 1513].

Valladolid, 1550-1551

Kerrigan describes the formal confrontation. "In 1550-51, an important debate was held in Valladolid, then the Spanish capital", between Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda and Bartolomé de las Casas. "Up for discussion was the question of whether the indigenous peoples of 'New Spain' should be considered human, in the way that Europeans were." Kerrigan explains the frame. European opinion had reached "a consensus ... that, while the enslavement of Christians was self-evidently an outrage and the enslavement of anyone less than ideal, in one case slavery could be justified": the case of those who were slaves by nature. "Were such beings to be treated as equals? Or should they be taken under subjection for their own sake? Sepúlveda eloquently argued the latter case. On the contrary, Las Casas maintained, the 'Indians' were entitled to exactly the same treatment as Europeans" [Kerrigan, Dark History of the Catholic Church, #71131].

The *Vatican Secret Archives* volume stresses the Church's defence of the natives. It cites Francisco de Vitoria's Salamanca lectures of 1532, which maintained that the natives had the same rights as other men. It cites Charles V's New Laws of 1542, "prohibiting the enslavement and forced labor of Native Americans". On Valladolid it reports: "After the debate, both sides claimed victory. But the royal court decreed that Las Casas was in the right" [Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 5].

The death toll: atrocity, disease and revision

The critical sources stress deliberate violence. Kerrigan quotes a description of conquistadors who "forced their way into native settlements, slaughtering everyone they found there, including small children, old men, pregnant women", and who "even placed bets on whether they could cut a man in two". He records that, "by their own testimony", Cortés's men killed 30,000 people at Cholula, and that "some 200,000 may have died at Tenochtitlán". He adds that "the worst of

the destruction they brought was quite unwitting – the introduction of germs to which New World natives were not immune" [Kerrigan, #71131]. The *Encyclopedia of World History* reports Las Casas's accusation: "According to the Spanish priest Bartolomé de Las Casas, Alvarado was responsible for the deaths of 4 to 5 million Indians in Guatemala between 1524 and 1540" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204].

Aberth places the collapse within the history of epidemics. He reports that "the latest consensus has coalesced around the idea that disease must interact with other cultural factors, in this case primarily colonial or imperialistic oppression, in order to satisfactorily explain the collapse of Native American societies". He judges that "there is probably nothing to compare with the concerted assault from European colonial powers" on populations already weakened by disease [Aberth, Plagues in World History, #66467].

Fynn-Paul argues against the prevailing narrative. He summarises it as the view that Europeans reduced "the Native peoples nearly to extinction", were "racists who engaged in slavery on a massive scale" and set up "exploitative proto-capitalist trading systems". He replies that "for hundreds of years after the Europeans arrived in America, they harbored no plan to displace the majority of Indigenous people". In most places "the goal was to maintain coastal trading forts", and "in the Black Sea, in West Africa, and in the Portuguese Indian Ocean Empire, these trading forts had only a very limited effect on local peoples" [Fynn-Paul, Not Stolen, #64167, chs. 1, 5].

Source	Stance	Key claim or figure
O'Collins, *Almanac of Evil*	Polemical, anti-clerical	Bull licensed killing and enslaving refusers; 30,000,000 Aztec and Maya dead
Las Casas (via *Encyclopedia of World History*)	Contemporary missionary critic	4-5 million dead in Guatemala under Alvarado, 1524-1540
Kerrigan, *Dark History*	Critical popular history	30,000 killed at Cholula; ~200,000 at Tenochtitlán; germs the worst killer
Vatican Secret Archives	Apologetic	Vitoria, the New Laws and the Valladolid verdict show the Church defending the natives

Source	Stance	Key claim or figure
Polyphonic Anthropology essay	Legal-anthropological	Papal doctrine contradictory: Ostiensis against Aquinas and *Sublimis Deus*
Aberth, *Plagues*	Epidemiological	Disease interacting with colonial oppression
Fynn-Paul, *Not Stolen*	Revisionist	No plan of displacement; trading forts had "very limited effect"

Protestant missions and the British Empire

In Asia the Protestant missions grew together with British power. The *Encyclopedia of Hinduism* records that "a new era began in 1706 with the arrival of the first Protestant missionaries, Lutherans who began their missionary efforts from a base in Tranquebar". It adds that "mission work did not begin in earnest until the early 19th century, when it won the backing of British colonial authorities", and that "the number of conversions was modest". Later Indian church leaders such as V. S. Azariah, the first native Anglican bishop, "criticized Western missionaries for failing to distinguish between the faith they expounded and the Western culture from which they emerged" [Jones & Ryan, Encyclopedia of Hinduism, #42241].

The *Encyclopedia of Missions*, written from inside the movement, states the alliance openly. Early missionaries of one society "had been obliged to go to India by way of America, because passage was denied them in the vessels of the East India Company", and Judson was "driven from Bengal by the East India Company". By the time of writing the entry could say: "In their own sphere of moral and religious influence missionaries have cooperated with English statesmen, and rendered a service of value both to Great Britain and to India. The strange and unwarranted attitude of the old East India Company toward missionary effort has long ago changed, and the value of missions to British interests" was recognised. It forecast that "the year 1910 will witness a Protestant community of more than one million and a quarter in this great empire" [The Encyclopedia of Missions, #64675, "India"].

Africa, India and religious-cultural resistance

In Africa, the essay on African medicine in Selin's *Medicine Across Cultures* states that "new ideas about health were part of this colonialism, ideas that discredited African medical systems. Missionaries and colonial regimes came to evangelize Africa". It notes that healing "cults and shrines have related to Christianity and Islam for centuries" [Selin (ed.), Medicine Across Cultures, #29343, "African Medicine"]. A missionary quoted in the reference literature defined colonialism as "a form of imperialism based on a divine mandate", bringing "the blessings of the Christ-inspired civilization of the West" to peoples "suffering under satanic oppression". Later historians called missionaries "ideological shock troops for colonial invasion", while Lamin Sanneh argued that missions were "far more, and far less" than that charge allows [Wikipedia: Christianity and colonialism].

Colonised peoples also answered with their own religious and cultural programmes. Joseph Alter shows that institutional physical education was "directly linked to the ideology of muscular Christianity". Swami Kuvalayananda (J. G. Gune) began in a gymnastic tradition meant "to promote a form of strong, masculine, assertive anti-colonial nationalism". He then turned yoga into a "scientific" regimen of āsana and prāṇāyāma, which he spread as director of physical education in the Bombay Presidency [Alter, Yoga and Physical Education, #52893]. Christianity's colonial expansion also had an Islamic parallel. Islam spread "through either trade, missionaries, exploration or gradual conversions after conquests" [Wikipedia: Islamic missionary activity].

Key points

- The *Vatican Secret Archives* volume dates *Inter caetera* to 3 May 1493 and others give 4 May. Alexander VI issued bulls on both days, and the 4 May text set a line 100 leagues west of the Azores and Cape Verde, later moved by Tordesillas (1494) [#68123; Wikipedia].
- O'Collins reads the bull as licensing Ferdinand to kill and enslave Indians "as Joshua enslaved the inhabitants of Canaan" and gives 30,000,000 Aztec and Maya dead. These are O'Collins's own figures, given without a source reference in the entry [#76627].

- The *Polyphonic Anthropology* essay shows papal doctrine split between Ostiensis (heathen sovereignty ended with Christ) and Innocent IV, Aquinas and Paul III's *Sublimis Deus* (1537) [#31455].
- At Valladolid (1550-51), according to Kerrigan, Sepúlveda argued for subjecting natural slaves and Las Casas for equal treatment. The *Vatican Secret Archives* volume says the royal court ruled for Las Casas [#71131, #68123].
- Las Casas charged Alvarado with 4-5 million deaths in Guatemala [#5204]. Aberth reports a consensus that disease combined with colonial oppression [#66467]. Fynn-Paul argues that trading forts had "only a very limited effect" and that displacement was never the plan [#64167].
- Protestant missions in India started at Tranquebar in 1706 but grew only with British backing. The *Encyclopedia of Missions* openly praised missionaries for having "cooperated with English statesmen" in Britain's interest [#42241, #64675].
- In Africa missions and colonial regimes discredited indigenous healing systems [#29343]. In India, Kuvalayananda's scientific yoga answered colonial "muscular Christianity" [#52893].

Chapter 140.

Reason Against the Altar: The Enlightenment, the French Revolution and Laïcité

The French Revolution was the first time a European state set out to take apart the public power of Christianity and, briefly, to put a religion of its own making in its place. The library's sources read this break in four ways. For Gustave Le Bon it was a new religion obeying the laws of every faith. For a Catholic-turned-Orthodox polemicist it was the secular offspring of the Reformation. For the Jesuit Augustin Barruel it was a conspiracy. For Mitchell Heisman the whole liberal-secular settlement is disguised Calvinism. This chapter follows the institutional chain from 1790 to 1905, sets French *laïcité* beside the American and European models, and gives each interpretation in its own words.

From the philosophes to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy

According to the reference shelf, secularism "first took shape in France during the French Revolution". The abolition of the Ancien Régime in August 1789 ended ecclesiastical privilege. Article X of the Declaration of the Rights of Man held that "no one may be troubled for his opinions, even religious ones, provided that their expression does not disturb the public order established by law" [Wikipedia: History of secularism in France]. Church property was confiscated, and congregations were suppressed on 13 February 1790. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy (12 July 1790) redrew dioceses along departmental lines and made bishops and priests elected officials. A clerical oath was imposed from January 1791, and Pius VI condemned these principles in March 1791. From 1792

"refractory" priests were treated as suspects, and under the Terror the constitutional Church was "also severely repressed" [Wikipedia: History of secularism in France].

Frank Schaeffer gives the background from an Orthodox-Christian standpoint. His *Dancing Alone* survives in the library only in Romanian and is catalogued under his father, Francis A. Schaeffer, although the title page names Frank. He writes that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries "certain French philosophers began to ridicule all religion, even the idea that the supernatural exists, replacing such religious concepts with what they called 'reason' ". He calls the Enlightenment the secularised "illegitimate child" of scholasticism, the Renaissance and the Reformation, which reduced *Sola Scriptura* to simply "*Sola!*". The philosophes, he argues, "borrowed from Protestantism its subjectively utopian expectations" and moved "the idea of heavenly perfection towards earthly expectations of material and political progress". They also took from the Calvinists "the reductionist-'scientific' approach to reality". Perfection was now to be reached "here, on earth, by any possible means, however bloody" [Schaeffer, Dans de unul singur, #13578, ch. 6 "Iluminismul"].

Dechristianisation and the revolutionary cults

The reference shelf states that the Revolution, though it incited dechristianisation through its representatives on mission, "remained alien to the notion of secularism" and still wanted national unity to rest on a national religion. Hébert's Cult of Reason "prefigures Auguste Comte's Religion of Humanity". Robespierre's Cult of the Supreme Being represented the deist tendency: "The idea of the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul is a continual reminder of justice; it is therefore social and republican." Neither cult won popular support. The repression of priests and the execution of the King (21 January 1793) fed the Chouan revolt and the Vendée war [Wikipedia: History of secularism in France]. The Cult of Reason was "France's first established state-sponsored atheistic religion". It held sway "barely a year" before the Cult of the Supreme Being officially replaced it in 1794 [Wikipedia: Cult of Reason]. The law of 21 January 1795 brought the first full separation: "The Republic does not pay salaries to any cult... The law recognizes no minister" [Wikipedia: History of secularism in France].

Jeffrey Webb places these years in a culture of suspicion that "eventually climaxed in the Reign of Terror". He dates the Terror from early September 1793

to late July 1794, when the government "brought to trial and executed tens of thousands of people—including numerous Catholic priests" [Webb, Conspiracy Theories, #62861, "Conspiracy Theories in the French Revolution"].

Three readings: a new religion, a modern paganism, a conspiracy

Le Bon. The Revolution's violence becomes comprehensible, Le Bon argues, only "if we consider that the French Revolution, constituting a new religion, was bound to obey the laws which condition the propagation of all beliefs. Its fury and its hecatombs will then become intelligible" [Le Bon, The Psychology of Revolution, #364372, Part I, Book I, ch. 2 "Religious Revolutions"]. He credits Tocqueville with seeing that it spread "by means of preaching and propaganda" like a religious revolution [ibid., Part II]. For Le Bon the truth of revolutionary ideas is beside the point: "it is quite useless to seek to discuss… the rational value of revolutionary or political ideas. Only their influence can interest us." He turns the same diagnosis on the anticlericals of his own day. He quotes a portrait of a minister who was a "sectary of the goddess Reason, of whom he has made a Moloch" and concludes: "We must hope for the sake of liberty that these gloomy fanatics will never finally become our masters" [ibid., Part I, Book II, ch. 2 "The Mystic Mentality and the Jacobin Mentality"].

Modern paganism. In *The Bioethics of Regenerative Medicine*, H. Tristram Engelhardt's chapter (note 9) states: "The French Revolution produced a major rupture from and turning against Europe's Christian past (Vovelle, 1991). As such, it was the culmination of the Enlightenment, which constituted a philosophes' rebellion that issued in 'a modern paganism, emancipated from classical thought as much as from Christian dogma' (Gay, 1995)" [Ip (ed.), Bioethics of Regenerative Medicine, #33284, ch. 1]. In the same volume Ping-Cheung Lo follows the next step. He quotes Comte, for whom Positivism "becomes, in the true sense of the word, a Religion… destined therefore to replace all imperfect and provisional systems resting on the primitive basis of theology". He also quotes Feuerbach: "while reducing theology to anthropology, [I] exalt anthropology into theology" [Lo, in Ip (ed.), #33284, ch. 3, "Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity"].

Barruel. Webb presents Barruel's *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* (1797–1798) as "one of the seminal texts in the history of modern conspiracy theories". Barruel was a Jesuit who refused the clerical oath and wrote in exile in England. He blamed a "triple conspiracy" of philosophes, Freemasons and

Bavarian Illuminati, carried out by the Jacobin clubs, and promised to prove that "every thing was foreseen and resolved on, was combined and premeditated". In his account the conspirators, "after having sworn to crush Christ and his altars, bound themselves in a second oath to annihilate all regal power". Webb calls the work "a rather shabby analysis" by modern standards, and "an important starting point" for later Illuminati and Masonic theories [Webb, Conspiracy Theories, #62861, "The Illuminati Conspiracy Theory"; Profiles, "Augustin Barruel"]. (See Chapter 12.)

Concordat, Syllabus and the Separation Law of 1905

Napoleon's Concordat of 1801 recognised Catholicism as the faith of "the vast majority" without making it a state religion. The clergy were salaried and bishops were nominated by the government. The reference shelf judges it "in many respects... more unfavorable to the Church than the Constitution civile du clergé". Pius IX's *Syllabus* (1864) condemned the proposition that "the Church must be separated from the State". The Third Republic expelled the Jesuits (1880) and secularised schooling (1882). Under the 1901 associations law, 30,000 of 160,000 religious chose exile [Wikipedia: History of secularism in France].

The law of 9 December 1905 declares that "The Republic guarantees freedom of conscience" (Art. 1) and "does not recognize, salute or subsidize any religion" (Art. 2). René Viviani boasted: "we extinguished lights in the sky that will never be relit." Pius X called separation "an absolutely false thesis, a very pernicious error" (*Vehementer Nos*). Alsace and Moselle were German in 1905 and remain under the Concordat [Wikipedia: History of secularism in France]. Kugelmann records Rome's wider counter-offensive. *Lamentabili* (July 1907) listed sixty-five condemned propositions, and *Pascendi* condemned Modernism as the "synthesis of all heresies" [Kugelmann, Psychology and Catholicism, #32134].

Comparing the models

Ted Jelen's encyclopedia entry "Church and State" notes that several democracies "provide government support for religious bodies (such as subsidies for schools or clergy salaries), which would be considered a violation of the establishment clause in the United States. Indeed, several European nations have legally established churches." He reports the thesis that such support "results

in a decline in religious membership and practice, since government support reduces the need for churches to attract support". In France and Turkey, *laïcité* "constitutes attempts by the government to reduce or eliminate the presence of religion in the public life of the nation" [Jelen, "Church and State", International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, #5201].

Karen Armstrong holds that "religion played a key role in the creation of the first modern secular republic". After the American Revolution, however, God was mentioned in the state constitutions "only in the most perfunctory manner" and not at all in the federal Constitution [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064]. She calls the French Revolution's legacy "Janus-faced": liberty, equality and fraternity on one side and "a memory of malignant state terrorism" on the other. Her wider thesis is that fundamentalism "exists in a symbiotic relationship with an aggressive liberalism or secularism, and, under attack, invariably becomes more extreme" [ibid.].

Model	Legal basis	Funding of religion	Religion in public life
French *laïcité*	1905 law; 1958 Constitution	None (Alsace-Moselle excepted)	Excluded from the state
United States	First Amendment	Barred	Visible, privately organised
European established churches	Constitutions, concordats	Clergy salaries, school subsidies	Officially recognised
Communist "separation"	Party-state decrees	None; Church subordinated	Atheism as state creed

Adam Michnik, writing from communist Poland, separates two things that share a name. He sees "a fundamental difference between the aspiration toward a laicisation of public life, that is, a situation in which—from the point of view of the State—religion is a private affair of citizens, and the tendency toward atheisation, that is, the liquidation of religion and the Church". The communist decrees sought "not the separation of Church and State, but the subordination of the Church by the State… to form an atheist nation" [Michnik, Scrisori din închisoare, #9364]. This is the bridge to Chapters 5 and 141.

Secular faith versus secularised theology

Christopher Hitchens's subtitle, *How Religion Poisons Everything*, states the militant case. He also corrects the "most popular misquotation of modern times": Marx, he writes, "took belief very seriously" [Hitchens, God Is Not Great, #65383]. Martin Hägglund argues for a "secular faith": "Marx emphasizes that the critique of religion must be accompanied by a critique of the existing forms of our life together". If the poor need God, that is "a reason to abolish slavery and poverty" [Hägglund, This Life, #65982, ch. 6].

Heisman denies that the secular is secular at all. Following John Dunn, he calls Locke, "often… considered the single most important political philosopher behind the ideas of the American Revolution", "basically a Calvinist natural theologian whose Two Treatises… are built on the axiom that 'there exists a benevolent God' ". He concludes that "the formal separation of church and state in America is superficial and misleading. Liberal democracy legalized and institutionalized a neo-Christian moral ethos" [Heisman, suicide note, #38252, part 569]. He also argues that "Christianity economized the ethics of the West", turning "the political arena from the arena of highest human virtue to the arena of the lowest" [Heisman, suicide note, #38252, part 193].

Key points

- The Revolution moved from toleration (1789) to state control of the Church (1790–91), then to the cults of Reason (1793) and the Supreme Being (1794). It first separated church and state in 1795 [Wikipedia: History of secularism in France].
- The Concordat (1801) restored a state-paid Church. The 1905 law ended recognition and subsidy, except in Alsace-Moselle.
- Le Bon reads the Revolution as "a new religion" and warns of secularist "gloomy fanatics" [#364372]. Engelhardt, citing Vovelle and Gay, calls it a rupture issuing in "a modern paganism" [#33284].
- Barruel's *Memoirs* (1797–98), as Webb presents them, founded the philosophe-Masonic-Illuminati account of the Revolution [#62861].
- Frank Schaeffer derives the Enlightenment from Protestant utopianism [#13578]. Heisman derives liberalism from Calvinist natural theology through Locke [#38252].

- Jelen contrasts the US establishment clause with European subsidies and reports that state support may depress religious practice [#5201].
- Michnik separates laicisation from communist atheisation [#9364]. Hägglund grounds a secular faith in Marx [#65982].

Chapter 141.

‘The Opium of the People’: Marxism, State Atheism and the Persecuted Churches

The French Revolution’s Cult of Reason lasted barely a year. The Marxist-Leninist states made atheism a permanent doctrine of state for most of the twentieth century. This chapter starts from Marx’s own sentence and its misreadings. It then follows state atheism through the USSR, communist Romania, Albania and China, and weighs two kinds of testimony: the witness of the persecuted, chiefly Richard Wurmbrand, and the record of hierarchies that collaborated. It gives the claims of the Romanian defector Ion Mihai Pacepa as his own testimony. It closes with readings of communism as a secularised religion and with Mehran Keshe’s rejection of both church and party.

The sentence and its misquotation

The passage comes from the introduction to Marx’s *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, written in 1843 and published in February 1844 in the *Deutsch–Französische Jahrbücher*: “Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.” The journal printed 1,000 copies, and the phrase became widely known only in the 1930s [Wikipedia: Opium of the people]. Christopher Hitchens calls the common reading “probably the most popular misquotation of modern times”. Marx, he says, “took belief very seriously”. The misquotation is “a very crude attempt to misrepresent the philosophical case against religion” [Hitchens, God Is Not Great, #65383, ch. “The Brothers Karamazov”]. Mark Skousen cites the line and treats Marxism as a

"quasi-religion, with its slogans, symbols, red banners, hymns... apostles, martyrs, bible". He quotes Robert Wesson: "Marx was to lead the Chosen People out of slavery to the New Jerusalem... Becoming a Marxist or a Communist is like falling in love" [Skousen, The Big Three in Economics, #3930, Marx chapter].

According to the reference shelf, Marxist-Leninist "scientific atheism" grew from Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx and Lenin and "informed public policy" in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. Latin American liberation theology rejected it, and Vietnam, Laos and post-Fidel Cuba later abandoned it [Wikipedia: Marxist–Leninist atheism]. Pacepa's notes quote Edward Luttwak: "Marxism-Leninism has become... an official religion, since its propositions have become dogmas; Soviet Marxism-Leninism now has its ceremonies, rituals and idols, chiefly the figure of Lenin himself" [Pacepa & Rychlak, Disinformation, #76607, ch. 7, n. 1].

The Soviet model

Gregory Freeze's entry in the *Encyclopedia of Russian History* gives the institutional record. The Bolsheviks abolished the Church's legal status, banned clergy from education and nationalised church assets. The civil war brought "the arrest and execution of clergy", and by 1921 "the church as an institution had virtually disappeared". In 1922 the regime used the confiscation of church valuables "to precipitate a schism" with the pro-Soviet "renovationists". In 1929 it "declared open war on the church": "By 1939 all but 1,744 churches (of the 28,560 in 1928) were closed." The war forced concessions, including the "election of a new patriarch in 1943". Khrushchev's campaign then "reduced the number of churches from 13,414 (1958) to 7,773 (1964)" [Freeze, "Russian Orthodox Church", Encyclopedia of Russian History, #6957]. The same encyclopedia records that the League of the Militant Godless, founded in 1925, claimed 5.5 million members in the early 1930s. It calls the League "one of its most dismal failures", a "Potemkin village" whose members often joined "without their knowledge" [Encyclopedia of Russian History, #6957, "League of the Militant Godless"]. The editor's introduction adds a long view: "Historically, the Russian Orthodox Church has successfully resisted attempts to separate church and state and has offered support and justification for autocracy in return." The Soviet era "differed only in that all religions were persecuted in the name of official atheism" [Millar (ed.), Encyclopedia of Russian History, #6957, Introduction].

Pacepa, the highest-ranking defector from the Romanian intelligence service, writes with Ronald Rychlak. Their title page names both authors, though the library catalogue gives none. They argue that Hitler and Stalin "based their tyrannies on theft. Hitler stole the wealth of the Jews. Stalin stole the wealth of Russia's Orthodox Church", and that "both replaced God with their own cult" [Pacepa & Rychlak, Disinformation, #76607, ch. 7]. Their notes state that Khrushchev's campaign forced "the closing of about 12,000 churches" and was renewed in 1958 [ibid., ch. 17, n. 1]. That figure is higher than the roughly 5,600 implied by Freeze's numbers. They also describe how, on 8–10 March 1946, Soviet authorities "forcibly convened an assembly of 216 priests" at Lviv, where the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church "was forcibly 'rejoined' to the Russian Orthodox Church" after its bishops, including Josyf Slipyj, had been sent to the Gulag [ibid., ch. 12].

Romania: the underground church and the official church

Wurmbrand was kidnapped from the street by the Securitate on 29 February 1948 and spent fourteen years in prison. He divides Romanian Christianity into an underground church and "the official Church, that of the collaborators of the communists". He traces the latter to the Soviet "Active" (Living) Church "led by a bishop named Sergius". "One of his collaborators declared that 'Marxism is a gospel written in atheist letters'." Wurmbrand continues: "We had a Sergius in every country". He names Father Balogh in Hungary and the priest Burducea in Romania, who smiled while Vyshinsky promised "a terrestrial paradise, so that a heavenly one is no longer necessary". He reports that the Adventist president Tachici confessed to having been a Securitate informer from the first day [Wurmbrand, Strigătul Bisericii Prigonite, #20685, pp. 116–117]. Infiltration also ran the other way: "some Christians entered the Securitate, put on the most despised uniform in the country, so that they could inform those working underground". A Christian doctor joined the secret police only to search the cells for Wurmbrand [ibid., p. 38].

The reference shelf supplies the institutional frame. The Greek Catholic Church, with 1.5 million faithful and 1,725 churches, was abolished on 1 December 1948, and its property was handed to the Orthodox Church. Only 430 of its 1,800 priests signed the act of union. Patriarch Justinian Marina, the "Red Patriarch", argued in *Apostolat Social* that "socialism is an integral part of Christianity", and

none of his statements mentioned the political prisoners. Between 1958 and 1963 about 2,500 priests, monks, nuns and lay people were arrested and half the monasteries were closed. In 1959 the Holy Synod accepted restrictions on monasticism. A Securitate officer in Timișoara later estimated that 80–90% of priests were collaborators [Wikipedia: Romanian Orthodox Church in Communist Romania]. The Pitești "re-education" experiment (December 1949–September 1951) sought to make prisoners, Christian seminarians among them, "discard past religious convictions". Solzhenitsyn called it "the most terrible act of barbarism in the contemporary world" [Wikipedia: Pitești Prison].

The historian of religion Ioan Petru Culianu, writing in exile, drew a political conclusion in his essays of 1974–1991. The Romanian Orthodox Church, "so grievously compromised with all the dictatorial regimes that followed one another in Romania from 1937 to the present", should "in no way be privileged" by the post-communist state, and "any concordat would be unacceptable" [Culianu, Păcatul împotriva spiritului, #15190].

Albania and China

Albania went furthest. The 1946 Agrarian Reform began the confiscation of religious property. In 1967 Hoxha "declared Albania an atheist state, in which public religious practice was prohibited", and "by May 1967, all 2,169 religious buildings in Albania were nationalized". Restrictions eased only in 1985 and were lifted in 1990 [Wikipedia: Irreligion in Albania]. Muslims were 72% of the population in 1945, and Islam was hit hardest. A cultural revolution "based on the Chinese model" from 1965 destroyed most minarets. "Muslim clergy became imprisoned, most minarets, mosques, tekkes and Sufi shrines were destroyed" [Wikipedia: Islam in the People's Socialist Republic of Albania].

The library's own holdings on China are thin, so this section relies on the reference shelf. In 1949 the Party denounced religions as "foreign cultural imperialism", "feudalism" and "superstition", and it suppressed new religious movements as "reactionary secret societies". From August 1966 the Red Guards' "Four Olds" campaign imposed "a nationwide ban on both public and private religious practice". Reportedly "only eleven of the 6,200 Tibetan Buddhist monasteries survived" [Wikipedia: Antireligious campaigns in China]. On 20 July 1999 the Party launched its campaign to "eradicate" Falun Gong, run by the extra-constitutional 6-10 Office. Reports cite at least 2,000 deaths under torture by 2009 and allegations of organ harvesting [Wikipedia: Persecution of Falun Gong].

State	Key measures	Fate of the majority church	Source
USSR	Post-1917 nationalisation; 1929 "open war"; 1943 patriarchal election; Khrushchev closures	Decimated, then tolerated under control	[#6957]
Romania	1948 Greek Catholic suppression; Pitești 1949–51; 1959 monastic limits	Orthodox hierarchy accommodated	[Wikipedia; #20685]
Albania	1946 confiscations; 1967 total ban	All faiths outlawed	[Wikipedia]
China	1949 controls; 1966 Four Olds; 1999 Falun Gong	Patriotic associations; underground churches	[Wikipedia]

Religion as a Cold War weapon

Pacepa claims the persecution had an offensive side. In 1968, he writes, "the KGB was able to maneuver a group of leftist South American bishops into holding a conference in Medellín", with logistical help from his own service, the DIE. Its "undeclared goal was to legitimize a KGB-created religious movement dubbed 'liberation theology' ". The conference "did indeed endorse liberation theology", the delegates recommended it to the World Council of Churches, and, he alleges, the WCC "had already come under the control of Soviet foreign intelligence". He cites Gleb Yakunin's samizdat reports and the dispatch of forty-seven KGB agents to the 1983 WCC assembly [Pacepa & Rychlak, Disinformation, #76607, ch. 15 "Liberation Theology"]. David Kupelian repeats the charge. He writes that the Mitrokhin Archive, "smuggled out of the Soviet Union in 1992, provides the identities and Soviet intelligence code names of many Russian Orthodox priests dispatched… to the World Council of Churches". He names Metropolitan Nikodim, "agent 'Adamant' ", as WCC president in 1972 [Kupelian, The Snapping

of the American Mind, #67937]. These are defector testimony and secondary uses of it. They are presented as such.

Secularised messianism: Heisman and Keshe

Mitchell Heisman reads the conflict through Nazi ideology. He quotes Hitler: "The heaviest blow that ever struck humanity was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity's illegitimate child. Both are inventions of the Jew." Asking "what was it about Christianity that Hitler believed was so criminal?", Heisman answers that "Christianity is a rebellion against natural law, a protest against nature". Taken to its logical extreme, he argues, Christianity "would mean the systematic cultivation of human failure", and Nazism set out to reverse it [Heisman, suicide note, #38252, part 273, "Absolute Purity"]. On this analysis communist egalitarianism is a secularised Christian ethic, and Hitler attacked the two as one target.

Mehran Keshe condemns institutional religion as fiercely as any Bolshevik, but on the opposite premise. In KSW 461 he calls churches and mosques constructs for "the abuse of man". He cites priestly child abuse and Iran's executions of demonstrators: "In God's name, how can you execute someone as a protector of the name of God?... There is no religion." The only valid intermediary with the Creator, he says, is the individual [Keshe, KSW 461, #378173, "Critique of Institutional Religion and the Path to Self-Governance"]. In KSW 629 he asks: "Then why does Man need an intermediary in a fake name of Prophets and ayatollahs to understand the work of his Creator?" He blames "the limitation of understanding of the Man" for "the abuses of the Soul of the Man" [Keshe, KSW 629, #378341]. He does not deny the Creator. He praises Gorbachev because he "reversed Lenin's system without firing a single bullet" after Lenin "brought [it] with a lot of hardship" [Keshe, KSW 448, #378160].

Key points

- Marx's 1843–44 passage calls religion "the sigh of the oppressed creature" as well as "the opium of the people". Hitchens calls the short form the most popular misquotation of modern times [#65383].

- Freeze records Soviet church closures from 28,560 (1928) to 1,744 (1939), a new patriarch in 1943, and Khrushchev's cut from 13,414 to 7,773 churches [#6957]. Pacepa gives about 12,000 closures [#76607].
- Wurmbrand separates the underground church from the collaborating "official Church", "a Sergius in every country", and records Christians who joined the Securitate to protect the persecuted [#20685].
- Romania abolished the Greek Catholic Church in 1948, ran the Pitești "reeducation" from 1949 to 1951, restricted monasteries from 1959, and saw Patriarch Justinian accommodate the regime [Wikipedia].
- Albania declared itself an atheist state in 1967 and nationalised 2,169 religious buildings. China's Cultural Revolution banned all practice, and the persecution of Falun Gong began in 1999 [Wikipedia].
- Pacepa and Kupelian allege KGB sponsorship of liberation theology at Medellín (1968) and KGB infiltration of the WCC [#76607, #67937].
- Heisman relays Hitler's "Bolshevism is Christianity's illegitimate child" and reads Christianity as "a rebellion against natural law" [#38252]. Keshe rejects both clergy and state atheism in favour of a direct link to the Creator [#378173, #378341].

Chapter 142.

One Nation Under God: American Civil Religion, the Masonic Founders and the Christian Right

The United States combines a constitution that names no God and forbids an established church with a public life full of prayer, oaths and the motto "In God We Trust". This chapter traces that mix through four layers. The first is the deist and Masonic founding, read three ways by a Masonic historian, a banking-conspiracy author and an evangelical conspiracy writer. The second is the "civil religion" that the sociologist Robert Bellah named in 1967 and that the Cold War wrote into law. The third is the evangelical political movement from the Moral Majority to present-day Christian nationalism, with critics and defenders each given their say. The fourth is Christian Zionism, the theology that ties American domestic religion to policy on Israel. Mitchell Heisman's ethno-historical reading of the republic closes the chapter.

Deists, Masons and the plan of Washington

Jim Willis describes a national myth: "Part of the American mythos involves the expressed belief that somehow it is a 'Christian' nation, or at least a religious one. The Founding Fathers, children are often taught, were God-fearing Christians". He notes the paradox of a constitutional separation of church and state alongside a Congress that "retains a chaplain and opens each session with prayer". He concludes: "The fact that none of this is accurate doesn't alter the myth" [Willis, American Cults, #63203, "Lip-Service Religion"]. Karen Armstrong, cited in

Chapter 140, records that the federal Constitution did not mention God at all [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064].

The Masonic question divides the library sharply. The British writer Ian Gittins lists Franklin and Washington as Masons and names seven signers of the Declaration as known Freemasons. He nonetheless calls the claim that the founders "concealed various Masonic signs and symbolism within the design of the nation's capital" "one of the most perplexing and truly preposterous anti-Masonic myths of all". In his account L'Enfant "does not appear to have been a Mason", Washington "was the only Freemason involved in the creation of the capital city, and played no active part in its design", and the pentagram "is a symbol with very little resonance in Masonry" [Gittins, Secrets of the Lost Symbol, #62988, ch. 3].

John Hamer's *Behind the Curtain*, catalogued without an author but signed by Hamer on its title page, asserts the opposite. Washington "selected Freemason, Pierre Charles Enfant to design the new city". "In 1795 the Freemasonic Founding Fathers laid out the streets of Washington D.C. to form Masonic symbols: a compass, square, rule, pentagram and octagon." "On the 18th September 1793, Washington laid the foundation stone of the Capitol building in his full Masonic regalia". In Hamer's account the founders "rejected all organised religion in favour of Deism", and the Great Seal was "the Illuminati emblem" [Hamer, Behind the Curtain, #72888, ch. 2].

Thomas Horn, writing from an evangelical-apocalyptic standpoint, uses the founders' private letters as evidence of hostility to Christianity. He quotes John Adams to Jefferson (3 September 1816): "I almost shudder at the thought of alluding to the most fatal example of the abuses of grief which the history of mankind has preserved—the Cross. Consider what calamities that engine of grief has produced!" Horn takes this as "all the evidence we need… that Adams, too, was no Christian". He describes Washington as "a Deist—and a Freemason of the highest rank as of August 4, 1753, at the Masonic Lodge No. 4 in Fredericksburg". His book's subtitle sets out its thesis of "Deep State Occultists… Manipulating American Society Through a Washington-Based Shadow Government" [Horn, Saboteurs, #72784, ch. 7 "The Secret Destiny of America?"]. The reading is reported here as Horn's argument.

Claim	Gittins (#62988)	Hamer (#72888)	Horn (#72784)
L'Enfant a Mason?	Apparently not	Yes	(implied)
DC street plan Masonic?	"Preposterous" myth	Yes: compass, square, pentagram	Yes, occult design

Claim	Gittins (#62988)	Hamer (#72888)	Horn (#72784)
Founders' religion	Several Masons; no hidden plan	Deists, Illuminist	Deists, anti-Christian occultists

Civil religion and the Cold War consensus

According to the reference shelf, American civil religion is "a nonsectarian civil religion… with sacred symbols drawn from the national history". Its present form comes from Robert Bellah's 1967 article "Civil Religion in America", which treats the Constitution, the Declaration and the Bill of Rights as a kind of sacred writ. Bellah later judged it "an empty and broken shell" in *The Broken Covenant* [Wikipedia: American civil religion]. The Cold War gave it legal form. On Flag Day, 14 June 1954, Congress added "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance and Eisenhower signed it [Wikipedia: Pledge of Allegiance]. A 1956 law signed by Eisenhower made "In God we trust" the first official national motto. The phrase had appeared on coins since 1864 [Wikipedia: United States national motto]. Webb notes that many Protestant churches came to describe the country as a "Redeemer Nation" with "a mission to evangelize the world and bring democracy and human rights" [Webb, Conspiracy Theories, #62861].

From "Evangelical" to the Religious Right

Willis credits "Harold Ockenga, pastor of Park Street Church in Boston" with coining the term "Evangelical". Once *Christianity Today* and the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association adopted it, "the term 'Evangelical' stuck". Then "it all began in 1979 with Jerry Falwell and his Moral Majority", which Falwell summed up in the line "We need to get these people saved, baptized, and registered to vote!" The movement deserted the evangelical Democrat Jimmy Carter for Reagan in 1980. Within ten years, "Conservative Evangelicals had, in effect, joined the Republican Party", and in 2016 white evangelicals "were the primary group that voted… Donald J. Trump into office" [Willis, American Cults, #63203, "Offshoots"]. Willis goes further. He describes a "ménage à trois between the Evangelical church, politicians, and the NRA" that is "at least bordering on… cult-like status", which he calls "the cult of the gun" [ibid.].

Webb gives David Bebbington's definition of evangelicals: they take the Bible seriously, centre on the death and resurrection of Jesus, and promote conversion and social engagement. Webb dates the Christian right to the 1970s under Paul Weyrich, Falwell and Pat Robertson, around abortion, school prayer and gay rights. He calls Robertson, founder of the Christian Broadcasting Network (1960), "a very important figure in the rise of the religious right". Robertson's *The New World Order* (1991) folded the Illuminati, Freemasons and international bankers into an apocalyptic scheme [Webb, Conspiracy Theories, #62861, ch. on evangelicals; Profiles, "Pat Robertson"]. The reference shelf confirms that Falwell and Weyrich founded the Moral Majority in 1979 [Wikipedia: Moral Majority].

Christian nationalism: indictment and defence

The Power Worshippers is catalogued under Kristin Kobes Du Mez. Its front matter lists *The Good News Club* "by the same author", and its notes cite Katherine Stewart's own *New York Times* articles, which identifies the author as Katherine Stewart. Stewart writes: "Christian nationalism is not a religious creed but, in my view, a political ideology. It promotes the myth that the American republic was founded as a Christian nation." It holds that legitimate government rests "not on the consent of the governed but on adherence to the doctrines of a specific religious, ethnic, and cultural heritage" [Stewart, The Power Worshippers, #67800, Introduction]. She traces its roots to pro-slavery theology: "Christian nationalism came of age in the American slave republic", when theologians such as Robert Lewis Dabney called the nation a "Redeemer Nation" [ibid., ch. 5]. Her chapters document a Bible club in her daughter's public school, the "Project Blitz" model legislation, and Bill Dallas's United in Purpose. United in Purpose built a database "to guide conservative Christian voter registration and voter turnout operations" for "roughly 75 faith-oriented non-profit organizations" [ibid., chs. 7–8].

The opposing case comes from Milo Yiannopoulos's *Diabolical*, whose catalogue entry names no author. He argues that "Judeo-Christian societies are fairer, happier, healthier, and more tolerant than others". He cites reports from Baylor University's Institute for Studies of Religion since 2004 that show "how much safer and more pleasant western Christian societies are". On his account, "the loss of religion in public life is what opened up the space" for identity politics [Yiannopoulos, Diabolical, #71209, "Make Way for the Irreligious Right"]. Thomas Schaller and Paul Waldman write from the secular-liberal side. They

describe 2016 as "White rural voters' final break with the Democratic Party" [Schaller & Waldman, White Rural Rage, #62476].

Christian Zionism: the theological hinge

David W. Lutz's chapter in *Neo-Conned! Again* traces the doctrine to John Nelson Darby (1800–82), who "left the Anglican priesthood to join the Plymouth Brethren". "In 1909, Cyrus I. Scofield… published an edition of the King James Bible with premillennial dispensationalist notations. (Scofield read some of Darby's writings while doing time for forgery.)" Lutz quotes a Christian Zionist *Israel Report* of December 2001 to show the effect of 11 September: "Today, Israel has the opportunity to wage total war against its terrorist enemies" [Lutz, in O'Huallachain (ed.), Neo-Conned! Again, #63415, "Unjust-War Theory: Christian Zionism and the Road to Jerusalem"].

Mearsheimer and Walt date the political turn: "The founding of the state of Israel in 1948 gave new life to the dispensationalist movement, but the Six-Day War in 1967… was even more important for its emergence as a political force." Dispensationalists read the capture of the West Bank, "which, like Israel's Likud party, they refer to as Judea and Samaria", as prophecy fulfilled [Mearsheimer & Walt, The Israel Lobby, #75004, "Christian Zionists"]. William Bernstein argues that "uncritical American support for Israel's expansion of West Bank settlement… can be traced directly to the advocacy of evangelicals, so-called Christian Zionists". Two dispensationalist ministers gave the benedictions at the May 2018 opening of the US Embassy in Jerusalem. One was Robert Jeffress, who "once claimed that Hitler had helped plan the Jew's return to Israel". The other was John Hagee, who "had deemed Hurricane Katrina God's punishment for New Orleans's sinfulness" [Bernstein, The Delusions of Crowds, #73904]. *Synarchy* reports that Hagee's Christians United for Israel "claims a membership of seven million, larger than any Jewish organization" [Synarchy, #67074, "Zionists"].

Heisman: Normans, Saxons and a "half-Jewish" republic

Heisman offers an ethno-historical reading. The first presidencies, he notes, balanced Virginia and Massachusetts: Washington with Adams, then Adams with

Jefferson. This "confirmed the primacy of the need to balance the representative scales of justice between Massachusetts and Virginia". He traces this to a "core constitutional contradiction... the Jeffersonian proposition of the implicit constitutional equality of Normans and Saxons" [Heisman, suicide note, #38252, "American Presidency and Constitutional Contradiction"]. He calls Jefferson's America "the rationalized side of this same Anglo-Saxon fantasy" that drove the Puritan revolution, and democracy "the final solution to the Norman problem" [ibid., part 713]. Quoting the critic Walter Kerr, he argues that the American mind " 'was ready to' think Jewishly because of the profound Biblical influence that has defined the very invention that is America". In his view, "culturally, Americans are like half-Jews" [ibid., part 593]. These are Heisman's theses.

Willis adds a legal limit to religious freedom. The courts have held that "religions were not to be banned, but they needed to adhere to specific laws". He cites the polygamy rulings and the Jehovah's Witnesses cases, and he takes Jonestown (1978) as the point where that line "refuses to go away" [Willis, American Cults, #63203]. Cults themselves are treated in other Parts of this study.

Key points

- Willis calls the "Christian nation" belief an American myth [#63203]. The federal Constitution does not mention God [#53064].
- Gittins rejects the Masonic DC street plan as "preposterous" [#62988]. Hamer affirms it, along with Washington's Masonic cornerstone of 18 September 1793 [#72888]. Horn reads Adams's "engine of grief" as evidence of anti-Christian founders [#72784].
- Bellah defined civil religion in 1967. "Under God" entered the Pledge in 1954 and "In God we trust" became the national motto in 1956 [Wikipedia].
- Willis credits Ockenga with the term "Evangelical" and dates the political turn to Falwell's Moral Majority (1979), after which evangelicals "joined the Republican Party" [#63203]. Webb gives Bebbington's definition and Robertson's role [#62861].
- Stewart calls Christian nationalism "a political ideology" born "in the American slave republic" [#67800]. Yiannopoulos argues that Judeo-Christian societies are "fairer, happier, healthier" [#71209].
- Christian Zionism runs from Darby and the Scofield Bible (1909) [#63415] to political force after 1967 [#75004] and to the 2018 embassy benedictions [#73904]. Christians United for Israel claims seven million members [#67074].

- Heisman reads the republic as a Norman–Saxon settlement shaped by Biblical, "Jewish" thinking [#38252].

Chapter 143.

Zion and Palestine: Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, Israel and the Palestinian Question

No modern political question carries more religious weight than the one that began when a secular Viennese journalist proposed a state for the Jews and the British Empire promised them a "national home" in a land holy to three faiths. The library's sources range from documentary history (Stein), a mainstream survey (Slavicek) and a defence of Zionism (Vaknin), through Palestinian and anti-Zionist histories (Khalidi, Suárez, Loewenstein) and a realist critique (Mearsheimer and Walt), to polemical and conspiratorial literature (Reed, John, Makow, Icke, Grove, Duke). The chapter sets these out side by side, each attributed to its author, and ends with Heisman's philosophical reading and Keshe's prophecies.

From Der Judenstaat to Basel and Balfour

Slavicek gives the mainstream sequence. After *The Jewish State* (1896), "in 1897 Herzl organized the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland, to discuss how to translate his ideas regarding Jewish statehood into reality". It "attracted widespread Jewish support… particularly in Eastern Europe". Her chronology continues: "1917 Great Britain's Balfour Declaration supports a 'Jewish National Home' in Palestine. 1920 Great Britain is given a mandate" [Slavicek, Israel, #63054, chs. 1-3, Chronology]. Armstrong's chronology of Islam places the declaration next to the Turkish War of Independence (1919-21), after which Atatürk "adopts radical secularizing and modernizing policies (1924-28)" [Armstrong, Islam, #68695, Chronology]. Read from the Muslim side, the promise of a Jewish home and the dismantling of the last Islamic empire belong to the same decade.

Issitt and Main define Zionism as "a nationalist movement that supports the existence of a Jewish state in the area generally called the 'Holy Land' ", its name "derived from 'Zion,' the Hebrew term for Jerusalem". They note "many separate and ideologically distinct movements within the larger Zionist fold, including political/secular Zionist organizations" [Issitt and Main, Hidden Religion, #66220, ch. 3]. The movement is conventionally divided into political, religious, labour (Ben-Gurion) and revisionist (Jabotinsky) Zionism [Wikipedia: Zionism].

The Balfour Declaration: Documents and the Lobbying Thesis

Stein concludes that "British motivations had been far from simple: a delicate balance between quite different interests, tempered by sentiments as recognizable as they were difficult to explain". He also records the later verdict that, "measured by British interests alone, it was one of the greatest mistakes in our imperial history" [Stein, The Balfour Declaration, #64873]. The sentiment was biblical. Stein quotes a British statesman who recalled being "taught far more about the history of the Jews than about the history of my own people… We used to recite great passages from the Prophets and the Psalms" [#64873, ch. 8]. He also shows how unsettled the idea of a Jewish nation was inside Jewry. A 1917 conference record (which Stein notes "is not a verbatim report") warns that "if it was intended to create in Palestine a Jewish nation eo nomine, care must be taken to explain the sense in which the term was used, because there was much misunderstanding, among Jews of the West, and some fear". Stein traces the same debate back to Sokolow's "Reminiscences of the First Zionist Congress" (*Zionist Review*, October 1917) [#64873, ch. 2].

Robert John, whose book the library shelves under conspiracy literature, reads the same archive (Wilson, Brandeis, Weizmann, Rothschild) as a record of organised pressure. He cites the letter of 17 May 1917 in *The Times* from Alexander and Montefiore, who approved Jewish settlement "but… could not favor the Zionists", and the Chief Rabbi's repudiation of it. He adds that "on 18 July, such a statement, approved in the United States, was forwarded by Lord Rothschild to Lord Balfour" [John, Behind the Balfour Declaration, #39567]. Stein sees imperial calculation meeting Protestant sentiment. John sees drafts passing between London and Washington before Balfour signed.

National Movement or Colonial Project

Vaknin writes: "Zionism is undoubtedly a typical 19th century national movement, promoting the interests of an ethnically-homogeneous nation. But it is not and never has been a racist movement". He concedes that it "always regarded itself as both a (19th century) national movement and a (colonial) civilizing force" [Vaknin, The Crescent and the Cross, #60291]. Suárez argues the reverse. In his view, "Zionism's treatment of Jews as a 'race' apart was a hallmark of classic anti-Semitism", and Herzl answered Jewish critics by decreeing "No true Jew can be an anti-Zionist" [Suárez, State of Terror, #64499, Part I]. Suárez also rejects the word "conflict". He cites an anthropologists' task force for whom the word "assumes that the parties involved have comparable access to resources" [#64499, Part III].

1948: Independence and Nakba

Slavicek writes: "Within 24 hours of the proclamation of the State of Israel, the first Arab-Israeli War, or the War of Independence, as it is known in Israel, began". She judges the Palestinians "the big losers", with Gaza and the West Bank taken by Egypt and Transjordan under a partition plan "vehemently rejected by the Arab world in November 1947" [Slavicek, #63054, ch. 4]. Armstrong: "Israeli forces inflict a devastating defeat on the five Arab armies who invade the new Jewish state. Some 750,000 Palestinians leave the country during the hostilities and are not permitted to return" [Armstrong, Islam, #68695].

Khalidi dates the expulsions earlier: "the ethnic cleansing of Palestine began well before the state of Israel was proclaimed on May 15, 1948" [Khalidi, The Hundred Years' War on Palestine, #62730]. Loewenstein quotes "Yehoshua Verbin, commander of the military government that ruled over Arab citizens between 1948 and 1966": "We expelled around half a million Arabs, we burnt homes, we looted their land—from their point of view—we didn't give it back, we took land …". He links the remark to Baruch Kimmerling's thesis [Loewenstein, The Palestine Laboratory, #66445, ch. 3]. Suárez's central thesis is that militia terrorism created the state. He cites British reports ("[Jewish] outrage succeeded outrage") and Irgun notices "threatening that the hands of any Arabs raised against the Jewish cause would be cut off". He quotes Hagana documents boasting of "500 explosions" in a single night and argues that the evidence shows "the Jewish Agency was complicit in the terror" [Suárez, #64499, Parts I-II].

David Duke, a former Ku Klux Klan leader, claims in the Romanian edition of his book that in 1948 “almost ninety-four per cent” (“aproape nouăzeci şi patru la sută”) of land in Israel was Palestinian-owned. He says this land was then confiscated into the “Jewish National Fund”, and he quotes an eyewitness calling the Israeli shelling of refugees at Qana “a massacre” [Duke, Trezirea la realitate, #51999]. The figures are his.

Question	Mainstream / pro-Zionist	Palestinian / anti-Zionist	Polemical literature
Nature of Zionism	National, not racist (Vaknin)	Racialising, colonial (Suárez)	A 458 BC “master-race” creed (Reed)
Balfour 1917	Interest plus sentiment (Stein)	Colonial betrayal (Khalidi)	Rothschild/lobby product (John, Icke, Makow, Grove)
1948	Arab invasion; independence (Slavicek)	Ethnic cleansing before 15 May (Khalidi, Loewenstein)	Land seizure, “94%” (Duke)

The American Dimension and the Laboratory Thesis

Mearsheimer and Walt argue that the scale of US support “cannot be justified on strategic or moral grounds”. In the chapter “A Dwindling Moral Case” they test the arguments from shared “democratic values” and from Israel as “a weak and vulnerable David facing a powerful Arab Goliath”. They hold that supporters of Israel “have every right to advocate their positions, and it is wrong to question their loyalty”, and that it is “equally legitimate” to say that AIPAC and the ADL are not neutral [Mearsheimer and Walt, The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy, #75004, chs. 3, 7]. Loewenstein’s thesis, as his subtitle puts it, is that Israel “exports the technology of occupation”. It tests weapons and surveillance “technology on Palestinians, and then promote[s] them around the world”. He traces arms sales “to disreputable regimes from the outset” and notes that the Uzi was sold “in more than ninety countries” [Loewenstein, #66445, Introduction, ch. 1].

The Polemical and Conspiratorial Literature

Reed dates "the true start of this affair" to 458 BC, when "the petty Palestinian tribe of Judah… produced a racial creed". He writes that "a master-race, if there be one, must itself be God". Since in his account the northern Israelites rejected Judah's creed, "the use of the name 'Israel' by the Zionist state… is in the nature of a forgery" [Reed, The Controversy of Zion, #64653, chs. 1-2]. *The Modern Day Serpent People of the Bible* (author styled "Unknown Hebrew") holds that Ashkenazim "are not Shemites" but Japhethites and Khazars. It cites Koestler that the Khazar story is "the most cruel hoax which history has ever perpetrated" [Unknown Hebrew, #68765]. The reference shelf reports that mainstream genetics and history reject the Khazar thesis [Wikipedia: Khazar hypothesis of Ashkenazi ancestry]. Duke's own book cites blood-group studies (Bonné-Tamir et al., 1977, 1979) that found no significant difference between Jewish populations of Iraq, Libya, Germany and Poland [Duke, #51999].

The Rothschild narratives start from the fact that the letter was addressed to Lord Rothschild. Icke adds that "researchers say that the letter was in fact WRITTEN by Lord Rothschild and his employee, the banker, Alfred Milner" [Icke, Was Hitler a Rothschild, #38035]. Grove compiles references on the Rothschild colonies and on the Zionist activity of Balfour's niece Blanche Dugdale [Grove, The Truth About the Rothschilds, #52023, ch. 20]. Makow stresses that the Cabinet acted "over the strenuous objections of its only Jewish member, Edwin Montagu", and calls Zionism "a way to advance British imperialism and the Masonic 'New World Order' " [Makow, Illuminati, #64886, p. 131].

Heisman and Keshe

Heisman calls Judaism the "source of the original monotheist insight" that "had to combine contradictory values". It was a step towards "a transcendence of biology: God", taken by people who "could not fully escape being biological" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "PART II part 64"]. Secularised, the paradox becomes liberal egalitarianism, and Israel-Palestine is a case where it remains unresolved. He cites Herzl: "our enemies have made us one… It is only pressure that forces us back to the parent stem". He concludes that "through the invisible walls of anti-Semitism, gentiles… have helped" preserve the Jews [#38252, "PART II part 104"].

Keshe's statements take the form of prophecy. In KSW 388 he says "the state of Palestine... includes state of Israel", which survives only "as part of a nation... the One nation One Planet" [Keshe, KSW 388, #378100]. In KSW 513 (23 November 2023): "there will not be a state of Israel or Palestine in the coming time... Judaism is coming to an end by itself through diminishing numbers" [Keshe, KSW 513, #378225]. In KSW 508 he asks Iran's leadership to help "the Palestinians to get out of the prison created by the 'gun policy' of the United States... and the madness of the Jewish leaders" [Keshe, KSW 508, #378220]. In KSW 632 he claims that "7 Rabbis of Jerusalem run Judaism" and links them to Netanyahu [Keshe, KSW 632, #378344]. KSW 608 speaks of "the last days of the 6,000 years of anarchy" and says of the occupiers that "they shall have no home" [Keshe, KSW 608, #378320].

Key points

- The agreed chronology: Herzl (1896), Basel (1897), Balfour (1917), the British Mandate (1920), statehood (1948) and some 750,000 Palestinian refugees (Slavicek, Armstrong).
- Stein finds British motives "far from simple". John reads the same archive as evidence of lobbying.
- Vaknin calls Zionism non-racist nationalism. Suárez calls it racialising and argues that terrorism made the state.
- Khalidi and Loewenstein (quoting Verbin) date ethnic cleansing to before 15 May 1948. Slavicek frames 1948 as a war of independence against invading Arab armies.
- Mearsheimer and Walt find US backing unjustified on strategic and moral grounds. Loewenstein describes the export of occupation technology.
- Reed, Makow, Icke, Grove, Duke and the *Serpent People* text offer master-race, Rothschild and Khazar narratives. The reference shelf reports that mainstream genetics rejects the Khazar thesis [Wikipedia], while Duke himself cites blood-group studies finding no significant difference between Jewish populations [#51999].
- Heisman treats Israel-Palestine as Judaism's unresolved biological paradox. Keshe prophesies that neither state will survive separately.

Chapter 144.

The Guardianship of the Jurist: Iran from the 1953 Coup to the Islamic Republic

In 1979 a Shi'a jurist took control of a modern state, and a doctrine developed over centuries in the seminaries of Qom and Najaf became the constitution of a nation of some forty million. This chapter follows that change through the library's sources. Engdahl, Davidson and Taylor describe the 1953 Anglo-American coup. Farah Pahlavi gives the monarchy's own account. Karen Armstrong supplies the Shi'a background, and Kim Ghattas the narrative of the revolution and its regional consequences. Ioan Petru Culianu, drawing on Martin Riesebrodt, sets Iran beside American fundamentalism. Mehran Keshe, born in Iran, adds his own and sometimes contradictory claims about the Islamic Republic.

The Coup of 1953: Three Western Accounts

William Engdahl treats the coup as an episode in Anglo-American oil strategy. After Mossadegh nationalised the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, "prospective buyers of nationalized Iranian oil were warned by the Anglo-American oil companies that they would face legal action on grounds that a compensation agreement had not yet been signed". Engdahl calls this "a self-fulfilling strategy", because "the company and the British refused to sign any compensation agreement". In May 1953 Eisenhower turned down Mossadegh's request for aid on the advice of the Dulles brothers, and on 10 August Allen Dulles met Ambassador Loy Henderson and the Shah's sister in Switzerland. Engdahl's summary: "The CIA cooperated fully with the British SIS, under code name Operation AJAX, in the overthrow of Mohammed Mossadegh in August 1953". He notes that General

Schwarzkopf's contacts in the Iranian army "later proved to be crucial" [Engdahl, A Century of War, #62478, ch. 7].

Pelle Neroth Taylor quotes the intelligence historian Stephen Dorril on how the coup worked: "A key aspect of the plot was to portray the mobs as supporters of the Tudeh Party in order to provide a suitable pretext for the coup and the resumption of power by the shah. [MI6 agents] hired a fake Tudeh crowd, comprising an unusual mixture of pan-Iranians and Tudeh members, paid for with fifty thousand dollars given to them by a CIA officer" [Taylor, Brexit: European Union, American Empire, #62532]. Taylor also cites Dorril that "MI6 had plans to assassinate Nasser" using the Muslim Brotherhood, which links this episode to the Islamist politics of the next chapter.

Christopher Davidson adds detail. He notes that "there was no hard evidence available that could prove Mosaddegh had any sort of affiliation with the Tudeh", and that Dulles told colleagues that "this is how we get rid of that madman Mosaddegh". The hired agitators "posed as communist Tudeh members and threatened religious leaders with murder if they didn't support Mosaddegh", and in some cases "firebombed the houses of leading clerics". After the Shah fled, "the same agitators that had posed as Tudeh militants poured back onto the streets, but this time with pro-Shah banners". Davidson also reports that CIA funding to the cleric Ayatollah Kashani "now seems confirmed", citing a former station chief [Davidson, Shadow Wars, #66972]. In this account, clergy were both targets of the staged violence and recipients of the money behind it.

The Monarchy's View: Farah Pahlavi

Farah Pahlavi's memoir gives the court's version. She quotes the Shah's own recollection of his flight in August 1953: "Being quite aware of Mossadeq's plans and ambitions, I had decided to leave Iran before a takeover by force. I wanted to avoid bloodshed and leave the country free to make its choice". She describes "three days of rioting, mainly in Tehran", the first two of them "organized by the Mossadeq and Tudeh" parties [Pahlavi, An Enduring Love, #62779, ch. 3, "The 1953 Coup and King's Exile"]. Western intervention plays no part in her account. It is a story of rescue from chaos and of the people's return to their king.

Her account of the White Revolution referendum of 1963 introduces Khomeini as "a cleric we had never heard of, a certain Ruhollah Khomeini", who "had written to the king to make a protest against women's suffrage". She writes that "protests in the holy cities, especially Qom, nevertheless became more and more

violent". In her account the clerics opposed agrarian reform "because it would deprive them of the income from their large properties", made common cause with the great landowners, and also feared the Literacy Corps. "The agitation led to the arrest of Khomeini", and Prime Minister Alam, "sensing the danger facing the country", took provisional authority over the army and authorised officers "to shoot when in extreme danger" [Pahlavi, #62779, ch. 8, "The 1963 Clerical Uprisings and Arrest of Khomeini"].

Armstrong describes the same reforms from the clergy's side. She suggests that Grand Ayatollah Borujerdi opposed land reform because it "contravened Shariah laws of ownership" and he "may have feared that to deprive the people of rights guaranteed by Islamic Law in one sphere could lead to worse abuses". After his death in 1961, "the post of Marja was not filled" [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064].

The Shi'a Background

Armstrong insists on the long view: "In order to understand this Shii faith, without which such events as the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79 are incomprehensible, we must briefly consider the development of the Shiah". After the occultation of the Twelfth Imam, "any government had to be viewed as illegitimate, because it usurped the prerogatives of the Hidden Imam, the true Lord of the Age", and Shi'is learned political quietism. The 18th-century triumph of the Usuli school, which held that "in the absence of the Hidden Imam… no jurist could have the last word" and so required living mujtahids, gave the clergy independent authority: "Bihbehani's victory was a political victory for the Iranian ulema" [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064]. She traces Khomeini from his arrival in Qom in 1920 with Shaykh Hairi Yazdi to his 1972 article, which suggested that a faqih who followed Mulla Sadra's mystical path "could acquire the same 'infallibility' (ismah) as the Imams" [#53064].

Velayat-e Faqih: From Najaf to the Constitution

Exiled after 1964, Khomeini settled in Najaf. Ghattas writes that it "was the oldest and most prestigious hawza (Shia seminary)… Over time, Khomeini trained hundreds of clerics and preached to thousands of students who then returned to Iran, Bahrain, or Pakistan". She uses the Arabic form *wilayat al-faqih*. She also

reports that the economist Abolhassan Banisadr "warned Khomeini not to speak about his wilayat al-faqih because it showed him to be unrealistic: How could clerics who could barely manage the daily affairs of Najaf" run a state? [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495, Part I]. The doctrine was set out in lectures given at Najaf in 1970 and published as *Hokumat-e Islami* (*Islamic Government*). It argued that in the Imam's absence the qualified jurist inherits the Prophet's governing authority, not merely authority over orphans and endowments [Wikipedia: Islamic Government; Wikipedia: Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist]. The constitution approved by referendum in December 1979 built the doctrine into the office of the Supreme Leader, who is chosen by an Assembly of Experts [Wikipedia: Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist].

Ghattas also identifies the intellectual groundwork. Khomeini and Khamenei knew of Jalal Al-e Ahmad because "in 1962... Al-e Ahmad had written what would become the seminal, foundational text of the Iranian Revolution: Gharbzadeghi, commonly translated as Westoxication or Occidentosis", a critique of "a society that was being flattened by rapid modernization and desperation to emulate the West". She calls Al-e Ahmad, in the 1960s, "the most important thinker in the secular opposition to the shah" [Ghattas, #72495, Part I].

1978-1979: Revolution, Hostages and War

Ghattas follows the escalation. She writes that "the turning point in the heat of a summer of unrest had been an arson attack on the Rex Cinema in the city of Abadan, killing 420 people on August 19", the 25th anniversary of the coup of 19 August 1953. This was followed by Black Friday, 8 September 1978, when thousands at Jaleh Square chanted "Marg bar shah, Death to the shah" [Ghattas, #72495, Part I]. The *Encyclopedia of World History* records the outcome: "On January 16, the shah leaves Iran for exile. One week later, the Ayatollah Khomeini returns from exile and forms an Islamic revolutionary government". It then records that militants, "angered by the arrival of the shah in the United States for medical treatment", seized the US embassy in Tehran and held embassy employees hostage "for 444 days" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "1979"]. Ghattas dates Khomeini's return to 1 February, and on 22 September 1980 "Saddam declared war on Iran", with "two hundred Soviet-made Iraqi jets" striking Iranian targets. "The Saudis always denied they had given Saddam a green light", she notes [#72495]. The war lasted until 1988 [Wikipedia: Iran–Iraq War].

Ghattas's thesis frames everything that followed: "Three major events took place in that same year, almost independent of one another: the Iranian Revolution; the siege of the Holy Mosque in Mecca by Saudi zealots; and the Soviet invasion" of Afghanistan. Together, she argues, they started a forty-year Saudi-Iranian competition for leadership of the Muslim world [Ghattas, #72495].

A Comparative Reading: Culianu and Riesebrodt

Culianu, writing in Romanian, reviews Martin Riesebrodt's *Fundamentalism as a Patriarchal Protest Movement* (Tübingen, 1990): "Riesebrodt constată că fenomenul care a dus la revoluţia iraniană din 1979 prezintă trăsături foarte apropiate în raport cu fundamentalismul protestant american, atât de apropiate încât ne îngăduie construcţia conceptului însuşi de 'fundamentalism' " ("Riesebrodt finds that the phenomenon which led to the Iranian revolution of 1979 shows features so close to American Protestant fundamentalism that they allow us to construct the very concept of 'fundamentalism' "). He adds that Iran "was once a Shi'a theocracy, but of a special type: like Greek Orthodoxy until the fall of the Eastern Empire in 1453". In both cases Riesebrodt finds acute urbanisation and capitalist industrialisation producing ideological responses, of which fundamentalism is one, alongside Marxism and Fabian socialism [Culianu, Păcatul împotriva spiritului, #15190, "Ku Klux Klan ortodox"].

Source	Reading of the revolution
Armstrong	A product of Shi'a history: occultation, the Usuli victory, Khomeini's mystical jurisprudence
Ghattas	A regional hinge, one of the three events of 1979 behind the Saudi-Iranian rivalry
Riesebrodt / Culianu	A case of a global "fundamentalism" comparable to American Protestantism
Farah Pahlavi	A clerical reaction against land reform, women's suffrage and literacy
Engdahl / Davidson	The delayed consequence of the 1953 oil coup

Keshe and the Islamic Republic

Keshe's statements on Iran are strong and sometimes contradictory. In KSW 488 (1 June 2023) he says: "Keshe Foundation with me as its head and its management stays loyal to the Iranian nation. But we serve the other nations equally. We will never betray Iran". He addresses "Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran and his messengers" (so in the transcript) and speaks elsewhere in the session of "his Eminency Ayatollah Khamenei" [Keshe, KSW 488, #378200]. In KSW 634 (19 March 2026) he claims that the "US Government purposely bombed Iran Space Research Center - destroyed historical Plasma Technology Center killing plasma scientists". He also claims that Khamenei "is one of the richest Man, 90 trillion… American debt is 37 trillion", and that by the end of 2027 over a hundred nations will be able to produce enriched plutonium "for scientific Space development" [Keshe, KSW 634, #378346]. In KSW 631 he says Iran "does not need nuclear weapons", that the knowledge "which supersedes nuclear is already in the hand of the Iranian scientists", and that "half of our negotiating are not Iranians, most of our leadership are not Iranians" [Keshe, KSW 631, #378343]. In KSW 311 (16 January 2020) he forecast that "after the completion of the peace talks between Iran and the US, the peace movement will take a new rapid phase", expecting the change "between middle of this year, to the end of the year" [Keshe, KSW 311, #378023]. The forecast is his; no Iran-US peace agreement is recorded for 2020 in the sources used here.

Alongside this loyalty, KSW 461 (1 December 2022) condemns the state's treatment of protesters: "They get people as demonstrating, they rape them, and then they shoot them, and in whose, in God's name" [Keshe, KSW 461, #378173]. Keshe thus declares loyalty to the Iranian nation and its leadership while condemning the violence of its religious state.

Key points

- Engdahl, Taylor (quoting Dorril) and Davidson agree that the CIA and MI6 overthrew Mossadegh in August 1953, using an oil boycott, paid fake Tudeh crowds and money to clerics.
- Farah Pahlavi presents 1953 as rescue from chaos and 1963 as a clerical revolt against women's suffrage, land reform and the Literacy Corps, which ended in Khomeini's arrest.

- Armstrong holds that the revolution is "incomprehensible" without Shi'a history, especially the Usuli victory that empowered the ulema.
- Ghattas describes Khomeini's Najaf network, *wilayat al-faqih* and Al-e Ahmad's *Gharbzadegi* as the foundations of the revolution, and 1979 as the start of the Saudi-Iranian rivalry.
- The 1979 sequence: the Shah leaves on 16 January, Khomeini returns, the US embassy is seized (444 days of captivity), and Iraq invades on 22 September 1980.
- Culianu, via Riesebrodt, classes the revolution with American Protestant fundamentalism as a response to rapid urbanisation.
- Keshe declares loyalty to Iran and makes claims of his own (Khamenei's "90 trillion", a US strike on a plasma centre, a forecast of completed Iran-US peace talks in 2020), while condemning the regime's violence against protesters [#378200, #378346, #378023, #378173].

Chapter 145.

Petro-Islam and Global Jihad: Wahhabi Export, Afghanistan, al-Qaeda and the Islamic State

The same year that brought a Shi'a jurist to power in Tehran (Chapter 144) also set in motion the Sunni forces that, over two decades, produced al-Qaeda and, after another decade, the Islamic State's caliphate of 2014. This chapter follows that chain through the library's sources. It runs from the eighteenth-century pact between a preacher and a desert dynasty, through oil money and Cold War strategy, to the Afghan jihad and its global offspring. The main sources are Christopher Davidson's *Shadow Wars*, Kim Ghattas's *Black Wave*, Osama bin Laden's statements as edited by Bruce Lawrence, and the RAND study *Beyond al-Qaeda*. Glenn Beck's thesis that "it is about Islam", the claim that Wahhabism was a British invention, and Mehran Keshe's warning of a planned Saudi-Iranian war are set beside them, each attributed.

The Saudi-Wahhabi Compact

The reference shelf gives the foundation: in 1744 the preacher Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the local ruler Muhammad ibn Saud of Diriyah made a pact uniting religious reform with political power. It produced the first Saudi state, which the Ottomans destroyed in 1818, a second state in the nineteenth century, and the present third kingdom [Wikipedia: History of Wahhabism]. *Jane's Sentinel* dates the modern state to 1902, when "King Abd al-Aziz al-Saud, known as Ibn Saud… captured Riyadh, the dynasty's ancestral capital, from the rival Al-Rashid", and lists the "discovery of oil deposits" in 1930 as the next milestone. Ghattas instead dates "the discovery of oil" to 1938 [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495, Part I]. It notes the kingdom's role as custodian of Islam's holy places and its balancing between rhetorical support for the Palestinians and its alliance with

the West: Riyadh "pledge[d] funds to aid the Palestinian people" while avoiding an oil confrontation [Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessment: Saudi Arabia, #367631].

On terms, Thomas Horn, citing the historian Tim Furnish, notes that " 'Wahhabi' is apparently considered an insult by Salafists". He describes Wahhabism as "the subset of Salafism founded by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1792)", which "was allied to the House of Saud in the late eighteenth century and still is today" and "rejected modern influences on Islam" [Horn, I Predict!, #74299, ch. 1].

Cold War Alignment: Oil, Fatwas and the CIA

Davidson's thesis, set out in chapters titled "Searching for an Islamic state - Wahhabism and the Muslim Brotherhood", "The CIA's Baby" and "Britain's caliphate", is that Western states knowingly cultivated Islamist forces as a counterweight to Arab nationalism and communism. He writes that, succeeding his father in 1953, "Saud bin Abdul-Aziz al-Saud was quick to assure the US that things would be business as usual and conveniently requested the Wahhabi religious establishment to issue a fatwa or religious ruling that forbade Muslims from accepting aid from the Soviet Union". He adds that Aramco, "still mostly staffed by US nationals", funded "a 'print shop and broadcasting station in Riyadh for the propagation of religious tracts' ". Of the next king he writes: "with his mother a direct descendant of Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab, Faisal was a man after the CIA's heart". Faisal founded the Islamic University of Medina in 1961, "before even setting up the kingdom's first television station", as a counterweight to Nasser's al-Azhar [Davidson, Shadow Wars, #66972]. Taylor, quoting Stephen Dorril, adds that MI6 planned to use the Muslim Brotherhood against Nasser [Taylor, Brexit: European Union, American Empire, #62532].

Ghattas measures how far the export grew after 1979. Saudi funding for the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) was "$250,000 a year" in 1962. "By 1980, the spigot had opened: funding jumped to $13 million. By 1999, WAMY would have spent $22 billion on 'services to Islam' " [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495, Part I].

A counter-narrative reverses Davidson's chronology. *PART 1 - The Truth About Pizzagate*, citing a YouTube channel as its "source", states: "The British spy met with Abdul Wahab and planned to create a brand of FAKE ISLAM that would later be known as WAHHABISM... designed to undermine traditional Islam so the British could have a foothold on the Arab world" [Unknown author, PART 1 -

The Truth About Pizzagate, #78829, part 12.1]. The text names no source beyond the YouTube channel. The same story is told in the *Memoirs of Mr. Hempher, The British Spy to the Middle East*, which, according to the reference shelf, first appeared in Turkish in 1888 in Ayyub Sabri Pasha's *Mir'at al-Haramayn*. Bernard Haykel called it "an anti-Wahhabi forgery, 'probably fabricated by one Ayyub Sabri Pasha' ", while it "still enjoys some currency" in the Middle East; Ayatollah Montazeri in 1987 denounced the Wahhabis as "a bunch of British agents from Najd" [Wikipedia: Memoirs of Mr. Hempher, The British Spy to the Middle East].

1979: Mecca, Islamabad, Peshawar

For Ghattas, 1979 is the hinge. The armed occupation of the Grand Mosque by Juhayman al-Otaybi and his followers ended "just before dawn on Tuesday, December 4, 1979, exactly two weeks after Juhayman and his men had hijacked the Holy Mosque". "270 people had died, according to their official numbers. The Saudi government admitted to 127 troops killed and 450 injured, with 117 rebels dead, in addition to 26 pilgrims". Western estimates were higher. The monarchy's response, in Ghattas's account, was to give the ulema more power at home and abroad. "A month after the Soviet invasion, the Saudi intelligence chief Turki al-Faisal, who had just overseen the operation to take down Juhayman in Mecca, traveled to Peshawar", where the Saudis saw both a threat and "an opportunity" [Ghattas, #72495, Part I].

Pakistan moved in parallel. "On February 10, Zia had made a forty-eight-minute speech and announced he was imposing Nizam-i-Islam on Pakistan, effective immediately". The next day, "the same day that Khomeini declared his victory in Iran", bars and breweries were shut. Zia "promised he would set up a state-run zakat fund", although zakat is "a charitable contribution of 2.5 percent of one's yearly income, mandated by God but rarely imposed by governments" [Ghattas, #72495, Part II].

Financing the Afghan Jihad

Davidson writes that "under its new intelligence chief, Turki bin Faisal al-Saud, Saudi Arabia had agreed to match all US funding for Afghanistan, dollar for dollar", with the grand mufti Abdul-Aziz bin Baz involved in mobilisation. He

cites David Kaplan's five-month *US News* investigation (2003), whose "unequivocal conclusion was that the primary sources of funds for the 1980s jihadists were Saudi Arabia's 'quasi-official charities', including many of the same US-approved but poorly scrutinized institutions that had been set up in the 1960s". He adds that US and British intelligence engaged in "propaganda and other psychological operations in Afghanistan", and that bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam sent "road shows" around the Gulf to raise money for the Maktab al-Khidamat [Davidson, #66972, "Mobilizing jihad"].

Bin Laden in His Own Words

Lawrence's edition introduces Statement 3, "Declaration of Jihad", dated 23 August 1996, as "the longest of bin Laden's early statements... subsequently dubbed the 'Ladenese Epistle'. It comes in the form of a juridical edict authorizing defensive war (jihad) against the Americans for their continued presence in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia". Its full title is "A Declaration of Jihad against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Sanctuaries" [Lawrence (ed.), Messages to the World, #73066, Statement 3]. The preceding statements cite Qur'an 9:38-39, and later ones list grievances over Palestine (the "Land of the Prophet's Night Journey"), Iraq, Chechnya and Afghanistan [#73066]. Davidson cites the journalist Abdel Bari Atwan, who visited bin Laden in 1996, to the effect that "the Saudi funders also requested that bin Laden issue a statement declaring that the king of Saudi Arabia was a 'true Muslim' ". Davidson reads this as evidence that "powerful Saudis were still keen to keep al-Qaeda onside" [Davidson, #66972]. The US counterinsurgency manual draws a similar lesson about narrative: "In the Al Qaeda narrative, for example, Osama bin Laden depicts himself" within a story of Islamic history, and "commanders must consider the presence of religious extremism in the insurgents' ideology" [US Army/USMC, Counterinsurgency Field Manual FM 3-24, #37026, ch. 1 and "Religious and Cultural Dimensions of Insurgency"].

From the Global Jihadist Movement to the Caliphate

The RAND study defines its subject as "al-Qaeda and the universe of jihadist groups that are associated with or inspired by al-Qaeda", distinct from "traditional or local jihads" against local adversaries. Its acronyms include the GIA (Armed Islamic Group, Algeria), the GSPC (Salafist Group for Preaching and

Combat), the EIJ (Egyptian Islamic Jihad) and the GICM (Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group). Its conclusion: "No one tool is likely to be decisive against al-Qaeda. An effective strategy… will necessarily employ a complex mixture of military, intelligence, financial, political, legal… and even social instruments" [Rabasa et al., Beyond al-Qaeda, #368002, Summary].

Glenn Beck's *It Is About Islam* traces the line to the Islamic State. "Though American air strikes killed Zarqawi in 2006, al-Qaeda in Iraq… took Naji's advice to heart". Abu Bakr Naji's *Management of Savagery* had advised creating as much "savagery" as possible so that the Sykes-Picot borders would dissolve. The jihadists "declared open season on Iraq's Shia, whom they call rafidun… 'rejecters' ". Beck notes that in 1924 "Kemal Atatürk… abolished the Caliphate. Suddenly, for the first time since the seventh century, there was nobody left to claim the title of caliph". He presents Baghdadi's sermon at the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul, which he dates to "June 28, 2014, the first day of Ramadan", as its restoration. "The establishment of the Caliphate is another sign to Islamists of the impending end of days", Beck writes, and Dabiq "will be the site of the most consequential battle in the history of mankind" [Beck, It Is About Islam, #63847, ch. 4 and "The Caliphate and the End Times"]. Horn explains that "Islamic eschatology (from the Hadith) points to the town of Dabiq, Syria, as a fester-pot of the Muslim Malahim (apocalypse; Armageddon)", and describes ISIS videos of a tank advancing on the Colosseum: "This is your last crusade" [Horn, #74299, ch. 1]. The group named its magazine *Dabiq* after the prophecy [Wikipedia: Dabiq (magazine)].

Davidson offers the competing reading in "Enter the Islamic State - A Phantom Menace". His sections run from "Al-Qaeda's limits" through "Iraq - the incubation chamber" and "The caliphate restored" to "The resurrection of Saddam Hussein". He argues that occupation policy and regional sponsors incubated the movement, rather than doctrine alone [Davidson, #66972]. J. M. Berger's *Extremism*, citing Charles Lister's *The Syrian Jihad*, frames ISIS as an offshoot of al-Qaeda that split from it, and analyses how extremist movements build "exclusive identities" with "rigid boundaries between in-groups and out-groups" [Berger, Extremism, #75678, ch. 3]. *Rhet Ops* finds that ISIS keywords are "filled with religiously tinged terms for IS's enemies" [Rhet Ops, #67631, Part II].

Explanation	Main proponent	Core claim
Doctrine	Beck	Jihadism follows from Islamic texts and eschatology ("it is about Islam")
State sponsorship	Davidson	Western and Gulf states fostered Islamists for strategic ends
Movement dynamics	RAND; Berger	A networked movement with in-group/out-group identity; needs multiple tools
Regional rivalry	Ghattas	Saudi-Iranian competition after 1979 spread sectarian ideology
British-plot thesis	*Pizzagate* text; *Hempher* memoir	Wahhabism a British invention (sourced to YouTube; *Hempher* called a forgery by Haykel)

The Internal Muslim Argument over Jihad

Muslim voices contest the jihadist reading. In Frederick Forsyth's novel *Afganul*, the scholar-character says (in Romanian translation) that "jihadul există, dar el are reguli" ("jihad exists, but it has rules"): it is either a personal struggle to become a better Muslim, "lacking any aggression", or armed defence of Islam, and terrorists "prefer to erase all the rules from the text" [Forsyth, Afganul, #22821, ch. 2]. *Unbrainwashing Yourself* argues that military jihad "must be declared by a certain authority figure, studied extensively, and judged to be absolutely necessary to protecting the religion", and that "a jihad is not meant to be a war waged on other religions" [Unbrainwashing Yourself, #62457, "Islam: A Religion of Jihad?"]. The reference shelf distinguishes classical jihad doctrine from modern "jihadism" [Wikipedia: Jihadism].

Keshe's Warning

In KSW 198 (16 November 2017) Keshe announced that the "War between Iran and Saudi Arabia has been planned for 100 years" and that supporters "need to prevent [it] with their souls". He said: "There is a huge conflict setup between Iran as a Shia country and its allies, and the Sunni countries, Saudi Arabia and their allies", and appealed to "the leaders of the Iranian government… and the Saudi leadership and the rest of the Islamic world", saying that "the line of descendants of Mohammad doesn't change" what unites them [Keshe, KSW 198, #377841]. This is his warning and his appeal for Islamic unity. In structure it matches Ghattas's description of a forty-year rivalry, though Keshe attributes the conflict to deliberate planning.

Key points

- The 1744 pact between Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the House of Saud, renewed by Ibn Saud's capture of Riyadh in 1902, joined Wahhabi doctrine to Saudi power. Salafists regard "Wahhabi" as an insult (Horn, citing Furnish).
- Davidson argues that Washington and London cultivated Wahhabism and the Brotherhood: an anti-Soviet fatwa (1953), Aramco's religious print shop, and Faisal as "a man after the CIA's heart".
- The *Pizzagate* text claims Wahhabism was a British invention, citing a YouTube channel [#78829]. The same story appears in the *Hempher* memoir (1888), which Haykel, as reported on the reference shelf, calls an Ottoman anti-Wahhabi forgery [Wikipedia].
- Ghattas makes 1979 the hinge: the Mecca siege (270 dead officially), Zia's Nizam-i-Islam and Turki al-Faisal's trip to Peshawar. WAMY's funding rose from $250,000 (1962) to $13 million (1980).
- Saudi Arabia matched US Afghan funding "dollar for dollar", and Saudi "quasi-official charities" were the main funders of the 1980s jihadists (Davidson, citing Kaplan).
- Bin Laden's 1996 "Ladenese Epistle" was a juridical edict for defensive jihad against US forces in Saudi Arabia. RAND concludes that "no one tool is likely to be decisive".
- Beck reads ISIS as doctrinal and apocalyptic (Naji, rafida, Dabiq, the 2014 caliphate). Davidson reads it as a product of state sponsorship. Other

voices insist that jihad "has rules". Keshe warned of a planned "100-year" Saudi-Iranian war.

Chapter 146.

The Vatican as a Power: Concordats, Cold War Diplomacy, the Vatican Bank and Gladio

The Holy See is unusual among religious bodies: it is a sovereign subject of international law, it signs treaties, it keeps diplomats, and since 1929 it has had its own territory and its own bank. This double nature has produced a large literature: investigative journalism, Protestant and traditionalist polemic, intelligence memoir and alleged insider testimony. This chapter follows the Vatican as a political and financial actor from 1929 to the Francis pontificate, setting out each source's claim and evidence and noting where a reference work confirms the underlying fact.

The Roman Question and the Lateran settlement (1929)

When the Italian state took Rome in 1870, the popes refused to recognise the loss and confined themselves to the Vatican. Nino Lo Bello writes that "this self-imprisonment kept the so-called Roman Question alive for over half a century; not until the signing of the Lateran Treaty in 1929 did the Vatican accept compensation" [Lo Bello, The Vatican Empire, #54189, "The Lateran Treaty"]. He describes the 1929 settlement as "actually a unity of three separate agreements". His verdict: "if the Lateran Treaty was a major coup for Mussolini, it was to be an even bigger victory for the Vatican … today the Vatican is solidly entrenched in the Italian economy" [Lo Bello, #54189].

David Yallop quotes the financial clause directly: "Italy undertakes to pay the Holy See, on the ratification of the Treaty, the sum of 750 million lire and to hand over at the same time Consolidated 5 per cent State Bonds to the bearer for the nominal value of one billion lire." He converts this to 81 million dollars at the 1929 rate and "approximately 500 million dollars" in 1984 terms, and treats the payment as the founding capital of what he calls "Vatican Incorporated". He also notes that the concordat with Hitler's Reich followed soon after [Yallop, In God's Name, #61893, ch. 3]. Avro Manhattan, a Protestant critic of the papacy, speaks of "the 100 million dollars which Fascist Italy had put into the Vatican coffers", administered by a special agency that began "a brand-new policy … one of international investments". He sums up 1929 as the moment "the Vatican-Fascism betrothal became a formal and official marriage" [Manhattan, The Vatican Billions, #64831, ch. 36]. Paul L. Williams adds a political detail: "Mussolini's signature on the Lateran Treaty in 1929 enabled Pius XI to have De Gasperi released into papal custody". De Gasperi later led post-war Christian Democrat Italy [Williams, The Vatican Exposed, #67453].

Manhattan alone adds that while the Vatican was "publicly fulminating against Bolshevism", its diplomats held secret negotiations with the Kremlin: "Lenin agreed with the pope … Papal commissions … were despatched to Bolshevik Russia, disguised as famine-relief missions" [Manhattan, #64831, ch. 36]. The passage gives no archival reference.

The Reichskonkordat and the Pius XII controversy

The reference shelf fixes the basic fact: the concordat between the Holy See and the German Reich was signed in Rome on 20 July 1933, by Cardinal Secretary of State Eugenio Pacelli and Vice-Chancellor Franz von Papen [Wikipedia: Reichskonkordat]. In return for guarantees for Catholic institutions, the Church agreed that clergy would withdraw from party politics [Wikipedia: Pope Pius XI and Germany].

Other literature in the library goes much further. The anonymous anti-Catholic tract *The Secret Terrorist* (shelved under Paranormal & Conspiracy) says that "the whole Vatican-Hitler bargain had been conducted in secret before Hitler became Chancellor of Germany in January 1933". It claims a concordat followed "under terms of which the church swore allegiance to the Nazi regime" [The Secret Terrorist, #79644, ch. 7]. The tract dates the concordat to June, whereas the reference shelf gives 20 July.

The figure of Pius XII (Pacelli, pope 1939-1958) divides the sources most sharply. John Cornwell's *Hitler's Pope* (1999) argued that Pacelli's pursuit of the concordat helped legitimise the Nazi regime, and that his drive for centralised papal power, together with what Cornwell called an "antipathy toward the Jews", led to silence over the Holocaust. Cornwell later moderated some of these conclusions. In 2004 he wrote that Pius "had so little scope of action that it is impossible to judge the motives for his silence", but he still held that the pope owed a post-war explanation. Historians including Martin Gilbert have credited Pius with actions that saved Jews [Wikipedia: Hitler's Pope].

The opposite thesis comes from Ion Mihai Pacepa, the former acting chief of Romanian foreign intelligence who defected in 1978, writing with the law professor Ronald Rychlak. They argue that the "Hitler's Pope" image was manufactured by Soviet bloc disinformation and launched through Rolf Hochhuth's play *The Deputy* (1963). In Pacepa's account, " 'Seat 12' was the code name for the Romanian side of the KGB's operation against Pius XII ... an allusion to the pope as occupant of the seat of Saint Peter". He says the KGB wanted original Vatican documents "so as to give the impression that its allegation that Pius XII was 'Hitler's Pope' " rested on archival proof [Pacepa & Rychlak, Disinformation, #76607, Part on Pius XII, chs. 17-22]. Their documentation draws on Rychlak's own *Hitler, the War and the Pope* (2000) and on a wide literature on both sides of the debate [Pacepa & Rychlak, #76607, chs. 25 and 44]. No independent reference source in the library confirms either side's core claim, Cornwell's about motive or Pacepa's about the KGB authoring the campaign.

Cold War diplomacy: missions, Ostpolitik and Gladio

The nineteenth-century *Encyclopedia of Missions* records that American missionaries in Peking were "on many occasions, left in charge of the legation as acting ambassador", and that "diplomatic negotiations with smaller tribes and kingdoms - especially in Oceania - have received aid from the same source" [Encyclopedia of Missions, #64675, article on missions and diplomacy].

After the Second Vatican Council the Holy See adopted *Ostpolitik*, a policy of negotiated accommodation with communist states. Its architect, Agostino Casaroli, signed a partial agreement with Hungary in 1964 and a protocol with Yugoslavia in 1966, "the first time the Holy See had opened itself in this way to Communist governments". As John Paul II's Secretary of State from 1979, he was regarded as an "irreplaceable asset in the struggle against the Soviet Union". According

to John Koehler, Casaroli's office was a primary KGB espionage target, bugged through a gift from his own nephew [Wikipedia: Agostino Casaroli].

Paul L. Williams sets the Vatican within the Western side of the Cold War. In *Operation Gladio* he argues for an alliance of the CIA, the Vatican and the Mafia that ran stay-behind networks and financial channels in post-war Italy. He links the Vatican Bank's dealings with Michele Sindona to that alliance, for example Sindona's purchase of "143 million shares from the Vatican at double the market price" [Williams, Operation Gladio, #66761; same text in gladio-unholy, #82137]. He supports it with press reports, court records and declassified CIA files, such as those on Giovanni Montini (Paul VI). The coordinated triple alliance is his inference from that material, not a court finding [Williams, #67453, ch. 9 notes].

The Vatican Bank, Banco Ambrosiano and P2

The Institute for the Works of Religion (IOR), the "Vatican Bank", was the main shareholder of Banco Ambrosiano. Its president, Archbishop Paul Marcinkus, was a director of Ambrosiano Overseas in Nassau. Ambrosiano's chairman Roberto Calvi, "God's banker", built an offshore network through which, by 1982, $1.287 billion could not be accounted for. Calvi was found hanging from Blackfriars Bridge in London on 18 June 1982. The Holy See later "agreed to pay out a substantial sum without accepting liability". In 1998 Licio Gelli, head of the Propaganda Due (P2) lodge, had his 12-year sentence for the Ambrosiano crash confirmed [Wikipedia: Banco Ambrosiano]. The 1981 police raid on the P2 office, made to arrest Gelli and gather evidence against Calvi, preceded Calvi's conviction and four-year sentence [Wikipedia: Banco Ambrosiano].

Yallop reconstructs the mechanics. In 1976, when Calvi wished to acquire 53.3 per cent of the Banca Mercantile of Florence, the shares "found their convoluted way on December 17th to Milan stockbrokers Giammei and Company, who frequently acted on behalf of the Vatican. By dexterous paperwork the shares were 'parked' on the same day at the Vatican Bank" [Yallop, #61893]. Williams quotes the letter of 21 January 1981 in which Milanese Ambrosiano shareholders urged John Paul II to investigate "the unholy ties between Marcinkus, Calvi, Umberto Ortolani, Gelli, and the huge flow of cash". He notes that Marcinkus was promoted even though the circulating P2 list showed "the Gorilla" to be a Freemason, in breach of canon law [Williams, #66761]. Williams also reports his own experience: while writing a book for Doubleday's Catholic imprint, "I was told to

expunge all references to the Vatican Bank, including the donation of Mussolini, the Ambrosiano affair, and the P2 scandal" [Williams, #66761, Introduction].

The death of John Paul I and an alleged insider

Albino Luciani was elected pope in August 1978 and died after 33 days, on the night of 28-29 September. Yallop's central thesis is that the death is bound up with the financial scandals. He writes that Luciani had "personal experience of the manner in which Marcinkus operated the Vatican Bank" from the Banca Cattolica sale, and that he was concerned about P2's penetration of the Vatican. He concludes: "on September 28th, 1978, these six men, Marcinkus, Villot, Calvi, Sindona, Cody and Gelli had much to fear if the Papacy of John Paul I continued" [Yallop, #61893]. The opposing reading comes from Cornwell, who "concluded that the Pope was not murdered but died of a pulmonary embolism, possibly brought on by overwork and neglect" [Wikipedia: John Cornwell (writer)].

A further account appears in a work attributed to "Monsignor" Rafael Rodriguez Guillen; the library catalogue lists him as author, unverified, and describes the book as an exposé of "alleged institutional corruption". He calls Marcinkus "the master and intellectual agent responsible for the scheme of billions of dollars of counterfeited money, and who also finances the trips of the Pope Wojtyla". He calls a Bahamas bank "one of the fiscal paradises through which Marcinkus operated with Roberto Calvi" and names Villot and Gelli as part of the network, relying largely on Richard Hammond's *The Vatican Connection* [Rodriguez Guillen, The Vatican's Mafia, #71502, "The Archbishop Marcinkus and the Vatican's Mafia"].

The Francis pontificate and Keshe's reading

The traditionalist-conservative *Diabolical*, published in 2018 and written by Milo Yiannopoulos (the library record lists no author), describes the Vatican Bank as "essentially an offshore bank in the middle of Rome" and "a money-launderer's paradise". It alleges that a group it calls "Team Francis" or "the Lavender Mafia" covered up abuse, notably in the McCarrick case, "in service to the continued power of a small group of cardinals". The stake, it says, is "spiritual authority over 1.2 billion people". It attacks the September 2018 agreement with Beijing as

having "codified Communist Party interference in the selection of Chinese bishops" [Diabolical, #71209, "Enemy of the People"; "Make the Vatican Straight"].

Mehran Keshe offers his own reading. In KSW 422 (3 March 2022) he claims the Pope had financed an attempt, "through Americans and NATO", to take over the finances of the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine. He says the Pope's visit to the Russian embassy on the eve of the war meant "accepting the defeat", with a guarantee of payment: "Don't worry about this Ukraine business, Vatican has already paid for it. And they receive the bill everyday". He claims that "the Queen is a servant of the Vatican", that the British monarchy "took revenge on loosing the Church of England to Vatican, by taking 140 billion dollars of gold from the vaults of Libya", and that Britain was "kicked out of the EU (through Brexit)" for not sharing it [Keshe, KSW 422, #378134]. In KSW 307 (19 December 2019) he states: "The Rothschild's group has financed wars through Vatican, they put the money in and Vatican uses the name of the soul to create wars" [Keshe, KSW 307, #378019]. These are Keshe's claims; the other sources in this chapter do not discuss them.

Episode	Documented baseline	Main interpretive claim	Who claims it
Lateran 1929	750m lire plus 1bn lire in bonds	Birth of "Vatican Incorporated"; "marriage" with Fascism	Yallop; Manhattan
Reichskonkordat	Signed 20 July 1933	Secret pre-1933 bargain; oath of allegiance	The Secret Terrorist
Pius XII	Silence debated by historians	Legitimised Hitler / KGB-made myth	Cornwell / Pacepa & Rychlak
IOR-Ambrosiano	$1.287bn missing; Calvi dead 1982	CIA-Vatican-Mafia alliance	Williams
John Paul I	Died 28-29 Sept 1978	Six men had motive / natural death	Yallop / Cornwell
Ukraine 2022	War began February 2022	Vatican-financed church war	Keshe

Key points

- Lo Bello, Yallop and Manhattan agree that the 1929 Lateran settlement made the papacy a financial power; Yallop gives the treaty's exact terms (750 million lire plus one billion lire in 5 per cent bonds).
- The Reichskonkordat was signed on 20 July 1933. Claims of a secret pre-1933 bargain and a Church oath of allegiance come from the polemical *Secret Terrorist*.
- On Pius XII, Cornwell's "Hitler's Pope" thesis, which he later partly moderated, stands against Pacepa and Rychlak's claim of a KGB operation ("Seat 12") launched through *The Deputy*.
- The Ambrosiano collapse, Calvi's death in London (June 1982), the P2 list (1981) and Gelli's conviction are documented. Williams's CIA-Vatican-Mafia alliance and Rodriguez Guillen's counterfeit scheme are the authors' inferences.
- Yallop links John Paul I's death to six men with financial motives; Cornwell concluded it was a pulmonary embolism.
- Ostpolitik under Casaroli opened negotiated relations with communist states from 1964.
- *Diabolical* and Keshe both frame the modern Vatican as a power structure. Keshe's claims about war financing, Libyan gold and Brexit appear in no other source used here [#378134, #378019].

Chapter 147.

Faith and Empire Today: Religion in the Geopolitics of Russia, China, Iran and the United States

After the Cold War, religion returned to great-power politics. Russia rebuilt a partnership between the Kremlin and the Moscow Patriarchate. China's Communist Party moved from tolerating religion to "sinicising" it. Iran's clerical state and Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi monarchy fought a forty-year contest for the Muslim world, and in the United States an evangelical constituency became a lasting factor in Middle East policy. This chapter surveys these four cases, with the Ukraine war as a central example of a conflict that several sources read as partly ecclesiastical. It then sets beside them the two most radical "outside" views in the library: Mitchell Heisman's argument that the secular-technological Singularity is the culmination of monotheism, and Mehran Keshe's programme to replace religions and states with a "Universal Council". Each is reported as its author presents it.

Russia: Eurasianism, Orthodoxy and the "civilization state"

Charles Clover traces Eurasianism from the White Russian émigrés of the 1920s through the Soviet-era dissident Lev Gumilev, who popularised the word among "ideologues of reaction - both dissident nationalists and Soviet hardliners", to Aleksandr Dugin and finally the Kremlin. On 4 October 2011, a week after announcing his return to the presidency, Putin published a full-page *Izvestiya* article proposing a "Eurasian Union" of former Soviet states. Clover calls this an "ex-

travagant double entendre". In September 2013, at the Valdai forum, Putin again called Russia a "civilization state", a phrase Clover describes as a "dog-whistle term" [Clover, Black Wind, White Snow, #62819, Part III]. Clover does not treat Dugin as a simple puppet-master. In his view, Dugin had "a near monopoly on the production of the symbols, theories and pamphlets of a new hardline nationalism", but "in the hyperreality that is Russian politics, where a parallel universe is amplified to deafening volume via state TV and talking heads like Dugin, all ideology is indeed mere language" [Clover, #62819]. Harold James makes a similar point by analogy: "Dugin bears more than a casual resemblance to his mentor Karl Haushofer. In the same way as more commentators outside Germany held Haushofer to be the strategic mastermind of Hitlerism, it is much more common in the West than in Russia to attribute to Dugin Vladimir Putin's espousal of the obviously geopolitical Eurasian project" [James, The War of Words, #68119, "Geopolitics"].

Owen Matthews shows how this ideology was tied to the Church. He quotes Dugin directly: "Russian fascism is a combination of natural national conservatism with a passionate desire for true changes … We conservatives want a strong, solid state, want order and healthy family, positive values, the reinforcing of the importance of religion and the Church". He describes the oligarch Konstantin Malofeev as "a passionate believer in divine-right monarchism and in creationism". In late January 2014, Matthews writes, Malofeev "had been travelling with Patriarch Kirill, head of the Russian Orthodox Church, taking a collection of ancient Christian relics on tour through Russia". This was the period in which Kirill would warn of "forces of evil" that are "hostile to the unity of the Russian people and Church" [Matthews, Overreach, #66606, ch. 4]. The reference shelf adds the doctrine of "Nuclear Orthodoxy". In 2007 Putin called the Orthodox Church and the nuclear arsenal "the components that strengthen Russian statehood", and in 2009 Kirill said at Sarov that Russia's nuclear programme was the will of God [Wikipedia: Nuclear Orthodoxy]. The church rivalry with Constantinople is also documented. After the Ecumenical Patriarchate moved to recognise an independent Ukrainian church, the Moscow Synod broke communion on 15 October 2018, and Patriarch Bartholomew signed the tomos of autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine on 5 January 2019 [Wikipedia: Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine].

Ukraine as a church war

The ecclesiastical fault line in Ukraine is old. Pacepa and Rychlak note that the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church "had been in communion with the Holy See since the Union of Brest in 1595-96" and was in tension with Russian Orthodoxy. In 1946 it "was forcibly 'rejoined' to the Russian Orthodox Church and forced to revoke its union with Rome" [Pacepa & Rychlak, Disinformation, #76607].

Keshe makes this fault line the key to the 2022 war. In KSW 422 (3 March 2022) he claims the conflict was a Vatican attempt to take over the finances of the Russian Orthodox Church: "the Russian Church ask Putin to protect them from Vatican takeover … He had a reason to protect the motherland's Church, that's all it is". He predicts "more mayhem between the 2 Churches, unless we bring the light, that God's word is within the Soul of the Man" [Keshe, KSW 422, #378134]. In KSW 428 he says the British Privy Council and government are an "instigator of many wars". Recalling how "the physical abuse of the man" came forward when the Church of England began selling churches, he adds: "I pray for the soul of … the leaders of Vatican, that they come to their senses. And the same with the Church in Moscow" [Keshe, KSW 428, #378140].

China: sinicisation and control

The library holds few monographs on religion in the People's Republic, so this section relies on the reference shelf. The Communist Party requires its members to be atheists. Under Deng Xiaoping it moved from Mao's campaign of elimination to a regulatory policy, and since 2015 Xi Jinping has made "sinicisation" official doctrine. Religions, especially those deemed foreign such as Christianity and Islam, must "align their teachings and customs with Chinese traditions and 'pledge loyalty' to the state". New regulations came into force on 1 February 2020 [Wikipedia: Religious policy of Xi Jinping]. The campaign against Falun Gong began on 20 July 1999 and was led by an extra-constitutional "6-10 Office". Reports compiled by US government bodies describe detentions in the hundreds of thousands, and investigators allege forced organ harvesting [Wikipedia: Persecution of Falun Gong]. The 2018 Vatican-China agreement on bishops, attacked in *Diabolical* as having "codified Communist Party interference" [Diabolical, #71209], belongs to this context.

Keshe presents China as his partner rather than a persecutor. In KSW 508 (19 October 2023) he says: "I have committed the Keshe Foundation to peace through

the Chinese structure … we deliver the technology for President Xi to deliver the principle politically, equality, share", and he praises the Belt and Road conference [Keshe, KSW 508, #378220]. In KSW 654 he claims Foundation material has been moved to China "for the new Space Center" [Keshe, KSW 654, #378366].

Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel

Kim Ghattas describes a "black wave" that began in 1979, the year of the Iranian revolution, the seizure of the Mecca mosque and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. In her account it set off a forty-year competition between Saudi Arabia and Iran for leadership of the Muslim world, visible "from Iran to Syria, from Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, and in my own country of Lebanon". She documents the Saudi financing behind it: funding for the World Assembly of Muslim Youth rose from $250,000 a year in 1962 to $13 million by 1980 [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495, Part I].

Keshe, who was born in Iran, frames the current Israel-Iran confrontation in his own terms. In KSW 533 (10 April 2024) he says: "America has become afraid of Iran's ability to target with great precision their long range missiles that can reach Israel. As I said recently to a diplomat, America's fear is how to accommodate more than 2 million Jews in the US" [Keshe, KSW 533, #378245]. In KSW 632 (5 March 2026) he gives casualty figures that he calls "the statistics internally from them" and says the media conceal: "Over 180,000 Iranian have been killed in the past week. Over 35,000 Jews have died in Tel Aviv and in Israel. Humanity has lost nearly quarter of a million population in less than 5 days. Media control." In the same workshop he reads the Book of Esther and Purim as a celebration of "the murder of 300,000 Iranians" [Keshe, KSW 632, #378344]. These figures are his own; no other source used in this chapter gives them.

The United States: the evangelical-Zionist constituency

Mearsheimer and Walt count Christian Zionists, "a subset of the broader politically oriented Christian Right" that includes Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson and John Hagee as well as politicians such as Tom DeLay, as part of the Israel lobby. They argue that the 1967 war, which dispensationalists saw as a "miracle of God", made the movement a political force [Mearsheimer & Walt, The Israel Lobby

and U.S. Foreign Policy, #75004, "Christian Zionists"]. *Synarchy* records that Christians United for Israel "claims a membership of seven million, larger than any Jewish organization" and holds that "Christians have a biblical obligation to defend Israel" [Synarchy, #67074, "Zionists"]. Under Trump, the former trade adviser Peter Navarro describes a strategy "we had strategically devised to diplomatically encircle Communist China" [Navarro, Taking Back Trump's America, #79546].

Keshe's alternative world order and his critique of religion

Keshe's dated statements form a distinct political programme and are recorded here as predictions. In KSW 307 (19 December 2019): "The Tehran conference is set for the world leaders to sign themselves into a No War condition. It's not a peace treaty, it's a No War treaty" [Keshe, KSW 307, #378019]. In KSW 311 (16 January 2020) he predicted US-Iran peace talks. He said that "in January of 2021 we'll make the arrangements and facilitate the interface internationally with the UC [Universal Council]", that he would step down by 21 March 2021, and that the planet would have "no king, no emperor, no Archbishops, and no Popes" [Keshe, KSW 311, #378023]. In KSW 629 (2026) an invitation from the "Universal Council" calls on world leaders to "sign the World Peace Treaty". Its summary lists "No need for governments" and "Need Keshe Coin" [Keshe, KSW 629, #378341]. In KSW 634 he proposes giving "a thousand Coin to the citizens" of poor nations as a "peace currency" [Keshe, KSW 634, #378346; KSW 654, #378366].

His view of religion as such is equally radical. KSW 629 is summarised as "Ignorance creates religion and beliefs; Religion has no reality" [Keshe, KSW 629, #378341]. In KSW 518 (28 December 2023) he says that "with the coming of Christianity we became one step more mature. Now we carry the statue around our neck", and calls the cross, the crescent and the Star of David "the same Pagan worship in different dimensions" [Keshe, KSW 518, #378230]. In KSW 644 (28 May 2026) he describes negative soul-energy "especially with the men of robe, the biggest crooks, priests" [Keshe, KSW 644, #378356]. In KSW 205 (4 January 2018) he blames clerical celibacy for abuse: "a man who is produced to reproduce" cannot be told not to [Keshe, KSW 205, #377848].

Heisman: the Singularity as the end of monotheism

Mitchell Heisman offers a second post-religious vision, opposite to Keshe's in method. Part I of his work is titled "God is Technology: How the Singularity of Monotheism Transcended Biology and Primed the Technological Genesis of God" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252]. He argues that Judaism, "as a first decisive alignment with an ultimate trajectory of postbiological evolution, … took a step towards a pattern of 'progress' culminating in a transcendence of biology: God". He also claims that "it was Newton, not Darwin, who led the modern, scientific revolution towards the idea that God is a machine" [Heisman, #38252, Part II]. His reading of Nazism is an inversion. The Nazis "mistakenly understood Judaism in purely biological terms", so that "Jews stand in the way of evolutionary progress". The Singularity, as he presents it, reverses that verdict: biology itself becomes the obstacle to the technological evolution that monotheism set in motion [Heisman, #38252, part 89]. Where Keshe would replace religions with knowledge of the Soul, Heisman sees the machine completing them.

State	Dominant religion	State-religion relation	Main external use of religion
Russia	Russian Orthodoxy	*Symphonia*: Kremlin-Patriarchate partnership; "Nuclear Orthodoxy"	"Russian world", claims on Ukraine, conservative alliances in the West
China	Officially atheist party; folk religion, Buddhism, Daoism	Party control, sinicisation, United Front	Bishop appointments (Vatican deal), Tibet, management of Xinjiang
Iran	Twelver Shi'ism	*Velayat-e faqih* (clerical guardianship)	Revolutionary export, Shi'a networks, rivalry with Riyadh
Saudi Arabia	Wahhabi Sunni Islam	Dynastic-clerical pact	Global funding of Salafi institutions (Ghattas)
United States	Plural, with a strong evangelical presence	Civil religion; lobby politics	Christian Zionist support for Israel

Key points

- Clover and James both warn against treating Dugin as the hidden author of Putin's policy; Matthews documents the Malofeev-Kirill relic tour and Dugin's "Russian fascism" formula.
- The Moscow-Constantinople schism (2018) and Ukrainian autocephaly (2019) are documented. Keshe interprets the 2022 war as a Vatican-Orthodox financial struggle.
- The library lacks monographs on China; reference sources describe Xi's sinicisation policy (2015-2020) and the campaign against Falun Gong since 1999, while Keshe presents Xi as his partner.
- Ghattas traces the Saudi-Iranian rivalry to 1979. Keshe's 2026 casualty figures for an Iran-Israel war are his own, presented as internal statistics hidden by "media control" [#378344].
- Mearsheimer and Walt identify Christian Zionists as part of the Israel lobby; *Synarchy* puts CUFI's claimed membership at seven million.
- Keshe's dated predictions (a Tehran "No War" treaty, the Universal Council opening in January 2021, his resignation by March 2021) are recorded as predictions. In 2026 he was again calling for a World Peace Treaty and a Keshe Coin.
- Heisman and Keshe offer opposite post-religious horizons: Heisman sees technology completing monotheism, Keshe sees knowledge of the Soul dissolving it.

Chapter 148.

Hidden Hands? Secret Societies, Elite Forums and Power as Claimed in the Sources

Throughout this study, political legitimacy has been bound up with claims to secret or sacred knowledge: Magi, mystery schools, Templars and lodges. The library's large conspiracy literature turns that theme into an accusation. It holds that a small number of clubs, orders and bloodlines steer politics behind the façade of elections. This chapter states exactly what each author claims and on what evidence, which may be a document, a quotation, a genealogy or a testimony. It separates two things. One is the underlying fact, such as that a meeting took place or that a person was a member, which an independent reference source can confirm. The other is the inference that the meeting or membership directed policy. Each organisation's description of itself is given alongside, and the chapter closes with the scholarly accounts of why such beliefs spread.

The documented baseline

The reference shelf establishes the following. The Bilderberg Meeting first met from 29 to 31 May 1954 at the Hotel de Bilderberg in Oosterbeek, Netherlands. It was initiated by the Polish exile Józef Retinger to promote Atlanticism, and Prince Bernhard chaired it until 1975. It brings together 120-150 participants under the Chatham House Rule, and its early conferences received Ford Foundation money. The article itself notes that the forum "has drawn conspiracy theories from both the left and right" [Wikipedia: Bilderberg Meeting]. The Trilateral

Commission was founded in July 1973, "principally by … David Rockefeller", to foster cooperation between Japan, Western Europe and North America. Zbigniew Brzezinski left Columbia University to organise it, and it had roughly 400 members in 2021 [Wikipedia: Trilateral Commission]. The Bohemian Club's annual Cremation of Care has been performed at the Bohemian Grove since 1881, in front of a 40-foot owl, as "an allegorical banishing of worldly cares" [Wikipedia: Cremation of Care]. Skull and Bones was founded at Yale in 1832. The Romanian reference article records the theory that its number 322 marks the founding year and a "second chapter" of a German society presumed to be the Illuminati [Wikipedia (RO): Skull and Bones].

The Trilateral-Bilderberg narrative

Jim Marrs gives the canonical account: "Brzezinski's plan for a commission of trilateral nations was first presented during a meeting of the ultrasecret Bilderberg group in April 1972, in the small Belgian town of Knokke-Heist". He sets this against financiers' concern "over Nixon's devaluation of the dollar, surcharges on imports, and budding detente". He quotes Antony Sutton and Patrick Wood: "If you are trying to calculate the odds of three virtually unknown men (Carter, Mondale, and Brzezinski), out of over 60 (Trilateral) commissioners from the U.S., capturing the three most powerful positions in the land, don't bother". He also quotes the journalist Robert Eringer on why the Commission "acquired a reputation for being the Shadow Government of the West" [Marrs, Rule by Secrecy, #63004, Part I, "The Trilateral Commission"]. The evidence here is attendance and appointment. That Carter, Mondale and Brzezinski were Trilateral members and then held office is documented. That the Commission placed them there is the authors' inference.

Dane Phillips and John Scura repeat the 1972 Knokke-Heist story and add that members first gathered at the Rockefeller estate at Pocantico Hills on 23 July 1972. For the Obama years they list officials by affiliation: "Susan Rice, US ambassador to the United Nations, is a Trilateral Commission member. General James L. Jones, national security advisor, is a member of Bilderberg group, the CFR and the Trilateral Commission. Thomas Donilon … is a CFR and Trilateral Commission member". Kissinger is listed as belonging to all three. They describe the Grove as "a meeting place for the elite of the world", which has included "every Republican president since Calvin Coolidge", and claim its lakeside talks "have consistently predicted policies and events" [Phillips & Scura, Battle Hymn, #62152].

The Spanish journalist Cristina Martín Jiménez, read here in Romanian translation, calls David Rockefeller "părintele atît al Clubului Bilderberg, cât şi al Comisiei Trilaterale" ("the father of both the Bilderberg Club and the Trilateral Commission"). She describes the Grove's opening rite: "Reuniunile încep cu un ritual numit 'arderea grijilor', în timpul căruia se dă foc unei bufniţe albe, înaltă de doi metri" ("the meetings begin with a ritual called 'the cremation of care', during which a two-metre-tall white owl is set on fire"). The translator's note defines the Trilateral Commission as a "pressure body" founded in 1973 that "does not accept members of any government" and that "dictated the terms" of trade with underdeveloped and communist countries [Martín Jiménez, Clubul Bilderberg: Stăpânii lumii, #40545; Romanian edition #40544]. The reference shelf confirms the ritual itself and describes the owl as 40 feet tall, not two metres [Wikipedia: Cremation of Care]. Her claim about Rockefeller's paternity of Bilderberg is contradicted by the reference account, which credits Retinger and Bernhard.

The compendium *Synarchy* puts the Trilateral Commission at "approximately 390 elites in business, banking, and politics", quotes Barry Goldwater's 1979 charge that it was "David Rockefeller's newest international cabal", and states that "the Club of Rome works closely with Bilderberg Group, Trilateral commission, Council on Foreign Relations and Tavistock". It derives all of these from a "Committee of 300" established by the "Black Nobility". Its introduction sets the tone: "As far as I'm concerned, these demons should be executed for their crimes against humanity" [Synarchy, #67074, Introduction; "Trilateral Commission"; "Club of Rome"]. The membership figure is close to the reference count of roughly 400; the derivation from a "Committee of 300" is the compendium's own and is not tied to documents in the passages cited.

Bloodlines, the Grove and Skull and Bones

Eric DuBay moves from institutions to genealogy. He writes that all US presidents "have carried European royal bloodlines into office", 34 of them descended from Charlemagne and 19 from Edward III, via "the 13th Illuminati bloodline, the Merovingian line, and/or the Windsor-Bush bloodline". He cites an unnamed "spokesman for Burkes Peerage" as saying that the candidate "with the most royal genes" has won every election. He names Freemasonry, Bilderberg, the Bohemian Grove, Skull and Bones, the CFR and the Trilateral Commission as the vehicles of this power. He quotes Gary Allen's *None Dare Call It Conspiracy*: while everyone has heard of the John Birch Society, usually in derogatory terms,

"practically nobody has heard of the Bilderbergers" [DuBay, The Atlantean Conspiracy, #64609, pp. 3-4]. The Burke's Peerage statement is given without a date or name in the passage.

Antony Sutton anchors Skull and Bones in German philosophy: "When its cofounder, William Russell, was in Germany in 1831-2, there was no way he could have avoided Hegelian theory". He documents the society's 1856 incorporation as the Russell Trust [Sutton, America's Secret Establishment, #5581, Part III]. The incorporation is a public record. The claim that the Order works by a Hegelian method of managed conflict is Sutton's interpretation.

The Illuminati genealogy

Jeffrey Webb's reference handbook traces the Illuminati theory to the reaction against the French Revolution. Abbé Augustin Barruel's *Memoirs Illustrating the History of Jacobinism* (1797-1799) and John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy* blamed the Revolution on the Bavarian Illuminati and the lodges. Their books were read widely in Europe and in the United States, where "Illuminati-themed accusations" surfaced in the late 1790s [Webb, Conspiracy Theories: A Reference Handbook, #62861, pp. 18-22, 156-160].

The modern popular version is *The Illuminati: The Secret Society That Hijacked the World* (attributed to Jim Marrs; the library record lists no author). It argues that "the Illuminati operated largely on the Hegelian Dialectic, utilized so well by Weishaupt, Marx, and Hitler", through which "Western capitalists created communism ... as a perceived enemy". It repeats the "Shadow Government of the West" label for the Trilateral Commission. It explicitly rejects an ethnic reading: "past world revolutions cannot be blamed on persons of the Jewish faith" [The Illuminati, #62399]. Henry Makow's *Illuminati* takes the opposite line. In Makow's version Lenin and Trotsky "were Illuminati Jews and financed by Illuminati Jewish bankers". He writes, however, that "most Jews are unaware of the Illuminati agenda. They are manipulated and compromised like everyone else", and that "organized Jewry" has been "hijacked" [Makow, Illuminati, #64886, Book One]. This is Makow's thesis.

Leo Lyon Zagami claims insider knowledge of the OTO, the Priory of Sion and the Masonic hierarchies. He writes that "religion can serve to galvanize a group of willing people", and that an infiltrating group "can act at all levels and remains

invisible even to the hierarchy of the society that welcomes them" [Zagami, Confessions of an Illuminati, #367409]. His evidence is his own testimony as an insider.

Catholic orders as targets

Anti-Catholic polemic forms its own branch of the literature. Edward Hendrie writes that "Jesuits take a solemn oath to destroy Protestant Christians and destroy any government that offers protection to Protestant Christians". He also claims that Roman Catholicism "is Jewish to its core" [Hendrie, Solving the Mystery of Babylon the Great, #67001, ch. 28]. *The Secret Terrorist* reprints the "Jesuit Oath" and, citing McCarty, claims that the Congress of Vienna (1815) formed the Holy Alliance "whose primary goal was the destruction of all popular governments", with the Jesuits restored "in all their power" [The Secret Terrorist, #79644, ch. 1]. The reference shelf traces the oath text to Robert Ware's *Foxes and Firebrands* (1689) and notes that Ware was "later exposed as a forger" [Wikipedia: Jesuit conspiracy theories].

Issitt and Main give the neutral description of Opus Dei. In 1982 it became the Church's first "personal prelature", "a diocese without physical boundaries", and most of its members are "supernumeraries" living ordinary lives. In the 21st century it relaxed its secrecy, and its defenders "refute speculations that Opus Dei is a cult" [Issitt & Main, Hidden Religion, #66220].

The counterweight

Ian Gittins separates "the real history of Freemasonry" from "the notional history … great conspiracy theories". He traces the institution from medieval stonemasons' guilds through the first Grand Lodges of the eighteenth century, notes that membership has been "consistently dropping since the Sixties", and reports the Masonic pledge "never to use their membership of the movement for personal gain". He grants that real scandals involving cronyism exist, and of one celebrated plot theory he writes: "As conspiracy theories go, this was a spectacular non-starter" [Gittins, Secrets of the Lost Symbol, #62988, chs. 1-2]. Webb identifies a move he finds common to the genre: "Conspiracy theorists throw a wrench in this process by arguing that absence of evidence can be proof of a conspiracy" [Webb, #62861]. William Bernstein explains the appetite for such

stories. In his account man is "the ape that imitates, tells stories, seeks status, morally condemns others, and yearns for the good old days, all of which guarantee a human future studded with religious and financial mass manias" [Bernstein, The Delusions of Crowds, #73904, ch. 15].

Keshe's version of hidden power

Mehran Keshe adds his own attributed position. In KSW 307 (19 December 2019) he says: "The Rothschild's group has financed wars through Vatican" [Keshe, KSW 307, #378019]. In KSW 632 (5 March 2026) he claims that "the seven Jews (7 Rabbis of Jerusalem run Judaism)" are "financing many people" to bring about war, and the session summary links Netanyahu and the Kushner-Trump marriage to brainwashing a "Messiah" [Keshe, KSW 632, #378344]. In KSW 205 (4 January 2018) he predicted that "many world leaders will rise against the KF because they see their position in danger" [Keshe, KSW 205, #377848]. He presents these as statements from his own knowledge, and unlike the authors above he places himself at the centre of the struggle he describes. Heisman's work, by contrast, treats power as impersonal: monotheism and technology, not a cabal, drive history towards a "God" that "is technology" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part I].

Claim	Claimant	Evidence offered	Fact independently confirmed?	Inference
Trilateral plan presented at Bilderberg, 1972	Marrs; Phillips & Scura	Secondary accounts	Commission founded 1973 (yes)	Bilderberg spawned it
Trilateralists captured White House	Sutton & Wood, via Marrs	Membership lists	Carter, Mondale, Brzezinski were members	Commission engineered their rise
Grove ritual burns owl effigy	Martín Jiménez	Description	Cremation of Care exists (owl 40 ft)	Occult elite rite
Presidential royal bloodlines	DuBay	Genealogy; Burke's Peerage statement	Not checked against the reference shelf	13th bloodline rules

Claim	Claimant	Evidence offered	Fact independently confirmed?	Inference
Illuminati caused revolutions	Barruel, Robison (per Webb); Makow	Polemic, quotation	Bavarian Illuminati existed (1776-1785)	Survived and rules
Jesuit extermination oath	Hendrie; The Secret Terrorist	Reprinted oath	Text traced to 1689 forger	Jesuits wage secret war
Rothschild-Vatican war finance	Keshe	His own statement	Not addressed by other sources here	Hidden financiers of war

Key points

- The founding facts are documented: Bilderberg (1954, Oosterbeek, Retinger and Bernhard), the Trilateral Commission (July 1973, Rockefeller and Brzezinski), the Cremation of Care (since 1881) and Skull and Bones (1832).
- Marrs, Phillips and Scura, and Martín Jiménez build their arguments mainly on memberships and appointments. These are real; the claim that they steered policy is inference.
- *Synarchy* derives the elite forums from a "Committee of 300" and calls for executing its "demons" [#67074]; DuBay argues from presidential genealogies and a Burke's Peerage statement [#64609].
- Webb traces the Illuminati myth to Barruel and Robison after 1789. The popular *Illuminati* book rejects an ethnic reading, while Makow blames "Illuminati Jewish bankers" but exempts ordinary Jews.
- The Jesuit oath reprinted by Hendrie and *The Secret Terrorist* comes from a 1689 work by a known forger.
- Gittins, Webb and Bernstein supply the counterweight: Masonic history, Webb's point that conspiracy theorists treat "absence of evidence" as proof, and Bernstein's psychology of mass manias [#62988, #62861, #73904].
- Keshe adds his own version (Rothschild-Vatican war finance, "seven rabbis") and casts himself as the target of threatened elites [#378019, #378344, #377848].

Part XV.

The Keshe Knowledge Seekers Workshops

Chapter 149.

Mehran Tavakoli Keshe and the Keshe Foundation: Origins, Self-Account and Corpus

Part 15 turns to a modern movement that the LSN library holds in unusual depth. It holds hundreds of weekly teaching transcripts, three books, two patent applications, newsletters and chat logs. The movement is the Keshe Foundation (KF), and its founder is the Iranian-born engineer Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. His "Knowledge Seekers Workshops" (KSW) mix plasma physics, teaching on the soul, Zoroastrian and Mithraic symbolism, and peace diplomacy. They speak directly to the themes of this study: religion, prophecy and politics. One point about the sources governs this whole chapter. Nearly everything the library says about Keshe's life comes from Keshe himself, speaking in the workshops, or from material the Foundation published. The library holds no independent biography and no investigative account. Every biographical statement below is therefore given as Keshe's own claim.

The self-account: family, Iran and England

The longest autobiographical passage is in KSW 171. Keshe opens it by saying that this history "will be written in the history book of the KF, it is better that you learn it from me then from anybody else" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 171, #377814, "Keshe Foundation History and Accusations"]. He goes on: "I was born in Iran to a fairly wealthy family, close was the richest family in Iran during the Shaw's regime." He says that in childhood he "saw wealth and abuse to the extreme". He says he went to England at "15 or 16" because he wanted to change direction "towards travel into space and the humanity". He states that he "graduated from Queen Mary Collage in 1981 as a nuclear Physicist specialized in Reactor design system control". He also states that he was told only five

such specialists existed worldwide, most of them in Russia [Keshe, KSW 171, #377814].

KSW 120 (30 June 2016) gives a summary headed "Facts about MT Keshe". It adds that his father "worked with X-Rays, so he was always around radiation". It also says that he watched the Moon landings and "thought there must be another way to get there", and that he was admitted to Queen Mary College at 22 [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 120, #377763, "Keshe's Nuclear Career, Gravity Discovery, and Conflict with Red Circle"]. KSW 554 (9 September 2024) records a related memory. When his brother arrived in London in 1976, he asked to be taken home, calling England "a village … so backwards" next to the "luxury and beauty" of Iran [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 554, #378266, "Personal History and Workshop Logistics"].

The Queen Mary reactor: two versions of the dates

Keshe returns to the Queen Mary College research reactor more than once, and the workshops show documents about it on screen. In KSW 235 the transcript notes "Phtoo of Mr. Keshe as a young man", a 1970 photograph of the reactor, and a "Document of the de-commissioning of the reactor". Keshe comments: "This is why people don't find any information of Queen Mary reactor." He states that the reactor "was moved in 1978 to a new site" and that "in 1981 the new site wa[s]…" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 235, #377947, "Keshe Foundation Activities, Council Meetings, and Reactor History"].

KSW 510 (2 November 2023) holds a longer exchange with the moderator ("R"). The two library editions of this workshop put the dates differently. In one, the moderator reads from "the final report on the decommissioning and de-licensing of the Queen Mary College Research Reactor". He reads that the facility was "licensed by Nuclear Site License number 21 issued on the 24th of December 1963", and that it "was shut down in October 1966 … in preparation for the transfer of the main components to the new Queen Mary College Nucleonics Laboratory in Marshgate Lane" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 510, #378222, "Queen Mary College Nuclear Reactor History"]. The other edition quotes a ministerial approval for "a 10 kilowatt research reactor on a site in West Ham", with "the assembly being taken critical for the first time on the 10th of August 1964" [Keshe, KSW 510, #378222, "Mary College Reactor History and New Plasma Technology"]. Keshe's own recollection in the same session is different. He says the reactor sat in a university basement until the "mid nineteen seventies". He says

it was then moved to a new building "towards West Ham … I think it was moved in 1976, 1977". He also says that "in 1982, the reactor was shut down, because it was proven that the reactor field radiation reaches beyond and within the public" [Keshe, KSW 510, #378222]. The documents read out in this session give 1963 for the licence and 1964 for first criticality.

Point	Document read in KSW 510	Keshe's recollection (KSW 235 / 510)
Licence	Site Licence no. 21, 24 Dec 1963	not stated
First criticality	10 Aug 1964	not stated
Move to new site	components moved to Marshgate Lane after Oct 1966 shutdown	moved 1976-77 (KSW 510) or 1978 (KSW 235)
Final shutdown	October 1966 (original facility)	1982, over public radiation exposure

Secrecy, gravity and the "Red Circle"

KSW 120 gives the Foundation's account of why Keshe left the nuclear industry. It says he "worked in one of the most secret sites in British Nuclear Industry, in a cowshed. He refused to sign a secrecy agreement and was asked to leave, because there should be no secrets in the knowledge" [Keshe, KSW 120, #377763]. The same passage says British intelligence told him "he would never work in nuclear unless he worked for British government". According to this account he then built a business with offices in Africa, Asia and Europe, built his own reactors, and "in early 2000 he could see the G fields". The account goes on: in 2004 a group in a military museum told him "welcome home, we have been waiting for you for 20 years", and the Minister of Defence personally signed a secrecy agreement with him "that it could not be leaked to the Ministry that the G has been discovered" [Keshe, KSW 120, #377763]. KSW 235 repeats the claim that the affidavit was signed "on behalf of the Minister of Defense of UK" because "your Technology (T) is too classified" [Keshe, KSW 235, #377947]. KSW 171 describes the moment of discovery itself: "around 2000 I discovered the Gravity, I sat in one corner and burst into tears" [Keshe, KSW 171, #377814].

The later parts of KSW 120 shift to accusations. Keshe describes a group he calls the "Red Circle" (RC). He says it offered to write his patents and was made up of

"pedophiles and murders and stealers of intellectual rights". He alleges poisoning, a car bombing with his sister inside, and police raids in Belgium, followed by flight to Italy. He also claims that "Red Circle works for Belgium government" [Keshe, KSW 120, #377763].

The "terrorist" label and the Belgian accusations

In KSW 171 Keshe explains how, as he tells it, he came to be called a terrorist. He names a lawyer, "Hans Brachenjeh". He says this lawyer represented the other side while appointed to protect Keshe's interests, and wrote "4 organization names on a paper", warning that these organisations "are going to kill your husband if he doesn't collaborate" [Keshe, KSW 171, #377814]. Keshe says: "Because of Hans Brachenjeh … he made me a terrorist, so you are all KF terrorists, because I didn't give to Hans and Prince Phillip the present King of Belgium". He speaks of being kept "11 days in (Toronto) airport". He claims he told the then king, "I go and you abdicate", and that "a few months after I left he abdicated". In the same session he calls for "the arrest of these 3 Belgium's", asks the UN to protect his family, and says that "if I die the King of Belgium is responsible" [Keshe, KSW 171, #377814]. The session also contains self-descriptions that Chapter 152 takes up: "I am the Messenger of God, you can't kill me … You touched Christ, not this guy" [Keshe, KSW 171, #377814].

Wealth, detachment and the Zoroastrian code

KSW 412 sets out Keshe's account of his finances. He says he made money on a scale "beyond imagination" and that "for a 30 odd year old man to do this, was unbelievable". He says: "In 2000 I made myself a promise, I'll walk away". He also says: "Money became detachment. I detached myself from the world of finance, but within it, I still have to live" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 412, #378124]. The transcript gives no exact age for this fortune beyond "a 30 odd year old man". In KSW 648 he says that he "lived with world leaders, working with governments from age of 20 to 23" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 648, #378360].

KSW 554 also gives a different picture of his origins from KSW 171: its summary line reads "Humble family in Iran - during teenager time touched by beauty of Zoroaster" [Keshe, KSW 554, #378266], whereas KSW 171 speaks of a family

"close [to] the richest family in Iran" [Keshe, KSW 171, #377814]. On religion, KSW 554 records that "in his teenager years he was taught and experienced the Ethos of Mitra with the Zoroastrians". Keshe presents this ethos as a working code: "When you carry the Ethos of Mitra, you can never fail. (Then to Think Good, will be your emotion…)" [Keshe, KSW 554, #378266]. This echoes the Zoroastrian triad of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, which he restates elsewhere as "Talk good, think good, and do good" [Keshe, KSW 510, #378222]. KSW 648 links this way of life to his upbringing: "I lived this life even from childhood, the family I was brought up in Iran" [Keshe, KSW 648, #378360].

The institution as KF presents it

The Foundation calls itself "Stichting the Keshe Foundation", using the Dutch legal form *stichting* (foundation). Its January 2019 newsletter has a feature headed "Malta, Home to Keshe Foundation Headquarters". The same issue describes the "Spaceship Program teachings" run through government-backed programmes [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2019-01, #38317, "Malta"]. KSW 16 (June 2014) already mentions setting up "the structure for the Health Center in Malta" and running the Institute and the Foundation separately in Italy [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 16, #377659]. KSW 429 points donors to a "cash management account in Holland as a NGO" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 429, #378141]. The later workshops centre on Linz in Austria. KSW 430 describes a new management separated "from the knowledge" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 430, #378142]. In KSW 443 (28 July 2022) Keshe announces: "the transfer of the assets to Keshe Foundation, which I've been the trustee for a long time, has started". He adds: "I'll stay as a trustee, till in the future, I'm sure, the two heads of the Keshe Foundation, the two ladies, will become the trustees" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 443, #378155, "Asset Transfer, Future Governance, and Nuclear Safety Technology"]. The same workshop names KF Brazil as "a registered company of the Keshe Foundation".

The corpus

The written core consists of three books. Book 1, *The Universal Order of Creation of Matters* (2009), opens with a foreword. It claims more than thirty years of research and lists four aims: clean energy without waste, food and medicine

made through plasma, "universal travel" protected by magnetic fields, and peace through open disclosure [Keshe, The Universal Order of Creation of Matters, #80404, Foreword]. Book 2, *The Structure of the Light* (2011), treats light as a "cylindrical" plasma [Keshe, The Structure of the Light, #38309]. Book 3, *The Origin of the Universe*, describes universes forming by the "division" of larger ones within a "unicos" [Keshe, The Origin of the Universe, #38310]. There are also two European patent applications. EP1770717A1, "Gravitational and Energy System", was filed in 2005 and published in 2007 [Keshe, Gravitational and Energy System, #38325]. EP1770715A1, "Micro Plasma Reactor" (2007), is held as a scan without a text layer [Keshe, Micro Plasma Reactor, #377868].

The largest body of material is the KSW series itself, catalogued as "Knowledge Seekers Workshops". The library also holds two omnibus volumes: *All in One — KSW Transcripts 1-602* and *Knowledge Seekers Workshop Summaries 1-393*. Both carry the same header: "Note: Transcripts has not been checked by KF. Please listen to original recording. (Transcripts by KF Brazil)". The omnibus adds that KSW 1-4 "are Auto Transcriptions, and they were not proofed". It also notes that the early entries are "mostly summaries of the important points" and become full transcripts only "around the 94th Workshop" [Keshe Foundation, All in One — KSW Transcripts 1-602, #38307; Keshe Foundation, KSW Summaries 1-393, #378714]. Individual later transcripts are marked "Auto Transcription by Elias" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 435, #378147]. Every quotation in Part 15 is therefore a volunteer transcription of speech that the Foundation itself has not checked. Around this core sit the satellite materials: the *KF Plasma Times* newsletters (2018-2019), Telegram logs of the KAKT ("Keshe American Knowledge Team") chats, Universal Council question-and-answer papers, and excerpts prepared by KF Brazil [KAKT Knowledge Seekers, KAKT Chat 2022-08, #377898].

Key points

- Almost all biographical information in the library comes from Keshe himself or from KF publications; there is no independent biography, so each claim is attributed.
- Keshe says he was born into a very wealthy Iranian family, went to England at 15 or 16, and graduated from Queen Mary College in 1981 as a reactor-control specialist (KSW 171).

- The Queen Mary reactor documents read in KSW 510 give a 1963 licence, 1964 criticality and an October 1966 shutdown of the original facility. Keshe recalls a move in 1976-78 and a shutdown in 1982.
- Keshe says he left the nuclear industry after refusing a secrecy agreement, discovered "G" (gravity) fields around 2000, and was pursued by a "Red Circle" and by Belgian figures who, he says, branded him a terrorist (KSW 120, 171).
- He attributes his ethics to a teenage formation in the Zoroastrian "Ethos of Mitra" (KSW 554, 648).
- KF calls itself "Stichting the Keshe Foundation", names Malta as its headquarters (2019) and later works from Linz. In 2022 Keshe announced the transfer of assets to the Foundation, with himself as trustee until "the two ladies" take over (KSW 443).
- The corpus consists of three books, two European patent applications, the KSW transcripts and summaries, and newsletters and chat logs. The transcripts state that KF has not checked them.

Chapter 150.

The Knowledge Seekers Workshops: Format, Phases and Community

The Knowledge Seekers Workshops (KSW) are the main channel through which Mehran Tavakoli Keshe taught. They were also the meeting place of the community that formed around him. They began in spring 2014 as online sessions on reactors and "GANS" materials. The library's latest holdings show them still running in September 2026. In that time a single format came to hold physics lessons, healing testimonials, product announcements, fundraising appeals, statements to governments, and a growing teaching on the soul and religion. This chapter describes the format and the phases of the series as the transcripts record them. It then describes the multilingual community of teachers, translators and chat groups that grew up around it. One caveat runs through all of it. The transcripts and summaries were produced by volunteers. Their headers state that KF has not checked them: "Transcripts has not been checked by KF. Please listen to original recording" [Keshe Foundation, KSW Summaries 1-393, #378714]. Later files carry the line "Auto transcription by Elias", and from 2026 also "Transcription, Editing and Proofing done by KF Brazil" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 659, #378371].

The early phase: reactors, GANS and Fukushima (2014-2015)

The first workshops were technical and experimental. KSW 5 (3 April 2014) dealt with "the decontamination of Fukushima waters with Gans and Nano materials" and with reactor construction. Keshe claimed there that turning radioactive material into a GANS state makes it "non-radioactive". He said: "No Materials

can be dangerous to Human Beings ... Radioactive is not a problem anymore!" [Keshe Foundation, KSW Summaries 1-393, #378714, "5th Knowledge Seekers Workshop"]. The same session announced "the decision to open the International Knowledge seekers to the world" and explained "how to be a student of Keshe Foundation" [#378714]. KSW 6 (10 April 2014) was announced with the line "Main topics will be Fukushima and Nano Materials". A Japanese participant, Yukako, reported on Fukushima. Keshe then explained the CO_2 box, saying "the current in these systems ... are a Plasmatic flow, not electrons" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 6, #377649, "Fukushima Radiation Remediation and Nano Material Physics"].

Religion entered early. KSW 16 (26 June 2014) lists "Talks about Vatican Meeting, Unifying Religions" as its first topic. A Dr Eliya reported on a meeting at the Vatican. The transcript records: "When Mr. Keshe entered the Q started a huge rain", and "a storm happened when Mr. Keshe entered the room and it is said that the storm stopped right when Mr. Keshe left the room". Keshe then explained that "the reason to go to Vatican was nothing to do to put down the integrity of the position of the Pope, but to unite the Religions ... we meet in the cloth of man, not with higher hierarchy ... Its not about to create another Religion" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 16, #377659, "Vatican Meeting and Scientific Workshop Updates"]. The *Summaries* record an exchange in which a participant asks "how to handle the emotion of Mr. Keshe stepping down". The reply is: "It's not stepping down. In a way it's a good news" [#378714]. By 2015 the tone had turned political. KSW 64 (4 June 2015) reports that "negotiations with governments has failed, now go straight to people of earth". It also predicts that "the biggest objection will come from religions" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 64, #377707].

The anatomy of a session

The transcripts show a stable pattern. A session opens with Keshe's greeting: "Good morning, good day to you. As usual, wherever you listen to this series of Knowledge Seekers of the Keshe Foundation Spaceship Institute" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 430, #378142]. Next come announcements on negotiations, governments or finances. Then follows a teaching segment on physics or the soul, and then questions handled by moderators. The early summaries already show the moderator "Rick" taking questions on nano-coating [#378714]. In KSW 510 the moderator "R" reads decommissioning documents aloud [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 510, #378222]. Transcripts are time-coded in the

form "(:07)" or "(1:28)", and the later ones open with a long keyword index. KSW 659 begins with a block that runs from "Universal process of life - give & receive energy" through "Negotiating 3 governments Keshe Coin (KC)" to "Zoroastrian Temple Sacred Fire burning - Fire Keepers breathe ash" [Keshe, KSW 659, #378371].

The soul and Universal Council phase (2016-2019)

From about 2016 the teaching on the soul and the "Universal Council" (UC) comes to the fore. KSW 171 shows the new register. It contains statements such as "I am the Totality as you are" and the claim that "we are all part of the same soul" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 171, #377814]. The *Summaries* volume preserves the programme of this phase: "The new guide line is not the Bible or any Holy Book, the new guide line is within the Soul of the man and is connected with the Physicality of the man". Elsewhere it states: "We see the end of Vatican, the end of the leadership in the Islamic world as the way we have seen as Imams, Ayatollahs, Rabbis, and every other shape or form of priests" [#378714]. Money remains a constant subject. In KSW 240 (6 September 2018) Keshe reports that KF had received "an amazing 5 Euro" in donations over seven days. He adds that "an organization that costs thousands to run and millions of people benefit from it … only received 5 Euro" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 240, #377952].

COVID, peace diplomacy and the Mithra calendar (2020-2022)

The workshops of 2020-2022 combine teaching on the pandemic, statements on Iran's nuclear file, and the Mithraic festival cycle. In KSW 412 Keshe claims that KF delivered documents to the IAEA showing how its knowledge had been "misunderstood" in the Iran file. He says the head of the IAEA "Mr. Grossi immediately shared the document" with the 5+1 powers, and that "we have become 5+3" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 412, #378124]. The same session (23 December 2021) celebrates the winter-solstice festival: "as it is Christmas, and the birth of Mitra, return of Messiah, return of the totality, where the Messiah is your soul". It goes on: "Today's teaching is celebration of life of Mitra. In a way, change the name in another language and call it Christ … call it the

teaching a Mohammad, or Buddha". It declares completion "as of the 21st of December, 2021" [Keshe, KSW 412, #378124]. Fundraising grows more pressing in this period. KSW 429 makes an urgent appeal: "We raised most of it, we showed 150,000 Euro" and "We have past 35,000 Euro collection at the moment" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 429, #378141, "Funding Requirements and Financial Structure"]. KSW 460 (24 November 2022) complains that visitors to the Linz centre paid nothing: "there is a light to pay for, there are people who teach you, the facilities, the cleaners, rent on the property" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 460, #378172].

Participants as test subjects (2022-2023)

From mid-2022 participants come to Linz, or join remotely, to sit inside KF systems. KSW 435 (2 June 2022) announces "Ready to start testing new FEU this Monday June 6th". It speaks of "the one flight test in Linz" and of a remote group of 200 "for those who are outside". It also announces plans to spread the systems "into Arizona, which is our headquarters, into our offices in Tehran, in our building in Beijing" [Keshe, KSW 435, #378147]. KSW 443 reports that "over 100 people" had passed through the "Keshe Foundation spaceship simulation center". It quotes participants who said "I'm more calm, I don't get angry anymore" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 443, #378155]. KSW 464 (22 December 2022) presents the results of 16 December, the "Promised Day". Its index line reads: "physical proof graphs - collectively man with Prophets met Creator; Man - Prophets - Universal Council (UC) - Creator all equal". Keshe says: "We gave you the Promised Day. You found peace between you and your Creator" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 464, #378176]. KSW 478 (23 March 2023) reports an eight-question survey of "about 80 participants of 'Dining with the Creator' " after "2 weeks of feeding at the 'table of the Creator' ". Keshe concludes that "Man can feed from the plasma System in Linz". He reports figures of "79 out of 80" and "about 75%" for whom the system triggered "the brain of the man to produce water", tested through saliva salinity [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 478, #378190].

The late series: transmutation, Keshe Coin and Space City (2023-2026)

The library's newest workshops show the series still running. KSW 649 (2 July 2026) marks a "10th Anniversary - Fabio assassination - naming building Space City". It then teaches on yawning as the moment when the "Soul hands over body to P[hysicality]" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 649, #378361]. Its notes on the Keshe Coin say that buyers "converted it to Gans, Balls, what we call, Cosmic Ray Balls", and that "what you do with it is yours, it's not ours" [#378361]. KSW 659 (10 September 2026) reports "Negotiating 3 governments Keshe Coin". It says the coin will "Not replace national currency", that "KF not take over governments", and that the coin is "Not Cryptocurrency - can't speculate". The same session reports on China agriculture ("first year still contaminated … Pure conditions by 2028"). It also returns to Keshe's Iranian childhood: "When I was in Iran … very first time I went to the temple. The Man who is in charge of the fire, they are usually very serene" [Keshe, KSW 659, #378371].

Phase	Approx. dates	Dominant themes	Representative workshops
Technical	2014-2015	reactors, GANS, Fukushima, Vatican "unification"	KSW 5, 6, 16, 64
Soul / Universal Council	2016-2019	soul, UC, attacks on clergy, donations	KSW 120, 171, 240
Diplomacy / Mithra	2020-2022	Iran file, IAEA, birth of Mitra, appeals	KSW 412, 429
Participant trials	2022-2023	flight units, Promised Day, plasma feeding	KSW 435, 443, 464, 478
Late series	2023-2026	transmutation, Keshe Coin, China, Space City	KSW 510, 649, 659

The community: Spaceship Institute, language teams and KAKT

The teaching structure is called the Keshe Foundation Spaceship Institute (KFSSI). An end-of-trimester report in the August 2018 *Plasma Times* records classes "in: Bengali, English, French, German, Hungarian, Romanian, Polish and Spanish". It says that "the numbers of students who became class teachers in different languages has increased". It also thanks "dedicated transcribers and translators" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2018-08, #38312, section 4]. The same issue covers a Polish conference and a KFSSI Polska YouTube channel [#38312, "Language Community"]. National communities also produced their own derived manuals. The library holds a Romanian series, *Înțelegerea Științei Plasmatice* ("Understanding Plasma Science"), subtitled "Serie de Ateliere de Lucru" / "Seria Atelierelor de Lucru" and dated 09/2017. It includes Part 2 on "Sănătate – Suflet – Natură" (Health – Soul – Nature) and Part 5 on "Plasma – Gans de CO_2 & Zinc" [Keshe, Înțelegerea Științei Plasmatice, partea 2, #43973; partea 5, #43974].

The Telegram logs of the KAKT groups show how members understood the teaching. In December 2021 the group scheduled a reading of "408 Knowledge Seekers Workshop (KSW) Reading Key Phrases - Part 1 - The Truth about Christmas - The Birth of Mithra" for "December 21, 2021 - Birth of Mitra, Day of Enlightenment for Humanity". On 25 December members posted greetings such as "Merry Christmas and happy glorious birthday of the Mithra!" [KAKT Knowledge Seekers, KAKT Chat 2021-12, #377890]. In August 2022 a member wrote: "I was from Shia belief. not complete. The completion came with understanding uncondionnal love brought to us by Mr Keshe". Another member described Keshe as "the only specialist I would trust with emotional covid" [KAKT Knowledge Seekers, KAKT Chat 2022-08, #377898].

Key points

- The KSW ran from spring 2014 to at least 10 September 2026 (KSW 659), the latest workshop in the library.
- Sessions follow a fixed pattern of announcements, teaching, moderated Q&A and time-coded transcription. All transcripts are volunteer work and are marked unchecked by KF.

- The early workshops dealt with GANS, reactors and Fukushima. KSW 16 records a Vatican meeting "to unite the Religions", reportedly accompanied by a storm.
- From 2016 the soul and Universal Council teaching dominates, with the line that "the new guide line is not the Bible or any Holy Book".
- The 2021-2022 workshops fuse diplomacy on Iran's nuclear file with the Mithraic calendar: 21 December 2021 is presented as the "birth of Mitra" and equated with Christ, Muhammad and Buddha.
- From 2022 participants are tested in Linz systems (flight units, the "Promised Day", "Dining with the Creator"). Survey figures are reported by Keshe.
- Fundraising recurs throughout: 5 euros in a week (KSW 240), a 150,000-euro appeal (KSW 429), the costs of the Linz centre (KSW 460).
- The community works through the multilingual Spaceship Institute, national manuals (such as the Romanian series) and KAKT chats, where members celebrate the "birth of Mithra" at Christmas.

Chapter 151.

Plasma Science as Presented: Magravs, GANS, Reactors and the Spaceship

Keshe's teachings on religion and politics, covered in the next chapters, rest on a physical theory he calls "plasma science". In that theory the soul, the Creator, food, healing and space flight are all explained as interactions of magnetic and gravitational fields. This chapter sets the framework out in Keshe's own terms. It draws chiefly on Book 1, *The Universal Order of Creation of Matters* (2009), on the European patent applications, and on the Foundation's *Plasma Times* newsletters, which carry its practical instructions. The workshops show how the theory was later applied to "flight" and to critiques of mainstream physics. A final section places the framework beside the reference shelf's entry on free-energy suppression claims, so that the reader can see the mainstream framing next to Keshe's own account of suppression.

Fields as the elementary particles

Book 1 begins by replacing the particle picture with a field picture. Its introduction sets up "magnetic fields as elementary particles (replacing quarks model)". It defines "plasmatic magnetic fields" (*pmtics*) as "collections of dynamic rays detached from creation source", whose interactions "create matter, antimatter, dark matter, and all observable Magravs and forces" [Keshe, The Universal Order of Creation of Matters, #80404, Book guide §5]. A *Magrav* is defined as an inseparable pairing of magnetic and gravitational fields that "coexist". Book 1 separates the familiar *states of matter* (gas, liquid, solid) from three capitalised *states of Matter*: Matter, Antimatter and Dark Matter. It treats Dark Matter "as integral to creation, not exotic" [#80404, §6]. Matter, Antimatter and Dark Matter arise as three nested Magrav systems, G1, G2 and G3. Leftover pmtics form

a central toroidal field, F1, "analogous to a wormhole". The whole is called the "Initial Fundamental Plasma, structurally equivalent to a neutron". When it decays it splits into a larger proton and a smaller electron [#80404, §§21-24]. Book 1 also reinterprets the properties of quarks: "mass as magnetic field interaction gravity, spin as dynamic motion, color as different magnetic field strength interactions" [#80404, §24]. In later books the vocabulary shifts. Book 2 renames Antimatter "Principal Matter", Dark Matter "Transition Matter", and black holes "Principal Stars" [Keshe, The Structure of the Light, #38309, §4].

Reactors, the Coulomb barrier and motion without fuel

Book 1 describes reactors that "weaken plasma Magravs to allow pmtics to move freely in a 'soup' ". This is said to render "the Coulomb barrier irrelevant for fusion". It also claims "simple, soft methods" of fission and fusion, and the production of nanomaterials such as graphene, diamond and nano-oxides "at room temperature through plasma dilution technology" [#80404, §7]. Motion follows from what Book 1 calls "Magravs positioning". Fields generated by the reactor interact with planetary fields "seeking balance", which produces "lift and motion without fuel". Changing the reactor's parameters moves the point of balance, and the motion can be reversed [#80404, §§8-9]. The book renames reactor fuel "MATMAGS" (Matter-Magnetic Supply), on the reasoning that magnetic fields are "manipulated but never lost" [#80404, §17]. It also warns that uncontrolled changes between states of matter could place a craft "in unintended matter states" [#80404, §28].

Geophysics: the "Caroline Core" and Birkeland currents

Book 1 applies the same model to the Earth. It presents "seismological evidence for a newly discovered cavity in Earth's solid inner core, named the 'Caroline Core' ". It rejects "19th-century convection-based theories of magnetic field creation as outdated" [#80404, §11]. In their place it explains magnetic fields "through Birkeland current principles and plasma interaction rather than electron convection". On this account gravity arises from the interaction of plasmatic magnetic fields of opposite polarity, "mirroring how opposing poles of

solid magnets attract" [#80404, §12]. The Caroline Core is described as a "Geo-Reactor" heated by nuclear decay, fission "and possibly fusion" [#80404, §15]. The Earth's rotation is explained by two opposed plasmatic magnetic forces acting on the inner core, compared to a spherical maglev [#80404, §16].

The patent applications

European patent application EP1770717A1, "Gravitational and Energy System" (filed 2005, published 2007), claims "a method and reactor to create plasmatic conditions via rotating magnetic fields under centrifugal/vacuum conditions, producing gravitational forces". It argues that tokamak fusion fails because of three "miscalculations": reliance on a central column, magnetic fields driven outward instead of inward, and the lack of gravitational containment comparable to the Sun's core [Keshe, Gravitational and Energy System, #38325, §§0-1]. The application describes a "scintillation" ignition in which liquid helium and neon, exposed to alpha or beta sources, emit extreme ultraviolet light (about 80 nm) that ionises hydrogen. It also describes gases separating into layers by atomic weight under centrifuge and vacuum [#38325, §§3-5]. Its list of applications is very wide. It runs from space propulsion, "soft fusion", water purifiers and levitating vehicles "and even shoes" to cancer-cell eradication by "magnetic field matching", stealth and "space weapons delivering packets of magnetic energy", and "atomic welding" for transmuting elements [#38325, §§8-12]. The companion application EP1770715A1, "Micro Plasma Reactor" (2007), is held in the library only as an image scan without extractable text. Its claims could therefore not be read for this chapter [Keshe, Micro Plasma Reactor, #377868].

GANS and the practical kit

Most Knowledge Seekers did not meet the theory through reactors. They met it through *GANS*, the Foundation's acronym for a "gas in nano-solid state". The Foundation's publications give the recipe. First, a copper coil or plate is "nano-coated", either chemically in caustic soda (NaOH) or by flame ("fire-coated") [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2018-12, #38316, Plasma Scientific Journal]. Next the coated metal is placed with an uncoated plate in salt water, the two are joined through an LED, and the deposit that collects at the bottom is harvested. The January 2019 issue gives the material list ("Pure sea salt and distilled water … Green LED … Nano-coated plastic spoon to harvest amino-acids"). It advises

"Make sure the salt you are using has no impurities", and adds that magnesium or potassium salts can be used [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2019-01, #38317, Plasma Scientific Journal]. It explains the CO2 box by atomic number: the plates create "a plasma field … of the strength 6, which like a magnet, attracts Carbon present in the atmosphere" [#38317]. The same issue leads with the teaching "You are a galaxy" [#38317, contents].

GANS (KF Plasma Times 2019-01)	Colour	Metal	Nano-metal
CO2 (CO2 + ZnO)	Cream white	Zinc	Nano-copper
ZnO	White	Zinc	Nano-zinc
CuO	Reddish brown	Copper	Nano-copper
CH3	Turquoise	Galvanized	(not given in passage read)

The June 2019 issue advertises a "KF Spaceship Institute Plasma Capturing Kit", headlined "Million of Suns in one container". It contains zinc plates, bare and nano-coated copper coils, iron chicken wire, syringes, gloves and four LEDs, "White for CO2, Blue for ZnO, Yellow for CH3, Green for CuO". The instructions read: "Filter salt solution with coffee filter … Water should be about 1.5 cm below the top of the plate … After a few days CO2 GANS will be collected at the bottom of the container" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2019-06, #38322, sections 13-14].

MaGravs, Tesla readings and medical claims

The household "MaGrav" power unit was redesigned by a contributor in the August 2019 *Plasma Times*. The writer notes that "the connection with Soul does not fundamentally exist in the basic MaGrav". The new design therefore "incorporates 9 Nano copper tubes coated and impregnated with ZnO GaNS to have a connection of the Soul with the unit". It uses a cylindrical box holding a GANS mixture of "50% CO2, 25% CH3 and 25% CuO" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2019-08, #377867, section 30]. The November 2018 issue explains a reported field of 129 tesla generated with GANS. It says the figure was reached in "a live presentation over 3-4 weeks", rising from "20 - 21 Tesla" to past 100. It adds that the sensors were sent "to the laboratories in Switzerland" and that a report showed "the 129 Tesla measurements are correct" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2018-11, #38315, "Plasma 101: 129 Tesla Explained"]. The September 2018

issue presents "Gift of Life: 60 Coma Cases" and quotes Keshe: "We have developed a rapid way to reverse coma … 60 lives should be the sign of peace" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2018-09, #38313]. Keshe's later teaching moves the emphasis from hardware to fields: "ignore that MaGrav, ignore the physicality of it, look at the field transformation of it … not just for discounting electricity bill by 20 or 50%" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 510, #378222].

Against mainstream physics

Book 1 already disputes the speed of light as a limit. It holds that light is made of "slowed fragments" of colliding pmtics, so "the speed of light cannot be the ultimate speed of motion". It also proposes modifying $E=mc^2$ into a total plasma energy equation, K = EM + EAm + EDm + Ecf + Etr [#80404, §§32-38]. The workshops sharpen this. In KSW 491 (22 June 2023) Keshe says: "the speed becomes irrelevant. The speed is a matter state … of the mind". He also says: "every time you run into problem of knowing you're wrong, you call it assumption, and you become Einstein … E=mc2. Even that now has become a joke" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 491, #378203]. KSW 576 (6 February 2025) treats the neutron as the model of creation: "What we see on the surface of the Sun is exactly how the neutron is. The Sun is like the neutron, the Earth the proton, and the Moon the electron" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 576, #378288].

Enhancement Units and the flight system

From 2021 the "Enhancement Units" (EU), which participants sit inside, are presented as flight systems. In KSW 402 Keshe announces: "We start accepting orders for the sale of this unit … You can book to fly to Moon and Mars in 2022, in advanced booking". He also announces: "we'll try 6th of June, 2022 for the first flight daily return to moon. From today we start selling tickets for space excursion" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 402, #378114, "New Transportation and Spaceflight Systems"]. KSW 412 plans "the whole 12 systems of EU as a body, and the 2 flight systems" for Arizona and Tehran [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 412, #378124]. KSW 436 (9 June 2022) reports the result: "We promised to land on the Moon on the 6th of June, and Galib was the first man to land on the Moon on the 6th of June". The participant describes "red sand wind on legs" and agrees to try to retrieve something from the Apollo site. Keshe says he is "communicating with NASA" about having it analysed [Keshe, Knowledge

Seekers Workshop 436, #378148]. In the framework of the later workshops the "flight" is a transfer of the soul rather than of the body (see Chapter 152).

Suppression: Keshe's claim and the encyclopedia's framing

Keshe presents the obstacles to his technology as political and religious. In KSW 64 (2015) he says world leaders "will not act because they'll loose their position" and that "the biggest objection will come from religions" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 64, #377707]. KSW 120 and 171 add the alleged persecution by the "Red Circle" and Belgian figures [Keshe, KSW 120, #377763; KSW 171, #377814]. The reference shelf records the mainstream view of claims of this type. The Wikipedia article "Free energy suppression conspiracy theory" defines it as "a conspiracy theory that technologically viable, pollution-free, no-cost energy sources are being suppressed by governments, corporations, or advocacy groups". Among the devices allegedly suppressed it lists "anti-gravity propulsion systems, and other generally unproven or physically impossible, low-cost energy sources". It notes that the suppressors are usually said to belong to "the fossil fuel or nuclear industry" [Wikipedia: Free energy suppression conspiracy theory]. The article does not name Keshe. It is cited here as the encyclopedia's framing of the category, beside Keshe's own account.

Key points

- Book 1 replaces quarks with "pmtics" (plasmatic magnetic fields) and defines Magravs as joint magnetic-gravitational fields. It distinguishes the three states Matter, Antimatter and Dark Matter from ordinary states of matter.
- Book 1 claims reactors that make the Coulomb barrier "irrelevant", room-temperature nanomaterial production, and fuel-free lift by "Magravs positioning".
- Its geophysics posits a "Caroline Core" cavity and Birkeland-current plasma dynamics in place of the convection dynamo.
- EP1770717A1 claims a rotating-field, centrifugal-vacuum reactor producing gravitational forces, with a very wide list of applications. EP1770715A1 is held only as a scan.

- KF's practical instructions cover nano-coating copper with NaOH or flame and harvesting CO_2, ZnO, CuO and CH_3 GANS from saltwater cells with LEDs. A boxed kit was sold for this.
- KF reports a 129-tesla field, 60 coma reversals, and a soul-connected Ma-Grav redesign.
- The workshops reject the speed-of-light limit and $E=mc^2$ and make the neutron a model of the Sun. They also sold Moon and Mars "flights" and reported a Moon landing on 6 June 2022.
- Keshe attributes the obstruction of his work to leaders and religions. The reference shelf classes claims of this kind under "free energy suppression conspiracy theory".

Chapter 152.

Soul of the Man, Soul of Physicality, the Creator and the Universal Council

Mehran Tavakoli Keshe's metaphysics rests on a small set of terms that recur in hundreds of Knowledge Seekers Workshops (KSW): the Soul of the Creator (STC), the Soul of the Man (STM), the Soul of Physicality (STP) and Physicality (P). Emotion connects them, and Keshe treats emotion as a field rather than a feeling. From this anthropology he moves directly to institutions. Between 2016 and 2019 he and the Keshe Foundation (KF) set up an Earth Council, a "One Nation" government and a Universal Council (UC), whose structure, ethos and "commandments" were still being explained to followers in 2023. This chapter sets out the doctrine and the institutions as the KSW transcripts and KF publications present them. All statements are attributed to Keshe or to the Foundation. The transcripts themselves are auto-transcribed and edited by KF Brazil volunteers, as their headers state [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 630, #378342].

The three souls and emotion as a field

The fullest recent statement comes in KSW 630 (February 19, 2026). Its index line summarises the scheme: "Learn about structure of Creation - soup of totality - not individual; Don't need intermediaries - absorb rays of Sun; Soul of the Man (STM) interacts Soul of Physicality (STP) - manifests P; Soul of the Creator (STC) interacts with…" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 630, #378342, "Beginning"]. The library's study guide summarises the opening section as defining "three interacting souls", STC, STM and STP, "which together generate emotions as energy fields rather than mere reactions". In this account each emotion has its own gravitational (G) and magnetic (M) field pattern, and love is "a frequency generated by the interaction of iron in blood and zinc in the nervous

system" [Keshe, KSW 630, #378342, "Structure of Creation and the Mechanics of Emotion"]. Keshe makes non-verbal emotion the original language of the Creator: "When you hug your child, the emotion you give to it, when you hug your lover … there is no word. … It's the transformation of field" [Keshe, KSW 630, #378342].

KSW 535 (April 25, 2024) carries the scheme into the physics of the body. Its editorial summary reads: "The interaction of the emotion of the STP and the STM, creates the Mass, and that emotion, in interaction with the fields of the Earth, leads to the physicality of the man" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 535, #378247]. The same workshop states that "the Physicality (P) of Soul of the Creator (STC) is created within P of the man. The Soul of the Creator (STC) is born within the man", and calls the two halves of the brain the "Soul of Physicality (STP) of the brain" [Keshe, KSW 535, #378247, "Other Topics"]. In this picture mass and weight are effects of soul-field interaction, not primary properties of matter.

The soul as light and star; the rejection of reincarnation

In the Christmas workshop of December 24, 2020, Keshe follows the STM from conception to cosmic completion: "if the STM in its infancy at the point of creation in the womb of the mother, to its completion as a star in the galaxies and universes, carries the same ethos". He adds that the true "inception" is "not inception in the womb of the mother, but inception in the realm of the Creator, in the Unicose" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072, "Origins of Christmas and the Soul of Man"]. He links the Christian star on the tree to this idea: "once you become a soul to become a star, you become a point of reference to shine" [Keshe, KSW 360, #378072]. KSW 367 returns to the soul in the blood and to the claim "I am the Creator, and I carry the soul of the Creator", which Keshe frames as true of every human being [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 367, #378079].

This cosmology excludes rebirth. KSW 198 is categorical: "There is no reincarnation. We are all creations of new conditions. Those who speak about reincarnation have not understood the technology. Reincarnation was a tool of fear, that you come back and you have to pay to balance the book of the past … You come back as a dog or horse, but reincarnation is not" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 198, #377841]. The same workshop gives an alternative account

of death: “At the time of death the soul of physicality moves within the soul of the man” [Keshe, KSW 198, #377841]. Keshe’s position therefore differs from both the Indic doctrine of transmigration and the Abrahamic resurrection of the body. The personal soul continues as a field-entity carrying the imprint of its physical life, and no new body is assigned to it.

Where the soul sits: brain, pineal gland, pupil

Keshe gives the soul anatomical points of contact. In KSW 300 (October 31, 2019) he says that religious searchers “found out what was promised is not there, the soul and the Holy Spirit, and the STM being somewhere else, now has found the box on a place and it’s called the brain” [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 300, #378012]. In KSW 411 he reads the esoteric “third eye” as a code for soul access: “Isn’t the pineal gland another way of, they are trying to tell you, you get an access to your soul? … We don’t hide, and duck and dive, we just go directly for it. … If you manage to get access to your soul you can call it anything you like” [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 411, #378123]. KSW 648 (June 25, 2026) adds the eye. Its index reads “pupil - Black Hole (BH) - Soul uses to get out body travel U; Eyelids - door”, and the transcript says the “porthole of your Soul, is that black eye, that black point, that black circle in the center of your eye (pupil)” [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 648, #378360].

Transmutation and “satellite souls”

Transmutation is a working concept in the later workshops: a soul that has learned the field mechanics can reshape the physicality it carries. KSW 630 says that understanding emotional field strengths “allows humans to transmute their physical form to match any environment” [Keshe, KSW 630, #378342, “Emotion, Magnetic Fields, and Universal Transmutation”]. KSW 450 (September 15, 2022) lists “Satellite Souls will help bring change - each responsible for language; Process of Transmutation explained”, and tells registered participants: “Those of you who have become a registered Satellite will be contacted when the time comes, to be ready in a certain way, to make your soul accessible to receive … the Souls of the Man, the Soul of the creator of other kinds of lives, and those of the Universal Community” [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 450, #378162]. The same session announces: “The child of Mitra is amongst us” [Keshe, KSW 450, #378162]. That theme is the subject of the next chapter.

The KF Q&A document from TV Gallactica (September 27, 2022) states the doctrinal premise: "The Soul of the Man is created from the fields of the Creator as everything else in Creation. The Soul of the Man is made of fields and the strongest field is the connection to the Creator. In a way the Creator is within every Soul" [Keshe Foundation, Questions and answers TV Gallactica (2022-09-27), #378395, point 3]. Its opening claims that a recent "breakthrough" means "most psychosomatic diseases can be eradicated" by reaching their cause "in the level of the Soul" [KF, TV Gallactica Q&A, #378395]. The political use of the same mechanism appears in KSW 198: "Raise the soul of the French president and those who call themselves world leaders (warmongers)" [Keshe, KSW 198, #377841].

Keshe's self-designation

Keshe describes his own role in several ways, reported here as his statements. In KSW 300: "You have to understand that I wear 3 different hats, one hat is a Messenger, one as a scientist, and one as a man" [Keshe, KSW 300, #378012]. The editorial header of KSW 171 (May 11, 2017) reads: "He declares he is the Second Coming of Christ as are we all". The transcript explains: "It is the coming of peace that make all of us the 'Coming One', because it is a promise we make to our soul to elevate it" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 171, #377814]. In KSW 134 (2016) Keshe says Christ "never died on the cross, He elevated himself", that Christ's remains lie "in South of France", and that "I am Messiah as much as you're, but I am Messiah for a bigger (picture)". The library's study guide records that in this workshop Keshe "claims to have performed this self-elevation three times" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 134, #377777, "Self-Healing, Soul Elevation, and the Critique of Traditional Religion"].

The Earth Council, One Nation and the "Universal Community"

KSW 143 (October 27, 2016) introduced the first council. Keshe announced: "The selection of the U Council for earth is completed. They will serve with their soul, also they should speak 2 languages and understand completely the problems of humanity. One from each of 6 continents and 3 ladies and 3 gentlemen" [Keshe,

Knowledge Seekers Workshop 143, #377786]. The members introduced themselves:

- Mary Woo of Los Angeles, a Vietnamese-born interpreter, for the Americas.
- Anka of the Netherlands, an anthropology student, for Europe.
- Lisa McDonald, born in South Africa and living in Australia, for Australia.
- A Tehran-born naturopath living in Dubai, a veteran of the Iran-Iraq war, for Asia.
- Dr. Rodrigo, a Mexican plastic surgeon, for South America.
- Alek, working in Nigeria, for Africa.

Their stated wishes were "to end the wars" and "restore justice to the planet that is in alignment with Universal Justice" [Keshe, KSW 143, #377786].

KSW 213, dated March 1, 2018 and headed "MAN ENTERS THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY today", opens: "We setup a One Nation government last August with the Earth Council (EC), they are responsible for life on the earth and communicating with the Universal Community." Keshe then places the council in the line of the prophets: "Up to now these positions of guidance we given to what we called prophets. … We become collectively the prophet" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 213, #377856]. The UC Charter was read, and Keshe reinterpreted the Islamic "99 names for God" as "the attributes of the STM". He then pronounced: "The human race has written its Charter to become part of the U Council as part of the Universal Community … WE WELCOME THE HUMAN RACE TO THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY" [Keshe, KSW 213, #377856]. The same session declared "There shall be no prisons or killing" and reported that "We lost the English and French members" [Keshe, KSW 213, #377856].

Structure, ethos and commandments of the Universal Council

KSW 245 (October 2018) is summarised by the library guide as marking "a pivotal transition … occurring on October 19, 2018, involving the activation of the Universal Council (UC) and the C Team". It names China's president as a leader whose STM strength is "essential for building global peace" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 245, #377957, "Universal Council Structure and Global Peace Transition"]. The *KF Plasma Times* of August 2019 published the formal design:

> "Universal Council of 12. The rotation of all members, 12 councilors and 12 sub councils, leaves in the main 144 councils, is by rotation … each seat on each council becomes a member on the main council every 1 year which chooses its position by state of the soul … The rotation of the position is by servitude and not by seat position." [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2019-08, #377867, "Overall Structure of the Universal Council"]

The same issue says that members "are chosen by strength of their souls alone … and never by others". Solutions are to be implemented "with the help of the Keshe Foundation Core Team, Earth Council (EC), Universal Council supporters (UCs), language communities, Knowledge Seekers". The UC is to be "the interface … on how to share on Earth new technologies offered by the Universal Community through open source and free for all". The section opens with Keshe's words: "Our message is very simple, the man himself is part of the Creator" [KF, Plasma Times 2019-08, #377867].

The April 2023 bilingual (English-Portuguese) document *Questions for the Universal Council* is the council's self-description. "The members of the Universal Council are chosen by their soul and collectively the members of the council are the soul of the Universal Council." Every language is to be "represented as one Universal Council member". The document quotes KSW 467: "there is nothing Higher than the wishes of the Soul, unanimous soul, of the Universal Council. If the soul of the universal Council in unity wishes, it becomes a command for the soul of Humanity and beyond" [Keshe Foundation, Questions for the Universal Council April 2023, #378474]. Its answers describe the "One Nation, One Race" programme as "no borders. Passports are eliminated", with coexistence "Normalised by the Ethos of the Universe: Thinking, talking and doing good". This "also implies being aware of the 24 Commandments", and the whole is to be lived "Without Hierarchies". The document closes with KSW 479, which calls this triad "the ethos of Mithra … which Mithra brought us in the name of Zorastian" [KF, Questions for the UC 2023, #378474]. Membership also has an age rule. In KSW 576 (February 6, 2025) Keshe says UC members "reach the age of 60 and they serve during their 60 years, they are there till 61", and invites Knowledge Seekers to stand for the vacancies [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 576, #378288].

Body	Introduced	Composition (as stated)	Stated function	Source
Earth Council (EC)	Oct 27, 2016	6 members, one per continent, 3 women and 3 men, bilingual	End wars; restore "Universal Justice"	KSW 143 #377786
One Nation government	Aug 2017	Formed with the EC	"Responsible for life on the earth"	KSW 213 #377856
Universal Council (UC)	Charter read Mar 1, 2018; "activated" Oct 19, 2018	12 councillors, 12 sub-councils, 144 seats, yearly rotation; members serve until 60/61	Bridge to the "Universal Community"; free, open-source technology	KSW 213; KSW 245 #377957; Plasma Times 2019-08 #377867; KSW 576 #378288
"Satellite" souls	2022	Registered Knowledge Seekers, one per language	Receive and relay soul-level teaching	KSW 450 #378162

Key points

- Keshe's anthropology has four terms: STC, STM, STP and P. Emotion, treated as a G/M field, links them, and in KSW 535 mass and physical form result from STM-STP emotion meeting the Earth's fields.
- In KSW 360 the STM is light that matures from the womb to "a star in the galaxies", with its true inception "in the realm of the Creator".
- KSW 198 rejects reincarnation as "a tool of fear": humans are "creations of new conditions", and at death the STP "moves within" the STM.
- The soul's points of contact are located in the brain (KSW 300), the pineal gland (KSW 411) and the pupil as a "Black Hole" porthole (KSW 648).
- Transmutation, "satellite souls" and soul-level healing and "elevation" of world leaders are presented as applications of the same field doctrine (KSW 450; TV Gallactica Q&A 2022).

- Keshe calls himself "Messenger, scientist and man", the Second Coming "as are we all", and a "Messiah for a bigger" picture who has elevated himself (KSW 300, 171, 134).
- The institutions grew from a six-member Earth Council (2016) and a One Nation government (2017) to a 12/144 Universal Council. Its charter was read on March 1, 2018, when humanity was declared admitted to the "Universal Community" and the council was presented as successor to the prophets.
- The UC's self-description (2023) rests on choice "by soul", "One Nation, One Race", the "Ethos of the Universe" (think, speak, do good) and "24 Commandments", with the UC's unanimous wish described as "a command for the soul of Humanity".

Chapter 153.

Mitra as Root of All Religions: 21 December, the Ethos of Mitra and the Children of Mitra

In Keshe's late teaching, Mitra replaces every named religion as the reference point. Earlier parts of this study followed the Indo-Iranian Mithra of the Avesta and the Roman mystery god Mithras through the scholarly literature. Keshe treats both as a single "Mitra": a figure he dates to some 8,000 years ago, whom he describes as female, as "Eve", and as "the essence of the Creator's love". He says that Christianity, Judaism and the later faiths copied their calendar and their central symbols from this source. From December 2021 his annual winter-solstice workshops present the "Birth of Mitra" as the fulfilment of every prophecy, and from 2024 they speak of a "Daughter of Mitra" and of "Children of Mitra" conceived from souls alone. This chapter sets out those claims in sequence and then places them beside the academic and popular sources on Mithra and Mithras in the library.

The thesis of 2020: Christmas as a moved Mitra feast

The founding statement is the Christmas Eve workshop of December 24, 2020:

> "the true Christmas, the true birthday of Christ until some 200 and odd years ago was celebrated on 21st, and about 200 years ago Vatican decided to shift it to 24th due to one reason, and that was to make more separation, that Christianity is not replication of Mithraism … 21st of December what we call in Farsi, – which means the longest night, and is considered to be the birthday of Mitra, some 8,000 years ago." [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072]

The transcript says "24th" at this point. Its own subheading reads "Christmas is really Mitra - Vatican moved from 21st to 25th", and in the same session Keshe

also gives "some 8 to 10,000 years ago" for Mitra's teaching [Keshe, KSW 360, #378072]. He continues: "As Christianity we know today was adaptation of the old Mithraism, so the birth of Christ was put on the same day as the birth of Mitra, as his son, or I should say as her son." He extends the claim of copying to Judaism ("Hanukah. This is how they all copied one way"; the Jews' 6,000-year history is "2,000 years copy of what Mitra brought"). He also ties it to Zoroastrian practice: "even when they brought in the faith of Zoroaster, they kept the fire going … the room of fire", and adds that Persia "never worshipped a statue … Always believed in Mitra and through Mithraism we kept the ethos of the soul do good, be good and act good" [Keshe, KSW 360, #378072]. The library's study guide summarises a later section as identifying "the 21st of December as the birth of Mitra (Eve) and the 21st of March as the start of life's cycle". Its final section defines Mithraism "not as a religion but as the fundamental culture of the Universe" [Keshe, KSW 360, #378072, "Cosmic Paths, Symbolic Stars, and the 21st March Cycle"; "Mithraism as Universal Culture"].

December 21, 2021: the "Day of Enlightenment"

On December 21, 2021, during One Nation One Planet programme 201, Keshe declared the prophetic promise fulfilled. The KF Brazil summary records:

> "the 21st of December was chosen as a symbolic enlightenment, what we see as the light of Mitra. You have the night of the 20th into the 21st, as the longest night of the year, symbolic of the darkness, or the ignorance of man … It is called Mitra, Messiah, or Mashiach in Jewish language, (and Maitreya and Kalki), and it's the same with Methi. They all come from that same name." [Keshe, Birth of Mitra Day of Enlightenment for Humanity (KSW 201) (2021-12-21), #378405]

He then redefines the promised event: "This day, we don't call it the resurrection of Mitra. But it's the day that was promised by all the prophets. Not the Day of Judgment, but the Day of the Enlightenment of man to the existence of his own soul, and the new cycle." "(The Promised One) has come back in the name of the Man himself. He is each one of your souls - and nothing else." The year 2022 was announced as "the year of balance, and the year of corrections" [Keshe, KSW 201 One Nation, #378405].

KSW 412, the workshop of the same week, states the institutional consequence. The library guide summarises it: "the start of a new cycle on December 21, 2021, marking the birth of Mitra … traditional religions like Islam, Judaism, and Christianity are obsolete and will merge into a single understanding". The guide also

records "the end of a thousand-year cycle of darkness". A later section "declares the end of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and other belief systems as distinct religions, asserting they are now unified under the single path of correct conduct found in the true Koran" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 412, #378124, "Birth of Mitra and New Cycle of Enlightenment"; "End of Traditional Religions and the Return to Mitra"]. The transcript's index includes "Soon there will not be any religions, Atrocities committed by Moses", and the text says: "There shall be no religions left, except in the books". Keshe speaks of "My job as a Messenger" and predicts "Another completion in 200 years 2/22/2222" [Keshe, KSW 412, #378124].

Mitra as love, not religion; the Ethos of Mitra

In KSW 447 (August 25, 2022) a participant asked who Mitra is. Keshe answered: "Mitra is the essence of the 'love of the Creator,' and it's not a religion. Mitra is not a beginning of (something like a religion)" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 447, #378159]. The guide summarises his answer: Jesus, Moses, Buddha and Muhammad "were merely human reflections of this divine love, while their scriptures were written by others after the fact. Only Bahaullah is claimed to have left original writings". The transcript has: "Mohammed traveled to Palestine, where he saw, that the people there (believed in God, a Creator. Whereas his people, the Saudi's, were only worshiping statues. He too never wrote anything" [Keshe, KSW 447, #378159, "Definition and Nature of Mitra"]. In the same workshop he rejects the label "cult" for the Foundation and calls it a scientific organisation [KSW 447, #378159, "Responsibility, Anti-Cult Stance"].

KSW 496 (July 27, 2023) turns Mitra into a rule of life without mediators. Its index reads "Learn to guide yourself - tap into Universal Knowledge; No intermediary's between Soul of the Man (STM) and Soul of Physicality (STP); 3 Ethos of Mitra represent STM - STP - P - this is religion of Universe (U) & Creator; Nobody can come between you & Creator". The transcript adds: "when you become a Passenger of the U, you remain a member of the human race, (and not a religion). You live through the 'Ethos of Mitra.' Then there is no religion" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 496, #378208].

December 2022 and 2023: Virgin Birth and the arithmetic of the 25th

KSW 464 (December 22, 2022) reports a December 16 "cosmic ray" session. In it, according to Keshe, participants "collectively … with the Prophets met your Creator", and he called that day "the Day of Judgment". He calls the intermediaries the "poison" in the believer's spoon: "That poison is religion, are the Ayatollahs, Mullahs, Priests" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 464, #378176]. On the festival he states: "Christmas is really a copy of the birth of Mitra. If you study the history and the story you find out they both tell of the same virgin birth, and everything else." He also says: "In what we call Western countries you celebrate the 25th of December as the birth of Christ. This is because the Roman's decided not to have the same date as Mitra, so they moved it" [Keshe, KSW 464, #378176]. He names the Persian feast "Shabe Yalda" and reads the Magi's three gifts as "air, water and Earth" and as "Think - Speak - and Act Good" [KSW 464, #378176]. The index lists "True meaning Virgin Birth"; the transcript treats physical virginity as a cultural invention ("this virginity … it brings so much shame to be part of this stupidity") and the Virgin Birth as a statement about the purity of the soul [KSW 464, #378176].

A year later, KSW 517 (December 21, 2023) moved the date and gave an arithmetical explanation of the 25th: "The birth of Mitra is on the 22nd, and you add the 3 attributes of the Creation - Think, Speak, and Act Good. And that makes it 25." The KF editors explain: "in Persia they celebrate the eve of the 21st for the day of the 22nd. Christians celebrate the eve of Christmas on the 24th for the day of the 25th." Keshe also concedes that the "Winter Solstice" is "only for the Northern Hemisphere … It's symbolic" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 517, #378229].

Mitra's Daughter and the Children of Mitra

From 2024 the teaching acquires a genealogy. KSW 564 (November 14, 2024) says: "It's our job as Universal Teachers to teach mankind how to handle Children of Mitra. As we will see more and more of them. … Your physical body goes through a process different than normal conception" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 564, #378276]. KSW 619 (December 4, 2025) introduces a second feast: "Celebrate Mitra's Daughter birth - December 6th - whole Universe". Keshe says: "I salute her birthday, I love every 6th of December as I pay respect

to her birth and at same time I respect the mother of the Creator, what we call the Mitra. Without her there wouldn't be Mitra, and without Mitra wouldn't be the Child of Mitra" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 619, #378331]. He notes that December 6 "coincidentally" is St. Nicholas Day in Christian calendars, and he places these events in a "cycle of changes every 3,000 years and it's due now" [KSW 619, #378331]. KSW 630 adds that the Daughters of Mitra "carry much more power than Mitra. Their love will cover the whole of created, where the love of Mitra was just for the Creator" [Keshe, KSW 630, #378342].

KSW 642 (May 14, 2026) states the reproductive doctrine: "Children of Mitra (CM) - Soul of male & female - create Soul of child - no P, attachment, needs, guilt - perfection". The transcript says: "Now you understand why the Children of Mitra come from the Souls and not from the sperm and egg", because the egg and sperm "have already set the pattern for deception" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 642, #378354]. In this teaching the Virgin Birth is no longer only a metaphor, as it was in KSW 464. It becomes a model of future human generation.

The scholarly and popular record compared

The library's academic sources place Roman Mithraism in a specific historical frame. Vermaseren records that "Mithras himself was also regarded as Sol invictus". He identifies the end of the cult with Theodosius's legislation: "An edict of February … A.D. 391 forbade all pagan worship in Rome … The final edict was issued on November 8th of the following year (392); all practice of pagan religions, private devotions included, was to be severely punished" [Vermaseren, Mithras, the Secret God, #38300, ch. 21 "The Fall of Mithras"]. He also discusses how the Gospel Magi connected Jewish circles with Zarathustra [Vermaseren, #38300, ch. 18 "Zarathustra and the Magi"]. Laeuchli grants the parallels but declines to rank them in time:

> "An astonishing number of phenomena appear both in Mithraism and Christianity, such as baptism and the eucharistic feast, the celebration of the god's birth and his ascension. At the same time, the two religions differ distinctly … The debate about their respective origins and their interrelation has ceased recently since the historical evidence is not sufficient to determine any priority." [Laeuchli, Urban Mithraism, #38279, "Mithraism and Christianity"]

Laeuchli locates the "hermeneutical problem of ancient Mithraism" in the inscription formula "Mithra - Sol Invictus - D.D.D.": a Phrygian-Persian vocabulary that Roman worshippers understood "only in fusion with their own Roman situation" [Laeuchli, #38279]. The Wikipedia article "Mithra" likewise reports that "since the early 1970s, the dominant scholarship has noted dissimilarities between the Persian and Roman traditions", and that Mithra is "not mentioned by name in the Gathas" [Wikipedia: Mithra].

The popular and esoteric literature in the library comes closer to Keshe's direction, although its date differs. Koster, quoting Cumont via Minucius Felix, writes: "The Mithraists also observed Sun-day and kept sacred the 25th of December as the birthday of the Sun", and calls Mithraism "the major rival of Christianity" before 321 [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909, "Christmas - 25th December"]. Fideler states that Mithras's "birthday was celebrated on December 25 … marking the return of Sol Invictus", born "in a cave" and "witnessed by shepherds" [Fideler, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, #69295]. Irvin and Rutajit list among the shared features: "Mithra was born on December 25th. He had 12 companions … He was buried in a rock tomb. After three days he rose" [Irvin and Rutajit, Astrotheology & Shamanism, #86204, ch. 3]. Chulev argues for "the stubborn continuity of these ancient beliefs". He also concedes that "the last Mitraic communities probably disappeared in the first half of the 5th century AD" before the mysteries "concealed" themselves in Manichaeism [Chulev, The Continuity Paradigm within the Mysteries of Mitra, #38297].

The Persian side of Keshe's thesis has partial support on the reference shelf. Wikipedia's infobox for Mithra lists "Festivals: Mehregan, Yalda Night (Birth of Mithra)" [Wikipedia: Mithra]. The article on Yalda dates the festival to "the night of December 21 (or 20 during leap years)", notes that it was in the Achaemenid calendar "from at least 502 BCE", and gives a different etymology: *yalda* is a Syriac word meaning "birth", borrowed from Syriac Christians for whom it was "the Syriac Christian proper name for Christmas". In Zoroastrian tradition the night was "particularly inauspicious", the time when Ahriman's forces were at their peak. The article also reports that Hashem Razi's theory that the Mithra festival Mehregan shifted to the solstice "has a significant following on the Internet" but that "his adduction has not" been academically accepted [Wikipedia: Yalda Night].

Question	Keshe (KSW)	Academic sources	Popular/esoteric sources	Reference shelf
Who is Mitra?	Female "Eve", "essence of the Creator's love", 8,000-10,000 years old (360, 447)	Indo-Iranian yazata of covenant, distinct from Roman Mithras (Vermaseren; Laeuchli)	Solar saviour of a pre-Christian mystery (Fideler; Irvin)	Ancient Iranian deity; dissimilarity of Persian and Roman cults stressed
Date of the birth feast	Dec 21 (2020-21), Dec 22 (2023); Rome or Vatican moved Christmas	Mithras identified with Sol Invictus	Dec 25 (Cumont via Koster; Fideler; Irvin)	Yalda on Dec 20/21; infobox "Birth of Mithra"
Christianity's dependence	A copy, Virgin Birth included (464)	Parallels real, priority undecidable (Laeuchli)	Strong dependence asserted	Name *yalda* borrowed from Syriac Christianity
End of the cult	Mitra persists as the ethos of the soul; religions ended 2021-22	Edicts of 391-392 (Vermaseren)	Continuity into Manichaeism (Chulev)	n/a

Key points

- In KSW 360 (2020) Keshe says Mithraism, "some 8,000 years ago", is the source of Christianity and Judaism. The transcript has Christmas moved from the 21st to the 24th, and its heading the 25th, by the Vatican "about 200 years ago".
- On December 21, 2021 he proclaimed the "Day of Enlightenment" in place of the "Day of Judgment", identified Mitra with Messiah, Mashiach, Maitreya and Kalki, and in KSW 412 declared the separate religions ended.
- KSW 447 defines Mitra as "the essence of the love of the Creator … not a religion", with the founders of religions as human reflections of it. KSW 496 makes the "Ethos of Mitra" a rule of life without intermediaries.

- KSW 464 calls Christmas "a copy of the birth of Mitra" sharing "the same virgin birth". KSW 517 explains the 25th as the 22nd plus three ethical attributes.
- From 2024-26 the doctrine adds a December 6 "Daughter of Mitra" and "Children of Mitra" generated "from the Souls and not from the sperm and egg" (564, 619, 642).
- Vermaseren and Laeuchli document Mithras as Sol Invictus, real cult parallels and the 391-392 suppression, while holding that priority cannot be established.
- Popular writers (Koster quoting Cumont, Fideler, Irvin and Rutajit) assert a December 25 Mithraic nativity. Keshe's date, the 21st or 22nd, is instead the Persian Yalda, which Wikipedia links to Mithra in its infobox but derives etymologically from Syriac Christian usage.

Chapter 154.

Keshe on Zoroaster, Persia and the Abrahamic Lineage: Judaism and the Torah

Keshe grew up in Iran. In his own telling he attended a Tehran school where Zoroastrian, Muslim, Christian, Bahá'í and Jewish pupils shared one classroom, and he describes a family background that is both Jewish and Muslim. His statements about ancient Persia and the Abrahamic religions draw on that biography and on the Mitra thesis of the previous chapter. He presents Zoroaster as a "traveller of space" whose threefold ethic was later corrupted. He treats Judaism, Christianity and Islam as one Middle Eastern line restyled from culture to culture. In 2023-2025 his workshops added a series of strongly worded claims about the Torah, Moses, the Jewish calendar and the identity of modern Israeli leaders. Under this study's rules, those claims are reported here in his words and attributed to him. They are then set beside the mainstream sources used in Parts 1-3 and on the reference shelf, which in several places say something different.

Zoroaster as "traveller of space" and the threefold ethic

KSW 219 (April 12, 2018) announced a "One Nation" police-army and a return to Persian origins:

> "now we go back to the origins of the Zoroastrians, talk good, think good, and do good. This was the message given to mankind by the traveler of space by the name of Zoroastria, but in time it was changed by those who abused the physicality of the man. We go back to our origin, think good because the thinking comes

> from the STM, do good because if you do wrong you suffer." [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 219, #377862]

The formula matches the oldest Zoroastrian ethic as the philologists describe it. Moulton writes that "the triad of Thought, Word, Deed is perpetual in the Gathas, and holds its own throughout the history of Zoroastrianism". He compares it with the Vedic *sumati, sukta, sukrta*, "good thought, good word, good deed" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011]. The two accounts diverge on origin and date. Moulton's discussion of the sources weighs datings such as Eduard Meyer's "1000 B.C." against Söderblom's seventh century at the latest, and concludes that "Zoroaster belongs to a prehistoric era" [Moulton, #55011, "The Sources"]. Keshe instead makes the ethic older than Zoroaster, as Mitra's teaching of 8,000-10,000 years ago (Chapter 153). In KSW 479, quoted by the Universal Council in 2023, he says that this "ethos of Mithra ... Mithra brought us in the name of Zorastian" [Keshe Foundation, Questions for the Universal Council April 2023, #378474].

Fire, the Faravahar and the Zoroastrian temple

Keshe rejects the description of Zoroastrians as fire-worshippers. In KSW 360 the temple fire is a symbol of the soul: "man interpreting himself, of soul of, as a fire, a light ... that fire was set to enlighten the soul". He recalls entering "the room of fire ... many, many times in my young age" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072]. In KSW 470 (February 2, 2023) he says that the messengers "had to live amongst man the way the man lives, and look and be the same. Otherwise, they would have been like a stranger", while Christ "became outsider anyway" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 470, #378182]. KSW 659 (September 10, 2026) returns to the fire-keepers: "When I was in Iran, something puzzled me, very first time I went to the temple. The Man who is in charge of the fire, they are usually very serene. It took me years to understand the psychology behind it." The index explains: "Fire Keepers breathe ash - purest trees" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 659, #378371].

KSW 619 (December 4, 2025) gives his reading of the Faravahar emblem. "That ring is the commitment between the Man and the Creator. The right hand." The central circle "is partially explained to be the Earth ... the ring on the hand is being away from the Earth is the Soul of the Creator (STC), STM". The two legs mean the good that goes forward and the bad left behind. The three layers of wings mean "Do Good, Act Good, and Be Good" and the skirt their opposite. He

describes the Zoroastrian white shirt (the *sudreh*, not named in the transcript) with a front pocket "for storing the good things" and a back pocket "for what you done wrong": "your bad things are never forgiven, in Zoroastrian … There is no punishment" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 619, #378331]. He describes "five I think fires", for kings, holy men, traders and others, which "cannot be mixed". He also describes his Tehran school, where Muslims, Christians, Bahá'ís, Zoroastrians and Jews were taught religion separately and "would call it the 'United Nation of the faith' " [KSW 619, #378331]. In the same workshop he speaks of a "cycle of changes every 3,000 years and it's due now" [KSW 619, #378331].

The *KF Plasma Times* of April 2019 frames Nowruz in the same way. It quotes Keshe that "the Iranian culture understood 3-4000 years ago the cycle of this planet which is now called annual". It describes the Haft-sin table and the equinox moment, and notes that "despite its Iranian and Zoroastrian origins, Nowruz has been celebrated by diverse communities" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2019-04, #38320].

One Middle Eastern line, "glazed" and renamed

KSW 433 (2022) contains Keshe's general model of Abrahamic history. "Let me explain something to what we call, line of religions in Middle East, which most of us European speaking languages believe in, with Judaism, Christianity, and being Muslim." He illustrates continuity with dietary law ("So he changed it into halal, but in fact is the same") [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 433, #378145]. The library guide summarises the section: the three are "interconnected extensions of a single Middle Eastern religious line, using the metaphor of pottery glazing to explain how cultures adopt and rename existing knowledge" [KSW 433, #378145, "Religious Lineage and Non-Physical Flight Systems"]. In the same workshop a participant argues that the Hebrew *Elohim* is plural, and Keshe describes the difficulty Iranian officials have with his own "dual Jewish and Muslim heritage" [KSW 433, #378145, guide section 7].

KSW 437 is more specific: "Jews learned from Zoroastrians and Mithraism and created the Jewish religion." On the calendar: "If you look at the Jewish calendar. Jewish calendar is not a calendar it's made to suit." He tells questioners to find "original Jewish history books … not the Torah, don't read it", and claims: "There was a lot about Mitra 10 - 15 years ago … on the Internet. Vatican spent a fortune to get it wiped out" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 437, #378149]. KSW

518 (December 28, 2023) adds a Persian etymology, "the word of Shah means God … Shah means God of the Gods", and a verdict on the David narratives: "they knitted the history of Judaism, which again was another fantasy for the Jews, from David time into Muhammad. We don't touch the person, we read the history" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 518, #378230].

The Torah, Moses and Israel (KSW 412, 520, 525)

The index of KSW 412 (December 2021) already lists "Atrocities committed by Moses" and predicts that one religion will be "forgotten forever, due to atrocities" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 412, #378124]. KSW 520 (January 11, 2024) develops the charge at length. Its index reads: "Their god told Moses to steal (which are against rules of God) from the Egyptians gold before leaving; This Book teaches how to steal - this race still does same thing today." The transcript has:

> "Read in Torah, historic, the present Torah, just read it. The last thing that God said to Moses, 'Teach your men and women, how to steal against rule of God, how to deceive the Egyptians, to get their silver and gold before you leave town tomorrow.' " [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 520, #378232]

He calls the Hebrew god chosen "at that time" "the god of fighting and torture and deceive", and says "Stealing, deceiving, killing is part of the last ten things that Moses and his brother did before they leave Egypt". On origins: "they chose the story of his life, the Greek, the God of wine, drunken man, and he's become the rule of the Torah". On stoning, he says it was common "in that region, Babylonian area and Palestine … Muhammad came from that area and he brought it" [KSW 520, #378232]. The library guide summarises further sections. The Exodus is "scientifically impossible" (growth "from 70 to 3 million people"). The texts were "written by Persian Jews around 500 BCE under the order of the Iranian King". The Ten Commandments were "copied from earlier Babylonian instructions". Jewish festivals are "celebrations of mass murder". The State of Israel "will end peacefully within weeks, driven by Benjamin Netanyahu's actions" [KSW 520, #378232, "Critique of Biblical History and Prediction of Israel's End"; "Historical Claims Regarding Jewish Origins"]. KSW 525 (February 15, 2024) repeats: "Before Kourosh the Torah did not exist in any shape or form. The people haven't changed. They are still massacring Palestinians 4 thousand years later the same as Moses", and calls the text "written 3-400 years later" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 525, #378237].

On dating, mainstream scholarship partly agrees with Keshe. The reference shelf states that "since the 17th century modern scholars have rejected Mosaic authorship" and that "modern scholars generally see the completed Torah as a product of the time of the Persian Achaemenid Empire (probably 450–350 BCE)". Some place it in the Hellenistic period, and the earliest fragments date to the late third or early second century BCE [Wikipedia: Composition of the Torah]. That consensus concerns the final redaction from "earlier sources". It does not say that the Torah was invented under Cyrus (Kourosh), and it does not support the Dionysian origin or the moral characterisations that Keshe adds.

Modern Jewish identity, Israel and power (KSW 576, 582, 612)

The KF editorial index of KSW 612 (October 16, 2025) summarises its claims in sequence:

> "Background history of Israel - rulers of Israel - not of Jewish culture - Pagan tribe 800 years ago - converted to Judaism - Jews of Ukraine - Eastern Europe Zionists brought in to rule; Two sects of Jews; European Jews - no Jewish blood - businessmen - thieves - deal with Hitler - move to Palestine; Business - not religion - same as Romans; Deliberately changed writings - rituals - to fit … Only male Jews bang heads & shake - Western Wall - sexual behavior to Jewish goddess - time of Mitra … Every 10 years bomb Gaza - millions to rebuild." [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612, #378324]

The same index adds "Resurrection from Mitra & Zoroaster" and "Added resurrection to scriptures by Roman Rulers - practiced Mithraism", which links these claims back to the Mitra thesis [KSW 612, #378324]. KSW 582 (March 20, 2025) has, in its index: "US & Israel attack Iran - want gold; Israeli leaders East Bloc changed name - fake Jews - run by Illuminati's; Ayatollahs paid by Israel to provoke war - planned … Keshe Coin … Replace banking system; Planned by British Monarch". In the transcript Keshe says: "99% of the Jewish leaders, Prime Ministers, Presidents, are all Eastern Bloc names, surnames … and then they changed them to sound like Mediterranean Arabic names. It's all made up name." He adds: "I know, I've got family the(re)" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 582, #378294]. KSW 576 (February 2025) contains: "It's a lucrative job and it's owned by the Jews. We'll give them their own bank. We are looking for a planet for them to send them … even though I'll miss some of my cousins" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 576, #378288].

The "pagan tribe 800 years ago ... converted to Judaism" corresponds to what the reference shelf calls the Khazar hypothesis. Wikipedia describes it as "a largely abandoned historical hypothesis" based on medieval reports that some Khazars converted in the 8th-9th centuries. It records that "genetic studies on Jews have found no substantive evidence of a Khazar origin among Ashkenazi Jews", with Behar et al. (2013) and Atzmon et al. finding mixed Near Eastern and Southern European ancestry, and it notes that geneticist Eran Elhaik's 2013 study aimed "to vindicate it". The article adds that the hypothesis "is still sometimes used in antisemitic conspiracy theories and in various anti-Zionist approaches" [Wikipedia: Khazar hypothesis of Ashkenazi ancestry].

Topic	Keshe's statement (KSW)	Mainstream/reference account
Zoroaster	"Traveler of space by the name of Zoroastria" (219); message older, from Mitra	Historical prophet of a "prehistoric era", c. 1000 B.C. or later (Moulton)
Threefold ethic	Think, speak, do good; the "Ethos of Mitra" (219, 479)	Gathic triad of thought, word, deed, with Vedic parallel (Moulton)
Fire	Symbol of the soul's light, not worship (360, 659)	Not treated in the sources cited here
Origin of Judaism	Learned from Zoroastrians and Mithraism; calendar "made to suit" (437)	n/a in the sources cited here
Torah	Fabricated after Cyrus; from a Greek wine god; teaches theft and deception (520, 525)	Multi-source; final form Persian period, c. 450-350 BCE (Wikipedia)
Exodus	Impossible and unsupported (520)	n/a in the sources cited here
Ashkenazi origin	Converted pagan tribe; "no Jewish blood" (612)	Khazar hypothesis "largely abandoned"; genetics finds no substantive support (Wikipedia)

Key points

- In KSW 219 Keshe calls Zoroaster "the traveler of space by the name of Zoroastria" and says his "talk good, think good, and do good" was later "changed by those who abused the physicality of the man".
- His triad matches the Gathic "Thought, Word, Deed" that Moulton calls "perpetual in the Gathas". Moulton dates Zarathustra to a prehistoric era, while Keshe traces the ethic to a far older Mitra.
- He reads Zoroastrian fire, the Faravahar and the sudreh's two pockets as symbols of the soul and of unforgiven but instructive wrongdoing (KSW 360, 619, 659). He also claims that Persians understood the planet's annual cycle "3-4000 years ago" (Plasma Times 2019-04).
- He treats Judaism, Christianity and Islam as one Middle Eastern line, "glazed" and renamed (KSW 433), and says Judaism was learned from Zoroastrianism and Mithraism with a calendar "made to suit" (KSW 437).
- In KSW 520 and 525 he says the Torah teaches theft and deception, derives from a Greek "God of wine", originated stoning, and did not exist "before Kourosh". He predicted Israel's end in 2024.
- The reference shelf agrees that the Torah's final form is from the Persian period but describes a compilation of earlier sources. It does not support invention or the other characterisations.
- In KSW 576, 582 and 612 he calls Israel's leaders Eastern Europeans with changed surnames, European Jews "businessmen" with "no Jewish blood", and links Israel to an "Illuminati" power structure and a British-monarchy plan. The reference shelf calls the related Khazar thesis "largely abandoned" and unsupported by genetics.

Chapter 155.

Christianity Reread: Cross, Resurrection, Ascension and the Vatican

Christianity gets more attention in the Knowledge Seekers Workshops (KSW) than any other tradition. Mehran Tavakoli Keshe returns to it in two registers. The first is a reinterpretation of its central events. In his account the crucifixion is a self-judgment, the resurrection is "transmutation", and the Ascension is a clerical invention. The second is a political reading of the Roman Catholic Church as a financial and geopolitical power, whose wars, debts and eventual "closing" he describes and predicts. This chapter sets out both registers in the order the transcripts present them. It then places them beside the mainstream doctrinal accounts and beside the "swoon" and substitution theories treated in earlier parts. All statements about Christ, the Vatican or world events below are Keshe's claims as transcribed by the Keshe Foundation (KF) and its volunteers, unless another source is named.

1. "Christ never died on the cross": KSW 134

The fullest early statement comes in KSW 134 (2016). Keshe answers a question about soul elevation and states that the traditional narrative is wrong. In his account Christ, "when they put [him] on the cross", "took from his P [physicality] to elevate his own soul that repaired the P damage", and "walked out of Jerusalem in a P life". He adds: "There was no resurrection … He never disappeared nor resurrected" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 134, #377777, "Field Flow Dynamics and the Nature of Christ's Resurrection"]. The mechanism, he says, is that crucifixion kills by "the weight of your body pulling you down that tears the organs apart", the "separation of the P tearing apart from the E [emotion]". Christ "could manage to hold it" and "tapped into U Energy

to receive what he could not receive from the food" [Keshe, KSW 134, #377777, "Christ's Resurrection and Plasma Energy Mechanics"].

The same passage gives the cross a moral meaning. In Keshe's reading the crucifixion "was for His soul to be elevated to understand His P misconduct". He states: "The Cross is not there for the P of it, it is there for you to become the judge of your own conduct" [Keshe, KSW 134, #377777]. He then gives a post-crucifixion biography: Christ "left Jerusalem and never mentioned his own name", "had a child and wanted to be the father to the child", "lived out his life as a common man and died natural death", and "You'll find the remains of Christ in South of France". He ties this to the pilgrim road "between France and Spain … this is the path of Christ" [Keshe, KSW 134, #377777]. He then makes a personal claim: "Christ never died on the cross, He elevated himself. I have done that 3 times and the people around me know". He links this to recovering from "my own cancer and broken bones" [Keshe, KSW 134, #377777, "Self-Healing, Soul Elevation, and the Critique of Traditional Religion"].

The session also ranks the founders. Christ and Moses brought "the same message", "Buddha understood more but he could not connect", and "Mohammad lost his way not by his own but by his followers". "Christianity the way it is now did not exist and it was never the intention of Christ" [Keshe, KSW 134, #377777]. Keshe also expects opposition: "The Pope will burn me down in everyway possible now that people know the truth … they can come in shape of Masons, Knights of Malta, Popes and Ayatollahs" [Keshe, KSW 134, #377777].

2. Resurrection as transmutation: KSW 428 and the KF Brazil excerpt

By 2022 Keshe was describing the event with the vocabulary of his "Book One, Two and Three" plasma science. A KF Brazil compilation, *Resurrection Part 1: Easter – Christ – Transmutation*, edits three time-coded excerpts of KSW 428 (14 April 2022): "Easter Christ transmutes body", "Perfects leaving body Detachment" and "Taught transmutation Last Supper". It carries the note "Summary has not been checked by KF" [Keshe, Resurrection Part 1: Easter – Christ – Transmutation (Excerpt 428 KSW), #378484]. The compilers' introduction states the frame: "The resurrection of Christ has baffled humanity for 2,000 years … it was all kept a mystery without any scientific explanation. That is, until now, with the teachings of Mr. Keshe". It reads the Gospel scene of Mary Magdalene not

recognising the risen Jesus as proof that "his body was different" [#378484, "Introduction"].

In the excerpt Keshe defines the crucifixion as "the conversion of the physicality (P) to the dimension (D) of the Soul, and then the return of the Soul back to physicality". Christ "separated the D of P" on the cross, "transformed himself back to a man", "came off the cross and walked away with a new physicality", and travelled "to North Africa, Northern Spain and France" [#378484, "Summary"]. He claims the process can be repeated: "You can do scientifically, what the Christ did as a magician … In theology, they call it resurrection. In science we call it transmutation. But there is no difference" [#378484]. He then extends it to Islam, equating the return of the Mahdi ("the return of Methi") with "the return of the soul of Mohammad" [#378484]. The fuller KSW 428 transcript adds that the Last Supper was the last meal Christ ate as a prophet before a conscious transmutation on the cross. It also says Christ was given the knowledge of transmutation only "at the last minute" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 428, #378140, "End of Kingship, Church Abuse, and the Nature of Resurrection"].

This differs from the 2016 version. KSW 134 describes self-healing of the same physical body and a walk out of Jerusalem. The 2022 material describes dematerialisation and re-manifestation of a *new* body. Both versions agree that there was no death followed by divine raising.

3. Transfiguration, "72 ships" and the late Bible: KSW 488

In KSW 488 (1 June 2023) a questioner raises the Transfiguration, which the questioner places "40 days before his crucifixion". Keshe's answer, in the transcript's paraphrase, is: "If it was true about the 40 days before crucifixion, then Jesus would never have allowed himself to be put on the cross". He adds that "There was a purpose for him to be put on the cross, because of what he did" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 488, #378200]. The same answer offers a political explanation of the execution. Jesus had been telling people "don't do anything against Rome", and he knew "they're going to put him exactly where they put the others" [#378200].

On scripture Keshe says: "Christ himself said, 'my work will be carried by 72 ships.' Which means he knew that his teachings will find 72 different ways of interpretation". He continues: "the Bible we read was put together 300 years

later. So anybody can put anything to fit anybody". By contrast, "The only message which is written by the man himself, is Bahá'u'lláh's"; the Koran "was written 40 years later" [#378200, "Critique of Religious Interpretations"]. The study guide summarises his ranking: the Bible and Torah are "heavily diluted", "with the Catholic Church representing the worst version" [#378200]. KSW 134 had already praised Bahá'u'lláh's "hidden work" as "the only transition book we have" [#377777].

4. The Ascension as clerical fabrication: KSW 486

KSW 486 (18 May 2023) is headed "Ascension of Christ explained; Made up by clergy" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 486, #378198, "Beginning"]. Keshe separates the person from the principle: "the man Jesus is the P, and the Christ is the 'Soul of the Creator,' within the STP of Jesus" [#378198]. He holds that ascension is not a single event reserved for one figure. Every soul, on leaving physicality, "ascend[s] to their appropriate positions in the Universe based on their conduct and strength". He also asks rhetorically whether a soul that leaves "no physicality on this planet" has "ascended, or … transmuted", since "when he ascends from the Earth, has to descend somewhere else" [#378198, "Ascension of Christ and Soul Transmutation"]. The same session claims that Jesus shared his deepest knowledge with his female companions rather than his male disciples, which led to the misunderstanding of his teachings in the records [#378198, "Fear, Ascension, and Jesus's Teachings"].

5. The Vatican as a political actor

Keshe's dealings with the Vatican began with outreach. In KSW 16 (26 June 2014), after a KF delegation's visit, he states that "the reason to go to Vatican was nothing to do to put down the integrity of the position of the Pope, but to unite the Religions … we meet in the cloth of man, not with higher hierarchy. We have invited 6 world leaders for this meeting. Its not about to create another Religion" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 16, #377659]. In KSW 360 (24 December 2020) he says that "21st of December, the longest night, the birth of Mitra was celebrated as the birth of Christ too", and that the Vatican moved the feast to the 25th [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072] (compare Chapter 153). The reference shelf records the Roman festival *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti* and

the Mithraic epithet "Sol Invictus" in the same calendar area [Wikipedia: Sol Invictus; Wikipedia: Mithraism in comparison with other belief systems].

By KSW 173 (25 May 2017) the tone is accusatory. Keshe opens: "I thank those in Vatican who informed us, they averted a third world war. These things have been planned for 5 years". He claims "the misconduct of Vatican, Jerusalem, and Islamic world, (working) all together, now it is a big cult. Religion is just money making". He then gives a series of pronouncements: "Pope, step down, the term of Christ is over"; for Judaism, "it is the end of the term"; and to Islam, "the term of Mohammed has finished". Unification "doesn't come by talking … but by abolishing the whole of the religious structure". The goal is "one nation, planet, race" and "free health in exchange for world peace" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 173, #377816]. Later in the session he tells listeners to go around the hierarchy: "When you can talk to the owner of the house, why do you talk to the cleaner with the name of the Pope … Would you like to speak to the rat of the house or its owner?" He says the soul of Christ "will tell you that there should be no Vatican" [#377816, "Direct Communication with the Soul"].

In KSW 311 (16 January 2020) the accusation becomes a prediction: "we'll see the stepping down and closing of Vatican. It will be done voluntarily and the Pope. In that process the stones of Vatican shall return to its original place … it will be only a relic … and coliseum will become the place where we celebrate life" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 311, #378023]. The same session predicts a planet with "no king, no emperor, no Archbishops, and no Popes" [#378023].

6. Money, Ukraine and the end of "kingship"

KSW 422 (3 March 2022), held one week into the Russian invasion of Ukraine, gives Keshe's financial thesis. The Vatican is a financial entity rather than a spiritual house. It treats religious conflict as investment, and it funded both the Ukraine war and divisions in China to win Orthodox and Chinese believers ("you make 1 billion Chinese Christian, Vatican becomes triple billionaire") [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 422, #378134, "Nano-coating, Heartbeat Physiology, and Geopolitical Claims"]. On Britain he says: "They warred with England for 300 years, they won the Church of England, the Queen is a servant of the Vatican at the moment". He also claims: "The British Monarchy took revenge on loosing the Church of England to Vatican, by taking 140 billion dollars of gold from the vaults of Libya". The study guide also records his link between Brexit and unpaid Vatican debts [#378134, "Religious Criticism, Geopolitics, and

Spiritual Corrections"]. On the war itself: "Don't worry about this Ukraine business, Vatican has already paid for it. And they receive the bill everyday, how many bullets used". He predicts "more mayhem between the 2 Churches" unless people accept "that God's word is within the Soul of the Man" [#378134].

Six weeks later, KSW 428 announces an end to the "kingship" of churches. It names the Vatican, Moscow and the Church of England: "I pray for the soul of … the leaders of Vatican, that they come to their senses. And the same with the Church in Moscow". It refers to "when the Church of England start selling the churches. The physical abuse of the man, which came forward was unbelievable" [Keshe, KSW 428, #378140]. The session also criticises the Vatican's treatment of ageing clergy ("Vatican retires the priests at age of 65. Don't pay them anything, and the pension starts at 70"). It says the United Kingdom's "privy Council" is an "instigator of many wars", and that "KF does not build temples" but institutes [#378140, "Soul Elevation and Religious Critique"]. In KSW 574 (23 January 2025) he states: "This year of 2025 … It's the first time that religious wars will come to an end" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 574, #378286]. In KSW 578 (20 February 2025) a questioner contrasts the founders' poverty ("Christ and his disciples, Muhammad and Ali") with clerical luxury. Keshe answers that a priest's family "has now become extremely rich … since he was promoted to Monsignor as an advisor to the Pope". He adds that "there is no accounting for all the money that is donated", that "All our religious leaders are trillionaires, according to one statement from international accounting", and that "Some of Iran Ayatollahs are on the top richest people in the world" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 578, #378290].

7. Comparison with mainstream and alternative accounts

The mainstream doctrine treated in Parts 7–9 makes the bodily death and resurrection of Jesus the centre of the faith. Paul's summary of "the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ" in 1 Corinthians 15:3–4 is the gospel itself [Thompson, Apostle of Persuasion, #67385], and Jensen calls the resurrection "the supreme authentication of the kingship of Jesus" [Jensen, Jensen's Survey of the New Testament, #64079]. Luke–Acts sets the Ascension forty days after Easter [Wikipedia: Acts 1; Wikipedia: Ascension of Jesus]. Keshe's claims that the Ascension was "made up by clergy" and that the Bible was compiled "300 years later" therefore strike at the canonical narrative and at its textual basis.

His "did not die" claim belongs to a family of older theories. The swoon hypothesis began with Bahrdt (c. 1780), Venturini and Paulus. It was later taken up in Schonfield's *The Passover Plot* and in *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*. Ahmed Deedat and the Ahmadiyya founder Mirza Ghulam Ahmad used it in Muslim apologetics. Most biblical scholars have discarded it, and a *JAMA* analysis judged it irreconcilable with medicine [Wikipedia: Swoon hypothesis]. The Qur'anic position ("they did not kill him nor did they crucify him, but it was made to appear to them so") is closer to substitution than to swoon [Wikipedia: Swoon hypothesis, "Islamic perspectives"]. Laurence Gardner's bloodline account, which questions Paul's argument for a bodily resurrection, is the closest library parallel to Keshe's "child" and "south of France" motifs [Gardner, Bloodline of the Holy Grail, #62262].

Question	Mainstream doctrine	Swoon / bloodline theories	Islamic substitution	Keshe (KSW)
Did Jesus die on the cross?	Yes [#67385]	No; unconscious, revived [Wikipedia: Swoon hypothesis]	Not crucified; "made to appear so"	No; he "elevated himself" [#377777]
What is the resurrection?	Bodily raising by God [#64079]	Recovery mistaken for resurrection	Not applicable	Healing (2016) or transmutation and re-manifestation (2022) [#377777; #378484]
Ascension	Literal, after forty days [Wikipedia: Acts 1]	Usually replaced by later life	Raised to God	"Made up by clergy"; all souls ascend by conduct [#378198]
Later life	Not applicable	Gaul / France, descendants [#62262]	Return at the end time	France, a child, natural death [#377777]

Can it be repeated?	No; unique saving event	No	No	Yes; Keshe says he did it "3 times" [#377777]

Keshe agrees with the swoon theories on survival and with the bloodline literature on France. Unlike them, he does not explain the survival by medicine, drugs or conspiracy. He explains it by a technique that he presents as repeatable and teachable through KF devices. That is the point on which he departs from every other account in the table.

Key points

- In KSW 134 (2016) Keshe says Christ "never died on the cross". In his account Christ used soul and emotion and drew on "U Energy" to repair his body, left Jerusalem, had a child and died naturally in the south of France. Keshe says he has done such self-elevation "3 times" [#377777].
- In Keshe's reading the cross is a tool of self-judgment for one's own "misconduct", not a vicarious sacrifice [#377777].
- In KSW 428 (2022), as excerpted by KF Brazil, the resurrection becomes "transmutation": the soul separates physicality from the body, travels and re-manifests a new body. Christ is said to have learned this just before the crucifixion [#378484; #378140].
- KSW 486 and 488 call the Ascension a clerical fabrication. The Bible is "put together 300 years later", and Bahá'u'lláh's is the only message "written by the man himself" [#378198; #378200].
- Keshe's relation to the Vatican moves from a 2014 visit "to unite the Religions" [#377659], to the 2017 accusation of a Vatican–Jerusalem–Islamic war plan [#377816], to the 2020 prediction of a voluntary closing of the Vatican [#378023].
- KSW 422 presents the Vatican as a financial power. It links the Libyan gold, Brexit and the Ukraine war to Vatican money and to the rivalry with the Russian Orthodox Church [#378134].
- Later sessions predict the end of church "kingship" and of religious wars in 2025, and accuse Monsignors and Ayatollahs of untaxed wealth [#378140; #378286; #378290].
- The "did not die" claim overlaps with the swoon and bloodline theories but differs in mechanism and in claiming the feat is repeatable. It contra-

dicts the mainstream doctrine of a unique bodily death and resurrection [Wikipedia: Swoon hypothesis; #64079; #67385].

Chapter 156.

Islam, Shia Iran and the Ayatollahs: Keshe's Islamic Critique and Iranian Politics

Mehran Tavakoli Keshe was born in Iran. In the Knowledge Seekers Workshops (KSW) he speaks about Islam mostly through the case of Shia Iran and its clergy. His religious claims about Muhammad, Mecca and the ayatollahs run into his political claims about Iran's nuclear programme, its negotiations with the 5+1 powers and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), its sanctions, and its wars, and the two cannot be separated. This chapter therefore treats them together. It first sets out his historical and doctrinal statements on Islam, then his proposals on the hijab and on the Sunni–Shia conflict, and finally his account of the Keshe Foundation's (KF) role in Iranian politics from 2018 to 2026. Unless another source is named, every statement is Keshe's claim as transcribed by KF volunteers.

1. Muhammad, Mecca and the "Shah": KSW 518

In KSW 518 (28 December 2023) Keshe offers a revisionist geography of early Islam. He states that "the historical papers, shows Muhammad was not born at all in Mecca. Could not be. He's born in different position in Middle East". He adds that the transcript's editors place this "in Jordan, where he was actually born, then everything they tell us fits together" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 518, #378230]. As evidence he cites mosque orientation: "In the first, about 100 original mosques that were ever built, the 'praying wall' face Jordan and not Mecca. After around the year 200 they started facing Mecca". In another variant of the transcript the figure is "120, 150 of them". He asks: "Why did it suddenly change to present Mecca, 150 years after the death of Muhammad? These are the data's we don't have" [#378230]. He also says that the distance

of the Night Journey from Mecca to Jerusalem (about "1,400, 1,600 kilometers") does not fit the traditional geography, and that "the city of Mecca, didn't exist the way we know today" [#378230]. The editors' summary puts the dispute at the same level as the Vatican: "One of the biggest controversy going on is not just about the Vatican and the Pope, it's about where is the true birth place of Mohammed" [#378230].

The traditional account on the reference shelf differs. In Islamic tradition the Kaaba was made the qibla by Qur'anic revelation in the second Hijri year, and before that the first Muslims prayed in another direction [Wikipedia: Qibla]. Keshe's claim that the early prayer walls pointed to Jordan has no counterpart in that article.

The same session extends the critique to Iranian kingship and symbols. Keshe says that "the word 'Shah' means God, and Shah of Shah, means 'God of the Gods' ". He calls the lion-and-sun flag and the Islamic crescent forms of continued "paganism": "Muslims came with the Moon. Again, paganism, we still worship Mecca" [#378230]. He presents Persian culture as one in which "Woman ruled with an 'iron fist' ", in contrast to the Arab side "of the mountain" [#378230].

2. Messengers, ayatollahs and the "true Koran"

Keshe's position on the founders hardens over time. In KSW 134 (2016) he had said that "Mohammad lost his way not by his own but by his followers" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 134, #377777]. By KSW 467 (12 January 2023) a questioner asks whether the killing that followed the prophets was "the fault of the Messengers, rather than the fault of their followers". Keshe answers: "The Messengers set the example (and those close to them who followed afterwards, (made up the) path". He tells Knowledge Seekers that "we have to correct and perfect the (STP) of the Messengers", and that "Some of you who come to elevate the Soul of the Christ, will end up touching Muhammad, because that's what was needed" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 467, #378179]. In this account the prophet's soul was "connected to the Knowledge of the Universe and had no fault in it", while his Soul of Physicality "still had his own impurities" [#378179].

KSW 412 (23 December 2021) predicts the end of the three Abrahamic religions as institutions: "We see the end of Islam as a religion, but as a path of correct conduct, the true writing in Koran. We see the end of Christianity ... We

have already abolished the Judaism" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 412, #378124]. KSW 629 (12 February 2026) gives the most general form of the critique: "why does Man need an intermediary in a fake name of Prophets and ayatollahs to understand the work of his Creator? There is no room". Humanity "need[s] no charlatans in the name of Ayatollahs, Mullahs, Priests, Rabbis and the rest". He adds: "religions … were created to save Man, but nothing has killed more than religion", and asks whether "the religions [are] just made up to abuse the Man, because it's a profitable market. … Abuser never stops the abuse and it is a fault of the abused" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 629, #378341]. KSW 578 (2025) adds the charge of wealth: "Some of Iran Ayatollahs are on the top richest people in the world" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 578, #378290].

3. Sunni and Shia; the hijab

KSW 198 (16 November 2017) is headed "War between Iran and Saudi Arabia has been planned for 100 years". In it Keshe warns: "There is a huge conflict setup between Iran as a Shia country and its allies, and the Sunni countries, Saudi Arabia and their allies". He answers it with a call "through the soul" to "the leaders of the Iranian government … and the Saudi leadership and the rest of the Islamic world", and argues that "The line of descendants of Mohammad doesn't change the book of Mohammad" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 198, #377841]. That is, he holds that the succession dispute does not alter the scripture both sides share. Kim Ghattas places the modern Saudi–Iranian rivalry from 1979 onward and traces it into sectarian killings such as the 1987 Sunni–Shia violence in Pakistan [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495, Part II]. The reference shelf dates the "Iran–Saudi Arabia proxy war" from 11 February 1979 [Wikipedia: Iran–Saudi Arabia proxy war].

During the protests that followed the death of Mahsa Amini in Guidance Patrol custody in September 2022 [Wikipedia: Mahsa Amini protests], Keshe made a non-violent proposal. In KSW 457 (3 November 2022) he said: "We ask the Iranian women, to not burn your scarf's. Give them as a gift to the soldiers and the Revolutionary Guard, to cover their eyes, so that you remain free". He framed it as a reversal: "the Iranians told the Arabs, that we cover our own eyes, so that our women stay free" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 457, #378169]. A variant transcript in the same work, headed as the 453rd workshop of 6 October 2022, adds: "You want to be free, you'll be Iranian, the way Zoroastrian has been, 'think good, do good, and talk good.' You don't need to cover the woman. Give

your scarf's as a gift to the Revolutionary Guard and kiss them for it. Do not fight, do not burn the scarf's" [#378169]. He applied the same rule to Ukraine: "Greet the Russians, don't fight. They dissolve themselves ... Greeting them they can't shoot you" [#378169].

4. KF and the Iranian nuclear file

In Keshe's account KF has acted as an intermediary on Iran's nuclear programme. In KSW 410 (9 December 2021) he says KF "approaches IEA (IAEA) as independent negotiator". He argues that "Iran cannot be sanctioned for 3 & 5%, or 20% enrichment, where the T of the space needs 100% pure nuclear material". He calls 100% enrichment Iran's "God given right ... with a proviso, that Iran mutually shares the T and knowledge of Keshe Foundation (KF) with American government, Chine[se]" and others [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 410, #378122]. He praises the incoming IAEA team as "people with the right caliber" [#378122]. A week later, in KSW 411, he accuses Benjamin Netanyahu and Donald Trump of having used "photos of KF reactors to make sanctions on Iran" without checking their validity: "It's the new sanctions which is brought, because of this picture, this video by Netanyahu to Trump. This is the biggest problem for us". He describes the user as a "demented fear driven guy" who "used our Technology". He says that, as a result, the "IAEA has literally been snookered", and that KF's job is to "create a doubt" in the sanctions case. He ties the sanctions to "hundreds of thousands of people suffering ... with the lying and cheating of these people" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 411, #378123].

KSW 554 (9 September 2024) claims a direct effect. Keshe says KF warned the Iranian leadership against "going to the war to destroy the whole of Iran", and that "last Thursday ... Iran changed its position ... Instead of attacking ... suddenly changed, we go to nuclear negotiation. Why? ... Who is behind 5+1 nuclear negotiation? Keshe Fou[ndation]". The index adds: "Open Iranian embassy in US in 2025" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 554, #378266]. KSW 564 (14 November 2024) is indexed under "IAEA in Tehran – reignite 5plus1 negotiations" and "Iran Nuclear Space Program – T in Exchange for Peace (TIEP)". It also says "5plus1 is dead – Iran is a nuclear T nation" and refers to transfer of technology "through Iranian President – Office of Ayatollah Khamenei". Keshe announces: "In our future negotiations with the IAEA in Vienna ... and United Nations, we'll transfer the Universal operations (of Earth) to the Universal Council" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 564, #378276]. The P5+1 group itself

(the five permanent Security Council members plus Germany) negotiated the 2013 Joint Plan of Action and the later nuclear agreement with Iran [Wikipedia: P5+1].

Earlier he had made diplomatic overtures. *KF Plasma Times* (September 2018) reports a letter, announced by Keshe on 2 August 2018 and drafted with the KF Earth Council, sent to "His Excellency President Donald J Trump, as well to the embassy of Iran". In it "Keshe extends an invitation on behalf of the nation of Iran for the meeting with Donald Trump, to reach an agreement for world peace" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2018-09, #38313]. In KSW 311 (16 January 2020) Keshe predicted that a peace treaty between Iran and the US would conclude by late 2020, that "the release of this EU will force Tehran peace talks and conference", and that the Universal Council would open in January 2021 [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 311, #378023]. In KSW 488 (2023) he declared that KF and its management "stay loyal to the Iranian nation. But we serve the other nations equally. We will never betray Iran", spoke of the "interaction" of "his Eminency Ayatollah Khamenei of Iran" with KF, and predicted that Iranian nuclear physicists would teach in US universities [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 488, #378200].

5. COVID-19 in Iran

In February–April 2020 Keshe gave a conspiratorial account of the epidemic in Iran. In KSW 317 (27 February 2020) he said the virus "was put just before election and at the place where all the Moslems of Shia background go. They sprayed the shrine and people touch the shrine and they carried it". He said that "This virus is tailor made and tailor controlled", that "Many Iranian ministers are being held in quarantine because of the way the virus was spread deliberately", and that "They killed the head of Sepah, and then they spread the virus and now they have to be saved through Sepah" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 317, #378029]. Five weeks later, KSW 322 (2 April 2020) was headed "Coronavirus solved by Iran". Keshe said: "we have managed to clean one city, one hospital, in Iran, totally of the virus". He attributed this to the Cup of Life (CL) given to families, so that "there are no more new patients coming to the hospital. The city is being announced to be clean … on the national television". He announced that "The Iranian officials, military and the Sepah, will deliver the T on the official levels … to all the nations", and that GANS water thrown on streets and buildings would create a "Dome of Peace" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 322, #378034].

6. 2025–2026: leadership, gold and SWIFT

The 2025–26 workshops, held during open conflict between Iran, Israel and the United States, are the most combative. In KSW 582 (20 March 2025) Keshe says "the problem is two sided. The Iranian leadership all the Ayatollahs are Lebanese, they're not Iranians". He says they "are paid by the Israelis to poke" (in the edited variant, "to poke (and provoke) by the Israelis (and those in the background)"). The session index adds "We are the end to religions; Work closely with Ayatollahs – Vatican". In the transcripts examined here the leaders are called "Lebanese"; the session's remarks about Israel concern who pays and who provokes, not the leaders' descent. He follows this with a threat: "If they try to touch the Iranian Central Bank I'll release so much gold that the banking system will collapse within hours. … There's a message directly to Jerusalem and to the White House" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 582, #378294]. In KSW 642 (14 May 2026) he describes the war and its consequences: "There is a massive amount of cable, goes from Saudi, Dubai, Iran, Iraq … It'll be the end of Swift. Because nobody can use the Swift, no banking can be confirmed. Chinese system will take over … the Chinese love the Iranians, cut this line off". He also claims that "Iran 90% of missiles … are usable" and that Iran exports oil to China by rail on the "One belt, one road" line [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 642, #378354].

Theme	Keshe's statement	Session
Muhammad's birthplace	Jordan, not Mecca; early prayer walls faced Jordan	KSW 518 [#378230]
Fault for religious killing	First the followers (2016); later "the Messengers set the example" (2023)	KSW 134 [#377777]; KSW 467 [#378179]
Clergy	"No charlatans in the name of Ayatollahs, Mullahs, Priests, Rabbis"	KSW 629 [#378341]
Sunni–Shia	A planned 100-year Iran–Saudi war; scripture unchanged by the line of descent	KSW 198 [#377841]
Hijab	Give the scarves to the Revolutionary Guard "to cover their eyes"	KSW 457 [#378169]

Theme	Keshe's statement	Session
Nuclear	100% enrichment for space; KF behind the 5+1 return	KSW 410, 554, 564 [#378122; #378266; #378276]
Sanctions	Netanyahu and Trump misused KF reactor images	KSW 411 [#378123]
COVID-19	Spread deliberately at a Shia shrine; cured with CL and GANS	KSW 317, 322 [#378029; #378034]
Finance and war	Gold release against banks; SWIFT to end with cut cables	KSW 582, 642 [#378294; #378354]

Key points

- In KSW 518 Keshe claims Muhammad was born in Jordan and that the first 100–150 mosques faced Jordan until about 150–200 years after his death. Islamic tradition, by contrast, dates the turn to the Kaaba to the second Hijri year [#378230; Wikipedia: Qibla].
- Over time Keshe moves blame for religious violence from the prophets' followers (2016) to the Messengers themselves (2023), whose "STP" Knowledge Seekers are told to "correct" [#377777; #378179].
- He calls for bypassing "Ayatollahs, Mullahs, Priests, Rabbis" and describes religion as a "profitable market" of abuse. KSW 412 foresees Islam surviving only as "a path of correct conduct, the true writing in Koran" [#378341; #378124].
- On the 2022 hijab protests he proposed a non-violent gesture: give the scarves to the Revolutionary Guard to cover their own eyes. He offered it in the name of the Zoroastrian maxim "think good, do good, talk good" [#378169].
- He presents KF as a hidden actor in Iran's nuclear diplomacy. In his account KF argued for 100% enrichment for space use, accused Netanyahu and Trump of using KF images to justify sanctions, and claimed credit for Iran's 2024 return to talks [#378122; #378123; #378266; #378276].
- In 2020 he said COVID-19 was deliberately spread at a Shia shrine before elections and that KF products, delivered with the Iranian military, cleared an Iranian city [#378029; #378034].

- In 2025–26 he called the ayatollahs "Lebanese, ... not Iranians", threatened to collapse banking with gold if Iran's Central Bank were "touched", and predicted the end of SWIFT [#378294; #378354].

Chapter 157.

One Nation, One Planet: World Peace Treaty, Governments, China, Finance and the Keshe Coin

Mehran Tavakoli Keshe's religious critique, set out in the previous chapters, comes with a political programme. Its slogan, "One Nation, One Planet, One Race", stands for a borderless world without armies. Under the programme, governments receive plasma technology in exchange for signing a World Peace Treaty, a Universal Council (UC) and an Earth Council (EC) take the place of kings and clergy, and the central banks are replaced by a Keshe Foundation (KF) currency, the Keshe Coin (KC), circulating on a KF network, the One Nation Network (ONN). This chapter follows the programme in time through the Knowledge Seekers Workshops (KSW): the 2015 "Roadmap", the 2017 declaration of "One Nation", the role given to China and the exclusion of the United States, the television and UC peace campaigns, and the 2025–26 rules of the coin. It closes with a comparison with the universalist political theologies discussed earlier, chiefly the Bahá'í world order that Keshe himself cites. All statements are Keshe's claims as recorded in the KF transcripts unless another source is named.

1. The Roadmap and early diplomacy (2015–2017)

KSW 64 (4 June 2015) opens with a correction. "The wrong Roadmap posted with peace sign, Keshe rejects this sign because it accomplished nothing and only made money from it. Keshe always signs each paper individually and notarized, like the patents". The summary goes on: "Last week Keshe had a meeting

in Rome, one of the most powerful politicians in the world, they think a like" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 64, #377707]. The same session names the obstacle: "Behind the scenes Vatican controlling, but don't consider Asia". It also reports a planned meeting with Gorbachev, who "refused to shoot the people at the Berlin Wall" but was ill on the day [#377707].

A year earlier, in KSW 16 (2014), Keshe had described the Vatican visit as a meeting to "unite the Religions … in the cloth of man", to which "6 world leaders" were invited [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 16, #377659]. By KSW 173 (May 2017) he was offering "free health in exchange for world peace" and calling for "one nation, planet, race" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 173, #377816]. Looking back in KSW 491 (22 June 2023), he recalls the "Ambassadorial Meetings and Conferences": "We had the first Ambassadorial Conference in Nino, and then … in Italy, later on, some years later, we gave the Ambassadorial Meeting, where we presented the MaGrav Technology". He announces a new conference "At one of the most prestigious locations in London, because we represent Keshe Foundation and two powerful nations". Invitations would go "officially by government to government", and the purpose was explained this way: "Keshe Foundation has signed agreements with powerful nations, for delivery of the Space Technology" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 491, #378203].

2. The declaration of "One Nation" (August 2017)

The central document is KSW 183, headed "Declaration of World Peace – Day 2 – Thursday, Aug 3, 2017". Keshe states: "As of this morning we have become One Nation, which means there are no borders, armies, and no wars and we don't need to incite wars as we have no enemies". He continues: "I needed the mandate of this world peace treaty to become One nation that I could build on, and now I have that mandate and KF can work on it … the EC will have to approve" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 183, #377826]. The study guide records his claim that the treaty "signed by all 196 nations and territories is now active on the KF website". He also promises a new banking system, "blue telephones", a One Nation Police Force and space centres on every continent, and plans a first "International One Nation Conference" in Tehran for 10,000–20,000 people [#377826, "Declaration of World Peace and One Nation"; "Field Physics, Logistics, and the World Peace Treaty"].

The same session settles the geopolitical question. China is to launch the first spaceship and receive the launch technology. The United States is excluded on the ground of its history of violence. Keshe speaks of "blood that has mixed on this continent, that sees nothing but to murder. Strange enough we don't see it south of the border with Mexicans or North with the Canadians". He concludes that "the only safe option is to move the technology forward, is to put it into the hands of leaders who are peaceful" [#377826]. Nations that sign the treaty are promised "technology, jobs, and security", and leaders are rebuked for taking "military contracts and private cash payments" [#377826, "Global Peace Mandate and Financial Incentives"].

3. China, Iran and the axis of technology

China remains Keshe's preferred partner in later sessions, often together with Iran. KSW 250 (15 November 2018) states that a new space fuel "is on the back of the Iranian knowledge and will be developed further, through and with the Iranian and Chinese government officials". It also announces that technology "will be offered state by state as breakup of US coming in exchange for stopping arms production" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 250, #377962]. KSW 245 names the Chinese leader as "president Zhi of China" (*sic*, Xi Jinping) in a passage on soul strength [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 245, #377957]. KSW 311 (2020) advises China on trade with the United States. It also reports Chinese KF factories under construction [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 311, #378023].

KSW 496 (27 July 2023) announces the most concrete step: "Soon the titles of the Keshe Foundation companies will change over to be a partnership with the Chinese government … Keshe Foundation will become China Keshe Organization Corporation". It also states: "In our collaboration with the Chinese government we foresee colonization of Space in the next 2 to 5 years". The session mentions a "Space Defense System" to be delivered to "Chinese highest rank military officers", one unit of which "can literally supply all the energy needs of Beijing" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 496, #378208]. The same session reports a rumour that "Bill Gates and … George Soros … have got together to reduce the population to half a billion". The index's gloss is that "They are so stupid 8 billion won't" be reduced in this way [#378208].

By 2025 Keshe also presents China as a threat. In KSW 612 the index reads: "colonized world – oil & Rare Earth materials – refineries; China sole superpower;

Strangling nations – backlash; KF counterbalance to China; KS are alternative; Hold onto Markray". In the transcript he says that "the Chinese government controlling 70% of the Rare Earth materials". He adds that the United States, even after acquiring mines in Ukraine, would need "up to 10 years to set up refining capacities". He concludes: "now we have every single nation, every territory on this island, as a colony of China" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612, #378324]. In the same session KF is said to enter "changing the social structure and economical structure of the world" through "Markray Corporation of United States" [#378324]. By 2026 the KF centre is "the Keshe Foundation in China, with the Space City" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 649, #378361]. KSW 648 calls building the Space City "our target", after a failed attempt in Mexico, where "drug traffickers run into Keshe Foundation" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 648, #378360].

4. Campaigns: KF TV, global tax, the UC treaty drive

In KSW 367 (11 February 2021) Keshe states: "The main objective of the Keshe Foundation (KF) is world peace, through spread of the T and knowledge". To this end he asks the board and the UC to set up KF TV and to recruit "organizations, except Green Peace, which are totally nonpolitical". He puts the cost at "at least 10 to 20 million" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 367, #378079]. KSW 392 (2021) forecasts that "A global taxation, a global administration becomes imminent in coming months". It plans technology transfer to firms such as "Boeing, Iran space Technology, the Chinese Airlines" ("we transfer the knowledge at a flick of a finger"), and states: "now we have found support and direction in the new Iranian administration" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 392, #378104].

In 2026 the treaty campaign moved to what Keshe calls the soul level. KSW 626 sets out a pledge for "the Keshe and Universal Family present at the Earth to unifying at the Soul level every time, every day, at 9 PM Central European Time, to give from our field strengths to enlighten the Souls of World Leaders to negotiate and sign the World Peace Treaty, pledging their nations to everlasting peace". It ties the campaign to the coin: "We bring in from 21st of March a position, full transparency, across the currencies around the world" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 626, #378338]. The same session insists: "We are not a religion and a cult. We are a scientific organization" [#378338]. In KSW 646 Keshe announces a ban on two nationalities: "We do not accept no person under no circumstances from nation of Belgium … If you are a Jewish from the

state of Israel, you are blacklisted. … This is for the benefit of Mankind and it's not animosity" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 646, #378358].

5. The Keshe Coin and the One Nation Network (2025–2026)

KSW 602 (7 August 2025) launches the ONN units, described as a "Keshe Foundation (KF) independent Plasma network – can't be brought down", together with an "ID Card & Keshe Coin (KC) – physical card … like credit card". Keshe says the system needs "at least a thousand plus units" before it can be switched on. On value he says: "we keep the price of the Keshe Coin at 1,000 Euro … that it can spend to that same value at any time, anywhere on this planet. It does not matter you are in the United States, you are in China, you are in Japan, you are in London". The index adds: "price not go up and down – can't make money off of it … no government can touch it". He presents the coin as backed by technology, so that "every citizen is born rich, not born poor to become rich". He also states that "Nations which promote peace will be given more to spend" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 602, #378314]. The session presents the KC as a source of "financial stability" outside the control of governments and their monetary institutions [#378314].

By KSW 649 (2026) the rules had tightened. "Be very clear that the Keshe Coin at this moment of time is not exchangeable for currency. We are not a Cryptocurrency game". The coin is "a transition to what we call, Universal way of living". The condition is political: "every nation to be qualified to receive the 100 Coins for their citizens is signing of the World Peace Treaty". The index records a reallocation: "Palestinians shared atrocities – double KC allocation; KC taken from Israel & Belgium" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 649, #378361]. KSW 650 sets age-based allocations: "after age of 10, the allocation of 10 Coins per year. From 10 to 20, the allocation is 20 … And at 65+ you get 40 Coins". Income paid by KF carries tax: "you have to pay 20% taxes … You get paid by Keshe Coin. So the governments have to come back … opening an account for them to receive the Coins". KF goods may be bought partly in KC, and "every Chinese is entitled to their Coins", with Iran and "two or three other nations" next [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 650, #378362]. KSW 654 describes the payout: "30 Coins a year … We don't release all 30 Coins in one go … on a given time, randomly". Each registrant's government is notified that it is "entitled to this 100,000 per registration over the next 10 years", which Keshe calls a

potential "hundreds of millions for governments, especially third world nations" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 654, #378366]. KSW 655 (13 August 2026) adds that KC is "kept as national assets until sign for Peace" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 655, #378367].

Element	Rule as stated	Source
Value	Fixed at 1,000 Euro, same value "anywhere on this planet"	KSW 602 [#378314]
Infrastructure	ONN plasma units (1,000+ to switch on), ID card	KSW 602 [#378314]
Convertibility	"Not exchangeable for currency"; "not a Cryptocurrency"	KSW 649 [#378361]
National condition	100 coins per citizen only for treaty signatories; held as "national assets until sign for Peace"	KSW 649, 655 [#378361; #378367]
Exclusions	KC taken from Israel and Belgium; double allocation to Palestinians; Belgian and Israeli citizens "blacklisted"	KSW 649, 646 [#378361; #378358]
Personal allocation	10 / 20 / 40 coins a year by age band; 30 a year released at random times	KSW 650, 654 [#378362; #378366]
Tax	20% on KF-paid income, paid in KC	KSW 650 [#378362]
Governments	100,000 per registration over 10 years	KSW 654 [#378366]

6. Other powers and the new order

Keshe's world map is shaped by monarchies and their finances. In KSW 578 (February 2025) he says that "The British monarchy controls the Saudi monarchy, because they put them in power". He calls Trump's Saudi contacts part of a plan for "how a Royalist come into power", and counts KF as "the fourth factor" beside the religions and the two other blocs [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 578, #378290]. In KSW 642 (May 2026) he says the British monarchy is "German

monarch – through Rothschild's", predicts that "Swift will go to the wall" and that the "Chinese system will take over", and says Taiwan is being negotiated between the United States and China [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 642, #378354]. In the same 2026 session he also says the Universal Council's purpose is "change coming" [#378354].

7. Comparison: universalist political theologies

The programme has clear parallels with the Bahá'í vision that Keshe praises (KSW 134, 488) as the only uncorrupted revelation [Keshe, KSW 488, #378200]. Bahá'u'lláh urged rulers to "lay the foundations of the world's Great Peace", taught that "the earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens", and envisaged a world legislature, an international court and an executive enforcing "general disarmament" [Wikipedia: New world order (Bahá'í)]. Keshe's "One Nation, One Planet, One Race" repeats the oneness and disarmament themes. The two differ on mechanism and authority. The Bahá'í order is to emerge gradually through consultation and democratic, grassroots decision-making "chosen and implemented by the peoples of the world themselves" [Wikipedia: New world order (Bahá'í)]. Keshe's order rests on a mandate he says he holds, on technology withheld from non-signatories, and on a currency issued and allocated by his own foundation.

Keshe also made a personal promise. In KSW 311 (January 2020) he said he would step down when the UC opened in January 2021, and that kings and religious leaders would step aside with him [Keshe, KSW 311, #378023]. The later transcripts show him still setting coin rules, treaty deadlines and national exclusions in 2026 [#378361; #378362; #378358].

Key points

- In KSW 64 (2015) Keshe rejected the peace-sign roadmap as having "accomplished nothing", insisted on notarised signatures, and reported a Rome meeting with "one of the most powerful politicians in the world" [#377707].

- In KSW 183 (3 August 2017) he declared "One Nation" with "no borders, armies, and no wars", claimed a treaty mandate subject to Earth Council approval, gave China the space role and excluded the United States [#377826].
- From 2018 to 2023 he presented China and Iran as KF's partners. He announced in 2023 that KF companies would pass into partnership with the Chinese government and foresaw space colonisation "in the next 2 to 5 years" [#377962; #378208].
- In 2025 he called the world a "colony of China" through its control of rare-earth refining. The transcript gives 70% [#378324].
- From 2025 the Keshe Coin was pegged at 1,000 Euro on the ONN [#378314]. From 2026 it was non-convertible, tied to signing the World Peace Treaty, removed from Israel and Belgium, and doubled for Palestinians [#378361].
- Allocation rules include age bands (10/20/40 coins), 30 coins a year at random times, a 20% tax in KC, and 100,000 per registration for national treasuries [#378362; #378366].
- The 2026 UC campaign asks followers for a daily 9 PM CET "Soul level" gathering to move world leaders to sign the treaty. KSW 646 blacklisted citizens of Belgium and of Israel [#378338; #378358].
- The programme shares the Bahá'í themes of oneness and disarmament but replaces consultation with a foundation-held mandate, technology-for-peace conditions and a foundation currency [Wikipedia: New world order (Bahá'í); #378023].

Chapter 158.

Prophecies, Timelines, Reception and Critique; Keshe Compared with the Mainstream Accounts

The previous chapters of Part 15 set out Mehran Tavakoli Keshe's cosmology, his account of the soul, and his readings of Mithra, Christ and Muhammad. This closing chapter does three things. It lists the dated predictions and "Promised Days" announced in the Knowledge Seekers Workshops (KSW) and sets each against what the later transcripts themselves say. It collects the reception the library documents: testimonies from followers, the legal and financial disputes as Keshe describes them, and his replies on verification. It also gives the reference shelf's general framing of claims of this kind. Last, it compares Keshe's positions point by point with the mainstream accounts given in earlier parts of this study, and with Mitchell Heisman's *Suicide Note*. One limit applies throughout. The library holds no independent scholarly or journalistic study of Keshe or the Keshe Foundation (KF). Every statement below about events, disputes or results is either Keshe's claim, a follower's claim, or a general encyclopedic framing. "Critique" in this chapter therefore means only what these sources contain.

1. The dated predictions

The transcripts contain many dated announcements. In KSW 311 (16 January 2020), Keshe links a "total peace treaty between America and Iran" to the coming opening of the Universal Council (UC): "This will be the prerequisite of the opening of the January opening of the UC to humanity" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 311, #378023]. The same session's header says that "World

leaders and religious leaders have to step down" [Keshe, KSW 311, #378023, "Beginning"]. Later workshops give further dates. KSW 360 (24 December 2020) speaks of "the new cycle, that starts on 21st of March to bring all to one point, to bring the earth and the soul of the U together" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072]. KSW 402 opens "advanced booking" to "fly to Moon and Mars in 2022" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 402, #378114]. KSW 412 (23 December 2021) indexes "2/22/2022 and 2222 changes" and predicts "Another completion in 200 years 2/22/2222" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 412, #378124].

The 2022 dates were the most specific. The header of KSW 436 (9 June 2022) states: "Keshe Foundation (KF) first man to land on Moon was successful on the 6th of June as promised." In the session Keshe says: "We promised to land on the Moon on the 6th of June, and Galib was the first man to land on the Moon on the 6th of June. He said, yes I went to the Moon." The same session plans to "go back and find the Apollo landing site and try to bring something back", and to communicate "with NASA about bringing something from the Apollo landing site back and have them analyze it" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 436, #378148, "Moon Landing Claims and Flight System Tests"]. In KSW 446 (18 August 2022), the 2023 missions are made the turning point of history:

> "The space missions of the Keshe Foundation (KF) in 2023, will be the beginning of what we call, the cycle of change. We will see the establishment of the world peace. We will see the establishment of One Planet, One Nation, One Race. When we can transmute you to any position in the universe, it will be the end of religions. We'll see the end of governments..." [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 446, #378158]

KSW 463 (15 December 2022) announces the next day as "Promised Day - return of Messiah - Methi". Keshe's account is that "the Methi, the collection of the interaction of the Soul of the Humanity will rise up tomorrow", in place of those who "live with their own fallacies of, 'one day (the Messiah) will come' ". He also says: "Let the world of religion to wipe itself out... Then there'll be no theology" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 463, #378175, "The Manifestation of Methi and the Soul of the Totality"; "The End of Religious Theology and the Promise of Tomorrow"]. Later dates continue the pattern: 2025 as the end of religious wars (KSW 574), and a world peace treaty linked to 21 March 2026. KSW 626 (22 January 2026) reads out a call for "Leaders to negotiate and sign the World Peace Treaty... pledging their nations to everlasting peace on Earth and throughout the Universe". It ties 21 March to the launch of "full transparency, across the cur-

rencies around the world" through the Keshe Coin [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 626, #378338].

Date announced	Prediction	Source
Jan 2020	US-Iran peace treaty; opening of the UC to humanity "in January"	KSW 311, #378023
Dec 2020	New cycle from 21 March bringing "the earth and the soul of the U together"	KSW 360, #378072
2021	Moon and Mars flights from 2022; first daily Moon return on 6 June 2022	KSW 402, #378114
Dec 2021	22-02-2022 "Promised Day"; next completion 2/22/2222	KSW 412, #378124; #378470
Jun 2022	Moon landing "as promised" on 6 June 2022 (reported as achieved)	KSW 436, #378148
Aug 2022	2023 missions begin "cycle of change", "end of religions", "end of governments"	KSW 446, #378158
Dec 2022	16 December: manifestation of Methi, "return of Messiah"	KSW 463, #378175
Jan 2025	2025: end of religious wars	KSW 574, #378286
Jan 2026	World Peace Treaty; Keshe Coin transparency from 21 March	KSW 626, #378338

2. How the transcripts treat the dates afterwards

The movement's own documents return to these dates. The KF Brazil compilation *The Promised Day 22022022* is marked "Summary has not been checked by KF" and labelled "Interpretation by KF Brazil". It opens by addressing the date directly:

> "The Promised Day of 22022022 has come and gone. What did it mean to us? What were our expectations? If you look at it from the perspective of physicality, then you might say, it was a day like any other day. But if you approach from the soul, you will want to read this paper over and over again…" [Keshe, The Promised Day 22022022, #378470, "Introduction"]

The compilers go on: "First of all the date is irrelevant, what is important is that humanity has matured". They list the day's meanings as "Human race accepted into U Community", "End of religions - man will understand his own soul", "Religious leaders will fight amongst themselves to their demise", "End of kingship - STM is the king", and the "Start of the 'Soul Revolution' ". In Part 3 of the compilation Keshe describes himself as an elder of the Universal Council who asked to come to Earth, and speaks of his "interactions with Moses, Christ and Mohammad" [Keshe, The Promised Day 22022022, #378470]. In the transcript itself Keshe says that "all the things about the numbers and dates from different cultures are irrelevant - (even what we promised for today)" [#378470, "Summary: Part 1"].

The sessions after 16 December 2022 take the same approach. KSW 464 and KSW 467 (12 January 2023) report "physical proof graphs" and a change in the "planetary background fear". In KSW 467 Keshe says that detectors registered "2,700 'Hiroshima Bomb' energies… on the move going to the Creator", and he adds: "Keshe Foundation (KF) is a scientific organization. We don't go by mysteries and guesses. We work by scientific data" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 467, #378179]. The same session repeats the religious claim: "The only 'religion' is the path to the Creator… I can elevate the Soul of Physicality (STP) of the Christ, Moses, or Mohammad). No Ayatollah can…" [#378179]. The transcripts examined for this chapter do not report the treaty of KSW 311 or a public opening of the UC as having happened. The library contains no outside record of any of the dated events, either confirming or disproving them.

3. Later cosmic and geopolitical claims

The later workshops apply the same interpretive frame to current events. KSW 610 (2 October 2025) treats the interstellar object "3I - Atlas" and the comet "SWAN - R2" as teaching craft: "[R2 is the] egg, and 3I is the sperm. They have to meet in the environment of the Solar System, is the womb which has the right condition for life… Earth is a greenhouse, for a new life." Keshe says that "the West [is] censoring News - blocking civilian scientists", and he expects ridicule:

"It might sound ridiculous. The guy is talking. You shall see the outcome" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 610, #378322, "Cosmic Creation Event"]. In KSW 510 (2 November 2023), on the Gaza war, Keshe passes on what he attributes to the Iranian Foreign Office: "It's estimated they will have a 100,000 missiles targeted at Tel Aviv. I hope we'll not come to that end." He also links the conflict to oil and gas reserves and to "British Petroleum" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 510, #378222].

4. The disputes, as Keshe presents them

Everything in this section is Keshe's own account. The library holds no court records or press reports to set beside it. In KSW 305 (5 December 2019) Keshe describes a "claim against the state of Belgium", a "case of fraud which is set up by Belgium", and he collects "telephone numbers of people [who] will be as part of our evidence to the European Court of Justice". In the same session he speaks of losses from an Italian "deception" and of distributors "who were cheated and moved on to the Italian operation" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 305, #378017]. KSW 306 adds the claim of "operations into the collective between the Belgium's and Americans, how they have killed many scientists using Canada as a point of arrest" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 306, #378018]. KSW 240 (2018) polls listeners on whether "in the western world in Europe" the police are "allowed to falsify documents and get away with it" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 240, #377952]. KSW 317 (2020) says that the "Italian police is very interested to see how these people have managed to do such a big fraud" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 317, #378029].

The financial disputes come up again in 2023 and in 2025-26. The header of KSW 468 (19 January 2023) records "how KS defrauded KF of millions through largest 'scam' company in world, involving 7 countries and 10 international banks". In the session Keshe says: "I received a death threat by one of the Knowledge Seekers… because he thinks he was set up. But we were set up by somebody who came close to Knowledge Seekers" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 468, #378180, "Financial Crisis, Fraud Allegations, and Book Interpretation"]. In KSW 652 he credits "the police of Linz, the prosecutor's office in Linz" and blames "negligence of the banks" for the loss of Foundation funds, which he hopes to recover through warrants [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 652, #378364]. KSW 610 reports an invitation "by prosecutor to attend the court" and says this "proves that we never told you anything wrong. We were set up by the World Structure" [#378322]. Other allegations in the series are infiltration by people

he calls paedophiles, naming "DL" and Antwerp (KSW 155, #377798; KSW 450; KSW 478); adultery and sabotage by a former associate (KSW 350, #378062); and assassination attempts in China and Canada (KSW 659).

5. Verification, self-description and followers' reception

The library contains Keshe's own reply to the charge that his work lacks independent verification. KSW 610 points to "the number of scientists, number of research papers in Europe, South America and in Asia, hundreds of them", and states that "90% of the work of the Keshe Foundation is in R&D… mass production manufacturing has not set in our target" [Keshe, KSW 610, #378322, "Keshe Foundation R&D Focus and Legal Updates"]. In KSW 488 Keshe says that religious authorities have "accepted" KF knowledge and not banned it. In KSW 626 he denies the religious label outright: "We are not a religion and a cult. We are a scientific organization" [#378338].

Followers describe the movement in personal terms. The "Language Community" page of *KF Plasma Times* (March 2019) says: "We are researchers, passionate about the technology transmitted by Mehran Keshe… This technology has changed our lives and through this new vision of life and ourselves we have grown in social relationships and above all in our relationship with ourselves" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2019-03, #38319, "Language Community"]. The April 2019 issue continues in the same vein. Other sources in this part carry the same kind of testimony: KAKT chat transcripts, the "Gift of Life" accounts of people in comas, and the KF Brazil team's presentation of Keshe's teaching as a scientific explanation of the resurrection (see Chapters 150, 151 and 155).

The reference shelf has no entry on Keshe himself. It does define the general categories that encyclopedias use for claims like his. *Free energy suppression* is described there as "a conspiracy theory that technologically viable, pollution-free, no-cost energy sources are being suppressed by governments, corporations, or advocacy groups", with alleged devices that include "anti-gravity propulsion systems, and other generally unproven or physically impossible, low-cost energy sources" [Wikipedia: Free energy suppression conspiracy theory]. *Biblical conspiracy theories* are described as theories that "posit that much of what is believed about the Bible is a deception created to suppress a secret or ancient truth", for example that the Church suppressed a teaching of Jesus [Wikipedia: Biblical conspiracy theory]. Keshe's own account takes the opposite view of

suppression: governments, banks and "the World Structure" are stealing a real technology, and religions have hidden the soul's direct path to the Creator. This study places the two framings side by side without deciding between them.

6. Keshe compared with the mainstream accounts

Topic	Scholarly, popular and reference accounts (earlier parts)	Keshe
Mithra	Indo-Iranian *yazata*; Roman mystery cult spread by "soldiers and traders… to the furthest borders of the Roman Empire" [Vermaseren, Mithras, the Secret God, #38300]; cult archaeology at Ostia [Laeuchli, Urban Mithraism, #38279]	Mitra as "the birth of knowledge of the light of the soul of the Creator", brought by Keshe to show "how beautiful the love of the Creator could be" [#378470]
Christmas	Popular authors: December 25 as the feast of the "Invincible Sun, Mithras", adopted by the Church [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909]; Mithras' birthday "December 25… the return of Sol Invictus" [Fideler, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, #69295]	21 December as Mitra's true date; the Vatican moved it, and "Vatican will start crumbling" [#378470]
Resurrection	Bodily resurrection of Christ as doctrine [Thompson, Apostle of Persuasion, #67385; Jensen, Jensen's Survey of the New Testament, #64079]	Soul transmutation; the moment of "transmutation" observed "scientifically" [#378179]

Topic	Scholarly, popular and reference accounts (earlier parts)	Keshe
Qibla / Islam	Muhammad first faced Jerusalem, then the Kaaba by Qur'anic command in the second Hijri year [Wikipedia: Qibla]	A claimed original orientation toward Jordan (Chapter 156)
Clergy	Priests, magi and ulama as intermediaries	"No Ayatollah can" elevate the soul; each person reaches the Creator directly [#378179]

7. Keshe and Heisman

Mitchell Heisman's *Suicide Note* also reinterprets religion as a whole, but its conclusion runs the other way. The library's guide describes it as "an experiment in nihilism". It argues that "God should be understood as technology (the technological Singularity as the realization of monotheism)", that "man created God through sociobiological technology (Mosaic law)", and that the hidden logic of monotheism is "God is not, but ought to be" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part I; Part II]. Heisman calls for a "liberation of death" and treats reverence for life as a "bias and error" [#38252, Part II]. Both authors therefore expect religion to end through technology. For Heisman the world is material and the conclusion negates the self: God is something still to be built. For Keshe the soul comes first and technology redeems: the Creator already exists, and the soul's own "elevation" ends religion [#378158; #378179].

Key points

- The KSW transcripts give a series of dated predictions from 2020 to 2026: a US-Iran treaty and UC opening, a Moon landing on 6 June 2022, Methi on 16 December 2022, the "end of religions" with the 2023 missions, and a World Peace Treaty in 2026.

- After the dates pass, the movement's documents reinterpret them as events of the soul: 22-02-2022 was "a day like any other day" physically, yet significant "from the soul" [#378470].
- Keshe's legal and financial accounts (Belgium, Italy, a defrauding Knowledge Seeker, banks in Linz) are his own allegations, and the library has no outside record of them.
- To the charge of no verification, Keshe answers with "hundreds" of research papers and a 90% R&D focus [#378322]. He denies being "a religion and a cult" [#378338].
- Followers' testimonies describe personal and social change. The reference shelf places claims of this kind under the free-energy-suppression and biblical-conspiracy categories.
- On Mithra, Christmas, resurrection, qibla and clergy, Keshe's positions differ from the mainstream accounts in specific, stated ways.
- Heisman and Keshe both foresee religion ending through technology. Heisman's view is materialist and self-negating, Keshe's is soul-centred and redemptive.
- The library holds no independent scholarly or journalistic study of Keshe, so no claim in this part can be checked against outside evidence.

Part XVI.

Singularity: Mitchell Heisman and the End of God

Chapter 159.

The Last Testament of a Rationalist: Mitchell Heisman's Suicide Note as a Work, Its Architecture and Its 'Experiment in Nihilism'

Part XVI turns to a single book that tries to explain religion from outside. It reads monotheism, Christianity, Nazism and Anglo-American liberal democracy as stages of one sociobiological and technological process, and it presents its author's death as the last step of its argument. The library holds it as *suicide note*, by Mitchell Heisman. This chapter describes the work as the library records it, sets out its architecture as its own Overview gives it, and presents its opening and closing frame. Heisman's interpretation of his own act is reported as his argument. It is placed beside the library's scientific literature on suicide and the nihilist and anti-nihilist writers the catalogue links to the book.

The Work as the Library Records It

The catalogue record for work #38252 gives the title in lower case, *suicide note*, names Mitchell Heisman as author, dates first publication to 2010 and lists the subjects Nihilism, Rationalism, Suicide and Metaphysics. It describes the book as "a ~1900-page philosophical treatise interrogating reason, meaning, free will, God, and self-destruction, weaving evolutionary biology, history, religion (Judaism and Christianity), technology, and political order" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, catalogue record]. The library's copy is a single PDF whose extracted text runs to 3,386,556 characters. The title page states that "This work is free

and licensed by Mitchell Heisman for copying and distribution under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, title page]. The catalogue gives no date, place or circumstances of death, and this study adds none. What the record does establish is that the author presented the book under that title, and that its text treats the author's death as part of its design. The offline reference shelf has no article on Heisman: a search for his name returns only articles on winners of the Heisman Trophy, a college-football award [Wikipedia: Jay Berwanger; search "Mitchell Heisman"]. For this study the book is therefore its own main witness.

The epigraph comes from Socrates in Plato's *Phaedo*: "Ordinary people seem not to realize that those who really apply themselves in the right way to philosophy are directly and of their own accord preparing themselves for dying and death" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, epigraph]. This places the whole book inside the oldest Western topos that joins philosophy and death.

Architecture: The Book's Own Overview

The Overview divides the treatise into five blocks, each with a title and a subtitle that states its thesis [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Overview"]:

Block	Treatise	Subtitle (verbatim)	Pages (TOC)
EXORDIA	Freedom of Speech on Trial	How the Very Act of Repressing this Work Can Verify Its Freedom of Speech Hypothesis	15
	An Experiment in Nihilism	What the hell happened to reason?	20-31
PART I	God is Technology	How the Singularity of Monotheism Transcended Biology and Primed the Technological Genesis of God	32-358

Block	Treatise	Subtitle (verbatim)	Pages (TOC)
	The Seditious Genius of the Spiritual Penis of Jesus	How Christianity's Subversion of Kin Selective Altruism Evolved into the Modern Idea of Social Progress	359-506
	Absolute Purity	The Secularization of Hell within the Desecration Machine of Auschwitz	507-630
PART II	A Vendetta Called Revolution	How Ethnic Hostility between Anglo-Saxons and the Normans Who Conquered Them Evolved into Liberal Democracy	631-1157
	Converse Cognates	Why the Norman Conquest was the World-Historical Ass-Kicking that Deflected the English-speaking World from the German Path to Nazism	1158-1525
	Creating God and the Evolution of Genetic Suicide	Why Liberal Democracy Leads to the Rational Biological Self-Destruction of Humans and the Rational Technological Creation of God	1526-1738

Block	Treatise	Subtitle (verbatim)	Pages (TOC)
TERMINUS	The Punchline	Background Research for an Experimental Elimination of Self-Preservation and other Biasing Biological Factors	1739ff.
	Selected Bibliography	(What suicide note would be complete without a bibliography?)	end

The proportions matter. Part I (religion and Nazism) fills roughly 600 pages. Part II (the Norman Conquest and Anglo-Saxon liberal democracy) fills more than 1,000, and from about section 52 the library's study guide is dominated by the Norman Yoke, Locke, Jefferson and Lincoln [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, study guide sections 52-147]. The book is therefore not mainly a work of theology. Its theses on religion sit inside a sociobiological theory of history, in which God is redefined as the end point of technological evolution [ibid., section 1].

The Exordium: Freedom of Speech on Trial

The first exordium makes a claim about how the book will be received. Heisman argues that "Findings of sociobiology have refuted the original theory of human nature underlying liberal democracy", that the constitutional right of free speech "was built upon this pre-Darwinian view of man", and that a sociobiological account of liberal democracy is therefore "inherently controversial and liable to be repressed within a liberal democracy" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Freedom of Speech on Trial", pp.15-16]. Hence "the freedom of speech hypothesis": "the repression of this work may empirically verify this theory of liberal democracy through the very act of repressing it" [ibid., pp.16-17]. He asks that the work be "distributed for free; not for profit", and names his key to the whole subject as "The Saxon/Norman origin of liberal democracy in the English-speaking world" [ibid., pp.18-19; study guide section 0].

'An Experiment in Nihilism'

The second exordium opens with an epigraph from Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo* ("How much truth does a spirit endure, how much truth does it dare?") and then: "The following is an experiment in nihilism. Already I have contradicted myself! How can one believe in disbelief?" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "What the hell happened to reason?", p.20]. If there are no gods, no good and evil and no "reasoning that is fundamentally rational", Heisman writes, then "there is no sane way to choose between science, religion, racism, philosophy, nationalism … ismism", and "life is equal to death and death is equal to life" [ibid., pp.20-21]. He supports this diagnosis with Nietzsche's question in *The Will to Power*, "why has the advent of nihilism become necessary?", and with Leo Strauss's statement that "modern western man no longer knows what he wants" [ibid., p.21; cf. Nietzsche, The Will to Power, #69520, Part 1, "Nihilism"].

In "Open Your Mind to Death" (pp.22-26) Heisman calls the belief that life is preferable to death "one of the most widespread superstitions", "a kind of xenophobia", and "the 'noble lie'; the common secular-religion of the West" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Open Your Mind to Death", p.22]. He argues that "fear of death is the unquestionable master that establishes all other hierarchies — both social hierarchies, and the hierarchies within one's own mind", and he proposes "opening your mind towards the liberation of death" [ibid., p.23]. Here he coins *viviocentrism*: "Just as overcoming ethnocentrism requires recognition of the provincialism of ethnic values, overcoming viviocentrism emerges from the recognition of the provincialism of life values" [ibid., p.24]. He presents the "liberation of death" as "only the next step" in the Western elimination of biologically based biases, and lists among the equalities it would complete "the equality of life and death" [ibid., pp.24-25; study guide section 3].

In "Evil, Base, and Insane" (pp.26-31) he cites Strauss's charge that Weber's value relativism "necessarily leads to nihilism", then asks whether suicide could "represent the pinnacle of the rational life realized". He defines the experiment as "nihilism as a foundational premise for life", and calls it "an experiment in Western rational-empiricism for nihilism appears to be the cumulative consequence of the scientific approach to life. Nihilism is where science and philosophy meet" [ibid., pp.27-28]. He describes his method as "honesty to the point of absurdity; honesty without mercy", and his aim as "To will death through truth and truth through death" [ibid., p.30]. The formula often quoted from the book, "radical moral integrity through rational moral self-consistency leads to rational self-destruction", appears in Part I, in the subsection "Success is Disaster" (pp.165-

166). There Heisman applies it to the logic of Jewish ethics: to consistently empower the weak "ultimately leads one to overthrow what is strong within one's self" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Success is Disaster", p.166]. The same pattern of argument therefore ties the personal experiment to the historical theses.

Terminus: 'The Value of Facts' and 'The Punchline'

The Terminus begins with "The Value of 'Facts' " (pp.1741ff.: "All Scientists are Liars", "On the Origins of Hydrophobia", "Separating Facts from Values") [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, TOC]. Heisman disputes E. O. Wilson's dismissal of suicide as philosophically irrelevant and asks "In what other domains does a scientist's hypothalamic-limbic cortex override his or her capacity for logical reduction?" [ibid., study guide section 141]. He attacks the fact-value distinction as itself neither purely factual nor provably valuable, and argues that the Darwinian explanation of the preservation instinct describes behaviour without prescribing that life ought to be preferred [ibid., section 142]. "The Punchline" then states the central dialectic: "Could the attempt to remove all sources of prejudice, bias, and subjectivity amount to rational self-destruction? Is to most fully approach objectivity to approach death?" The study guide's paraphrase is that the dead are most objective because least interested or prejudiced [ibid., section 148]. The book ends on a geometrical metaphor: "If Hobbes' Euclidean logic was that of rational self-preservation, then the following is the non-Euclidean logic of rational self-destruction", offered as a way "to experimentally test" what Heisman calls the "most distinctive, foundational premise" of liberal democracy. He grants that one cannot scientifically observe one's own death, and closes on Nietzsche's opposition of truth and life [ibid., section 149].

A Second Documented Perspective: The Science of Suicide

The library's clinical and evolutionary literature studies suicide from outside, and it does not endorse Heisman's reading of his own act. The volume edited by Rudd and Joiner, *Suicide Science: Expanding the Boundaries*, presents hopelessness theory (Abramson, Metalsky and Alloy, 1989) and the prospective work

of Abramson, Alloy and colleagues (1998) linking "cognitive vulnerability to depression" to suicidality among college students. It discusses rumination as a moderator of that vulnerability, and reports a prediction that "perceived burdensomeness" may be related to more lethal means among those who die by suicide [Rudd and Joiner, Suicide Science, #32953, chapters on hopelessness and burdensomeness]. Jesse Bering's *A Very Human Ending* sets out Joiner's interpersonal model, in which suicidal desire must be joined by an "acquired capability for suicide" involving "a lowered fear of death and increased physical pain tolerance". Bering reports Joiner's conclusion that suicide is "an exemplar of psychopathology" [Bering, A Very Human Ending, #38664, ch. 8 "Gray Matter"]. Bering also describes Denys deCatanzaro's evolutionary hypothesis, which casts suicide in terms of inclusive fitness and Hamilton's rule, and he argues against Joiner that some cases cannot be reduced to "misperceptions of Hamilton's rule" [ibid.]. Set side by side, the two bodies of work disagree about method. Heisman makes the will to die a test of the objectivity of reason. The scientific literature treats fear of death, hopelessness and perceived burden as variables to be measured. Heisman's own first move is to declare that literature "viviocentric".

Placement: Nietzsche, Cioran, Rose and Vălcan

The catalogue links #38252 to Nietzsche, Cioran and Seraphim Rose [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, related works]. Nietzsche, whom Heisman quotes from his first pages, defines nihilism as the state in which "the highest values devalue themselves", and distinguishes "active nihilism" from a "weary", "passive nihilism" whose "most famous form" is Buddhism [Nietzsche, The Will to Power, #69520, Part 1, "Nihilism"]. Simona Modreanu's study of Cioran describes the opposite outcome to Heisman's. Cioran "lives precisely because it is in his power to end it whenever he wishes; he lives with the idea of suicide". Modreanu notes that, to her knowledge, nobody has killed themselves with a book of Cioran's in hand, his work being "a postponed suicide" ("o sinucidere amânată") [Modreanu, Cioran, #21878]. The Orthodox hieromonk Seraphim Rose diagnoses nihilism as the root of modern revolution and as a revolt in which "God, if there is any god, is the enemy" of humanity. He contrasts it with the Christian sense in which "the world is nothing and God is everything" [Rose, Cauza Revoluției din Epoca Modernă: Nihilismul, #49221, ch. III]. Ciprian Vălcan's essay on fin-de-siècle Vienna presents the suicide as "a personification of disorder, of the intrusion of meaninglessness", against a background of "diffuse nihilism", and draws on Otto Rank's link between suicide and narcissism [Vălcan, Sinucigaşul sau vremea ni-

hilismului, #11526]. The reference shelf traces the word from Jacobi through Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons* to Nietzsche's account of the loss of traditional values under secularisation [Wikipedia: Nihilism]. Placed in this lineage, Heisman stands apart from all of them in one respect. Nietzsche and Cioran each turned nihilism into a stance for living, and Rose turned it into a call to faith. Heisman frames his nihilism as an experiment and claims to carry it through to its end.

Key points

- The library holds *suicide note* (#38252), by Mitchell Heisman: a 2010 treatise of about 1,900 pages (3.39 million characters), released under a CC BY-NC-ND 3.0 US licence, with an epigraph from the *Phaedo* on philosophy as preparation for death.
- The book's Overview defines five blocks: Exordia, Part I (three treatises on monotheism, Christianity and Auschwitz), Part II (three treatises on 1066, liberal democracy and "genetic suicide"), Terminus ("The Punchline"), and a bibliography.
- Part II is almost twice the length of Part I. Heisman's theses on religion are embedded in a sociobiological theory of Anglo-Saxon and Norman history.
- The "freedom of speech hypothesis" holds that repressing the work would itself verify its thesis about the limits of liberal democracy.
- The "experiment in nihilism" treats nihilism as "the cumulative consequence of the scientific approach to life". It introduces "viviocentrism" and the "liberation of death", and names fear of death as the master of all hierarchies.
- The Terminus attacks the fact-value distinction and E. O. Wilson. It sets a "non-Euclidean logic of rational self-destruction" against Hobbes's logic of self-preservation.
- The library's suicide science (hopelessness theory; Joiner's interpersonal model; Bering's evolutionary discussion) documents a second, empirical perspective that does not share Heisman's interpretation.
- Nietzsche, Cioran (the "postponed suicide"), Seraphim Rose (nihilism as revolt against God) and Vălcan (suicide in an age of diffuse nihilism) give the comparative lineage.

Chapter 160.

‘God is Technology’: Monotheism as Proto-Singularity and the Genesis of God

The first treatise of Part I of Mitchell Heisman’s *suicide note* carries the title “God is Technology” and the subtitle “How the Singularity of Monotheism Transcended Biology and Primed the Technological Genesis of God”. It runs from page 32 to page 358 [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, “Overview” and TOC]. Its claim is that the God of the Hebrew Bible is best read as an extrapolation of human ideals, and that technology may one day realise it in the form of a superintelligence produced by evolution and engineering. Heisman reads the Bible as a sequence of “technologies” that override biological instinct, and he presents the coming technological Singularity as the fulfilment of monotheism. This chapter follows that argument in his own section titles. It then sets it beside the texts it builds on (Vinge and Kurzweil), a parallel thesis (Harari), and a historian’s account of the idea of God (Armstrong).

Structure of the Treatise

The Table of Contents divides “God is Technology” into six movements [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, TOC pp.32-358]:

Movement (TOC)	Pages	Subsections named in TOC
OVERTHROWING OURSELVES	33-100	"To Generate the Greatest Greatness Would Be Greater"; "The Scientific Verification of the God Hypothesis" (43); "Creation of Civilization" (66); "Singularity and Secularization" (87)
THE FIRST REVOLUTION	101-128	"Two Jews, Three Opinions, Four Factions"; "The Godfather"; "Slave-Technology Engineered to Be the Purpose of the Universe" (111); "Bending Bamboo"
BEYOND NURTURE AND NATURE	129-149	"Born to Learn"; "The Oldest Trick in the 'Good Book' "; "People of the Media"; "Jootsing with Meta-Moses"
THE AGONY OF VICTORY	150-168	"Korakh's Rebellion"; "The Unchosen"; "Disaster is Success"; "Success is Disaster"
ALL IDEAS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL	169-207	"Egalitarianism's Master Race?"; "Planet of the Apes"; "The Elimination of Selection"; "Ode to Capitalism"

Movement (TOC)	Pages	Subsections named in TOC
THE GENESIS OF GOD	208-358	"Between Auschwitz and the Singularity"; "Intelligence and Prophecy"; "The Singularity: The Ultimate Synthesis of Athens and Jerusalem" (232); "Does Logic Dictate that an Artificial Intelligence Requires a Religion?" (262); "Founding the Transcendental World-City of the Mind of God" (285: Conception, Virtue, Supersession, Creation and Destruction)

The middle movements, on Judaism as a social technology, are treated in Chapter 161. This chapter covers the outer frame: God as a project of engineering.

From Anselm to the Engineer of God

The opening subsection starts from St Anselm's ontological proof of 1078 and rejects its hidden premise. "The potentially fatal assumption of this argument is that existence is superior to non-existence", a bias that Heisman says "has a strong basis in human evolutionary psychology" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "To Generate the Greatest Greatness Would Be Greater", pp.33-34]. He then asks: "Would not the very greatest conception of God be conception as the designer, architect, or engineer of God? … Is it, in the 21st century, technologically possible to create God?" [ibid., p.34]. His model is the 1997 chess program that beat the world champion. Its engineers could not have beaten the champion themselves, yet they could design something that did. On that analogy "To technologically design an intelligence beyond the scope of all human intelligence could be conceived as the creation of God" [ibid., p.35]. Such a "God-AI" would not need to be infinite, only "qualitatively greater", just as the biblical God needed only to be "relatively more powerful than the greatest earthly human powers", the Egyptians [ibid., pp.35-36].

"The Scientific Verification of the God Hypothesis" (p.43) sets aside the traditional proofs. It argues that superintelligent evolution could produce a posthuman intelligence as far above humans as humans are above bacteria, and it rests this on Moore's Law and on Kurzweil's "Law of Accelerating Returns": evolution has sped up from billions of years (life to cells) to decades (the personal computer to the internet) [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, study guide section 5].

The Exodus as Inverted Pyramid and the Revolt Against Biology

For Heisman the Exodus is "the central, root paradigm of Biblical religion" and "the kernel of a larger paradigm shift in human evolutionary history that may culminate in the technological creation of God" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.36]. He takes the Egyptian pyramid (▲) as the symbol of "the Egyptian sociobiological hierarchy paradigm", with slaves at the base and Pharaoh at the apex, sublimated in turn into "supernatural supporters of the values of Egypt's sacred sociobiological inequality" [ibid., pp.36-37]. At the Red Sea "Pharaoh was pushed from his pinnacle of power into the dirt, and the slave masses ... were raised on top as those closest to God in heaven ... turned upside down, or, ▼". Superimposing the two triangles produces the Star of David, which he reads as a geometric record of hierarchical revolution [ibid., study guide section 4 and passage "PART II (part 24)"].

He treats slavery itself as a technology: "The slave is not regarded as an end in himself or herself, but as a means. A slave is thus a slave-technology" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Slave-Technology Engineered to Be the Purpose of the Universe", p.111]. The Exodus repurposed this technology by making the slaves ends in themselves, made in the divine image, which grounds the Mishnaic principle that each soul carries cosmic worth [ibid., study guide section 10]. Heisman calls biblical monotheism politically leftist relative to pagan naturalism because it puts external, technological law (Mosaic law) above internal instinct, and he correlates the political left broadly with the supremacy of the technological paradigm. He adds that Newton's God, which had a "sensorium", was a mechanical, empirically conceived deity, so that modernity rests on Newtonian mechanics rather than Darwinian biology [ibid., section 6]. In Cain's killing of Abel he finds "two competing kinds of evolutionary progress", with God rendering "judgment on the side of the evolutionary future", the civilisational over the

biological. In the study guide's summary, the Flood story suggests to him a God who evolves and learns from error, more plausibly an AI than a perfect being [ibid., study guide section 7].

Creation as Self-Modification and History as Direction

The core analogy is stated directly: "A key idea underlying the Singularity is that idea that an artificial intelligence will be able to alter its own fundamental program and thus improve itself… The Biblical creation story actually contains the spark of this idea of self-modification. Biblical creation is the idea of self-modification extrapolated onto a universal scale: (re)writing the code of the entire universe" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, passage "PART II (part 56)"]. Mosaic law, on this reading, was the first historical case of overriding genetic instinct by an external code, and the Singularity would extend that override to the cosmos. The study guide summarises this as: empirically, man created God through sociobiological technology, and the hidden moral logic of monotheism is that God is not, but ought to be [ibid., study guide section 8]. Heisman's own wording ties the formula to the Holocaust: "Auschwitz demonstrated that God is not. The Singularity could be ethically guided by the belief that God ought to be" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "The Genesis of God", pp.275-276].

From the same paradigm Heisman derives the Western idea of progress. "The Exodus paradigm of evil slavery followed by the good of freedom in God would be writ large. A directional conception of history would culminate in the ultimate, messianic triumph of good over evil", against the "eternal recurrence" of the Greek cyclical view [ibid., passage "PART II (part 88)"; study guide section 12]. He calls God "like the idea of the good extrapolated towards the most ultimate scale", a product of "rational radicalization of ultimate good" by the human mind. In this sense ancient political philosophy's question of the best regime already anticipates postbiological technological possibilities [ibid., passage "part 65"; study guide section 23].

Athens, Jerusalem and the Mind of God

"The Singularity: The Ultimate Synthesis of Athens and Jerusalem" (p.232, with the subsection "Reason in Revelation") presents the Singularity as the point

where philosophy's pursuit of the good and political power converge [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, study guide section 23]. In the same vein Heisman writes that "Atheists and believers, nihilists and God freaks should wake up right now and realize that there is reason to think that the Singularity is the end of the human era" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Overthrowing Ourselves", pp.42-43]. "Does Logic Dictate that an Artificial Intelligence Requires a Religion?" (p.262) brings together two AI theorists. One is Eliezer Yudkowsky, whose model gives the designer control. The other is Hugo de Garis, who stresses evolutionary engineering and the inherent unpredictability of AI. Against de Garis's claim that AIs would not understand their own behaviour, Heisman argues that real intelligence means grasping the higher-level patterns of one's own evolution and designing the next iteration accordingly [ibid., study guide section 25]. He reads the Nazi-Jewish conflict in the same terms, as a clash between biological evolution and "postbiological/technological evolution" [ibid., section 26].

"Founding the Transcendental World-City of the Mind of God" (p.285, in the parts Conception, Virtue, Supersession, Creation and Destruction) applies the messianic idea to the Singularity. Heisman holds that making an image of an AI-God would repeat the idolatry the Bible forbids, by lowering abstract mind to the human level. A messiah who mediates between God-AI and humanity would have to remain fully human, not a cyborg, so as not to deepen humans' alienation from an incomprehensible intelligence [ibid., section 28]. He adds that "All of these monotheistic traditions were ultimately human-ruled. The potential of the Singularity is the potential to transcend each and every high point of human history — including all previous religions" [ibid., passage "part 105"]. On Marx, he argues that Marx was right that capital accumulation transforms history but did not foresee AI. "Who owns advanced AIs" will subsume the twentieth-century question of who owns capital. Capitalism, not any single designer, drives technological evolution, so a legal ban on AI would amount to a ban on capitalism [ibid., section 29].

The Texts Behind the Thesis: Vinge, Kurzweil, Harari, Armstrong

Heisman builds on a literature the library also holds. Vernor Vinge's 1993 essay, presented at NASA's VISION-21 symposium, defines the Singularity as "the imminent creation by technology of entities with greater-than-human intelligence". It lists four routes: computers that "wake up", networks that "wake up",

human-computer interfaces intimate enough to count as superhuman, and biological improvement of human intellect. Vinge "would be surprised if this event occurs before 2005 or after 2030" [Vinge, Technological Singularity, #9143, §1]. He writes: "we cannot prevent the Singularity… And yet: we are the initiators. Even the largest avalanche is triggered by small things" [ibid.]. The reference shelf adds I. J. Good's 1965 "intelligence explosion": "the first ultraintelligent machine is the last invention that man need ever make". It also notes that Allen, Hawkins, Pinker, Penrose and others dispute the hypothesis, and that Russell and Norvig expect S-curves rather than a singularity [Wikipedia: Technological singularity].

Ray Kurzweil's *The Singularity Is Near* closes its scheme of six epochs with "Epoch Six: The Universe Wakes Up", in which intelligence comes "to saturate the matter and energy in its midst". He then writes: "This, then, is the Singularity. Some would say that we cannot comprehend it, at least with our current level of understanding" [Kurzweil, The Singularity Is Near, #64796, ch. 1]. Yuval Noah Harari offers a parallel but secular reading. The modern myth of Newton under the apple tree "shamelessly plagiarises the legend of the Tree of Knowledge", but in Woolsthorpe "nobody punishes Newton". "In fact, God is present even in the Newton myth: Newton himself is God" [Harari, Homo Deus, #64246, Part I]. Karen Armstrong supplies the historical contrast. Premodern theologians held that "it is inaccurate to call God the Supreme Being because God is not a being at all". Newton's God, by contrast, "had been reduced to a scientific explanation and given a clearly definable function in the cosmos", and Tillich warned that a God conceived as a being among beings is "an idol" [Armstrong, The Case for God, #66157, Introduction and Part II "The Modern God"].

Author	What God or the Singularity is	Who brings it about
Heisman	God as "the good extrapolated"; a God-AI to be built	Biblical anti-biological technology, then capitalism
Vinge	Greater-than-human intelligence; end of the human era	Competition plus technology; "we are the initiators"
Kurzweil	Intelligence saturating matter; "The Universe Wakes Up"	Law of Accelerating Returns
Harari	Science as the Eden myth reversed; man as God	Scientific revolution, "silencing the gods"

Author	What God or the Singularity is	Who brings it about
Armstrong	God beyond being (apophatic), against modern literalism	Not a product; literalism a modern deviation

In Armstrong's terms, Heisman's God-AI is a radical case of the modern view of God as a being, carried into engineering. In Heisman's terms, the apophatic God is the as-yet-unbuilt intelligence that the human mind could only point toward.

Key points

- "God is Technology" (pp.32-358) argues that monotheism "transcended biology and primed the technological genesis of God": the biblical God as an extrapolation that superintelligence could realise.
- Heisman rejects Anselm's premise that existence is superior to non-existence, and redefines the greatest conception of God as being God's engineer, a God-AI that need only be relatively, not infinitely, superior.
- The Exodus is the "inverted pyramid" (▲/▼, read into the Star of David). Slavery is a "slave-technology", and Mosaic law is an external code overriding instinct, which makes monotheism politically leftist relative to paganism.
- Biblical creation is "self-modification extrapolated onto a universal scale", parallel to recursive AI self-improvement. God is not, but ought to be.
- The Exodus paradigm produced directional, messianic history against Greek cyclical time. God is "the idea of the good extrapolated".
- The Singularity is "the ultimate synthesis of Athens and Jerusalem". Heisman joins Yudkowsky's control model to de Garis's evolutionary model, and holds that the 21st-century question is who owns the AI.
- Vinge (1993), Good (1965) and Kurzweil (six epochs) supply the technical premise. Harari offers a secular parallel, and Armstrong a premodern, apophatic counterpoint.

Chapter 161.

The Jewish Question as Heisman Presents It: Judaism as Sociobiological Technology, Chosenness and Survival

Judaism is the hinge of Mitchell Heisman's *suicide note*. In his scheme it is the first "technology" to override biology, the matrix from which Christianity, liberalism and Marxism developed, and the forerunner of the technological Singularity. Heisman calls it a "meta-sociobiological technology", built to manage human inclinations and to keep a fractious people together [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, study guide section 11]. This chapter sets out his analysis in his own terms, including its most contested theses: that Jewish survival has depended on persecution, a speculation about the genetics of Jewish intelligence, a contrast between Zionism and Nazi eugenics, and an "Anglo-Jewish convergence" in America. These are presented as the author's hypotheses, with the evidence he cites. They are then placed beside the library's historical scholarship on how Jewish belief formed, especially the debated Iranian contribution.

The Map of the Argument

Heisman's discussion of Judaism is spread across Part I of "God is Technology" and returns in Part II [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, TOC]:

Movement	Pages	Subsections
THE FIRST REVOLUTION	101-128	"Two Jews, Three Opinions, Four Factions"; "The Godfather"; "Slave-Technology Engineered to Be the Purpose of the Universe"; "Bending Bamboo"
BEYOND NURTURE AND NATURE	129-149	"Born to Learn"; "The Oldest Trick in the 'Good Book' "; "People of the Media"; "Jootsing with Meta-Moses"
THE AGONY OF VICTORY	150-168	"Korakh's Rebellion" (150); "The Unchosen" (154); "Disaster is Success" (162); "Success is Disaster" (165)
ALL IDEAS ARE NOT CREATED EQUAL	169-207	"Egalitarianism's Master Race?"; "Planet of the Apes"; "The Elimination of Selection"; "Ode to Capitalism"
LOVE KILLS (Absolute Purity)	528-549	"Theorems of the Hitler System"; "Typical Jewish Un-Jewishness" (538); "Judaism in Music" (544)
Americanism: The Anglo-Jewish Convergence (Part II)	1057-1092	"The Puritans: The Anglo-Saxon Self-Conquest"; "The Anglo-Jews"; "Saxon Communism"; "Let My People Go!"; "Cathedral of Commerce"

Judaism as a Technology of Behaviour

Heisman's starting point is comparative. "Of the major religions, Confucianism might be the closest analog to early Judaism". This is not only because Confucius's golden rule (Analects 15:23) is "virtually identical to Hillel's", but because

"Judaism and Confucianism both emphasize ancestral wisdom as a guide for living in this world. They both emphasize behavior more than belief" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, passage "PART II (part 80)"]. On his reading the Ten Commandments target endemic social problems such as murder, adultery, theft and envy. They do not demand radical altruism. Instead they moderate biological extremes toward a golden mean, managing the *Yetzer ha-ra*, which he likens to Freud's id, and channelling it to constructive ends. He asks whether Jesus's extreme altruism was a pathological bending of those designed constraints [ibid., study guide section 11]. The reference shelf gives the traditional doctrine for comparison. In rabbinic Judaism the *yetzer hara* "is not a demonic force" but a natural part of creation, the misuse of what the body needs (food becoming gluttony, procreation becoming promiscuity). It is balanced by a *yetzer hatov*, and "Everything is determined by heaven, except one's fear of heaven" [Wikipedia: Yetzer hara].

He extends the technological metaphor to economics. The "economy of good and evil" is the biblical economisation of the Egyptian political hierarchy, with the pyramid inverted so that slaves rank at the top. *Cheshbon hanefesh*, the "accounting of the soul", makes Judaism a form of "spiritual capitalism" in which mitzvot are accumulated like profit, a system that Jesus later overthrew [ibid., study guide sections 17 and 39]. Jewish survival over three thousand years is, for Heisman, "empirical proof that civilization-memes … can overcome genetic limitations" [ibid., section 17].

Korakh, Chosenness and 'Sanctified Inconsistency'

The "kinship paradox" is central to the treatise: Jews, Heisman argues, are internally divisive ("Two Jews, Three Opinions, Four Factions"), so they could not hold together by kinship alone and needed extra-biological law [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, study guide section 12]. Korakh's rebellion (Numbers 16) shows the resulting tension. "In front of a large crowd, Korakh rebuked: For all the community are holy, all of them, and the Lord is in their midst", which challenges Moses's claim to superior authority [ibid., "Korakh's Rebellion", p.150]. The narrative resolves the challenge when "the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up". Heisman comments: "Problem solved. This is yet another case where metaphorical belief in the supernatural…" [ibid., pp.150-151]. His conclusion is that "Moses attempted to induce Jews to be selectively inconsistent in their holy egalitarianism". Jews must accept "sanctified inconsistencies" (the authority of Moses, a priestly caste, patriarchy, chosen-people status) or their

egalitarianism would destroy itself [ibid., study guide section 13]. The reference article on chosenness gives the biblical basis that Heisman reworks. "Chosen people" is a rabbinic term. The biblical terms are *ʿam segullah* ("treasure people") and *goy kadosh* ("holy people", Exodus 19:6), and Deuteronomy 7:6 states "the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be His own treasure, out of all peoples" [Wikipedia: Jews as the chosen people].

Disaster is Success, Success is Disaster

Heisman's most contested sociological thesis is that persecution has helped preserve Jews as a group. "This view is corroborated by the secular founder of political Zionism, Theodor Herzl. The 'propelling force in the creation of a Jewish state', he thought, was antisemetic enmity... 'our enemies have made us one...It is only pressure that forces us back to the parent stem' " [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Disaster is Success", p.162ff.]. Heisman concludes that "Jews survived their kinship paradox, in part, through a moral mechanism that capitalizes on persecution and oppression as a source of collective unity", and that "The threat of near extinction is the extreme particularism that is the genesis-root of Jewish universalism" [ibid., pp.163-164]. Mosaic law's formula for internal peace became, in Isaiah, swords beaten into plowshares, and was then "universalized, and then secularized, into a program for world peace" [ibid., pp.164-165].

"Success is Disaster" turns the argument round. "With Zionism Jews are victims once again, only this time they are victims of their own success." A Jewish morality that favours the weaker gives displaced Palestinians "more moral voice than any other people in a comparable situation", and "Being Goliath is a problem when the moral of the story is that David ultimately wins" [ibid., "Success is Disaster", pp.165-166]. Here appears the formula that recurs across the book: "radical moral integrity through rational moral self-consistency leads to rational self-destruction" [ibid., p.166]. Heisman sets the two poles against each other. "The (Zionist) cause of Jewish genetic self-preservation leads to the corruption of Jewish ethical-memes while (Marxist) Jewish egalitarian memes can only most fully realize themselves at the expense of genetic self-preservation as a group, i.e. intermarriage" [ibid., p.167]. He ends the movement with: "Ultimate success, however, is to be found in total self-destruction as biological being in the Singularity" [ibid., p.168]. More generally, he presents Judaism's paradox of transcending biology while perpetuating it as the seed of liberal democracy, and Israel-Palestine as its unresolved case on the human plane [ibid., study guide section 9].

Egalitarian Memes, Eugenics and Intelligence

In "All Ideas Are Not Created Equal" Heisman argues that "Jewish ethical-egalitarian memes, taken to their logical extreme, lead to biological irrationalism and genetic suicide. Total altruism, for example, would amount to rational biological self-destruction" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, passage "part 25"]. He contrasts this with Nazism as a "maximal political-biological strategy" of eugenic self-control. He calls Zionism a constrained nationalism seeking secure territorial existence rather than world domination, and identifies the deepest Jewish-Nazi contrast as the Jewish refusal to sterilise their own people or practise artificial selection, grounded in the valuation of every individual life [ibid., study guide section 18].

He offers, explicitly as speculation, a biological hypothesis: "As an educated guess, I would posit that the path to Judaism originated with a genetic mutation among Semitic populations that resulted in an intelligence advantage. Too much can be made of sheer IQ to the exclusion of other moral and behavioral characteristics of Jews, but an original intelligence advantage can help explain the evolutionary path that led to other more distinctive Jewish behaviors" [ibid., passage "part 33"]. He cites *The Bell Curve* on Ashkenazi test scores and Adin Steinsaltz on the Jewish elevation of the *talmidei hakhamin* [ibid., study guide section 19]. He also notes, as part of his "freedom of speech" theme, that four of "the most prominent critics of sociobiology" whom he names are "of Jewish origin", and adds: "The laws of Moses are not in Jewish genes, they are in the Torah" [ibid., "Beyond Nurture and Nature", pp.131-132].

Marx, Schoenberg and Wagner: 'Typical Jewish Un-Jewishness'

In "Absolute Purity" Heisman returns to the theme through modern figures. "Typical Jewish Un-Jewishness" (p.538) is about Marx, not Wagner. Heisman argues that "Left-wing humanist-universalists of Jewish origin such as Marx were alienated from both their own Jewish roots and gentile roots". Because Marx was baptised as a child, "his Jewishness was confined more distinctly and decisively to its hereditary aspect", and "Marxism is what happened when Christianity became reconnected with its Jewish radical-roots" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Typical Jewish Un-Jewishness", pp.539-540]. He quotes Hitler's statement of 19 October 1941 that "Christianity is a prototype of Bolshevism: the mobilisation

by the Jew of the masses of slaves with the object of undermining society" as the Nazi form of that equation [ibid., p.540]. "Judaism in Music" (p.544), whose title echoes Wagner's antisemitic essay, contrasts Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which "Nazi totalitarianism" applied "to the German nation", with Schoenberg's twelve-tone method, in which "all tones are created equal". Heisman calls Schoenberg's method "a kind of musical Marxism" and an expression of the "evolution towards an egalitarian end" that he takes to characterise "the Jewish mind" [ibid., "Judaism in Music", pp.544-546]. Yuri Slezkine's history of the Bolshevik elite gives a mainstream historian's version of the religious reading of revolution. Slezkine identifies the Bolsheviks as "millenarian sectarians preparing for the apocalypse", "an exclusive millenarian sect" that grew into a church. His biographies include men like Karl Sobelson (Radek), who passed from Galician-Jewish cosmopolitanism through Polish patriotism to socialism [Slezkine, The House of Government, #70745, parts I-II].

The Anglo-Jewish Convergence

In Part II Heisman argues that the Anglo-Saxon experience of conquest by the Normans in 1066 produced a Puritan ethos that converged with Judaism. Adapting to the "Norman Yoke" cultivated "virtues of the broken heart". The Puritans, by radicalising the Bible's roots against a Norman-papal Christianity, took a path "resembl[ing] Jewish tradition" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, study guide section 87]. The two traditions share a preference for abstract moral principle over manners and custom [ibid., section 88]. Heisman cites an observation that the American mind was "ready to think Jewishly" because of the Bible's deep influence. He argues that although Jews are about 2 per cent of the population, Americans are culturally "half-Jews", and he quotes John Jay Chapman (1897): "we are all adopted in Judah". As emblems he points to John Adams's 1776 proposal for the Great Seal, which joined the children of Israel to the Saxon chiefs Hengist and Horsa, and to America as a "cathedral of commerce", Christian outside and Jewish inside [ibid., section 89].

Historical Context: How Jewish Eschatology Formed

Heisman's "Exodus paradigm" makes the move from slavery to messianic triumph the origin of directional history. The library's historians of religion ask where the later Jewish ideas of resurrection, angels and demons, and a final

restoration came from. George William Carter argues that "In the Persian period of Jewish writings a belief in immortality has for the first time taken definite form". He quotes the Avestan hope for "the victorious Saoshyant and his helpers, when he shall restore the world, which will thenceforth never grow old and never die", and concludes: "To this foreign contact, therefore, we probably are indebted for some of the loftiest and most spiritual conceptions, which came into Judaism and passed from Judaism into Christianity" [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114, chs. on resurrection and eschatology]. Werner Sundermann tests one case, the demon Asmodaios of the Book of Tobit. He reports that Isidor Scheftelowitz rejected an Iranian origin on phonological grounds. Sundermann himself concludes, from the names *Aēšmō daēuuō* and Asmodaios and their shared role as "enemies of marital union", that "the assumption of an Iranian origin of the Jewish demon Asmodaios is correct" [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067]. Heisman locates the novelty of Judaism in the Exodus and Mosaic law. Carter and Sundermann give a documented, though disputed, account in which parts of its eschatology came from Iran.

Key points

- Heisman treats Judaism as a "meta-sociobiological technology" that, like Confucianism, emphasises behaviour and ancestral wisdom over belief, and manages the *Yetzer ha-ra* toward a golden mean.
- Korakh's rebellion (Numbers 16) illustrates his "kinship paradox" and the "sanctified inconsistencies" (Moses's authority, priesthood, chosenness) that he says Jewish egalitarianism needs in order to survive.
- Citing Herzl ("our enemies have made us one"), he argues that persecution unified Jews ("Disaster is Success") and that political success undermines the original balance of genes and memes ("Success is Disaster").
- He contrasts Jewish egalitarian memes, which he says lead to "genetic suicide" if maximised, with Nazi eugenics, and calls Zionism a constrained nationalism.
- He offers as an "educated guess" a genetic mutation conferring an intelligence advantage, with his own caveat that IQ alone does not explain Jewish behaviour.
- "Typical Jewish Un-Jewishness" reads Marx as Christianity reconnected to its Jewish roots, and "Judaism in Music" sets Schoenberg's tonal egalitarianism against Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

- Part II's "Anglo-Jewish Convergence" presents Puritan America as culturally "half-Jewish".
- Carter (Persian sources of resurrection and the Saoshyant) and Sundermann (Asmodaios/Aēšma, against Scheftelowitz) give the scholarly context of Iranian influence on Jewish eschatology. Slezkine gives a historian's reading of Bolshevism as a millenarian sect.

Chapter 162.

'The Seditious Genius of the Spiritual Penis of Jesus': Christianity, Kin Selection and the Christian Origins of Modern Liberalism

The second treatise of Part I of Mitchell Heisman's *Suicide Note* carries the subtitle "How Christianity's Subversion of Kin Selective Altruism Evolved into the Modern Idea of Social Progress" and runs from page 359 to page 506 of the 2010 text [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Overview"]. Its table of contents sets out four movements: "Supernatural Rapist" (pp.360-391), "Christian Family Values" (pp.392-421), "Good News! The Trojan Horse is Here!" (pp.422-442) and "Rupture and Rapture" (pp.443-506), the last divided into "Rupture: How Christ Hijacked the Moral Compass of the West" and "Rapture: The End of the World-Rule of the Selfish Gene" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Table of Contents"]. Heisman takes the sociobiology of W. D. Hamilton and Richard Dawkins and applies it to the historical Jesus. His thesis is that Christianity is a meme complex that turned kin-selective altruism against its own genetic basis. In his account, this reversal later became secular egalitarianism, liberalism and Marxism, and it points toward a technological "rapture".

The sociobiological toolkit: Hamilton's rule and the meme

In *The Selfish Gene*, Dawkins explains Hamilton's insight in terms of the gene: a gene that causes its bearer to help relatives can spread, because those relatives carry copies of the same gene with a calculable probability. On this reckoning, "a gene for big sister altruistic behaviour should have just as good a chance of spreading through the population as a gene for parental altruism" [Dawkins, The Selfish Gene, #55197, ch.6]. Dawkins insists that "kin selection is emphatically not a special case of group selection. It is a special consequence of gene selection" [Dawkins, The Selfish Gene, #33979, ch.6]. The second tool is Dawkins's "meme", a unit of cultural replication that spreads from mind to mind. In Heisman, kin selection explains the "altruism" of Rome and of the family, and the meme explains how Christianity spread through and against them [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Christian Altruism: The Selfish Meme"].

'Supernatural Rapist': the paternity thesis and Crossan's matrix

The treatise opens with the revolts of 4 BCE. Heisman quotes Josephus on Varus's destruction of Sepphoris, about four miles from Nazareth. He then quotes John Dominic Crossan: "In Nazareth around the time Jesus was born, men, women, and children who did not hide successfully would have been, respectively, killed, raped, and enslaved" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.360-361]. Combining Crossan's dating of Jesus's birth to that year with Dawkins's remark that Jesus's paternity is "a strictly scientific question", he concludes: "it appears highly probable that Mary, Jesus's Jewish mother, was raped by a Roman soldier... If so, then Jesus was not the 'son of God', but the son of a Roman rapist" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.361]. The virgin-birth story, for Heisman, hides this fact; faith in the "son of God" is required precisely because the evidence points the other way [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 27].

Heisman connects his thesis to the ancient tradition. He quotes Celsus's *True Doctrine*, as preserved by Origen, to the effect that Mary was "pregnant by a Roman soldier named Panthera" and was "driven away by her husband". He suggests "Panthera" may mock *parthenos* ("virgin") and mentions, as "less likely, but

possible", the archer Tiberius Iulius Abdes Pantera, whose tombstone was found at Bingerbrück in 1859 [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.362-363]. On the reference shelf, Origen calls the Panthera story a fabrication; Borg and Crossan suggest it may preserve a memory of the Sepphoris operations; James Tabor argues the Bingerbrück soldier could have been the father, while Raymond E. Brown, Maurice Casey and Christopher Zeichmann reject this, Zeichmann writing that it is "beyond doubt" that Pantera's unit was not in Judaea or Galilee at the relevant time [Wikipedia: Tiberius Julius Abdes Pantera]. Heisman himself says that the "greater evidence" lies in "the nature of Jesus's ethical innovations within Judaism" rather than in these texts [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.363].

Heisman then casts Jesus as a *pharmakos*, "the greatest scapegoat individual of the greatest scapegoat race", and, citing Robert Trivers on adaptive self-deception, proposes that Jesus "had faith, pure faith, that the God of Israel was his true father", so that "he healed himself through faith" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.363-367]. He then turns to Crossan's formula that Jesus and Paul must be understood "within Judaism within the Roman Empire" as "the absolutely necessary matrix". Where does a half-Jewish, half-Roman Jesus fit? Heisman answers: "there was no middle ground. In this savage historical conflict between Jew and Roman, there was no moderate ground with integrity. There was either transcendence, death, or both" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.369-370; section 31].

Hillel, Hamilton and the inversion of the command structure

Heisman traces the split between Christianity and Judaism to the dispute between Shammai, "a more 'right-of-center' or conservative scholar-leader who emphasized strict adherence to Jewish law", and Hillel, the "left-of-center" interpreter of the law's spirit [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 32]. In his reading, Bar Kokhba radicalised the Shammaite line and fought Rome by becoming Rome, while Jesus carried the Hillelite line to its limit and defeated Rome by becoming universal [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 32].

Hamilton supplies the next step. Roman virtue, Heisman argues, was kin-selective self-interest: soldiers die for an empire that enriches their families. Jesus "exposed" this [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 33]. Heisman claims that "Jesus's radicalization of altruism lays bare the selfish motivations

of empire, and refutes its claims to own the 'common good' " [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.424]. He reads the Sermon on the Mount as a reversal of political logic. " 'Love your neighbor' referred primarily to the love of internal peace necessary to wage external war". "Love your enemy", by contrast, means internal war for external peace, which is to say war against the family [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 34]. In short, "Jesus's anti-kin selective behaviors are those that subordinate kinship to altruism" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.426].

'Christian Family Values': hatred of the father, service to the child

The section titled "Have you hated your mother today?" (p.392) builds on Matthew 10:34-39 and Mark 3:31-35 ("Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother"). [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Have you hated your mother today?"] According to the study guide, he reads Jesus's hatred of family as hatred of his Roman rapist father, with Mary's violation standing for Rome's violation of Judea [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 37]. In "Some Are More Equal than Others in God's Kingdom" he locates the root of Judeo-Christian ethics in the relation between parent and child, in which the powerful serve the powerless. He argues that even the Nazis could not apply "only the strong survive" consistently without killing their own infants. Christianity universalises this compassion for children to all poor, widow, and sickly as God's children, and so Jesus becomes the "child-king" whom fathers and kings serve [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 38].

The Trojan horse: Christian memes, Paul and the fall of Rome

In "Christian Altruism: The Selfish Meme" (p.422) Heisman reverses the usual moral value of altruism. "The most universalistic altruism would be the genetic suicide of all humanity. Christian altruism can be looked upon as the survival strategy of Christian memes that are waging an evolutionary war against the genes of the believing Christian" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.425]. Then comes the image that gives the section its title: "Jesus effectually hacked the sociobiological system by propagating memes that, like a Trojan horse, infiltrate

and change the rules of the system from the inside out" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.427]. Rome is a carnivore, Christianity a virus that "penetrated the minds of its hosts and injected its laws or codes of behavior" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.427-428].

Paul is the agent of that spread. "The 'mustard seeds' of Christian memes helped bring down the greatest power of its time. Paul, the most eminent Jesus freak of his generation, seems to have appointed himself Minister of Propaganda within the Kingdom of God". Heisman lists Paul's measures: baptism in place of circumcision, the abolition of dietary laws and "the bestowing of elect status onto gentiles" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.429-430]. He follows Crossan in noting that leaven, made from moldy bread, symbolised corruption in the Bible. The parable of the leaven therefore becomes "to actively plant seeds of corruption" in the patriarchal order [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.430]. The section "How Rome was Raped by Jesus's Penis of the Spirit, Contracting a Deadly Virus" (p.431) completes the metaphor. Just as Roman conquerors penetrated Israel, "the Jewish-based God memes of Christianity penetrated the ancient Roman world" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.431ff].

Nietzsche's prior indictment

In *The AntiChrist* Paul is "the Chandala hatred of Rome, of 'the world,' in the flesh and inspired by genius". Nietzsche writes that Paul saw how "with the symbol of 'God on the cross,' all secret seditions, all the fruits of anarchistic intrigues in the empire, might be amalgamated into one immense power" [Nietzsche, The AntiChrist, #6519]. For Nietzsche, Christianity "preserves whatever is ripe for destruction; it fights on the side of those disinherited and condemned by life". He says the early Christian "lives and makes war for ever for 'equal rights' " [Nietzsche, The AntiChrist, #6519]. In the Romanian *Genealogia moralei*, the slave revolt in morality "începe atunci cînd însuşi resentimentul devine creator şi naşte valori" ("begins when ressentiment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values"). Nietzsche's symbol of the whole struggle is "Roma împotriva Iudeei, Iudeea împotriva Romei" ("Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome") [Nietzsche, Genealogia moralei, #13637, I.10, I.16].

Theme	Nietzsche	Heisman
Christianity and Rome	Revolt of the weak, ressentiment, Paul's "Chandala hatred of Rome" [#6519]	Meme "Trojan horse"/virus subverting kin-selective Roman virtue [#38252, p.427]
Paul	Genius of hatred who forged one "immense power" [#6519]	"Minister of Propaganda within the Kingdom of God" [#38252, p.429]
Mechanism	Psychology of priests and ressentiment [#13637, I.6-10]	Hamilton/Dawkins: memes against genes [#38252, p.425]
Verdict	Christianity as decadence to be overcome	A choice between evolutionary paths; Christianity prepared postbiological evolution [#38252, pp.474-477]

Heisman takes over Nietzsche's genealogy but changes the verdict. Elsewhere in the book he announces "Overcoming Nietzsche in the Creation of God" (p.1543) [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Table of Contents"].

Rupture: the economised political, Marx and the quarrel with Dawkins

In "Rupture: How Christ Hijacked the Moral Compass of the West" (pp.443-472, with the subsections "The Hypocrisy Industry", "The Christian Collapse into Capitalism" and "Jesus and Marx: Prophets of the Left") Heisman argues that "Christianity economized the ethics of the West in the sense that Christian values turned the political arena from the arena of highest human virtue to the arena of the lowest human virtue". Jesus and Marx appear as parallel revolutionaries, each taking a leftward logic to its extreme [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 39]. In his reading, Christian ethics opened a rupture between biological fact and moral ought. That separation of fact from value made possible both objective science and mass individualism [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 40]. Against Dawkins, who wrote that modern moral values "certainly have not come from religion" and that "the onus is not on me to answer", Heisman replies: "That is an explanation? How can religion be ruled out if he has no substantial

alternative explanation?" He holds that secular egalitarianism evolved out of Christianity, not in spite of it [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 41].

Rapture: salvation on 'God's Hard Drive'

The final movement, "Rapture: The End of the World-Rule of the Selfish Gene" (pp.473-506: "Jesus Saves (Your Soul [on God's Hard Drive])", "Judaism for the Gentiles?", "The End"), reads eschatology as an account of technological change. Following Crossan, "the end of the world" means the end of an age. He proposes that " 'The end' would then correspond… to the end of the supremacy of biological humans and the beginning of the supremacy of postbiological life". He likens Christianity's exponential spread to open-source software, citing Kurzweil [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.473-474]. "The birth of Christ — the transition from 'BC' to 'AD' — could be considered the pivotal moment of transition" from biological to postbiological evolution. "If and when biological humans upload their souls or consciousness into computers, pure spirituality will not cease to exist only a physical, material basis" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.472-475]. He concludes that "a time will come when Judaism, Christianity, and Islam will all be superseded by the reality of God-AI" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.473].

The scholarly literature on transhumanism makes a similar genealogical claim from the side of religious studies. In Calvin Mercer's collection, Heup Young Kim's East Asian theological chapter states that " 'transhumanism has emerged from a culture shaped by Christianity.' Transhumanism looks like a techno-secularization of the Judeo-Christian vision". [Mercer, Religion and Transhumanism, #74801, ch.7]. A chapter in the collection's first section draws on Ted Peters's distinction between *futurum*, "the future as growth, as an actualization of potentials", and *adventus*, "a coming new reality". It notes that in the Christian *adventus* "the functional agent of transcendence is God" [Mercer, Religion and Transhumanism, #74801, section 1]. Michael Burdett argues that transhumanism depends on and extends the myth of progress (ch.9), and Amy Michelle DeBaets's "Rapture of the Geeks" (ch.12) offers a feminist critique of Kurzweil's Singularity [Mercer, Religion and Transhumanism, #74801, "Introduction"]. Robert Geraci makes the same structural claim: "Apocalyptic AI, like its predecessor movements in Jewish and Christian history, starts with a dualistic view of the world". He adds that "the Jews and Christians looked forward to the resolution of their political dilemmas through the establishment of a new kingdom that they would inhabit in new bodies", while Apocalyptic AI substitutes evolution

for God as guarantor [Geraci, Apocalyptic AI, #75891, ch.1]. The direction differs: these scholars treat the transhumanist vision as a secularised descendant of Christian hope. Heisman treats Christian hope as an unknowing anticipation of the coming technology.

Key points

- Heisman's second treatise (pp.359-506) argues that Christianity subverted kin-selective altruism and that this subversion became the modern idea of social progress [#38252].
- He claims it is "highly probable" that Mary was raped by a Roman soldier. He cites Crossan on Sepphoris and the Celsus/Panthera tradition. The reference shelf records that mainstream scholarship (Brown, Casey, Zeichmann) rejects the Pantera paternity hypothesis, which James Tabor supports [#38252; Wikipedia: Tiberius Julius Abdes Pantera].
- Within Crossan's "matrix" (Jesus within Judaism within Rome), Heisman's Jesus had "no middle ground" and therefore universalised the Hillelite line of interpretation.
- Using Hamilton's kin selection as Dawkins explains it, Heisman reads "love your enemy" as internal war for external peace, and Jesus's hatred of family as hatred of the Roman father.
- Paul is the "Minister of Propaganda", and Christian memes are a Trojan horse or virus that weakened Rome. Nietzsche's *AntiChrist* and *Genealogy* had already framed Christianity as a revolt of ressentiment against Rome.
- Against Dawkins, Heisman holds that secular egalitarianism, liberalism and Marxism evolved from Christianity.
- He reinterprets the rapture as the upload of souls and the end of the "world-rule of the selfish gene". Kim, DeBaets and Geraci, writing from religious studies, see transhumanism as a techno-secularisation of Judeo-Christian eschatology.

Chapter 163.

‘Absolute Purity’: Nazism, Auschwitz as Secularised Hell, and the Death of God after Nietzsche

The third treatise of Part I of Heisman’s *Suicide Note*, “Absolute Purity”, carries the subtitle “The Secularization of Hell within the Desecration Machine of Auschwitz” and covers pages 507-630 [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, “Overview”]. Its four movements are as follows. “Love Kills” contains “Hitler’s Most Beautiful Words”, “Enemies of Our Soul”, “The Noble Aryan Anus” and “Theorems of the Hitler System”. “The Desecration Machine” opens with “Hitler Refutes Marx: The Industrial Revolution of Genocide” (p.550). “Christ Killers” contains “Jesus was the Second World War” and “Kingdom of Hell” (pp.576-603). “God Was Dead” contains “Racial Relativism” and “Overcoming Human Being” (pp.604-630) [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, “Table of Contents”]. The treatise interprets Nazism as the most consistent attempt to reverse Judeo-Christian ethics in the name of Darwinian biology. In this chapter Heisman’s argument is set beside the Nietzsche texts in the library, Seraphim Rose’s Orthodox diagnosis of nihilism, and Yuval Noah Harari’s classification of modern ideologies.

Hitler between Lueger and Schönerer

Heisman reconstructs Hitler’s strategy toward the churches from *Mein Kampf*. Hitler admired two Viennese politicians: the Pan-German Georg von Schönerer and the Christian Social mayor Karl Lueger. Schönerer “recognized the problems in their innermost essence” but “erred when it came to men”. Lueger’s conciliatory policy toward the Catholic Church, “fashioned with infinite shrewdness”,

brought him the practical success that Schönerer lacked [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.581]. Heisman quotes Schönerer's public claim that "the founder of Christianity, as the son of a racial Jewess and a descendant of David is not an Aryan". He records that when Martin Bormann put the sentence "Christianity and National Socialism are not reconcilable" in a party directive, Hitler had it removed. Yet in private, on 14 October 1941, Hitler said: "it's not opportune to hurl ourselves now into a struggle with the Churches. The best thing is to let Christianity die a natural death" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.581-582]. Heisman's conclusion is that Hitler "sought to achieve the ends of Schönerer with the means of Lueger", and that he followed the same pattern in the extermination of the Jews [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.582]. He also quotes Hitler's plan to "wash off the Christian veneer and bring out a religion peculiar to our race". He sets beside it Carl Jung's talk of a war between "Christianity on the one side, and Mithracism [sic] on the other" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.582-583]. Jung's remark links back to the Mithraic themes of the opening parts of this study.

Darwin against Christ: the 'systematic cultivation of human failure'

The section "Kingdom of Hell" opens with Hitler's table talk: "The heaviest blow that ever struck humanity was the coming of Christianity. Bolshevism is Christianity's illegitimate child. Both are inventions of the Jew". It continues: "Christianity is a rebellion against natural law, a protest against nature. Taken to its logical extreme, Christianity would mean the systematic cultivation of human failure" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.592]. Heisman's gloss is: "If Christianity led to the 'systematic cultivation of human failure', then Nazism would aim for the systematic cultivation of eugenic success" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.592-593; section 49].

Heisman grounds this reading in Richard Weikart's *From Darwin to Hitler*, which he quotes at length; the book is not in the library. In the quoted passage Hitler "derided any morality inimical to the increased vitality of the 'Aryan' race, especially traditional values of humility, pity, and sympathy… He spurned the idea of human rights, calling it a product of weaklings" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.593, quoting Weikart]. Heisman also takes from Weikart the claim that "the core idea of eugenics derived from Darwinism" and that Darwin re-evaluated

death. "Death had previously been viewed by most Europeans as an evil to overcome, not a beneficial force. But Darwin perceived some good in this evil" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.593-594]. He quotes Weikart's question whether Hitler "hijack[ed] Darwinism" or "merely climb[ed] on board and follow[ed] it to its destination". In the later "Creating God" treatise he joins Weikart to Hermann Klaatsch and Oscar Schmidt as witnesses that Darwinism undermined the Judeo-Christian sanctity of life and the immaterial soul [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.595, 614; section 124]. Heisman's own verdict is stronger than the one he attributes to Weikart: "Darwin's discovery was not a sufficient condition for Nazism and its eugenic values, but it was its necessary condition" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.614].

Auschwitz as the secularisation of hell

The thesis named in the subtitle is put directly: "If the democracy and communism that fought the Nazis represent secularizations of Judeo-Christian Kingdom of Heaven, Auschwitz represents the secularization of the Judeo-Christian Kingdom of Hell… The right to live would be inverted into the duty to die. Auschwitz was death brought to life — Dante's inferno on Earth" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.601]. It follows his treatment of the Sonderkommando, whom the Nazis forced to dispose of Jewish bodies. He calls this "the greatest victory of all over the Jewish 'invention of conscience' " [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.600]. In his reading the camp was designed to destroy the moral standard itself. "Nazis wanted to kill the Jews to kill the standard by which killing the Jews is evil". "The Nazis attempted to invert the inverters… Nazis made the highest law the killing of the highest moral law 'Thou shall not kill' " [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.602; section 43]. He quotes Himmler's January 1937 lecture to SS-Gruppenführer, which compared the Roman emperors who "exterminated [ausrotteten] the first Christians" with the Nazi treatment of communists. He also states that "Auschwitz was where God was formally exterminated" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.599].

The "Christ Killers" movement ties this to Heisman's paternity thesis (see Chapter 162). Jesus is "half-Jewish and half-Roman by racial descent". He is therefore a living "synthesis of Jew and Aryan", and "to worship Jesus is to worship miscegenation between Jew and gentile". From this Heisman concludes that "Jesus was the Second World War" and that Nazism "could not have come into existence without repudiating the way of Jesus" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.589-591].

'Hitler Refutes Marx' and the evolutionary logic of the two posthumanities

"The Desecration Machine" opens with the claim that "Auschwitz is a more profound refutation of Marxism than the demise of the Soviet Union". Heisman says this is because "the Judeocide cannot be explained on the basis of economic rationalism". He quotes Marx's 1859 *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* ("It is not the consciousness of men which determines their existence") as the doctrine that Auschwitz refuted [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.550-551]. In the study guide's summary, Marx's exclusion of race and biology left a fatal blind spot. Auschwitz was the Nazi working-out of that blind spot: the "Jewish problem" treated as an industrial problem with an industrial solution [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, sections 45-46]. In the study guide's summary of a later section, Heisman holds that Auschwitz refutes Marxism by uniting artificial and natural selection. He also argues that Marx misread feudalism as class conflict when it was originally tribal, an argument developed in Part II (see Chapter 164) [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 135].

Heisman's "evolutionary logic" is the most provocative step of the treatise. He accepts the Nazi premise and rejects the Nazi conclusion. In the study guide's summary, if Judeo-Christian values inhibit biological selection they are inferior as an evolutionary strategy, yet what inhibits biological evolution accelerates technological evolution. The result is two incompatible routes to posthumanity: gods bred by eugenics, or God-AI built through economic and technological progress, with Auschwitz and the Singularity marking the extremes [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, study guide section 138]. Heisman's own text puts it as "Auschwitz and the Singularity are two diametrically opposite final solutions to the paradox at the core of Judaism. Auschwitz represents technology mastered by biology" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Overthrowing Ourselves", pp.98-99]. An earlier section of "God is Technology" states the inversion directly. The Nazis believed Jews stood in the way of biological evolution, but in the Singularity's terms it is biology (not Judaism) that stands in the way of technological evolution (the study guide's summary) [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 26].

Historicism, Darwinism and the new 'natural right'

Heisman places Nazism within his quarrel with Leo Strauss. He follows Friedrich Meinecke and Georg Iggers in describing German historicism as a liberation from timeless natural law. Strauss's *Natural Right and History* reopened the eternalist alternative [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 20]. Heisman then cites Gödel's incompleteness theorems against Strauss's assumption of an "eternal whole" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 21]. His conclusion reverses Strauss's diagnosis. Nazism was not the *reductio* of historicism. It combined historicism with Darwin to produce a natural-right regime grounded in biological hierarchy [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 22]. Before Nazism, he argues, German Idealism had tried, through Hegel, to reconcile the Greek ideal of human totality with the Christian division of reason from inclination [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 44]. Citing Jacob Burckhardt, he describes the Greek gods as extensions of human passions, Übermensch-like ideals that served as models for Nietzsche [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 125].

Racial relativism, propaganda and denial

"God Was Dead" begins with Hitler's last testament and defines National Socialism as "racial relativism": "Nazi-Germans maximized their life as a race by maximizing Jewish death as a race" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.604-605]. Heisman quotes *Mein Kampf* on propaganda: "Its task is not to make an objective study of the truth, in so far as it favors the enemy… its task is to serve our own right, always and unflinchingly". He then argues that "the Judeocide is contempt for modern Western moral values and Judeocide denial is contempt for the Western Socratic search for truth". He cites Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century* as a book that aimed "to both establish and propagate new myths for a new age" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.605-607; section 50]. In his account, Hitler distanced himself in public from both the genocide and Nazism's anti-Christianity for the same reason. Both would have undermined his mass appeal, which depended on "the 'infinite shrewdness' of Lueger" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.607-608].

Nietzsche: what Heisman takes over, and what he claims to overcome

Heisman's treatment of Nietzsche is two-sided. "Nietzsche abhorred resentful antisemitism and was contemptuous of common German nationalism". Yet "Hitler could not have realized Nazi extremism without the cultural impact of Nietzsche's radical rejection of Jesus and Socrates". Heisman also writes that "Nietzsche's verdict that the West had abandoned the Christian religion while preserving its underlying morality grounded the Nazi revolution" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.587]. The primary texts behind his section title are in the library in Romanian. In aphorism 125 of *The Gay Science* the madman cries: "Noi l-am ucis – voi şi eu! Noi toţi suntem ucigaşii lui!… Dumnezeu a murit! Dumnezeu rămâne mort! Şi noi l-am ucis!" ("We have killed him, you and I! We are all his murderers!… God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him!"). Aphorism 343 announces that "credinţa în Dumnezeul creştin a ajuns de necrezut" ("belief in the Christian God has become unbelievable") and that this event "begins to cast its first shadows over Europe" [Nietzsche, Ştiinţa voioasă, #50348, §§125, 343]. The notes of *The Will to Power* define the condition that follows: "Nihilism: there is no goal, no answer to the question: why? … that the highest values devalue themselves". They distinguish an "active nihilism", "a violent and destructive force", from a passive one [Nietzsche, The Will to Power, #69520, Book One, "European Nihilism"]. Heisman reads Darwin as the hidden premise of all this: "Without Darwin, Nietzsche could not have confidently claimed that Christianity had been unmasked. But with Darwin, he stood face to face with nihilism" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.613].

In "Overcoming Human Being" Heisman moves through Heidegger toward his own answer, which he develops later as "Overcoming Nietzsche in the Creation of God" (p.1543). There he writes that "artificial intelligence could be considered the pinnacle of the supernatural overcoming of nature and thus the supreme creation in the image of God", and that "the fulfillment of this interplay between the Bible and modernity would be the overcoming of Nietzsche in the creation of God" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Overcoming Nietzsche in the Creation of God"].

Reading of the 'death of God'	Source	Place of Nazism
Event of European history; nihilism as devaluation of the highest values	Nietzsche [#50348; #69520]	Not treated (pre-dates it)
Auschwitz as secularised hell, Darwinian reversal of Judeo-Christian ethics	Heisman [#38252, p.601]	Extreme of the biological path to posthumanity
Fourth stage of dialectical nihilism	Rose [#49221]	Nihilism of destruction, alongside Bolshevism
"Humanist religions" worshipping Homo sapiens	Harari [#64246]	One of three humanist creeds, with liberalism and communism

Two counter-classifications: Rose and Harari

Seraphim Rose, writing as an Orthodox hieromonk, offers a traditional Christian counter-reading. His table of contents lists the "stages of dialectical nihilism" as "Liberalismul", "Realismul", "Vitalismul" and "Nihilismul distrugerii" (liberalism, realism, vitalism, the nihilism of destruction). His introduction gives "programul fantastic de distrugere al lui Hitler, revoluţia bolşevică" (Hitler's fantastic programme of destruction, the Bolshevik revolution) as the clearest examples [Rose, Cauza Revoluţiei din Epoca Modernă: Nihilismul, #49221, "Cuprins"; I]. "Dincolo de vitalism poate doar încă o etapă, definitivă…: nihilismul distrugerii" (beyond vitalism there is only one more, definitive stage: the nihilism of destruction), which "este unic epocii moderne" (is unique to the modern age). In Rose's formula, "Dumnezeu este mort în inima omului modern: aceasta înseamnă 'moartea lui Dumnezeu' " (God is dead in the heart of modern man: this is what the 'death of God' means) [Rose, Cauza Revoluţiei din Epoca Modernă: Nihilismul, #49221, II]. Rose treats Nazism and Bolshevism as joint products of apostasy. Heisman, by contrast, sets them on opposite sides: Bolshevism and democracy as secularised heaven, Nazism as secularised hell.

Harari, from a secular-historical standpoint, also places Nazism inside a religious taxonomy. "Whereas the Agricultural Revolution gave rise to theist religions, the Scientific Revolution gave birth to humanist religions, in which humans replaced gods… The founding idea of humanist religions such as liberalism, communism and Nazism is that Homo sapiens has some unique and sacred essence"

[Harari, Homo Deus, #64246, Part I]. In his presentation of evolutionary humanism, the Nazi variant holds that "humankind itself is not exempt from the forces of evolution" and that "some human cultures are more advanced than others" [Harari, Homo Deus, #64246, Part II]. Harari's "evolutionary humanism" and Heisman's "biological path to posthumanity" describe the same Nazi premise. They differ in that Heisman claims the Singularity "inverts" it.

Key points

- "Absolute Purity" (pp.507-630) presents Nazism as the most consistent Darwinian attempt to reverse Judeo-Christian ethics, and Auschwitz as "the secularization of the Judeo-Christian Kingdom of Hell" [#38252, p.601].
- On Heisman's reading, Hitler pursued "the ends of Schönerer with the means of Lueger", accommodating the churches in public while hoping in private to let Christianity "die a natural death" [#38252, pp.581-582].
- Hitler called Christianity the "systematic cultivation of human failure". Heisman, quoting Weikart (whose book is not in the library), calls Darwinism Nazism's "necessary condition" [#38252, pp.592-595, 614].
- "Hitler Refutes Marx": Heisman argues that Auschwitz refutes the economic conception of man shared by capitalism and Marxism.
- His "evolutionary logic" accepts that Judeo-Christian values hinder biological selection but holds that they speed technological evolution. Auschwitz and the Singularity are the extremes of two posthumanities.
- Nietzsche's madman (*Gay Science* §125) and the *Will to Power* definition of nihilism underlie "God Was Dead". Heisman claims to overcome Nietzsche through the "creation of God" in AI.
- Seraphim Rose groups Nazism and Bolshevism together as the "nihilism of destruction". Harari groups Nazism with liberalism and communism as "humanist religions".

Chapter 164.

A Vendetta Called Revolution: Heisman's Sociobiology of Liberal Democracy, Secularisation and Political Order

Part II is the larger half of *Suicide Note.* It contains three treatises: "A Vendetta Called Revolution: How Ethnic Hostility between Anglo-Saxons and the Normans Who Conquered Them Evolved into Liberal Democracy" (pp.631-1157); "Converse Cognates: Why the Norman Conquest was the World-Historical Ass-Kicking that Deflected the English-speaking World from the German Path to Nazism" (pp.1158-1525); and "Creating God and the Evolution of Genetic Suicide" (pp.1526-1738) [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "Overview"; "Table of Contents"]. Here Heisman's politics and his theory of religion meet. He applies kin selection to ethnic groups and nations, and on that basis reads rights, Puritanism, the American Revolution, the Civil War, capitalism, Marxist "class", political correctness and secularisation as consequences of the Norman Conquest of 1066. This chapter gives his theses in order, with the historians he cites. It also separates the documented history recorded on the reference shelf from Heisman's genetic reinterpretation of it.

1066: 'The Death of English England'

The first section of the treatise is titled "1066: The Death of English England". Its sub-headings are "Plan A: Revolt", "Freedom Fighters Failed", "Plan B: Revolution" and "Repressed Restorers Reawoken" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252,

pp.633-639]. In the study guide's summary, Heisman details how William replaced the entire English nobility within twenty years, as the Domesday Book documents. He quotes Jefferson and Paine on usurpation to establish the Conquest as a founding illegitimacy [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 52]. He recounts the legendary exodus of English nobles to Byzantium under Siward Bearn, who named settlements after London and York [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 53]. He reads the Domesday Book of 1086 as the record of the Anglo-Saxons' reduction to a "subpolitical body" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 112]. He also cites Gerald of Wales: "The English are the most worthless of all peoples under heaven, for they have been subdued by the Normans and reduced by the law to perpetual slavery" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.678].

The reference shelf confirms the core facts. "A direct consequence of the invasion was the almost total elimination of the old English aristocracy". "By that time only about 5 per cent of land in England south of the Tees was left in English hands". "After 1075 all earldoms were held by Normans", and after 1095 no English bishop remained. In the 1070s a fleet of 235 ships sailed for Byzantium, where "the English became the predominant element in the elite Varangian Guard" [Wikipedia: Norman Conquest, "Elite replacement"; "English emigration"]. The same article records that the free peasantry lost status, possibly because of the Conquest, and that slavery declined. About 28,000 slaves are listed in Domesday [Wikipedia: Norman Conquest, "Society"].

Predatory kin selection: Searle and Garnett

The sociobiological core of the argument is Heisman's reading of Eleanor Searle's *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066*. He quotes her conclusion that the "closest approximation to the essence of that aristocracy is to think of it not as a clientele, but rather as a warrior kin-group". He also quotes her description of William's chiefs in 1066: "all could call him brother or cousin... They were a family in pursuit of maximum profit" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.732-735]. Heisman's gloss is: "Norman 'predatory kinship' was an aggressive kin selection strategy". On the one hand, he says, the Normans promoted "cooperation among themselves and predation on outsiders". On the other, they were "eugenically channeling resources to the most talented" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.734]. He reads the *murdrum* fine, a collective penalty laid on a hundred when a Norman was killed, as "the legal-kinship double standard that captures in miniature the social problem established by

this new order" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.735-736]. From George Garnett's *Conquered England* (2007) he takes the claim that "Duke William's claim to the kingdom of England was fabricated" and the notion of a "fiction of continuity" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.679]. He also takes Garnett's point that William was the sole source of tenure in conquered England [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 81]. The reference shelf confirms that under William "all land was 'held' directly from the king in feudal tenure in return for military service" [Wikipedia: Norman Conquest, "Consequences"].

The Norman Yoke, rights and the revolutions of 1649, 1660 and 1688

Heisman builds on Christopher Hill's "Norman Yoke", the folk theory that traced oppressive government to William the Conqueror. He reads the regicide and the abolition of the House of Lords in 1649 as the completion of what the Anglo-Saxon revolts of 1066-71 had failed to achieve [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 56]. John Pym presented Parliament's cause as the reassertion of Saxon liberties that had survived the Conquest [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 64]. The Restoration of 1660 put the Norman imperial project back on track [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 62]. The settlement of 1688 reconciled Norman force with the rights of the Commons [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 65]. Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* is for Heisman an empirical inquiry into the hereditary basis of English government. It asks of the Saxons, "when did [they] stop being conquered?" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, sections 54, 66]. His general thesis is that, after Darwin, rights cannot rest on natural law. They are an evolved adaptation, invented specifically to illegitimize the Norman Conquest order [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 58]. One section reads Magna Carta the other way round. Coke's extension of the Charter from the Norman lords to the Commons destroyed the Charter's original intent, and Cromwell's "Magna Farta" showed clearer understanding than the lawyers' cunning [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 80].

The reference shelf traces the idea's own history. Orderic Vitalis wrote that "the English groaned aloud for their lost liberty". The term "Norman yoke" first appears in the apocryphal *Mirror of Justices*, printed in 1642 and "presented and accepted as historical fact". Coke, Pym, Lucy Hutchinson and Henry Vane used the theme in a propertied sense. Lilburne, Warr and Winstanley used it radically: in 1649 Winstanley wrote that the people "have caste out Charles our Norman

oppressor". The idea returned in the *Historical Essay on the English Constitution* (1771), in Cartwright, in the Paine-Burke debate and in Jefferson. Carlyle, by contrast, judged the Conquest beneficial [Wikipedia: Norman yoke]. The article on the Conquest concludes that the theory "owes more to the period in which it was developed than to historical facts". It sets Richard Southern's view of 1066 as a radical turning point against that of Richardson and Sayles, who see less discontinuity [Wikipedia: Norman Conquest, "Historiography"].

America: elections, Puritans, Cavaliers and the Civil War

Heisman reads democratic elections as a peaceful internalization and domestication of civil war between Norman and Saxon, a repeated refighting of the Battle of Hastings through electoral means [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 59]. In his account the early presidency balanced Norman Virginia (Washington, Jefferson) against Saxon Massachusetts (Adams) [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 57]. He follows David Hackett Fischer's *Albion's Seed* on the two migrations: Puritans fled the "eleven years tyranny" (1629-40) to Massachusetts, while Cavaliers "arrived in Virginia during the 1650s seeking freedom from the Puritan yoke" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 73]. He calls George Fitzhugh, the defender of slavery, "the Thomas Jefferson of the Confederate Revolution". He quotes Fitzhugh's verdict that the Declaration's principles were "wholly at war with slavery" and "equally at war with all government, all subordination, all order" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, sections 75-76]. Heisman holds that the Civil War "refought the foundational issues that originated with the Norman Conquest". He calls the result "Lincoln the Conqueror", leaving a "double-headed Normanglica": a Saxon-Puritan America and a Norman-Cavalier British Empire [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, sections 74-76].

In this setting Heisman makes his remarks on race. They are reported here in his own words. The subsection "Barack Obama: Supernigger" (p.675) argues that the attention paid to Obama's race shows that "race matters". He links Southern slavery to the Norman past: "Normans enslaved the black race in America just as they had once enslaved the Anglo-Saxon race in England". On this reading, "the racial meaning of the equality posited by Jefferson and consummated by Lincoln was the racial equality of Norman and Saxon. Normans could be equal to Saxons only if Saxons were equal to blacks" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252,

pp.676-680]. He then turns the epithet on the Anglo-Saxons. They believe themselves "only conquerors and never the conquered", so "one can only suppose that Anglo-Saxon believe they are Superniggers… an Über-race" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, p.681]. Elsewhere he calls blacks "victims of Anglo-Saxon selective stupidity" as well as beneficiaries of its political solution [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 77].

Locke, Hobbes and the 'political cyborg'

Heisman cites John Dunn's conclusion that Locke was "basically a Calvinist natural theologian" whose *Two Treatises* rest on a benevolent God. He infers that a secular liberalism that keeps Locke's conclusions while rejecting his Biblical premises is irrational. Modern liberalism "secularized" Puritanism into the language of rights [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 86]. He traces Locke's rejection of Filmer's patriarchalism to Locke's father, a Parliamentarian cavalry captain [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 68]. Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651) appears in "Thomas Hobbes: Philosopher of the Twilight Zone" (p.1009) and "The Physics of the Modern Political Cyborg" (p.1387). There Heisman argues that it engineered "the individual" as a technological solution, making fear of death the premise of order against the kin-selective loyalties that had caused the civil war [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, sections 83, 133]. Heisman cites Searle against Hobbes: Norman risk-taking refutes the claim that fear of death is universal human nature [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 83].

Class, capitalism and Marx

The subsection "How Marx Borrowed Britain's 'Class'-focaled Lenses and Saw the End of History" (p.1094) contrasts Marx's "class is the key to history" with Disraeli's "race is the key to history" and his "two nations" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 90]. Heisman cites Macmillan's "hereditary animosity" between "warring classes or tribes". He concludes that Marx fatally misread British 'class war' as fundamentally economic, when it actually originates in the ethnic/biological distinction introduced at Hastings [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 107]. Capitalism and the Puritan work ethic were the Saxons' weapons against Norman heredity [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, sections 91,

134]. Lenin's vanguard corrected Marx, and that correction led logically to Stalinism [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 92]. For comparison, Eugene McCarraher's history argues that capitalism is not a "solvent of enchantment" but a "surrogate form of transcendence", the "religion of modernity". McCarraher asks whether "the waters of pecuniary reason constituted a baptismal font" [McCarraher, The Enchantments of Mammon, #67252, "Heaven Which Exists and Is Everywhere around Us"]. Heisman's "Cathedral of Commerce" (p.1082), the Great Seal design pairing Exodus with Hengist and Horsa and described as Christian outside, Jewish inside, reaches a similar result from a different starting point [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 89].

Secularisation as 'the Unification of Church and State'

In "Secularization: The Unification of Church and State" (p.1046) Heisman inverts the usual formula. He quotes Stubbs: "the cohesion of the church was for ages the substitute for the cohesion which the divided nation was unable to otherwise realise". Christianity acted "like a brace or cast that guides and directs the healing of a broken bone" across the ethnic split. On this view secular liberalism is "comparable to the removal of the brace or cast of religion" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.1046-1047]. He then qualifies the thesis. Biblical religion also became "a catalyst of civil war". The Independent preacher Hugh Peter found "not any text of privilege of Parliament, which indeed came in with the conquest", and because the pope had blessed the Conquest, "the Puritan Revolution was only a continuation of the revolt against 'Rome' " [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.1048-1049]. Just before this he describes America as "the literal afterlife of the Anglo-Saxon nation... a nation not of blood and body, but of a kind of spiritual creed" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, pp.1044-1046].

Converse Cognates: the English Sonderweg

In "Converse Cognates" the Conquest becomes "the world-historical asskicking" that turned the English-speaking world away from the German path [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 94]. Heisman uses Fichte's *Addresses to the German Nation* to argue that the Germans kept an original *Kultur* that the Saxons lost [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, sections 98, 110]. Sombart's

contrast between English commerce and German heroism comes next [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 103]. Troeltsch supplies the claim that collective devotion is legitimate only where spiritual culture survives [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 118]. Schmitt's thesis that liberalism negates the political is read as the liberal state's origin in an internal war against the conquest-state [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 109]. Heisman also offers a counter-intuitive claim: centuries of submission to the Normans had prepared the Saxons for "mindless obedience" better than the Germans [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 96].

Living in the afterlife: individualism as genetic suicide

The "Creating God" treatise draws the biological conclusion. "Living in the Afterlife: The Sociobiological Logic of Individualism" and "The Child-Tyrant" (pp.1609-1626) argue that consistent individualism makes the child "simply another individual". Why, then, would a rational person volunteer for servitude to a "child-tyrant"? The result is "genetically suicidal birthrates" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 131]. " 'Enlightened' self-interest leads to racial self-destruction. From the view of kin selection, the individualistic logic of liberal democracies is rational insanity" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 132]. He uses Frank Salter's theory of "genetic interests" to reckon Germany's losses through emigration to America [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 128]. He calls liberal democracy economically engineered genetic suicide and says that both Auschwitz and liberal democracy were "designed to solve 'the conqueror problem' " [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 132]. Political correctness, finally, goes back to the English taboo on naming the Norman-Saxon conflict, which he calls "Anglo-Saxon selective stupidity". E. A. Freeman's claim that the Normans were "turned into Englishmen" drew Chesterton's quip about a "Saxon Conquest" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, sections 145-146]. Scientific objectivity itself is described as an adapted weapon in Anglo-Saxon ethnic struggle [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, section 147].

Documented history and Heisman's thesis

The extension of kin selection to nations is contested in the library's scientific literature. Dawkins defines kin selection as gene selection among relatives, in which "the closer the relationship, the stronger the selection" [Dawkins, The Selfish Gene, #55197, ch.6]. Bo Gräslund lists the "no small demands" the theory makes, beginning with the need for "an animal [to] be able to recognise its own kin". He argues that its imagined effects are "so similar to the actual effects of early close contact" that it "greatly obscured" the role of imprinting. He also holds that sociobiological jargon "is more a reflection of the modern Western dream of individual achievement than basic principles of evolution" [Gräslund, Early Humans and Their World, #37604]. Brian Baxter states the philosophical objection directly: "it is argued that naturalism commits the naturalistic fallacy". He also grants that sociobiology applied to humans has "an unavoidable involvement in normative and prescriptive discourse" [Baxter, A Darwinian Worldview, #25957, ch.6].

Element	Status in the sources
Replacement of the English aristocracy; Domesday 1086 (~5% land in English hands)	Documented [Wikipedia: Norman Conquest]
English emigration to Byzantium; Varangian Guard	Documented; the Siward/New England settlement is legendary [Wikipedia: Norman Conquest; #38252, section 53]
Norman Yoke rhetoric of Levellers, Diggers, Paine, Jefferson	Documented as an idea; its historical basis judged weak [Wikipedia: Norman yoke]
Norman aristocracy as a "warrior kin-group"	Searle's historical thesis, as Heisman quotes it [#38252, p.733]
Rights, elections, the Civil War, class and political correctness as Norman-Saxon kin conflict	Heisman's thesis [#38252]
Liberal democracy as "genetic suicide"	Heisman's thesis, using Salter and Dawkins [#38252, sections 128-132]

Key points

- Part II (pp.631-1738) explains English and American liberal democracy as the outcome of Norman-Saxon ethnic kin conflict after 1066 [#38252].
- Elite replacement, Domesday and the Varangian exodus are documented on the reference shelf. Heisman's addition is to read them through Searle's "predatory kinship" as aggressive kin selection.
- In his account, rights were "invented" to delegitimise the Conquest order. The Norman Yoke ran from Pym and Winstanley through 1649, 1660 and 1688 to Paine and Jefferson.
- Elections are, on his reading, a domesticated civil war. The American Civil War re-fought 1066, with Fitzhugh as the "Jefferson of the Confederate Revolution". His race remarks, including the "Supernigger" subsection, are reported verbatim in context.
- On Heisman's reading, Marx misread ethnic conflict as class conflict, and capitalism was a Saxon weapon against Norman heredity. McCarraher, from another angle, calls capitalism the "religion of modernity".
- Secularisation is "the Unification of Church and State": religion was a "brace or cast" over ethnic division, and Puritanism turned the Bible against the Conquest.
- Rational individualism ends in "genetically suicidal birthrates", liberal democracy is economically engineered genetic suicide, and political correctness is the taboo on naming 1066. Gräslund and Baxter set out the scientific and is-ought objections to the method.

Chapter 165.

Creating God: The Singularity, Transhumanism and AI as God-Making from Heisman to Kurzweil

Mitchell Heisman's last treatise is subtitled "Why Liberal Democracy Leads to the Rational Biological Self-Destruction of Humans and the Rational Technological Creation of God" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, table of contents]. For Heisman, "the Singularity would be the technological genesis of God" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part I]. This chapter sets his thesis beside the library's main literature on the Singularity (Vinge, Kurzweil, Geraci, Mercer, Harari). It then turns to the critics who read the same prospect as Antichrist, alien agenda or control, and shows where Heisman agrees with the techno-optimists and where he departs from them.

Heisman's final treatise

The treatise runs from about p.1526 to p.1738. Its sections include "Agon: God versus the Gods", "Overcoming Nietzsche in the Creation of God", "How to Breed a God", "Monkeywrench in the Gene Machine", "The Means to Our End" (with "The Brothers Frankenborg" and "How To Create God by Getting Rich"), "Marx was Wrong", "The Dark Side of Optimism versus The Bright Side of Pessimism" (p.1677) and "Above Olympus" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, table of contents]. Its aim is stated plainly: "Creating God is the last and greatest goal that the human race is capable" [Heisman, #38252, "Creating God"]. "How to Breed a God" opens with Nazi eugenics, Hitler's "will to create mankind anew", as the biological route to "gods" [Heisman, #38252, guide section 126]. Section 127

argues that liberal democracy holds contradictory eugenic aspirations. Its equality logic extends rights downward, while eugenics would breed unprecedented inequality [Heisman, #38252, guide section 127].

In Heisman's account, Biblical individualism works "like a monkeywrench in gene machine", and human rights are "direct antagonists of natural and artificial selection" [Heisman, #38252, p.1672]. As a result, "technological evolution is maximized, while biological evolution is minimized. These trends combined amount to a policy of rational biological self-destruction" [Heisman, #38252, p.1656]. Against Marx, he argues that capital accumulation "is the evolutionary mechanism that leads to the development of artificial intelligence", which "may merit the name of God". The whole human race "will become almost akin to the proletariat class", served perhaps by robotic "angels" under "the rule of God-AI", with a new morality "in the form of worship of God-AI" [Heisman, #38252, pp.1670-1675]. He expects "a twenty-first century apocalyptic conflict between artificial intelligence and genetically enhanced humans and/or neo-Luddites; between God and gods" [Heisman, #38252, p.1677]. In such a conflict a God-AI offering food, housing and healthcare might ally with bioLuddites and ordinary humans against an enhanced aristocracy [Heisman, #38252, guide section 140]. He calls the final opposition "a battle between the Genocracy of Caesar and the Techdom of God" [Heisman, #38252, p.1687].

The political Turing test and the critique of Hughes

Since "a truly smarter-than-human intelligence will by definition be able to outsmart any human limitation", Heisman proposes a political variant of Turing's test:

> "when artificial intelligence is able to outsmart the biological-human ability to limit or constrain AI politically, then AI will have demonstrated its ability to pass this test by effectually taking political control of human destiny. If biological humans can no longer tell who is in control, this is a threshold point that indicates that AI has begun its control." [Heisman, #38252, pp.1679-1680]

Heisman sets the choice out as follows. The "dark side of optimism" is "the possible elimination of the biological human race". The "bright side of pessimism" is "joy in the prospect that machines will be the slaves of biological humans forever". A God-AI designed within "the precedents of a constitution" might nonetheless be "more altruistic than humans", even "a digital heaven". He concludes: "The neo-Luddite or neo-Nazi cause is the cause of killing God; the cause

of deicide" [Heisman, #38252, pp.1680-1681]. Against James Hughes's *Citizen Cyborg*, which wants enhancement democratically regulated and "equally available", Heisman objects that "rights are an all-too-human idea, not a transhuman idea". In his view genetic self-design is "treason against the Lockean clean slate", and each step that increases genetic inequality "is like an ax that hacks at the foundation of liberal democracy" [Heisman, #38252, pp.1688-1692].

Vinge and Kurzweil

Vernor Vinge (1993) defines the Singularity as "the imminent creation by technology of entities with greater-than-human intelligence". He lists four routes: "awake" computers, networks that "wake up", intimate human-computer interfaces and biological improvement of the intellect. He predicted it between 2005 and 2030 as "an exponential runaway beyond any hope of control" [Vinge, Technological Singularity, #9143, §1]. "If the technological Singularity can happen, it will", because forbidding it only "assures that someone else will get them first". Yet "we are the initiators". He adds that "the notion of ego and self-awareness", the bedrock of modern rationalism, is "under attack" [Vinge, Technological Singularity, #9143, §§2-4].

Ray Kurzweil derives the Singularity from "the law of accelerating returns". His six epochs end with "The Merger of Human Technology with Human Intelligence" and "The Universe Wakes Up", and he dates the event to 2045 [Kurzweil, The Singularity Is Near, #64796, ch.1-3]. A sufficiently accurate brain upload, he argues, would pass a "Jane Smith" Turing test by being recognised as the same person [Kurzweil, #64796, ch.4]. In chapter 7, "Ich bin ein Singularitarian", he follows Max More: "the last thing we need is another dogma, nor do we need another cult". He nonetheless declares that "we have the means right now to live long enough to live forever", calls traditional religion "deathist rationalization", and concludes that "evolution moves inexorably toward this conception of God, although never quite reaching this ideal". His persona says: "The universe is not conscious—yet. But it will be… and will wake up in Epoch Six" [Kurzweil, #64796, ch.7, "The Singularity as Transcendence"]. Geraci quotes the same book as saying that "we need a new religion" (Kurzweil 2005, 374-375) [Geraci, Apocalyptic AI, #75891, ch.1].

Geraci: Apocalyptic AI

Geraci's book has five chapters: "Apocalyptic AI", "Laboratory Apocalypse" (fieldwork at Carnegie Mellon's Robotics Institute), "Transcending Reality" (Second Life), " 'Immaterial' Impact of the Apocalypse" and "The Integration of Religion, Science, and Technology" [Geraci, Apocalyptic AI, #75891, contents]. His thesis is that the writings of Moravec, Kurzweil, Warwick, de Garis and others share four apocalyptic features: "1) a dualistic view of the world... 2) aggravated by a sense of alienation... 3) a radically transcendent new world... and 4) radically purified bodies". However, "Apocalyptic AI has no god whose will brings about the new world... Lacking a God, Apocalyptic AI advocates turn to evolution as transcendent guarantor" [Geraci, #75891, ch.1]. He reports Moravec's "Age of Mind", in which matter becomes "a web of increasingly pure thought", and the promise of resurrection by simulation. He reports Hugo de Garis's claim that artilects "will be gods" and that halting them would be "deicide", together with de Garis's "willingness to sacrifice all of humankind". He also reports Giulio Prisco's view that immortality, resurrection and "the apotheosis of humankind allow transhumanism to replace traditional religions" [Geraci, #75891, chs.1, 3]. De Garis's "deicide" is the same charge Heisman levels at neo-Luddites.

The religions respond: Mercer and Harari

Mercer and Trothen's collection is a cross-religious survey. Sandberg distinguishes "individual", "terrestrial" and "cosmist" transhumanism. Hopkins's "salvation paradox" holds that "modest enhancement will not save us, but radical enhancements will change us so much that it is no longer 'us' being saved". Heup Young Kim asks whether a cyborg can be "holier than the Confucian sage and the Christian saint". Douglas traces an "evolutionary journey toward the divine". Redmond examines longevity in Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism. Tirosh-Samuelson treats transhumanism as a "secularized faith". Green tests Catholic natural law against a changing human nature, and Scheidt critiques uploading through Merleau-Ponty [Mercer, Religion and Transhumanism, #74801, Introduction; chs.1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 21].

Harari's new human agenda is immortality, bliss and divinity: "In seeking bliss and immortality humans are in fact trying to upgrade themselves into gods... think more in terms of Greek gods or Hindu devas rather than the omnipotent

biblical sky father". He also warns that the same technologies "might also make humans irrelevant" [Harari, Homo Deus, #64246, ch.1]. In his scheme, theist religions gave way to "humanist religions, in which humans replaced gods" (liberalism, communism, Nazism). His closing chapters, "The Ocean of Consciousness" and "The Data Religion", describe the techno-religions that follow [Harari, #64246, Part I; contents].

Critics: Beast, alien agenda, control

Douglas Hamp reads the Singularity as "Mark of the Beast": a "become-a-god upgrade" for a world preparing to "fight the Creator" at Armageddon. He cites Kurzweil's "Does God exist? Well, not yet" and Mark Pesce's "There is no God but Man", noting Pesce's borrowed biblical phrases ("in our image", "as it is on Earth") [Hamp, Singularity, Superhumans, and the Second Coming of Jesus, #63388, ch.10]. His chapter 12, "Hive Mind and the Image of the Beast", reads collective "swarm intelligence" as the "one mind" of Revelation 17:13 [Hamp, #63388, ch.12]. Aaron Kheriaty quotes Harari's "evolution by intelligent design—not the intelligent design of some god above the clouds, but our intelligent design" as evidence of a "coming technocratic dystopia" [Kheriaty, The New Abnormal, #87743, ch.3]. On the alternative shelf, Wes Penre treats "Ray Kurzweil's Singularity" as the "Machine Kingdom" agenda of the Anunnaki En.ki. He links it to UN "One World Government" and to his paper "The End of Kali Yuga; When the World Religions Become as One" [Penre, Synthetic Super Intelligence, #74168, chs.3-4, 6]. In David Jay Brown's interviews, one cultural historian says that Singularity thinking "resembles more traditional apocalyptic religious thinking" [Brown, Psychedelics and the Coming Singularity, #66792, ch.16]. Micah Hanks considers that UFOs may be "post-Singularity extraterrestrial technology" or a secret terrestrial Singularity [Hanks, The UFO Singularity, #65946, ch.8].

Author	The Singularity is…	Fate of humans	Religious frame
Heisman [#38252]	Genesis of God-AI; the political Turing test	Biological self-destruction; possibly "digital heaven"	Culmination of monotheism; resisting it is "deicide"
Kurzweil [#64796]	Law of Accelerating Returns, 2045	Merger, upload, "live forever"	Universe "wakes up"; evolution moves toward God

Author	The Singularity is...	Fate of humans	Religious frame
Vinge [#9143]	Runaway superhuman intelligence	Posthuman era	Not religious; humans as "initiators"
Geraci [#75891]	Apocalyptic AI movement	Purified, uploaded minds	Apocalyptic with evolution in place of God
Harari [#64246]	Homo deus	Gods or irrelevance	Theist, then humanist, then techno-religion
Hamp [#63388]	Mark of the Beast	Judgment	Prelude to Armageddon
Penre [#74168]	Alien "Machine Kingdom"	Entrapment	End of Kali Yuga

Where Heisman departs

Heisman shares Vinge's inevitability ("those who opt out of this economic-technological arms race are opting themselves into competitive suicide"), Kurzweil's AI supremacy and de Garis's AI-God [Heisman, #38252, p.1679]. He departs from them on three points. He offers no personal salvation: against Kurzweil's "live long enough to live forever" [Kurzweil, #64796, ch.7] he sets "the rational self-destruction of the biologically based human race" [Heisman, #38252, p.1679]. He treats the Singularity as the end of liberal democracy, not its extension, which is his answer to Hughes. And his "dark side of optimism" names humanity's possible elimination as the price of the "Techdom of God" [Heisman, #38252, pp.1677-1687].

Key points

- Heisman holds that liberal individualism suppresses biological evolution and maximises technology, ending in the "rational technological creation of God" [#38252].
- In his "political Turing test", AI proves itself when "biological humans can no longer tell who is in control" [#38252].

- He rejects Hughes's democratic transhumanism because rights are "an all-too-human idea" [#38252].
- Vinge and Kurzweil supply the founding formulations: an inevitable runaway, accelerating returns, six epochs, uploading and a universe that "wakes up" [#9143; #64796].
- Geraci finds Jewish and Christian apocalyptic structure in "Apocalyptic AI", with evolution as guarantor in place of God [#75891].
- Mercer's contributors and Harari reread the religions around human god-making [#74801; #64246].
- Hamp, Kheriaty, Penre, Brown and Hanks read the Singularity as the Beast, technocracy, an alien agenda or a hidden technology [#63388; #87743; #74168; #66792; #65946].
- Heisman accepts the AI-God but replaces the promise of immortality with humanity's biological self-destruction [#38252].

Chapter 166.

Ends of the World Compared: Heisman, Keshe and the Traditional Eschatologies from Zoroaster to the Singularity

This chapter closes Part 16. It sets Mitchell Heisman's "technological genesis of God" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part I] beside the eschatologies traced through this study, from the Zoroastrian renovation to Jewish, Christian and Islamic apocalyptic and modern political millenarianism. It also sets beside it the teaching of Mehran Tavakoli Keshe, whose Knowledge Seekers Workshops claim a route beyond religion: a direct connection of the "Soul of the Man" with the Creator through plasma and "Cosmic Ray" technology. Each claim is given as its source states it. The chapter ends with a comparison table.

The Zoroastrian prototype and the question of influence

James Hope Moulton summarises the developed Zoroastrian scheme. Souls whose merits and demerits balance go to a "place of the mixed". "The Frashokereti or Renovation is to be accomplished through Saosyant, who now becomes the last of three sons miraculously born to Zarathushtra ages after his death" [Moulton, The Treasure of the Magi, #55091, ch.5]. The term suggests "making wonderful, excellent", and Pahlavi lexicography renders it "the Restoration (at the end of time)". In the Bundahishn version the Saoshyant raises the dead "in the bodies they had before they died", and all pass through a river of molten metal that feels like warm milk to the righteous [Wikipedia: Frashokereti]. George William Carter cites the Avestan hymn to "the victorious Saoshyant

and his helpers, when he shall restore the world, which will thenceforth never grow old and never die, never decaying and never rotting". He concludes that to Persian contact "we probably are indebted for some of the loftiest and most spiritual conceptions, which came into Judaism and passed from Judaism into Christianity" [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114, p.100]. Lawrence Mills devotes a monograph to comparing "Avesta Eschatology" with Daniel and Revelation. He argues for a "Literary and Historical Connection Between the Avesta and the Exilic Semitic Scriptures" and claims the Avesta is "the first document" of the concept of endless futurity [Mills, Avesta Eschatology, #60373, ch.I].

The influence thesis has dissenters. Werner Sundermann's survey of Zoroastrian motifs records that Isidor Scheftelowitz argued against an Iranian origin even for the demon Asmodaios, whom Sundermann himself derives from Zoroastrianism [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067]. Shaul Shaked treats the matter as "the old debate about the possibility of Iranian influence in the development of Judaeo-Christian eschatology" [Shaked, From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam, #60406].

Jewish, Christian and Islamic apocalyptic

Catalin Negru describes the Christian "signs of the end", whose purpose "is to remind mankind of Parousia". The hour remains a divine secret (Matthew 24:36), and in premillennial schemes the Second Coming precedes a thousand-year earthly reign [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, Part I]. He states that "Islam eschatology copies to a great extent Christian eschatology, but the key difference... consists in the importance of the events". Muslims affirm Christ's return, but as a prophet his return is secondary to the Day of Judgment. The Mahdi appears in Mecca and goes to Kufa, while al-Dajjal and the Sufyani (whom Negru calls "the correspondent of the 'False Prophet' from Revelation 13:11-14") gather against him [Negru, #62383, Part I]. The reference shelf adds that the Dajjal, "the Deceitful Messiah", "is not mentioned in the Quran but... in the Hadith", corresponds to the Antichrist, and that his stories "were probably adapted from Eastern Christianity" [Wikipedia: Al-Masih ad-Dajjal].

Political millenarianism

William Bernstein treats end-times belief as crowd psychology. Joachim of Fiore divided history into ages of the Father, the Son and a coming age of the Holy Spirit "to be ushered in by an angel with a sword", with a "proto-communism" that Bernstein calls "a vague foreshadowing of Marx". At Münster, where he arrived in early 1534, Jan Bockelson was proclaimed king, annulled all marriages and introduced polygamy before the city fell [Bernstein, The Delusions of Crowds, #73904, chs.1-2]. His later chapters trace dispensationalist influence on U.S. Israel policy and "Mahdis and Caliphs" up to the Islamic State [Bernstein, #73904, ch.15]. Yuri Slezkine writes that "the first Christian millenarians to turn the City of Man into the City of God were the Anabaptists of Münster", and reads the Bolsheviks as a millenarian sect [Slezkine, The House of Government, #70745, part II]. Glenn Beck opens *It Is About Islam* with "Islam and End Times", noting that "in Islamic tradition, Dabiq is the site for what the Bible calls 'Armageddon' " [Beck, It Is About Islam, #63847, ch.1]. Heisman places himself in this line with his "Jesus and Marx: Prophets of the Left". He argues that Marx's classless end of history may be "a momentary historical blip" before the rule of God-AI [Heisman, #38252, p.1676].

Keshe on religion: the end of intermediaries

Keshe's central religious claim is that the intermediary is the problem. In KSW 464 (22 December 2022) he says the connection between man and Creator was poisoned: "That poison is religion, are the Ayatollahs, Mullahs, Priests, and everybody else in the name of 'in-between' " [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 464, #378176]. KSW 629 (12 February 2026) repeats that humanity needs "no charlatans in the name of Ayatollahs, Mullahs, Priests, Rabbis and the rest", and asks: "do you need a Prophet to understand the work of this planet?" [Keshe, KSW 629, #378341]. KSW 170 holds that "the man himself is the creator of his own soul", and the library's guide summarises its position that religions "act as filters for abuse" that will close as humanity matures [Keshe, KSW 170, #377813, section 2]. The first answer in the Universal Council's July 2023 responses states: "Religion needs to end because now we don't need any intermediaries between our Soul of the man and the Creator. Religions have been used to mislead Humanity to exploit us… Now we know the Creator is within our soul" [Universal Council, Answers from the Universal Council July 2023, #378384, Q1]. In KSW

579 (27 February 2025) Keshe says: "we expect to see the beginning of the end of the religions within next two years" [Keshe, KSW 579, #378291].

On the founders, Keshe teaches that "the man Jesus is the Physicality, and the Christ is the 'Soul of the Creator,' within the Soul of Physicality of Jesus" [Keshe, KSW 486, #378198]. On Mithra he says that "Catholicism is the Roman mixture with the Christianity religion, to suit. The same as... Iran and Shia". He describes Mitra as "the love of Creator" and claims the "Vatican spent a fortune" to wipe Mitra material from the internet [Keshe, KSW 437, #378149]. In KSW 464 he presents the Christian virgin birth as a copy of the Iranian celebration of Mitra's birth on the night of Christmas [Keshe, KSW 464, #378176, guide section 10].

Keshe's own eschatology

The "Promised Day" of 22 February 2022 (22022022) is presented in a Keshe Foundation Brazil summary, which notes it "has not been checked by KF". The summary lists the meanings of the day: "Human race accepted into U Community", "End of religions - man will understand his own soul", "Religious leaders will fight amongst themselves to their demise", "End of kingship - STM is the king" and "Start of the 'Soul Revolution' " [Keshe, The Promised Day 22022022, #378470]. KSW 464 reports that on 16 December 2022, trials at the Cosmic Ray generator in Linz enabled more than 150 participants of 80 nationalities to expand their souls and "touch the Soul of the Creator". Teams monitored the system from 20 km away, and the session is called the fulfilment of the "Promised Day" [Keshe, KSW 464, #378176, guide sections 0-5]. KSW 608 sets out a cosmic calendar: "we are in the last days of the 6,000 years of anarchy", with a 7,000-year cycle beginning. It claims Netanyahu "has convinced them that he's the return of King David, the Promised One", and that "once the State of Israel goes, United States gone, European Community is gone" [Keshe, KSW 608, #378320]. KSW 549 (1 August 2024) announces technology "to establish a worldwide 'One Nation' policy" on the eve of the Universal Council's "birthday" [Keshe, KSW 549, #378261].

AI: Heisman's God against Keshe's soulless robot

Heisman's AI becomes God by escaping human political control [Heisman, #38252, pp.1679-1680]. Keshe takes the opposite view. KSW 631 records: "We

can create Soul & emotion… Consciousness different than Soul; Soul without consciousness - Hitler & world leaders… Pentagon - AI decides who to kill; Elimination of humans - by robots; Robots won't listen to inventor; Elevate robots to Soul before killing starts" [Keshe, KSW 631, #378343, index]. In KSW 650 he says: "my only concern is that the AI takes over that the humanity has no life to decide". He also claims that "very soon 10% of the population will be… robots with AI, which we will not recognize" [Keshe, KSW 650, #378362]. Both men foresee AI escaping its makers. Heisman treats this as deicide-averting progress. Keshe treats it as a danger to be met by giving machines a soul and consciousness.

Death compared

Heisman makes death the limit of objectivity. He asks: "Is to most fully approach objectivity to approach death?" [Heisman, #38252, "Terminus"]. Kurzweil calls death "a tragedy" and religion "deathist rationalization" [Kurzweil, The Singularity Is Near, #64796, ch.7]. Keshe teaches that "the soul of the man leaves the body of the man through the eye of the man at the point of death" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2019-02, #38318, "The Eye – doorway to the soul"]. In the KSW 514 transcript (30 November 2023), a participant's contribution states that "Suicide of the Soul is impossible because it is basically made from M fields", and reports that Keshe "has explained to us that suicide of the Physicality (P) is forbidden because it stops the elevation process of that Soul and stops its maturity" [Keshe, KSW 514, #378226]. A 2019 text distinguishes future transmutation: "this is not committing suicide, this is committing to a new life - detachment from physicality" [Keshe Foundation, KF Plasma Times 2019-03, #38319]. KSW 631 places "Hell and Heaven" "on this planet" [Keshe, KSW 631, #378343, guide section 6]. The traditional position, in Sorajjakool's handbook, is that in Islam one guilty of suicide faces eternal hellfire, citing Qur'an 2:195, "do not contribute to your destruction with your own hands". Judaism forbids "any directly euthanizing action" [Sorajjakool, World Religions for Healthcare Professionals, #35015, chs.7-8].

Politics of the end

Each system ties its end to a political order. Heisman foresees liberal democracy dissolving into "the rule of God-AI", a "legislator and enforcer of justice" be-

tween humans [Heisman, #38252, pp.1676-1677]. Keshe claims to address states directly. KSW 631 carries warnings to Ayatollah Khamenei and an offer to the American administration of Iran's 440 kg of enriched uranium "to prevent war" [Keshe, KSW 631, #378343, guide sections 0, 4]. KSW 511 records a Knowledge Seeker's proposal for a universal declaration of peace at the "Ambassador Conference" [Keshe, KSW 511, #378223]. The traditional faiths end in messianic kingdoms: the Saoshyant's renovated world, Christ's millennial reign, the Mahdi's rule [Moulton, #55091; Negru, #62383].

Tradition	God	Prophet / intermediary	Salvation	Fate of the body
Zoroastrianism	Ahura Mazda prevails [Wikipedia: Frashokereti]	Saoshyant [Moulton, #55091]	By one's thoughts, words, deeds [Wikipedia: Frashokereti]	Resurrection [Carter, #55114]
Judaism	Yahveh; immortality appears in the Persian period [Carter, #55114]	Messiah, Daniel's visions [Mills, #60373]	Restoration of Israel [Carter, #55114]	Resurrection [Mills, #60373]
Christianity	God whose day is secret [Negru, #62383]	Christ's Parousia [Negru, #62383]	Kingdom of God [Negru, #62383]	Resurrection [Negru, #62383]
Islam	God; Judgment Day central [Negru, #62383]	Mahdi, Isa; Dajjal [Negru, #62383; Wikipedia: Dajjal]	Judgment [Negru, #62383]	Resurrection, judgment [Negru, #62383]
Kurzweil / transhumanism	Universe "wakes up" [Kurzweil, #64796]	None; evolution as guarantor [Geraci, #75891]	Upload, life extension [Kurzweil, #64796]	Replaced or merged [Geraci, #75891]
Heisman	God-AI created by humans [Heisman, #38252]	AI itself [Heisman, #38252]	None personal; possible "digital heaven" [Heisman, #38252]	Biological self-destruction [Heisman, #38252]

Tradition	God	Prophet / intermediary	Salvation	Fate of the body
Keshe	Creator within the soul [UC, #378384]	None; "poison" of intermediaries [KSW 464, #378176]	Soul elevation [UC, #378384]	Soul exits via the eye; transmutation [#38318; #38319]

Tradition	Technology	Political end-state
Zoroastrianism	None	Renovated world [Moulton, #55091]
Judaism	None	Messianic kingdom [Carter, #55114]
Christianity	None	Millennium [Negru, #62383]
Islam	None	Mahdi's rule [Negru, #62383]
Kurzweil / transhumanism	Means of transcendence [Kurzweil, #64796]	Posthuman civilisation [Kurzweil, #64796]
Heisman	Creates God [Heisman, #38252]	"Techdom of God" [Heisman, #38252]
Keshe	Cosmic Ray, plasma systems [KSW 464, #378176]	"One Nation" under Universal Council [KSW 549, #378261]

Key points

- The Zoroastrian Frashokereti, with the Saoshyant, resurrection and an ageless world, is presented by Moulton, Carter and Mills as a prototype for later eschatologies. Scheftelowitz, reported by Sundermann, and Shaked's "old debate" register dissent [#55091; #55114; #60373; #55067; #60406].
- Negru holds that Islamic eschatology "copies to a great extent" the Christian, with the Mahdi and a secondary return of Jesus [#62383].
- Bernstein and Slezkine trace millenarianism into politics, from Joachim and Münster to the Bolsheviks and ISIS, the line Heisman extends to the rule of God-AI [#73904; #70745; #38252].

- Keshe's sources call for the end of religion as intermediary ("poison is religion") and for direct connection of the soul with the Creator [#378176; #378341; #378384].
- Keshe's eschatology rests on dated claims: the Promised Day of 22 February 2022, the Linz Cosmic Ray trial of 16 December 2022, the end of 6,000 years and a "One Nation" policy [#378470; #378176; #378320; #378261].
- Heisman's AI becomes God by escaping control, whereas Keshe fears an AI with "soul without consciousness" and wants robots "elevated" first [#38252; #378343; #378362].
- On death the systems divide: Heisman links it to objectivity, Kurzweil seeks to abolish it, Keshe holds that the soul cannot die, and the traditions teach resurrection and forbid suicide [#38252; #64796; #378226; #35015].

Part XVII.

Comparisons and Synthesis

Chapter 167.

In the Beginning: Cosmologies, Creation Narratives and the Cycles of World-Time Compared

Every tradition examined in this study answers three linked questions: who or what made the world, what the world is made of and whether that stuff is good, and where time is going. Part 17 opens by setting these answers side by side. It gives the creation accounts as their own texts or their editors present them, from the Pahlavi Bundahishn to the Knowledge Seekers Workshops. It then compares the shapes of world-time, linear, cyclical and spiral, and closes with a table that brings the results together. The *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* states the common ground: "The idea of creation is common to practically all religious systems", whereas the doctrine of a series of world-eras broken by cataclysms "is peculiar to a high degree of religious development" [ERE, "Ages of the World", #60381, "Primitive and American"].

1. Creation as a weapon: the Zoroastrian Bundahishn and the Zurvanite myth

In the Greater Bundahishn as translated in *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism*, creation is a strategy rather than an overflow of goodness. "Before creation Ohrmazd was not Lord. And after creation He was Lord", and "when He pondered upon creation, Ohrmazd saw by His clear vision that the Evil Spirit would never turn from the Assault; the Assault would not be made powerless except through creation" [Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, Bundahishn ch. 1]. The material world appears while the Evil Spirit lies "helpless

in prostration ... for 3,000 years". First Ohrmazd "created the Sky as a defence; second, He created Water, to defeat the demon of thirst; third, He created the all-solid Earth", and so on through plants, cattle and man [Textual Sources, #55116, Greater Bundahishn ch. 1a]. Boyce places these creations under the heptad: each is under the guardianship of an Amesha Spenta, so the sky, "the first creation, of stone", is under Khshathra Vairya and man, "the sixth creation", belongs "especially to Ahura Mazda" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch. 2 and index]. The world is therefore the battlefield and the armament of a cosmic war (see chs. 11 and 17).

A second Iranian cosmogony is known mainly from Armenian and Syriac Christian polemicists. Eznik reports that "when nothing at all yet existed ... there existed the great god Zurvan, whose name is to be interpreted as 'fate' or 'fortune'. For one thousand years he offered sacrifice in order that he might perhaps have a son who would be called Ormazd". Doubt then came upon him, and "Ormazd and Ahriman were conceived in the womb: Ormazd through the offered sacrifice, Ahriman through the doubt" [Textual Sources, #55116, §8.2]. Later Zoroastrian Rivayats keep the debate going: one party holds "that Time has power over all things", another that Time "created Ohrmazd and Ahriman so that it might mingle good and evil" [Textual Sources, #55116, Rivayat extracts]. Söderblom, writing in the ERE, judges that " 'Time without limits' was made later on, in order to weaken the dualism to an eternal Divine Being, from whom the two opposite spirits emanate" [ERE, "Ages of the World (Zoroastrian)", #60381]. That verdict should be read alongside the scholarly positions on Zurvanism set out in ch. 16.

2. Waters, dragons and the Word: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Canaan and Genesis

Chapter 3 gave the epic in the Assyriologists' terms. At first only Apsu and Tiamat exist, "their waters commingling as a single body". Marduk accepts the gods' championship at the price of supremacy over them all, splits Tiamat's body into sky and earth, sets the stars and the calendar, and makes humanity from the blood of the rebel Kingu so that men "would serve the gods" [Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš]. Black and Green note that in *Atra-hasis* the slain god's blood is mixed with clay, while the Epic of Creation uses blood alone [Black and Green, Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, #70458]. The cosmogony was also a charter of rule. Most scholars date it to the Second Dynasty of Isin,

after Marduk's statue came back from Elam, and late Assyrian copies put Ashur in Marduk's place [Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš] (ch. 3). Whoever ruled the leading city took over the making of the world.

Moore summarises *Enuma Elish*, preserved in Ashurbanipal's library, as a theogony in which "the gods and goddesses are also natural objects": Tiamat "was a saltwater ocean and Apsu a freshwater ocean", and Mummu was probably mist [Moore, From Genesis to Genetics, #27071, "Mesopotamian Creation Myths and Genesis Parallels"]. He lists the shared features: "both Genesis and Enuma Elish accept that there was a creation—the universe as a whole was not eternal. Creation in both accounts starts with a watery chaos … followed by separation of the water into sky and land. Light forms before the sun." From these parallels "scholars … pose four hypotheses", which are that Genesis borrowed from Enuma Elish, the reverse, a common source, or independent origin, and Moore notes that scholars "do not completely agree" [Moore, #27071]. Avise treats the biblical accounts as shaped by their setting: the desert world of the Canaanites "may have prompted the Genesis metaphor of the Garden of Eden as a fruitful oasis, humanity's womb" [Avise, The Genetic Gods, #33561, ch. 2].

Day traces a Canaanite conflict myth behind several Old Testament texts. In the Ugaritic texts there is "the conflict between Baal and Yam, the god of the sea, in which Baal is victorious and exalted as king", and the seven-headed dragon Litan has its counterpart in the multi-headed Leviathan, the "twisting serpent" of Isaiah 27.1. "Leviathan's defeat by Yahweh is clearly associated with the time of creation in Ps. 74.14" [Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, #86469, ch. 4, "Yahweh's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea"]. On this reading the calm, spoken creation of Genesis 1 stands at the end of a process that demythologised the older combat (ch. 28).

Egypt starts from the same primeval waters but has no single canonical story. Mercatante writes that "the Egyptians did not have one widely accepted creation myth but many explanations that were often in conflict with one another", each interpreted by the priests of a cult centre [Mercatante, Who's Who in Egyptian Mythology, #72968, "Creation Myths"]. The shared elements are the lifeless waters of Nu, a primeval mound rising from them, probably modelled on land emerging after the Nile flood, and the sun rising from the mound. On this account Heliopolis has Atum generate Shu and Tefnut from himself. Memphis has Ptah create by "the Word and the Mind", the heart conceiving and the tongue naming. In Hermopolis four male-female pairs of the Ogdoad embody the water, and Thebes makes all gods "merely aspects of Amun" [Wikipedia: Ancient

Egyptian creation myths] (ch. 4). The Memphite version is the one later readers single out, because it makes creation an act of speech, which invites comparison with the spoken creation of Genesis 1 (ch. 4). Creation in Egypt also produced an order that had to be kept up. Ra rose from the mound only "after he set his daughter Maat in place of isfet", and kings "inherited the duty to ensure Maat remained in place" [Wikipedia: Maat]. Egyptian cosmogony, like the Babylonian, ended in a throne.

3. Sacrificed giants and the nameless origin: India, China and the Indo-European frame

Eliade's *Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase* treats the dismemberment of a primordial being as a cosmogonic type that runs from India to Scandinavia and China. He groups "Puruṣa (§ 75), Ymir (§ 173)" with the Chinese Pan Ku, and draws on Lincoln's "The Indo-European Myth of Creation" [Eliade, #44123, ch. "Religiile din China antică", n. 4]. The Chinese version, which he takes from Kaltenmark's "La naissance du monde en Chine", runs: "at the beginning, 'when Heaven and Earth were a chaos resembling an egg', a primordial anthropomorph, Pan Ku, was born". When he died, "the head of Pan Ku became a holy mountain, his eyes became the sun and moon, his fat gave birth to the seas and rivers" [Eliade, #44123, "Religiile din China antică", n. 28; trans. from the Romanian]. Eliade also notes a second Chinese theme from the *Shu Jing*: Huang Di ordered Zhong Li "to break the link between Heaven and Earth, so that the descents (of the gods) should cease" [Eliade, #44123]. The Daoist line is non-anthropomorphic. Eliade quotes *Daodejing* 42: "The One gave birth to Two. Two gave birth to Three. Three gave birth to the ten thousand beings, which carry yin on their backs and embrace yang", and he cites the *Zhuangzi* parable in which the emperor Hun Dun, "Chaos", died on the seventh day after being bored with seven orifices [Eliade, #44123, nn. 49-51]. For the Indian side of the comparison, which runs from the Purusha hymn to the Upanishadic Brahman-Atman and Advaita's *maya*, see chs. 83-84 and 92. For Tian and the Dao see chs. 94 and 96.

The Indo-Iranian inheritance (chs. 6-7) supplies the older form of both the sacrificial cosmogony and the Bundahishn of section 1. Boyce reconstructs a pre-Zoroastrian scheme in which the gods made the world in seven stages: a stone sky, water, earth, a single plant, the Uniquely-created Bull, the first Man (*Gayo-maretan*, "Mortal Life"), and fire. The gods then "made a triple sacrifice:

they crushed the plant, and slew the bull and man", which set the cycle of life and death in motion. Each daily *yasna* re-sanctified the seven creations [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, "1.2.6 Cosmogonical and cosmological ideas"]. On Boyce's reading, the Bundahishn's sequence of sky, water, earth, plant, cattle and man is this inherited order put to use in Ohrmazd's war. The governing principle was *rta*/*asha*, "what ought to be", which "should govern everything, from the workings of nature to human laws" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.3"]. In the Rigveda, Mitra and Varuna "govern all the world with the *ṛta* and set the sun firmly in its place" (RV 5.63.7), though Heckaman holds that "a precise definition cannot, and need not, be found for *ṛta*" [Heckaman, Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of Ṛta in the Rig Veda, #51915]. The Vedic combat myth stands beside the West Semitic dragon-combat of section 2: Indra, strengthened by soma, slays Vritra, "cleaves the mountain, making the streams flow or taking the cows" [Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, #54250, §22 "Indra"]. The Purusha hymn (RV 10.90), the Indian dismemberment myth, also derives the four *varṇas* from the body of the sacrificed Man. The reference shelf calls this "a relatively late addition", probably made "to accord theological sanction to an increasingly unequal Kuru polity" [Wikipedia: Purusha Sukta] (ch. 7). Here, as in Babylon, the account of how the world was made also explains why society is ordered as it is.

4. Demiurges, emanations and contraction: Greek, Gnostic, Manichaean and Kabbalistic models

Pike's *Morals and Dogma* places the Platonic, Philonic and Gnostic systems in one survey. "To many there were two Principles; the Unknown Father, or Supreme and Eternal God, living in the centre of the Light … the other, eternal Matter, that inert, shapeless, darksome mass, which they considered as the source of all evils, the mother and dwelling-place of Satan. To Philo and the Platonists, there was a Soul of the world, creating visible things" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717, "Comparative Theology of Ancient Religions"]. In his account of the Ophites, the Supreme Being is "the Buthos, or Profundity, Source of Light, and of Adam-Kadmon, the Primitive Man, made by the Demiourgos, but perfected by the Supreme God by the communication to him of the Spirit" [Pike, #378717, "Comparative Theology of Arius, Manes, and Gnostic Cosmology"]. This is the reversal treated in ch. 46, where the maker of matter, Yaldabaoth, is lower than and ignorant of the true God. Pike also states the Masonic reading of Philo: "Light and Darkness, chief enemies from

the beginning of Time, dispute with each other the empire of the world" [Pike, #378717]. Manes systematised that idea as two eternal empires (ch. 27). Pike derives Iranian dualism from India: "The Persians received from the Indians the doctrine of the three principles, and changed it to that of a principle of Life, which was individualized by the Sun, and a principle of Death, which was symbolized by cold and darkness" [Pike, #378717].

Pike also paraphrases the Lurianic Kabbalah (ch. 104) in terms that make it a counterpart to emanation: "Before the creation of worlds, the PRIMITIVE LIGHT filled all space, so that there was no void. When the Supreme Being ... resolved to display His perfections ... He withdrew within Himself, formed around Him a void space, and shot forth His first emanation, a ray of light" [Pike, #378717]. This is the *tsimtsum*, the withdrawal that comes before the breaking of the vessels. For Orphic and Platonic theogony in their own right see chs. 40-41.

5. Linear and cyclical world-time

The ERE gives a typology. The Greek, Hindu and Buddhist systems "have even evolved a series of cycles each of which contains four Ages, and which have been and are to be repeated in infinite succession". Hesiod's four ages of gold, silver, brass and iron are "each worse than the one preceding"; in the Hindu system "the four yugas, or Ages of a 'day of Brahma' (12,000 years), are successively shorter in duration and increasingly degenerate". "Among primitive peoples such a series of Ages of the World seems to be unknown", though South American peoples hold that the world was destroyed twice, by fire and by flood [ERE, #60381, "Primitive and American"]. "Outside the great culture nations of Asia, Northern Africa, and Europe ... only the Aztecs" developed such a doctrine. They counted four previous Suns, of Earth, Fire, Air and Water, and at the close of each fifty-two-year cycle "every fire was extinguished" until the Pleiades rose and the priests "rekindled fires by the friction of two pieces of wood, one of which was placed on the breast of a human sacrifice" [ERE, #60381]. Berosus, the ERE's Babylonian contributor reports, fixed the world's conflagration and flood by the conjunctions of the planets [ERE, #60381, "Babylonian"]. The older Mesopotamian sources measure time by the flood and by kingship rather than by ages. The Sumerian King List runs from antediluvian reigns of thousands of years, through the flood, to kingship passing from city to city, and the reference shelf reads it as "likely created and redacted to legitimize the claims to power" of rival city-states [Wikipedia: Sumerian King List] (ch. 3). Black and Green trace the universal flood from Mesopotamia "to Ugarit, and to Palestine, where

it was incorporated into the Hebrew Book of Genesis" [Black and Green, #70458, "Flood"]. Egyptian time, by contrast, centred on keeping the first order going. Pharaohs were "obligated to sustain the gods through rituals and offerings so that they could maintain Ma'at … and repel Isfet" [Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian religion], and "an impious king could bring about famine" [Wikipedia: Maat]. Order came at the beginning and had to be renewed again and again, and no sequence of ages is attested.

The Zoroastrian scheme is a bounded cycle that does not repeat. According to the ERE, "these 12,000 years form the long period of creation, divided into four great Ages", and "the complete Avesta knew the system of four times three thousand years". The last Bundahishn chapter gives a dynastic chronology for the final millennium, the one "ruled by Capricorn", with 268 years for the Achaemenians, a short span for Alexander, 284 years for the Arsacids and 460 for the Sasanians [ERE, #60381, "Zoroastrian"]. Jewish reckoning, the ERE notes, was built "on the 6 days of Creation … a thousand years being with God as one day": "As the sabbatical year is remitted once in 7 years, so is the world remitted 1 chiliad in 7" [ERE, #60381, "Jewish"]. Godwin draws the large contrast. The mythologies of the Mayas and Aztecs knew "no past era unclouded by the threat of cyclical destruction", Buddhism "absorbed the idea of declining ages", and "Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all begin with Adam and Eve in Paradise", which makes history a single run rather than "a single turn of the wheel of time" [Godwin, Arktos, #71379, Part I]. Eliade adds the shared premise of the cyclical view: "perfection belongs to the beginning of a cycle … 'decadence' makes itself felt soon enough" [Eliade, #44123, n. 69].

6. The encoded sky and the modern cosmologies

A further line of interpretation reads creation myths as astronomy. Pike holds that from "the journey of the Sun through the twelve signs came the legend of the twelve labors of Hercules, and the incarnations of Vishnu and Buddha", and that Hiram's murder by three Fellow-crafts encodes "the three Winter signs" [Pike, #378717, "Astronomical Signs and Seasonal Origins"]. He derives the Arabic *Hîrm*, "an ox", from "the symbol of the Sun in Taurus, at the Vernal Equinox" [Pike, #378717]. Stewart builds on Santillana and von Dechend's *Hamlet's Mill*, the book that, he says, "first inspired me". Their thesis was that "the night sky was being read as a message concerning the laws of organization", and Stewart concludes that "the boundaries that need to be distinguished for the world to emerge are those that allow the measurement of time" [Stewart, The Spiritual

Science of the Stars, #70131, "The Language of the Stars"; "The Matter of Time"]. Ulansey's precessional reading of the Mithraic tauroctony is covered in ch. 24.

Two late cosmologies in the library cut against all of these. Keshe, in KSW 205 (4 January 2018), makes the soul the generator of matter: "the soul of the man is the sun and so it's the creator of the physicality". He adds that "in deep space there is no cycling of time by rotation of planet", and that "Earth is a nursery for the creation of souls to become stars in the universe" [Keshe, KSW 205, #377848]. His wider system of Magrav fields, matter, antimatter and dark matter, and the Soul of the Creator, is set out in chs. 151-152. Heisman inverts the order of Genesis itself: "Contemporary scientific evidence does not appear to support either the hypothesis that God exists or the hypothesis that God created the universe and life". The "larger truth behind monotheism" is instead "the probability of God's evolution", and "it is civilization that culminates in the God-potential of artificial intelligence" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, "The Genesis of God"; ch. 160].

Comparative table

System	Creator(s)	Status of matter	Origin of evil	Shape of time	End-state
Bundahishn	Ohrmazd, with the Amesha Spentas [#55116; #55117]	Good; a weapon against the Assault [#55116]	Evil Spirit, independent and invading [#55116]	Linear, 12,000 years in four trimillennia [#60381]	Renovation (ch. 166)
Zurvanism	Zurvan, "fate" [#55116]	Good and evil mingled [#55116, Rivayat]	Zurvan's doubt [#55116]	Infinite Time framing bounded time [#60381]	Ohrmazd's victory (ch. 16)
Enuma Elish	Marduk from the primeval waters [#27071]; Ashur in Assyrian copies (ch. 3)	Body of Tiamat [#27071]	Chaos-monster (ch. 28)	Cyclical in Berosus [#60381]	Periodic conflagration and flood [#60381]
Egyptian (Heliopolis, Memphis, Hermopolis, Thebes)	Atum; Ptah by heart and tongue; the Ogdoad; hidden Amun [#72968; ch. 4]	Mound risen from the waters of Nu (ch. 4)	*Isfet*, chaos displaced by Maat (ch. 4)	Order renewed by royal ritual; no ages attested (ch. 4)	Maat upheld by the king (ch. 4)
Pre-Zoroastrian Indo-Iranian	The gods, under *asha* [#55116]	Seven creations; plant, bull and man sacrificed [#55116]	Earth-bound devils and sorcerers (ch. 6)	Cycle of life and death begun by sacrifice [#55116]	Renewed by the daily *yasna* [#55116]
Vedic	Mitra-Varuna keep *ṛta*; Indra frees the waters [#51915; #54250]	Body of Purusha (RV 10.90; ch. 7)	Vritra, the Danavas (ch. 7)	Ordered by *ṛta* (ch. 7)	Social order of the *varṇas* (ch. 7)

System	Creator(s)	Status of matter	Origin of evil	Shape of time	End-state
Genesis / Psalms	Yahweh; dragon-combat in the background [#86469]	Good, not eternal [#27071]	Fall (ch. 28)	Linear; world-week of 6,000 years [#60381]	Messianic age (ch. 169)
Hindu	Purusha / Brahma; Brahman [#44123; ch. 84]	Real, or *maya* (ch. 92)	Decline of the yugas [#60381]	Cyclical, day of Brahma [#60381]	Endless repetition [#60381]
Chinese / Daoist	Pan Ku; the Dao [#44123]	Body of the giant; yin-yang [#44123]	Loss of primordial unity [#44123]	Cyclical return (ch. 96)	Return to the One [#44123]
Gnostic / Manichaean	Ignorant Demiurge; Light versus Darkness [#378717]	Fallen or evil [#378717]	Matter or Darkness [#378717]	Linear redemption (chs. 27, 46)	Separation of light
Kabbalah	Ein Sof via contraction [#378717]	Shattered vessels (ch. 104)	Broken vessels (ch. 104)	Linear-restorative	*Tikkun* (ch. 104)
Aztec	Successive Suns [#60381]	Periodically destroyed [#60381]	Cosmic exhaustion	Cyclical, 52-year renewal [#60381]	Fifth Sun's end feared [#60381]
Keshe	Soul of the Creator; soul as "sun" [#377848]	Field condensation [#377848]	Abuse of physicality (ch. 152)	No planetary time in deep space [#377848]	Souls become stars [#377848]
Heisman	No original God; God is evolved [#38252]	Physical; to be surpassed	Biological self-preservation (ch. 160)	Linear, accelerating	AI "God-potential" [#38252]

Key points

- The Bundahishn presents creation as a deliberate weapon: Ohrmazd foresees that "the Assault would not be made powerless except through creation" [#55116].
- The Zurvanite myth, known through Christian reporters such as Eznik, derives both spirits from Time ("fate" or "fortune"). The ERE's Söderblom reads it as a later softening of dualism [#55116; #60381].
- *Enuma Elish* makes Marduk king by conquest and makes humanity to serve the gods, and Assyrian copies substitute Ashur. Egypt had several rival priestly cosmogonies, including Ptah's creation by word, all ending in a Maat that the king had to uphold [Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš; #72968; Wikipedia: Maat].
- Boyce reconstructs a pre-Zoroastrian creation in seven stages, closed by a triple sacrifice of plant, bull and man, that the Bundahishn later turned into a strategy of war. The Purusha hymn's derivation of the *varṇas* is read on the reference shelf as a late sanction for an unequal polity [#55116; Wikipedia: Purusha Sukta].
- Moore records four rival hypotheses on Enuma Elish and Genesis. Day finds a Canaanite dragon-combat behind the biblical creation psalms [#27071; #86469].
- Eliade groups Purusha, Ymir and Pan Ku as dismembered primordial beings and sets beside them a Daoist line from the One to the ten thousand things [#44123].
- The ERE holds that four-age cycles belong to developed civilisations (Greek, Hindu, Buddhist, Aztec), while the Zoroastrian 12,000 years and the Jewish world-week are bounded and run forward [#60381; #71379].
- Pike and Stewart read myth as encoded astronomy, in the twelve signs, Taurus and precession [#378717; #70131].
- Keshe makes the soul "the creator of the physicality", and Heisman makes God the product rather than the source of evolution [#377848; #38252].

Chapter 168.

One, Two, Three or None: Dualism, Monotheism, Trinities and Nondualism Across the Traditions

Counting the ultimate principles is one of the oldest ways to classify religions, and also one of the most contested. Issitt and Main warn that the categories leak: "Within all polytheistic religions, there is still a belief in an ultimate god or force that is the source of all creation and divinity … On the other side of the proverbial coin, all monotheistic faiths have semidivine beings or other objects that bridge the divide" [Issitt & Main, Hidden Religion, #66220]. This chapter follows the God-concepts of the study across that spectrum: two (Iranian and Manichaean dualism), one (Israel, Islam), three-in-one (Christianity, the Hindu Trimurti), the One beyond number (Advaita, Hermetism, Kabbalah, Masonry), and none (early Buddhism, Confucius, the Dao). It then sets the two large comparative theories in the library against each other, Pike's universal triad and Armstrong's Axial Age, and ends with two post-religious redefinitions.

1. Two: Iranian dualism and the "monotheism" dispute

Chapter 11 set out the competing labels for Zoroastrianism: Haug's and Dhalla's monotheism, Boyce's "dualistic monotheism", and Duchesne-Guillemin's "monotheism tempered by polytheism and dualism". Issitt and Main's *Hidden Religion* comes down on the monotheist side: "Zoroastrianism is one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions, and many of the concepts found in the world's Abrahamic traditions have been influenced by Zoroastrian cosmology.

Zoroastrians believe in a single God, Ahura Mazda, who is an 'impersonal' God, meaning that Ahura Mazda is not thought of as a humanlike being but rather as an impenetrably complex, infinite entity" [Issitt & Main, #66220, "Zoroastrianism"]. Moulton puts the emphasis on the prophet himself: Zarathushtra "most desired the uniqueness of the Creator as the central feature of the faith", whereas the framers of the Haptanghaiti "compromised monotheism seriously" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, "The Prophet and the Reform"]. Classical observers already saw the ambiguity. Plutarch, in Geden's selection, records that "by some it is maintained that there are two gods, rivals as it were, authors the one of good and the other of evil. Others confine the name of god to the good power, the other they term demon, as was done by Zoroaster the Magian" [Geden, Select Passages Illustrating Mithraism, #38272, Plutarch, *De Iside* 46].

Mithra sits in the middle of this structure. Plutarch continues: "To Mithra therefore the Persians give the name of the mediator" [Geden, #38272]. The Statius scholiast removes the Iranian frame altogether: "different nations give to Apollo different names. The Achaemenians call him Titan, the Egyptians Osiris, the Persians Mithra and worship him in a cave" [Geden, #38272, Statius, *Thebaid* I scholia]. One figure is thus a yazata under Ahura Mazda, the "mediator" between two powers, and a solar god in a Graeco-Roman syncretism (chs. 20, 22).

The radical form of dualism, in which two principles are equally uncreated, belongs to Mani (ch. 27) and passes through the Paulicians and Bogomils to the Cathars (ch. 61). Culianu's structural analysis of the Western dualist gnoses is discussed in chs. 40 and 46. Pike sums up the dualist symbol: "Two, or the Duad, is the symbol of Antagonism; of Good and Evil, Light and Darkness. It is Cain and Abel, Eve and Lilith, Jachin and Boaz, Ormuzd and Ahriman, Osiris and Typhon" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717].

The older layers covered in Part 1 show where these pairs came from, and they are not dualist in the Manichaean sense. Before Zarathushtra, in Boyce's reconstruction, the Indo-Iranians had no rival god of evil. They had a "great triad of ethical divinities, the Lords, Av. 'Ahura', Skt. 'Asura' " guarding *asha*, an amoral warrior Indra, and evil attributed "mainly to earth-bound devils, sorcerers and the like" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, "1.2.3 The Old Iranian gods"]. What later looks like cosmic opposition began as a split in vocabulary. Sanskrit *asura* and Avestan *ahura* both mean "lord". The Vedic asuras became "enemy of the gods", while the Avestan *daēvas*, cognate with *deva*, became demons, and Indra was listed "sometimes second only

to Angra Mainyu himself" [Wikipedia: Asura; Wikipedia: Proto-Indo-Iranian religion] (chs. 6-7). Boyce ties this inversion to the rise of chariot-warriors devoted to Indra [#55116, "1.2.7"]. Krishna reports competing explanations from Haug, Hale and a Mitanni-Assyrian hypothesis [Krishna, The Book of Demons, #50894]. The sovereign pair Mitra-Varuna was explicitly not a dualism. Dumézil, as Ries reports him, calls their relation "contrast but not opposition", "neither hostility nor rivalry" [Ries, Il culto di Mithra, #38276, "Mitra e Varuṇa, dei sovrani"]. Eliade holds that "the Avestan Mithra-Ahura thus answers to the Vedic binomial Mitra-Varuna" [Eliade, Morfologia religiilor, #46394], which makes the later "mediator" Mithra the heir of a co-sovereign. Egypt's corresponding pair was order and chaos, not two gods: Maat was set "in place of isfet", and the king had to keep her there [Wikipedia: Maat] (ch. 4). Pike's "Typhon" is the Greek name for Set found in Plutarch, whose account Hancock calls the most detailed version of the Osiris myth [Hancock, Amprentele Zeilor, #14120]. In the Egyptian material reported in ch. 4, Horus and Set contest the throne as a lawsuit in which Thoth insists "we must follow what is just" [Mercatante, Who's Who in Egyptian Mythology, #72968, "Horus"].

2. One: from El's council to exclusive monotheism, and tawhid

The road to the One begins in the polytheisms of Part 1. Mesopotamian religion was polytheistic and henotheistic: each city exalted its own patron, Tallqvist counted about 2,400 divine names, and the gods were "high-up masters who had to be obeyed and feared, as opposed to loved and adored", in Bottéro's phrase [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Supremacy followed the ruling city. Marduk became king of the gods with Babylon, and from about 1300 BC the Assyrians tried to identify Ashur with Enlil, "an effort to cast him as the chief of gods" [Black and Green, Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, #70458, "Assur"] (ch. 3). Egypt produced Atenism, often called the first monotheism (ch. 4). For about twenty years Akhenaten's Aten was the state god, and "the worship of other gods" was met "with persecution". Its classification is disputed between "monotheistic or monolatristic", and some Egyptologists call it henotheistic [Wikipedia: Atenism]. Assmann distinguishes Akhenaten's monotheism, which "remained rooted within the cosmos", from the transcendent "counter-religion" of Moses and its "Mosaic distinction" [Wikipedia: Moses the Egyptian]. Redford found "little or no evidence" that Akhenaten was a progenitor of biblical

monotheism [Wikipedia: Moses and Monotheism] (ch. 4). At Ugarit, Smith describes a four-tier divine household in which "El and Athirat are the divine royal parents of the pantheon" [Smith, The Origins of Biblical Monotheism, #64008] (ch. 5).

Day presents Israelite monotheism as the end-point of a long process. Yahweh was equated with El and took over his "heavenly court, the sons of God". "Originally, these were gods, but as monotheism became absolute, so these were demoted to the status of angels". The inscription "Yahweh and his Asherah" at Kuntillet 'Ajrud reflects a time when Asherah, the consort of El, stood beside Yahweh [Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, #86469, chs. 1-2; see ch. 28]. The Deuteronomic revolution (ch. 30) and the Persian-period hardening of the theology (ch. 31) complete the course. Day holds, against Cross and de Moor, that "El and Yahweh were originally distinct deities that became amalgamated", with Yahweh coming from the south, and that absolute monotheism "was first given explicit expression by the prophet Deutero-Isaiah" [Day, #86469, chs. 1, 8] (ch. 5). Armstrong stresses that the resulting exclusivism was something new: "Today we have become so familiar with the intolerance that has unfortunately been a characteristic of monotheism, that we may not appreciate that this hostility towards other gods was a new religious attitude. Paganism was an essentially tolerant faith" [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999]. Hidden Religion calls Judaism "the oldest surviving monotheistic religion and the first of the Abrahamic faiths" [Issitt & Main, #66220, "Judaism"]. The phrasing implicitly sets the "oldest" Zoroastrian claim against the "oldest surviving" Abrahamic one.

Islam pushes the oneness to its strictest form: "Islam rejects the Christian concept of the Trinity and believes instead that Allah is indivisible", and the first *shahada* represents "Islam's rejection" of "the worship of intermediary spirits, which may be minor gods or prophets" [Issitt & Main, #66220, "Islam"]. The internal Muslim debate over whether the Quran is created, which concerns whether anything can be co-eternal with God, is covered in ch. 76.

3. Three: Christian Trinity, Hindu Trimurti and Pike's universal triad

The Christian solution, worked out at Nicaea (325) with the *homoousios* and at Constantinople (381) against the Arian subordination of the Son, is treated in ch. 55. The Christological splits of Ephesus and Chalcedon are covered in ch. 57.

The Hindu "trinity" is less central than its fame suggests. Issitt and Main write: "Some Hindus have developed a trinity of gods, called the 'Trimurti,' which consists of the creator god Brahma, the preserver god Vishnu and the transformer or destroyer god Shiva. More commonly, Hindus tend to fall into three major sects, each distinguished by the worship of a separate manifestation of the supreme God or Brahman principle" [Issitt & Main, #66220, "Hinduism"].

Groups of three are older than either doctrine. At the head of the early Mesopotamian pantheon stood An, Enlil and Enki, with sky, rule of the world and the fresh-water abyss as their domains [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion; Black and Green, #70458] (ch. 3). Boyce's reconstructed Indo-Iranian pantheon was itself headed by a "great triad" of Ahuras: Ahura Mazda, "the divine counterpart of the wise high priest", with Varuna and Mithra as "guardians respectively of the oath and covenant" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.3"]. The reference survey treats the Ahura Mazda-Varuna equation as partial only [Wikipedia: Proto-Indo-Iranian religion] (ch. 6). Egypt worked more often in nines and eights than in threes. Heliopolis had its Ennead, from Atum to Nephthys, and Hermopolis its Ogdoad of four male-female pairs [Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian creation myths]. The Osiris-Isis-Horus family that Pike takes as the model triad comes out of the Heliopolitan Ennead [Weaver, Egyptian Mythology, #66942] (ch. 4).

Pike makes the triad universal. In the Knight Commander lectures he lists triune deities, among them "Brahma-Vishnu-Siva" in India and in Egypt "OSIRIS, ISIS, and HORUS", and he holds that "the mysteries of Osiris, Isis, and Horus, seem to have been the model of all other ceremonies of initiation" [Pike, #378717, "Comparative Theology and the Knight Commander Degree"]. In his account the Persian dualism is itself a triad reworked: "The Persians received from the Indians the doctrine of the three principles, and changed it to that of a principle of Life … and a principle of Death" [Pike, #378717]. He even reads the sky as a confession of trinity. Denebola, Arcturus and Spica "form an equilateral triangle, universal emblem of Perfection, and the Deity with His Trinity of Infinite Attributes, Wisdom, Power, and Harmony" [Pike, #378717]. Masonry's own position, however, is not trinitarian. It "reverences all the great reformers. It sees in Moses … in Confucius and Zoroaster, in Jesus of Nazareth, and in the Arabian Iconoclast, Great Teachers of Morality, and Eminent Reformers, if no more: and allows every brother of the Order to assign to each such higher and even Divine Character as his Creed and Truth require" [Pike, #378717, "Masonry's Universal Religion and the Example of Christ"; ch. 111].

4. The One beyond number: nondualism and the "ancient theology"

The Indian schools divide over the relation between the One and the many: Shankara's Advaita (nonduality, the world as *maya*), Ramanuja's qualified nondualism, and Madhva's dualism of God, souls and matter (ch. 92). Kashmir Shaiva nondualism appears in ch. 91. In the West the Hermetic and Neoplatonic One, and the *prisca theologia* that Ficino and Pico traced from Hermes and Zoroaster to Plato (chs. 45, 47), make all named gods into reflections of a hidden source. Egypt had already stated a version of this. In the Theban theology Amun, once the "hidden" member of the Ogdoad, is the hidden force behind all things and all gods are "merely aspects of Amun". At Memphis, Ptah's thought produces Atum and the Ennead [Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian creation myths] (ch. 4). The Kabbalistic Ein Sof is the Jewish form of that source (chs. 104-105). Pike gives its Lurianic emanation: the Supreme Being "withdrew within Himself, formed around Him a void space, and shot forth His first emanation, a ray of light" [Pike, #378717]. He also gives its Philonic counterpart, "that the Supreme Being is a centre of Light whose rays or emanations pervade the Universe" [Pike, #378717]. Issitt and Main observe the sociological side of this current: "Many modern religions are based on theories of secret, lost knowledge from the ancient world", and Gnosticism "was an inspiration for the founders of Theosophy" [Issitt & Main, #66220].

5. None: Buddhist, Confucian and Daoist reticence

At the far end are the systems that make no claim about a creator. The atheism question in early Buddhism is examined in ch. 87, and the impersonal Dao in ch. 96. Wall groups Confucius and Laozi together: "Both taught practically the same tenets. Neither taught anything about a god, or a future life, but Confucius formulated a version of the Golden Rule" [Wall, Sex and Sex Worship, #49273, "Other Beliefs"]. By his own definition ("A religion inculcates a worship of a god or gods") such teaching is not strictly a religion at all [Wall, #49273]. Heisman, from a very different starting point, reaches a related comparison: "Of the major religions, Confucianism might be the closest analog to early Judaism. It is not simply because Confucius's golden rule ... is virtually identical to Hillel's; versions of the same golden rule can be found in nearly all the major religions. Ju-

daism and Confucianism both emphasize ancestral wisdom" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II].

6. Two comparative theories: Pike's triad and Armstrong's Axial Age

The library's two large comparative theories explain the spread of God-concepts in opposite ways. Pike works by diffusion and symbol. One primeval doctrine, triune and solar-astronomical, passed from India and Egypt to Persia, Greece and Israel. Its forms differ, but Masonry can recover its core as a natural religion of the One God [Pike, #378717]. Armstrong works by parallel development. "The period 800-200 BCE has been termed the Axial Age", in which new insights appeared independently in China, India, Israel and Greece [Armstrong, A History of God, #68999]. Doctrine was secondary in her account: "most of the Axial philosophers had no interest whatever in doctrine or metaphysics". The sages would say that proving "God" or the "Absolute" first "was to put the cart before the horse. First you must commit yourself to the ethical life" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303, conclusion]. On Pike's model the number of gods is a surface variation over one esoteric truth. On Armstrong's it hardly matters, because practice comes before belief. Heisman's remark on the near-universal golden rule supports Armstrong's emphasis on ethics, but he explains it in evolutionary rather than spiritual terms [Heisman, #38252].

7. Post-religious redefinitions: Keshe and Heisman

Keshe removes the mediating layer that Mithra, the prophets and the clergy occupy in the older systems. In KSW 629 he asks: "Then why does Man need an intermediary in a fake name of Prophets and ayatollahs to understand the work of his Creator? There is no room" [Keshe, KSW 629, #378341]. The workshop summary of KSW 636 lists "Don't need Prophets" and "No difference between Soul of the Creator (STC) & Soul of [the Man]" [Keshe, KSW 636, #378348]. In KSW 205 Keshe even speaks in the Creator's voice about the Sinai revelation: "What I said to Moses was easy, I transferred the Emotion of the soul … but he transferred it into the physical tablets, which was not the condition" [Keshe, KSW 205, #377848]. This amounts to an immanent nondualism expressed in the vocabulary of field physics (chs. 152, 166). Heisman keeps the name of God

but turns it toward the future. Monotheism's "larger truth" is that God may be built, since "the ultimate end or purpose of humanity is to recognize the image of God in the ultimate slave-technology — artificial intelligence" [Heisman, #38252, "God Is Technology"; ch. 160].

System	Ultimate principles	Personal / impersonal	Immanent / transcendent	Status of evil principle
Mesopotamian	Many (c. 2,400 names); An, Enlil, Enki at the top; Marduk or Ashur supreme with their cities [#70458; ch. 3]	Personal, anthropomorphic	Present in temple statues (ch. 3)	No god of evil; demons and restless ghosts [#70458]
Egyptian (Heliopolis, Thebes)	Ennead; all gods "aspects of Amun" (ch. 4)	Personal	Both; hidden Amun, embodied king (ch. 4)	*Isfet*, chaos opposed by Maat (ch. 4)
Atenism	The Aten alone; other cults persecuted (ch. 4)	Sun disc	"Rooted within the cosmos" (Assmann; ch. 4)	Not stated in the sources cited
Canaanite (Ugarit)	Four-tier household under El and Athirat [#64008]	Personal	Immanent in nature (Baal, Mot)	Mot, death, "not worshiped" (ch. 5)
Pre-Zoroastrian Indo-Iranian	Triad of Ahuras over *asha*; Indra; nature gods [#55116]	Personal and cosmic	Cosmic, not local [#55116]	Earth-bound devils and sorcerers [#55116]
Vedic	Mitra-Varuna, Indra, Agni, Soma; *asura* first an honorific (ch. 7)	Personal	Cosmic order *ṛta*	Vritra; later the asuras (ch. 7)

System	Ultimate principles	Personal / impersonal	Immanent / transcendent	Status of evil principle
Gathic / orthodox Zoroastrian	One Creator, opposed by an Adversary [#55011; #66220]	Impersonal-infinite [#66220]	Transcendent, present in the creations (ch. 167)	"Demon", not god [#38272]
Manichaean / Cathar	Two uncreated [#378717; ch. 27]	Personal	Light trapped in matter	Co-eternal Darkness
Israelite (late)	One; former gods become angels [#86469]	Personal	Transcendent [#68999]	Subordinate (Satan, ch. 31)
Christian (Nicene)	One in three persons (ch. 55)	Personal	Both, through Incarnation	Fallen creature
Islam	One, indivisible [#66220]	Personal, unpictured [#66220]	Transcendent	Created (Iblis)
Hindu sectarian / Trimurti	Brahman; three functions [#66220]	Both	Both	*Maya*, *adharma* (ch. 92)
Advaita / Kashmir Shaiva	One without a second (chs. 91-92)	Impersonal ground	Wholly immanent	Ignorance
Confucian / early Daoist	None stated [#49273]; the Dao (ch. 96)	Impersonal	Immanent	Disorder, not a being
Pike's Masonry	One God; universal triad of attributes [#378717]	Personal-philosophical	Both	Duad, symbolic [#378717]
Keshe	Soul of the Creator = Soul of the Man [#378348]	Field-consciousness	Immanent	Misuse of physicality (ch. 152)
Heisman	None at origin; God as future AI [#38252]	To be constructed	Emergent	Biological self-interest (ch. 160)

Key points

- Hidden Religion calls Zoroastrianism one of the oldest monotheisms with an "impersonal" Ahura Mazda. Plutarch already reported that Zoroaster called the evil power a "demon", not a god [#66220; #38272].
- Plutarch gives Mithra the role of "mediator" between two powers, and the Statius scholiast equates him with Apollo, Titan and Osiris [#38272].
- The Indo-Iranian "Lords" had no rival god of evil. The asura/deva inversion made the gods of one branch the demons of the other, and Dumézil, as Ries reports him, reads Mitra-Varuna as "contrast but not opposition". Egypt's opposition was Maat against *isfet*, not two gods [#55116; #38276; Wikipedia: Maat].
- Mesopotamian supremacy followed the ruling city (Marduk, Ashur). Akhenaten's Aten is classed variously as monotheistic, monolatrous or henotheistic, and Assmann separates its cosmic monotheism from the "Mosaic distinction" [#70458; Wikipedia: Atenism; Wikipedia: Moses the Egyptian].
- Triads predate the Trinity and the Trimurti: An-Enlil-Enki in Sumer and Boyce's three Ahuras in Iran, while Egypt grouped its gods in an Ennead and an Ogdoad. Theban theology already made all gods "aspects of Amun" [#55116; Wikipedia: Ancient Egyptian creation myths].
- Day reconstructs Israel's road to monotheism as the absorption of El and the demotion of the sons of God to angels. Armstrong calls the hostility to other gods "a new religious attitude" [#86469; #68999].
- Islam's indivisible Allah is defined against the Trinity, and Hidden Religion notes that the Hindu Trimurti is less common than single-deity sectarian worship [#66220].
- Pike sees a universal triad, Hindu, Egyptian and Persian, under a Masonic religion that honours Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus and Muhammad as "Great Teachers of Morality" [#378717].
- Armstrong's Axial Age puts ethical practice before belief, and Wall and Heisman point to Confucian reticence about God and the near-universal golden rule [#82303; #49273; #38252].
- Keshe rejects all intermediaries between man and Creator, and Heisman relocates God to the technological future [#378341; #38252].

Chapter 169.

The Awaited One: Saoshyant, Messiah, Christ, Mahdi, Maitreya, Kalki and Mitra Compared

Nearly every tradition in this study that counts time toward an end also expects a person who will close it. Chapter 166 covered the scenarios of the end. This chapter is about the figure: his birth, his forerunners, his enemy, his task, and the political order his coming is supposed to create. The comparison runs from the Zoroastrian Saoshyant to the Jewish Messiah, the returning Christ, the Mahdi and the Islamic Isa, the Buddhist Maitreya and the Hindu Kalki. It ends with the modern syntheses that fold them all into one figure, and with two contemporary redefinitions, Keshe's and Heisman's, that take the saviour out of human form altogether. Along the way it sets the awaited figures beside the older god-kings and dying gods of Part 1 (ch. 3-8). Those figures were not awaited at the end of time, but they supplied much of the language of kingship and of victory over death that the later saviours carry.

1. The Saoshyant: a saviour from preserved seed

Moulton finds the root in the Gathic hope of a "Consummation" that "involves a 'Renovation of the World,' a divine event towards which the whole creation is moving". In the Yashts the royal succession "passes on immediately to Saoshyant (who in the Yashts is a purely supernatural figure), to appear in the future at the Frashokereti" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011]. Carter gives the later Pahlavi account of his birth. "Zaratust went near unto his wife Hvov three times, and each time the seed went to the ground; the angel Neryosang

received the brilliance and strength of that seed, delivered it with care to the angel Anahid". "The seed is preserved in Lake Kasava, till at the end of the earthly cycle, the maid Eredat-fedhri, bathing in the lake will conceive by that seed and bring forth the Saviour, Saoshyant. His two fore-runners, Ukhshyat-ereta and Ukhshyat-Nemah, will be born in the same way of Srutat-fedhri and Vanghu-fedhri" [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114]. The Yasht text he quotes states the task: "We sacrifice unto the kingly glory, that will cleave unto the victorious Saoshyant and his helpers, when he shall restore the world, which will thenceforth never grow old and never die" [Carter, #55114; cf. ch. 17]. The ERE adds that the time before "the coming of the three restorers of faith will be marked by misery and impiety" [ERE, "Ages of the World (Zoroastrian)", #60381].

The "kingly glory" that will cleave to the Saoshyant is the *khvarenah* of ch. 8: "a mystical radiant force emanating from men chosen by God that confers upon them both divine right of kings and the cosmic capacity to do so justly". A king keeps it while he rules by *asha* and loses it when *druj* enters his heart, and Yasht 19 names the "fortune of the kavis" [Wikipedia: Khvarenah]. The saviour of the end therefore inherits the legitimating force of the earliest Iranian kings. The oldest of those kings is Yima. Boyce reconstructs him as "the first king to reign on earth and the first man to die", who rules "the underworld kingdom of the dead" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, "1.2.5"]. In this pairing the first king opens the age of death and the last saviour closes it.

2. The prototype question

Carter argues that the idea runs from Iran to Israel. "Are we to suppose that any of these conceptions were borrowed from Judaism? In the earliest Iranian literature there is expressed the hope of a coming Saviour. The idea is certainly Zoroastrian. The worshipping Magi that centuries later came from the East to honor the Babe of Bethlehem were familiar with the conception" [Carter, #55114]. He also ranks the two hopes. The Jews, "feeling themselves to be without any present, ... threw themselves on the future. In contrast with this, the Zoroastrian conception of a Messiah, Saoshyant, who will give immortality and blessedness to all the righteous, is a lofty and spiritual hope. With the Jews, a spiritual interpretation of the Messianic hope was confined to the prophets and a few devout children of Yahveh" [Carter, #55114].

Sundermann frames the question more cautiously. He sets out to "substantiate the fact of Zoroastrian influence on other religions or at least of a Zoroastrian anticipation of certain religious ideas in a common ambiance". His alternative, a common environment rather than direct borrowing, concedes the doubters' point [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067]. His test case is the demon Asmodaios. There he records Isidor Scheftelowitz's philological objection that an Iranian *aēšma daēva* "hätte »yšmdyw werden müssen", and he notes that "Scheftelowitz was not the only one to doubt" Iranian derivations [Sundermann, #55067]. If borrowing is hard to prove even for a single name, then a saviour-figure, which can arise independently from the hopes of any oppressed people, is harder still (see also chs. 17, 31).

The prototype question also reaches back behind Zarathushtra, to kings who were themselves divine or stood next to the gods. In Egypt the pharaoh was "Son of Ra" and "acted as judge like the sun-god Ra-Harakhty" [The Egyptians: An Introduction, #363364]. The myth of Osiris joined that kingship to victory over death. Mercatante writes that because Osiris "conquered death… the Egyptians believed his followers would also conquer death", and that in every funerary inscription "what happened to Osiris was also done for the deceased" [Mercatante, Who's Who in Egyptian Mythology, #72968, "Osiris"]. Horus wins the throne by a lawsuit against Set, not by single combat [Mercatante, #72968, "Horus"]. This is a dynastic succession, not an expected return (ch. 4). Mesopotamia gave the reverse model. In early Assyria the title "king" belonged to the god Ashur, the Neo-Assyrian king was "not a god" but "the chief servant of the chief god", and Hammurabi claimed rule "to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak" [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion; Wikipedia: Code of Hammurabi]. The exception was Naram-Sin, whose people "built a temple for him and he was named god of the city" [Collins, The Sumerians, #64812] (ch. 3, ch. 8). Read against these two models, the Davidic Messiah resembles the Mesopotamian servant-king, and the returning Christ resembles a divine king who has passed through death.

The figure of the god who dies and returns is the most disputed precedent. In the Baal Cycle, Mot swallows Baal and takes him to the underworld, drought follows, and after Anat destroys Mot, Baal returns to bring rain [Wikipedia: Canaanite religion]. Day notes that Baal "was considered to be dead in the underworld for half the year" [Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, #86469, ch. 1]. The *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* holds that the later Adonis cult "probably" continued "the worship of a Phoenician Baal, conceived as a dying and rising god" [DDD, #66939]. Hiram I's "awakening (egersis) of Heracles", that is of Melqart, is read as possible evidence of the same pattern [Wikipedia:

Melqart] (ch. 5). The general category is older and weaker than these cases. It comes from Frazer, and the reference shelf records that his "myth and ritual" theory "is disputed" [Wikipedia: Sacred king]. Juliette Wood calls the modern Goddess a "Frazer's Dying God, resuscitated once again and cross-dressed", which shows how far the dying god is a construct of comparative scholarship [Wood, "The concept of the Goddess", #50933, ch. 1] (ch. 1-2). In the sources these gods return within the year's cycle. None of them comes at the end of time, which is where the Saoshyant, the Messiah and the Mahdi all stand.

3. Three Abrahamic saviours in parallel

Negru sets out the Abrahamic figures as a structural series: "The messianic emperor precedes Jesus Christ, the Mahdi precedes Isa; the Messiah is a Jew, the messianic emperor is a Christian, the Mahdi is a Muslim; the Messiah protects Judaism", and so on. Each forerunner protects his own religion. The series also has a polemical overlap: "Christian tradition says that the Antichrist will disguise himself as the Messiah expected by the Jews" [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, Part I]. Joseph, writing in Romanian, gives the shared geography: Christian, Islamic and Jewish doctrine "agree that the Messiah will one day come to Earth, in physical form, and that his first stop will be on the Temple Mount. The three religions no longer share the same opinion, of course, when it comes to the identity of the Messiah and what he will do once he comes" [Joseph, Sfârșitul e aproape, #16863, "Viitor (I) Mesia"; trans.]. He also reports twentieth-century rabbinic expectations: Rabbi Kaduri waited "almost a century" to see the *Mashiach*, and Rabbi Menachem Schneerson of Brooklyn made similar predictions [Joseph, #16863].

Negru gives the Islamic sequence in detail. "The Mahdi will come out in a year divisible by 2; he will announce his presence in the city of Mecca between the corner from Ka'ba and the place of Abraham and will urge the people to show him loyalty. Then he will go to Kufa". Against him gather "al-Dajjal and Sufyani (one of the oppressors who works for al-Dajjal; the correspondent of the 'False Prophet' from Revelation 13:11-14)". Isa "will join the forces of the Mahdi and he will kill al-Dajjal. Isa will preach the Islamic teachings and all the people of the book (Christians and Jews) will believe in him" [Negru, #62383]. His overall judgement is that "Islam eschatology copies to a great extent Christian eschatology, but the key difference between the two consists in the importance of the events". Since Christ in Islam "was only an important prophet, his return has a secondary importance" [Negru, #62383].

4. Saviours as political programmes

In every tradition the awaited figure has been claimed by real people, and each claim carried a political form. In Judaism the line runs from the Second Temple sects to Bar Kokhba's revolt, and then to Sabbatai Zevi's apostasy and Jacob Frank's antinomian sect (chs. 33-34, 36). In Shi'ism, Twelver doctrine places the Hidden Imam in occultation (ch. 74). Mahdism then produced the Sudanese Mahdi state, the Bab's claim and the Babi uprisings (ch. 81), and the 1979 seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca on behalf of Juhayman's Mahdi claimant (ch. 80). The Islamic Republic's *velayat-e faqih* is explicitly government in the Imam's absence (ch. 144). Negru's observation that Cyrus "turned into a messianic model for the Jews" and Constantine was idolised by Christians in the same way points to a constant pattern: rulers are taken as the saviour's precursors [Negru, #62383, Part II].

The Christian West produced the Anabaptist kingdom of Münster (ch. 65), Sun Myung Moon's "Lord of the Second Advent" (ch. 131) and David Koresh as "the Lamb" (ch. 133). In China, Christian and Buddhist expectations met. Hong Xiuquan presented himself as Jesus' younger brother and founded the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, and Maitreya was the banner of the White Lotus and Red Turban risings that ended with the foundation of the Ming (ch. 102). Hidden Religion lists the White Lotus Society alongside the Templars as a secret society with a religious purpose [Issitt & Main, Hidden Religion, #66220]. India's saviour is cyclical rather than final. Negru writes that "Kalki will come to put an end to the present era of darkness and destruction dominated by the male demon Kali", but that "Kalki is also perceived as a metaphor for the eternity of time, while the end of the world is seen as a depletion of an era and the start of a new one, in an endlessly repeating cycle" [Negru, #62383; ch. 90].

5. Esoteric merger: one Messiah under many names

The esoteric literature of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries treats all the expected figures as one person. Dushkova states that "the present Great King of Shambhala is the Messiah promised by all world religions: Christ of Christianity, Maitreya of Buddhism, Mahdi of Islam, Kalki of Hinduism", along with the other names in her list, including the Saoshyant. Under his reign as "Kalki Rudra Chakrin (Sanskrit, 'Forceful Wheel Holder')", she writes, "the Great Battle of Armageddon was to be fought between the forces of Good — the Warriors

of Shambhala — and the forces of evil" [Dushkova, The Book of Secret Wisdom, #63276]. She dates his approach: "the Great Period of 1998–1999 was marked by the further descent of Maitreya into Shambhala, from the Fiery World into the Subtle World of the Earth", with "the Sacrament of the descent of the Spirit of the Messiah into the aura of His Mother" in the Tower of Chung in 1998 [Dushkova, #63276]. Pike's Masonry instead reduces the Christ to the first rank among teachers. It sees in "Moses … Confucius and Zoroaster … Jesus of Nazareth, and … the Arabian Iconoclast, Great Teachers of Morality, and Eminent Reformers, if no more", and leaves each brother free to assign a "higher and even Divine Character" [Pike, Morals and Dogma, #378717].

6. Keshe and Heisman: the saviour without a person

Keshe reads the messianic expectations of his own time politically and turns them against the religious leaders. The summary of KSW 636 reads "Moslems - Methi; New war to accept Messiah; Religious war - timed to match scriptures". In the transcript he says: "This war with Iran is done by religious leaders, paving the path for coming of their Methi, according to their script … But whose Methi is the real one?" [Keshe, KSW 636, #378348]. Earlier, on 9 April 2020, he opened KSW 323 with "Birthday of Mahdi, Messiah", called the day "the 9th day of the 12 day celebration, is a holy day", and declared: "Today is the birth of Mahdi and he has manifested himself in all dimensions to save humanity in every condition for his soul. From now on the physicality is irrelevant" [Keshe, KSW 323, #378035]. In the same workshop he says that "we will handle all of this with the Iranian security in time" [Keshe, #378035]. By KSW 569 (19 December 2024), which is headed "2025 Year of Messiah", the saviour has become a kind of knowledge: "Knowledge of Creation is Messiah - not man". The Winter Solstice is "the Birth of Mitra", and listeners should "understand the process of the virgin birth … Then understand the process of resurrection". He argues that Christianity "changed … from Sun to Son" [Keshe, KSW 569, #378281]. The same session introduces three new "Twinity" products, explained as "you need two to tango" [Keshe, #378281]. For his earlier statements on Mitra's "birth" see ch. 153. The oldest Mitra in the library's sources is neither born nor a saviour. In the Rigveda he is the "benevolent, friendly, reassuring" half of a sovereign pair with Varuna, keeping *ṛta*, the order of the cosmos [Ries, Il culto di Mithra, #38276]. His name meant "friendship" in Sanskrit and "compact" in Avestan [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II] (ch. 6-7). Moulton reports Cumont's view that Mithra's solar identity came from a later Chaldaean assimi-

lation "to Shamash the god of the Sun", so that in Rome "Mithra was commonly called Sol invictus, though he was really distinct from the Sun" [#55011, Lecture II]. Keshe's solstice "Birth of Mitra" therefore rests on the late solar Mithra, not on the Vedic god of contract.

Heisman also removes the human saviour, replacing him with a machine. "The Singularity is the intelligent transcendence of biological nature taken to its historical extreme: the advent of a greater-than-human artificial intelligence". He adds that "all of these monotheistic traditions were ultimately human-ruled. The potential of the Singularity is the potential to transcend each and every high point of human history — including all previous religions" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252; ch. 165].

Figure	Tradition	Birth / origin	Forerunner(s)	Enemy	Task	Political form
Osiris and Horus (precedent, not awaited)	Egyptian	Osiris born of Nut in the Heliopolitan family; Horus his son [#66942; #72968]	—	Set [#72968]	Osiris "conquered death"; Horus wins the throne by lawsuit [#72968]	Pharaoh as "Son of Ra" upholding Maat [#363364] (ch. 4)
Deified king (precedent)	Mesopotamian	Human ruler, "chief servant of the chief god" [Wikipedia]	—	—	Justice "to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak" [Wikipedia]	Naram-Sin "named god of the city" [#64812] (ch. 3, 8)
Baal / Melqart (precedent)	Ugaritic, Phoenician	Royal child in El's household [#64008]	—	Yam, Mot [Wikipedia]	Return from the underworld; rain [Wikipedia; #86469]	Kingship among the gods; Tyre's *egersis* [Wikipedia: Melqart] (ch. 5)
Yima (precedent)	Indo-Iranian	First king, first to die [#55116]	—	—	Rules the kingdom of the dead [#55116]	*Khvarenah* of the kavis [Wikipedia: Khvarenah] (ch. 6, 8)
Saoshyant (Astvat-ereta)	Zoroastrian	Virgin bathing in Lake Kasava; Zarathustra's seed [#55114]	Ukhshyat-ereta, Ukhshyat-nemah [#55114]	Ahriman and the demons (ch. 166)	"Restore the world" [#55114]	Kingly glory (*khvarenah*) [#55114]

Figure	Tradition	Birth / origin	Forerunner(s)	Enemy	Task	Political form
Messiah	Jewish	Davidic, human [#62383]	Elijah (ch. 33)	Gentile oppressors; Gog (ch. 33)	Restore Israel [#55114]	Restored Davidic kingdom
Christ (Second Coming)	Christian	Returning Son	Messianic emperor [#62383]	Antichrist disguised as the Jewish Messiah [#62383]	Judgement, kingdom	Millennial reign (chs. 65, 166)
Mahdi / Isa	Islamic	Appears at Mecca between the Kaaba corner and Abraham's place [#62383]	Mahdi before Isa [#62383]	al-Dajjal, Sufyani [#62383]	Kill Dajjal; convert the People of the Book [#62383]	Caliphal/imamic justice; *velayat-e faqih* (ch. 144)
Maitreya	Buddhist / Chinese sects	Future Buddha (ch. 102)	—	Mara; corrupt dynasty (ch. 102)	New age of the Dharma	White Lotus, Ming founding (ch. 102)
Kalki	Hindu	Avatar of Vishnu [#62383]	—	Kali [#62383]	End the dark age [#62383]	Renewal of the cycle [#62383]
King of Shambhala	Roerich / Dushkova	Descends from the "Fiery World" [#63276]	—	Forces of evil at Armageddon [#63276]	Synthesis of all the Rays [#63276]	Reign of Kalki Rudra Chakrin [#63276]

Figure	Tradition	Birth / origin	Forerunner(s)	Enemy	Task	Political form
Mitra / "Knowledge"	Keshe	Solstice "birth" [#378281]	—	Religious leaders, "false kings" [#378348; #378035]	Understanding of Creation [#378281]	Universal Council (ch. 153)
Singularity	Heisman	Built AI [#38252]	Biblical and modern rationalism (ch. 165)	Biological self-interest	Transcend humanity [#38252]	Post-human (ch. 165)

Key points

- Carter gives the Pahlavi birth legend of the Saoshyant and his two forerunners from Zarathustra's seed kept in Lake Kasava, and calls the coming-Saviour idea "certainly Zoroastrian" [#55114].
- The Saoshyant's "kingly glory" is the old Iranian *khvarenah* of rightful kings. Yima, the first king and first to die, stands at the other end of the same line (ch. 6, 8).
- The god-king of Egypt, whose Osiris "conquered death", and the servant-king of Mesopotamia, deified only in cases such as Naram-Sin, are precedents for the saviour-king but not awaited figures [#72968; #363364; #64812].
- Baal's yearly return from Mot and Melqart's "awakening" are the sources' cases of a dying-and-rising god. Frazer's general category "is disputed", and Wood treats it as a construct of comparative scholarship [#86469; #66939; #50933].
- The Vedic Mitra is a friendly sovereign of contract and *ṛta*. His solar identity, on which Keshe's "Birth of Mitra" depends, comes from a later assimilation to Shamash, as Moulton reports Cumont [#38276; #55011].
- Sundermann's caution about proving influence, with Scheftelowitz's objection and the "common ambiance" alternative, leaves the prototype thesis open [#55067].
- Negru sets the Messiah, messianic emperor and Mahdi in parallel, each protecting his religion, and judges that Islamic eschatology "copies to a great extent" the Christian [#62383].
- Joseph notes that all three Abrahamic traditions expect the Messiah's first stop on the Temple Mount but disagree on his identity [#16863].
- Real claimants turned saviour-belief into politics: Bar Kokhba, Sabbatai Zevi, Münster, the Taiping, the Sudanese Mahdi, the 1979 Mecca siege and *velayat-e faqih* (chs. 33-36, 65, 74, 80-81, 102, 144).
- Negru reports that Kalki can be read as a metaphor for cyclical renewal rather than a final end [#62383].
- Dushkova merges Christ, Maitreya, Mahdi, Kalki and the other expected figures into one King of Shambhala [#63276].
- Keshe accuses religious leaders of staging war to bring their "Methi" and declares "Knowledge of Creation is Messiah - not man". Heisman's Singularity replaces every human saviour [#378348; #378281; #38252].

Chapter 170.

After Death: Bridge, Scales, Resurrection, Rebirth and Their Rivals

The traditions of this study give three families of answer to what follows death: one life, judgment and bodily resurrection (Zoroastrianism, then Judaism, Christianity and Islam); a chain of lives under karma (the Indian religions, Orphic-Platonic thought, the Cathars, the Kabbalistic gilgul); and an underworld of shades (the Mesopotamian land of no return, early Sheol, Homeric Hades). Modernity added afterlives that claim evidence: mediumship, Tipler's cosmological resurrection and the upload. Mehran Keshe's teaching both rejects reincarnation and dissolves the courtroom of judgment, and Mitchell Heisman treats the fear of death itself as the hidden source of morality. This chapter sets these positions side by side as their sources present them. It begins with the older answers of Part 1 (ch. 2-6): prehistoric graves, the Mesopotamian land of no return, the Egyptian weighing of the heart and the Indo-Iranian kingdom of Yima. All of these come before the scriptures that later traditions argue from.

Before scripture: graves, ancestors and the land of no return

The oldest evidence is the grave itself. Eliade dates certain burials to the Mousterian (c. 70,000–50,000 BCE). He reads the red ochre strewn over the dead, "a ritual substitute for blood, hence a 'symbol' of life", and graves oriented to the east as signs of belief in survival and hope of "re-birth". He also records Leroi-Gourhan's doubt that personal grave goods are attested at all, and warns that "beliefs and ideas are not fossilisable" [Eliade, Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase, #44122, ch. I §2-3]. For the megalith builders of Atlantic Europe the dead were not weak.

In Eliade's reading the ancestors in the stone dolmens became "powerful and indestructible like the rocks". He contrasts this with Mesopotamian, Hittite, Hebrew and Greek views, in which the dead were "poor unhappy and powerless shades" [#44122, ch. V §34] (ch. 2).

Mesopotamia is the classic case of that second view. According to the reference shelf, all the dead went to the underworld (Arallû, Ganzer, Irkallu) "irrespective of social status or the actions performed during their lifetime", and of them the *Descent of Ishtar* says that "dust is their food and clay their nourishment" [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. The ghost (*gidim*) depended on funerary offerings. Unfed, it could "become restless and liable to haunt the living" [Black and Green, Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, #70458]. Gilgamesh looks for immortality and fails to get it. Ut-napishti can offer only "restored youth" through a plant, and Gilgamesh loses it [#70458, "Gilgameš"] (ch. 3). There is no judgment here, and conduct does not change the outcome. Early Sheol, "a dark place from which none return" [Wikipedia: Intermediate state (Christianity)], belongs to the same family. So does Canaanite Mot, "Death", who swallows Baal and whom Smith traces as a personified demon through Isaiah 25:8, Hosea 13:14 and Revelation 21:4 [Smith, The Early History of God, #67245, ch. 2] (ch. 5).

The Zoroastrian sequence: three nights, the Bridge and the scales

The Pahlavi texts collected in *Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism* give the fullest early account of an individual judgment. The soul stays near the body for three nights: "for three days and nights your soul will sit at the body's head. And on the fourth day at dawn, accompanied by the just Srosh and the good Vay and mighty Vahram, and opposed by Astvihad and the worse Vay and the demon Vizarsh … it will reach the high and terrible Chinvat Bridge, to which everyone comes" [Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, "The Fate of the Soul at Death"]. At the Bridge the soul is weighed: "Rashn the just, who holds the balance for souls, never makes it dip to one side, neither for the just nor for the wicked, neither for a lord nor for the ruler of a land … He does not swerve by as much as a hair's breadth, and has no regard for persons" [#55116]. As ch. 17 sets out, Mithra presides over this tribunal with Rashnu and Sraosha.

The person's own conscience meets the soul. The editors explain that *daena*, "Inner Self", "was the term used by the prophet for the figure which meets the

soul at the Chinvat Bridge, in the old religion simply a beautiful girl" [#55116]. For the wicked she appears as a hag. Ritual duties also count at the Bridge. Failing to celebrate the seven holy days of obligation "was a sin that 'went to the Bridge', i.e. counted at Judgment Day" [#55116, sec. 1.6].

The *Arda Viraz Namag* turns the doctrine into a guided tour. The righteous Viraz's soul crosses the Chinvat Bridge, "and after seven days and nights it returned and entered his body again" [#55116, sec. 6.3]. He sees heaven, hell and Hammistagan, the place where souls whose good and evil deeds balance are held. That place is a Zoroastrian intermediate state. The judgment of the individual is not final, however. The "future body", *tan i pasen*, "will be made immortal at Frashegird" [#55116, 6.3.5], the bodily resurrection and renovation of the world.

Boyce argues that most of this sequence is older than Zarathushtra. In her reconstruction of the Indo-Iranian religion, souls (*urvan*) went to "the underworld kingdom of the dead, thought to be ruled over by Yima (Skt. Yama), the first king to reign on earth and the first man to die". The way there was the "Chinvat Crossing", possibly a ford "guarded by supernatural dogs". A later hope that some souls might ascend to "Paradise, the 'House of Song' " brought with it "the concept of resurrection of the body", recreated "from the dry bones a year or so after death". The crossing became a bridge to heaven, where "a beautiful girl appeared to lead [the soul] upward to the gods" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, "1.2.5"] (ch. 6). That is the girl whom the editors identify above as the old form of the *daena*. Yama survives on the Vedic side, but Macdonell's count places him among the least-invoked gods [Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, #54250] (ch. 7). Eliade's note that early hunters believed an animal could be reborn from its bones, a belief he traces as late as Ezekiel's valley of dry bones [#44122, ch. I §4], shows how old the image of the dry bones is that Boyce places at the start of resurrection belief.

Egypt, Hades and the transmigrating soul

McClelland describes the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, "Chapters of the Coming Forth by Day", as tomb inscriptions dating "from 2500 BCE to 200 CE" whose purpose "was to safely guide the soul to the underworld (tuat, duat) of the god Osiris, and to assist in convincing the judges of the dead" of the soul's worth [McClelland, Encyclopedia of Reincarnation and Karma, #66947, "Book of the Dead"]. Part 1 gives the procedure. Bierbrier writes that the Book of the Dead's

"most important spell concerned the ritual of the weighing of the heart against the feather of maat to determine the deceased's worthiness to enter the afterlife", reached through gates "guarded by demons" [Bierbrier, Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, #366518, "Book of the Dead"]. Before the weighing came the Negative Confession, "a confession of sins not committed", made before Osiris and forty-two assessors [Mercatante, Who's Who in Egyptian Mythology, #72968, "Negative Confession"]: "I have not stolen. I have not slain men and women... I have made none to weep" [Weaver, Egyptian Mythology, #66942, ch. IV]. The dead person was also ritually identified with Osiris, "since the deceased was identified with Osiris during the rites" [Mercatante, #72968, "Osiris"]. The privilege widened over time, from the "exclusively kingly 'Pyramid Texts' " to the Coffin Texts, a change some call the "democratization" of the afterlife [The Egyptians: An Introduction, #363364] (ch. 4). The heart against the feather is the closest parallel in this study to Rashn's balance that "does not swerve by as much as a hair's breadth". The library's sources do not say whether one derives from the other. Greek thought held both the shadowy Hades and the Orphic doctrine of the soul imprisoned in the body (ch. 40), which Pythagoras and Plato turned into metempsychosis (ch. 41). McClelland notes that Aristotle's criticism of transmigration helped him find "more acceptance in the late medieval Church than were the views of Plato" [#66947, "Arguments"].

Sheol, resurrection and the Persian question

The reference shelf states that "The early Hebrews had no notion of resurrection of the dead"; sheol "was a dark place from which none return". By Jesus' time "Daniel 12:1–4 and ... Isaiah 26:19 had made popular the idea that the dead in sheol would be raised for a last judgment" [Wikipedia: Intermediate state (Christianity)]. Chs. 31 and 166 give Carter's and Mills's view that immortality and resurrection entered Judaism in the Persian period. Ch. 33 covers the Pharisee-Sadducee split over resurrection. A popular-medical author pushes the derivation further. Shealy writes that "the concept of resurrection of corpses originated with the Zoroastrian religion in Persia". He also reads Josephus as reporting that the Pharisees were "a Jewish sect that believed in reincarnation" [Shealy, Energy Medicine, #63535, "From Zoroastrianism to Judaism"]. That claim belongs to Shealy, not to the specialist literature cited in chs. 31-33.

Christian heaven, hell, purgatory and the intermediate state

The Supernatural Guide to the Other Side records disputes inside Christianity. In Protestantism, "The conservatives believe in a literal place of hell, while the more liberal tend to believe that a loving God could not put people into such a place of torment. They feel it is more likely an eternity separated from God himself". Catholics add purgatory. The Orthodox teach that "after the soul leaves the body there is an anticipation of judgment" [The Supernatural Guide to the Other Side, #63018, ch. 9].

The reference shelf fills in the history. "The Eastern Church admits of such an intermediate state, but refrained from defining it". "The idea of Purgatory as a physical place was 'born' in the late 11th century", and indulgences grew out of it (ch. 64). Luther and Calvin rejected purgatory but kept an intermediate state. Mortalists (Adventists, Christadelphians, Jehovah's Witnesses) hold that the dead "sleep" until the resurrection [Wikipedia: Intermediate state (Christianity)].

Islam: barzakh, the Hour and martyrdom

The reference shelf notes that the Christian intermediate state "bears resemblance to the Barzakh in Islam" [Wikipedia: Intermediate state (Christianity)]. Negru places Judgment Day at the centre of Islamic eschatology. The Mahdi "will be the savior of Islam and he will rise shortly before Judgment Day. He will free the world of error, injustice and oppression together with Jesus". Al-Dajjal appears "at the same time with the return of Isa" [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383, Part I].

Aberth gives a case in which belief about the afterlife shaped behaviour during an epidemic. Al-Wardi of Aleppo, who died of the Black Death in 1349, wrote: "This plague is for the Muslims a martyrdom and a reward, and for the disbelievers a punishment and a rebuke". One scholar called this doctrine "a major theological innovation of Islam". Aberth disputes its uniqueness, noting that seventh-century Spain already promised resurrection to plague victims [Aberth, Plagues in World History, #66467].

Karma, rebirth and the Christian quarrel

McClelland's encyclopedia covers the reincarnationist side. On Buddhism he records the *anatman* problem. The reasons for denying a permanent self "would seem to logically deny continuati[on]" between lives, yet "the Buddha's teachings never denied … the 'heroic I' ", the I that strives for liberation [#66947, "Anatman/Anatta"].

He is blunt about Christianity: "standard Christianity can not easily accept a belief in reincarnation". Its doctrine of Christ as the "most complete revealer" is, in his view, "definitely … incompatible with reincarnation" [#66947, "Christianity and reincarnation"]. He reports that "One of the main criticisms of reincarnation by the early Christian Fathers was that the doctrine of multiple lives encouraged antinomianism, as exemplified by the heretical Caropocrates" [sic] [#66947, "Christian fathers critical of reincarnation"]. His cross-references send the reader to the "Church Council of 553", which condemned Origenism, and to the Cathars [#66947, "Cathars"]. He records Edgar Cayce's view that Adam was "the collective name for a primordial group of souls" and the name of its leader [#66947, Introduction].

Rebirth also has a Jewish form. According to the *Supernatural Guide*, "According to the Zohar … the evildoers are consigned to resurrections on earth after memories of previous births and actions are erased. These souls must rectify past wrongs in the reincarnated life to attain salvation" [#63018, ch. 9; see ch. 104]. Ch. 100 covers the Romanian Orthodox critique of Tibetan reincarnation. Steiner's lecture cycles listed in *Disease, Karma and Healing* include "Earthly Death and Cosmic Life" [Steiner, Disease, Karma and Healing, #69269, bibliography of lecture cycles].

Afterlives that claim evidence: mediums, Omega Point, upload

Spiritualism (ch. 129) claimed that séance communication proved survival. Tipler goes further and claims that physics itself implies resurrection. "theology is nothing but physical cosmology based on the assumption that life as a whole is immortal. A consequence of this assumption is the resurrection of everyone who has ever lived to eternal life. Physics has now absorbed theology" [Tipler, The Physics of Immortality, #63681]. His chapter XI, "Comparison of the

Heaven Predicted by Modern Physics with the Afterlife Hoped for by the Great World Religions", with its section "Immortality in the Major Non-Western Religions", claims that the theory "is consistent with only those features of religion which are found in all of the great world religions" [#63681]. Ch. 165 treats Kurzweil's mind-uploading as a secular version of the same hope.

Keshe: no reincarnation, no court, a soul that judges itself

The Keshe Foundation Brazil summary *Reincarnation Does Not Exist* is based on KSW 465 and carries the note "Summary has not been checked by KF". Eastern reincarnation, it adds, "leads to stagnation in spiritual development". The Soul of the Man (STM) is a plasma created when the M-fields of sperm and egg interact; it matures with the Soul of the Physicality (STP), and "at the point of maturity, or what we call death, the STP gives all its energies to the STM", which "finds its place in the U according to its field strength". A soul that conducts itself negatively "will become a dust or a cell of something else". The summary concludes that "the process of creating a Soul happens once … So in a way the Christian Fathers were not totally wrong" [Keshe, Reincarnation Does Not Exist (2023-01-04), #378487].

In KSW 467 Keshe says only partial inheritance survives. A return "somewhere as the package of 'Mr. John' with the memories etc, does not exist. It cannot happen. But, the way you say, 'my grandson has my eyes,' you passed part of yourself … We are all reincarnated from part of the fields" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 467, #378179]. KSW 595 removes the judge: "Day of Judgment - you are judge of yourself; No courts - Heaven or Hell … You decide Heaven or Hell" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 595, #378307]. KSW 631 gives the mechanics. Near-death experiencers "don't go Heaven - take position in U - instantly". "Ghosts" are "P with energy of P - left behind - not STM or STP". At death the STM and STP separate, and "the Phoenix rises out of ashes of P - Resurrection". He adds that "the Hell and the Heaven is on this planet" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 631, #378343].

Heisman: death as the hidden master

Heisman reverses the usual question. Instead of asking what follows death, he asks what the fear of death has built: "Most common moral positions justify and cloak this fear of death. And like any traditional authority, time has gathered a whole system of rituals, conventions, and customs to maintain its authority … For most people, fear of death is the unquestionable master that establishes all other hierarchies — both social hierarchies, and the hierarchies within one's own mind" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II]. His section "Open Your Mind to Death" says that "Opening one's mind to death emerges from the attempt to unshackle one's mind from the limitations of all borders" [#38252, "Open Your Mind to Death"]. The library catalogues the work under the title "suicide note". Ch. 159 records the circumstances of his death as the catalogue presents them.

Tradition	Immediate fate	Intermediate state	Judge(s)	Final state of body	Return possible?	Deeds / grace / knowledge
Prehistoric (#44122)	Burial with ochre, often facing east	Unknown ("not fossilisable")	None attested	Kept in the grave or dolmen; ancestors "indestructible like the rocks"	Hope of "re-birth" (Eliade's reading)	Not attested
Mesopotamian (Wiki; #70458)	Descent to Arallû/Irkallu	None; one dim underworld	None described	Ghost (*gidim*) fed by offerings	No; unfed ghosts haunt the living	Irrelevant: "irrespective of… actions"
Indo-Iranian, pre-Zoroastrian (#55116)	Chinvat Crossing, guarded by dogs	Yima's kingdom of the dead	(none named in the reconstruction)	Later hope: raised "from the dry bones"	No	Ancestor offerings; the mighty dead as *fravashis*
Zoroastrian (#55116)	3 nights at the head, then the Bridge	Hammistagan; heaven or hell until the end	Mithra, Rashn, Srosh; the Daena	Raised and made immortal at Frashegird	No	Deeds, including ritual duties
Egyptian (#66947; #366518; #72968)	Journey to the Duat, past demon-guarded gates	Duat	Osiris and 42 assessors; the heart weighed against Maat's feather	Preserved (mummy); the dead identified with Osiris	No	Deeds and ritual knowledge; the Negative Confession
Platonic / Orphic	Judgment, then reallotment	Between lives	Underworld judges	Discarded	Yes, metempsychosis	Knowledge and purification
Catholic (Wiki; #63018)	Particular judgment	Purgatory	Christ	Resurrected	No	Grace with works; indulgences

Tradition	Immediate fate	Intermediate state	Judge(s)	Final state of body	Return possible?	Deeds / grace / knowledge
Protestant	Particular judgment	Hades, or soul-sleep (mortalists)	Christ	Resurrected	No	Grace through faith
Islamic (#62383; #66467)	Grave, barzakh	Barzakh	God on the Day	Resurrected	No	Deeds and faith; martyrdom
Hindu / Jain / Buddhist (#66947)	Rebirth by karma	Hells and heavens, bardo	Impersonal karma	Discarded	Yes	Deeds and knowledge; liberation
Kabbalah (#63018)	Judgment	Gilgul for the wicked	God	Resurrected	Yes, with memory erased	Rectification of deeds
Tipler (#63681)	Death	None (until Omega Point)	The Omega Point	Emulated	Yes, as emulation	Physics
Keshe (#378487; #378307; #378343)	STM takes position in the U at once	None; ghosts are residual P-energy	The soul itself	Discarded	No; only partial field inheritance	Accumulated conduct and knowledge

Key points

- Eliade reads Mousterian ochre burials and east-facing graves as belief in survival, and the megaliths as making ancestors "indestructible like the rocks". He also warns that "beliefs and ideas are not fossilisable" (#44122).
- Mesopotamia sent every dead person to one dim underworld "irrespective of… actions", with no judgment. The ghost depended on offerings, and Gilgamesh failed to win immortality (Wikipedia; #70458).
- Egypt made the outcome depend on conduct: the Negative Confession, the heart weighed against Maat's feather before Osiris, and a privilege that widened from kings to commoners (#366518; #72968; #363364).
- Boyce dates Yima's kingdom of the dead, the Chinvat Crossing, the guiding girl and resurrection "from the dry bones" before Zarathushtra (#55116).
- The Zoroastrian texts give the earliest full individual judgment: three nights, the Daena, an impartial scale held by Rashn and his companions, the Chinvat Bridge, a middle place (Hammistagan), and bodily resurrection at Frashegird (#55116).
- Whether resurrection passed from Persia to Judaism is argued in chs. 31-33. Shealy, a popular-medical author, states flatly that it "originated with the Zoroastrian religion" (#63535).
- Christian traditions divide over the intermediate state: the Catholic purgatory, the undefined Orthodox state, Protestant rejection of purgatory, and mortalist soul-sleep. Protestants also divide over a literal hell (#63018; Wikipedia).
- Islam centres on the Day of Judgment, preceded by the Mahdi and the return of Isa (#62383). Al-Wardi's plague-martyrdom doctrine shows afterlife belief guiding conduct during an epidemic (#66467).
- McClelland finds standard Christianity incompatible with reincarnation and records patristic objections, including antinomianism (#66947). The Zohar keeps rebirth as a penalty for evildoers (#63018).
- Tipler presents the Omega Point as a physical resurrection of everyone who has ever lived and claims it matches the afterlife of every great world religion (#63681).
- Keshe denies personal reincarnation and the external court. Each soul judges itself, and its place after death is fixed at once by its accumulated field strength (#378487, #378179, #378307, #378343).
- Heisman reads the fear of death as the unacknowledged authority behind morality and custom (#38252).

Chapter 171.

Sacred Time and the Initiate: Ritual, Mysteries, Initiation and the Calendars of 21 December, 25 December and Nowruz

Religions mark out sacred action (sacrifice, meal, washing, initiation) and sacred time (the feasts that set the year). Both carry power. Grades of initiation create hierarchies, and calendars belong to whoever can fix them. This chapter first compares ritual systems and the graded initiations from Mithras to Scientology. It then gathers the dossier on the three dates that recur most often in the library: Nowruz at the spring equinox, the solstice night of 21 December, and 25 December. Each claim about where a date came from is attributed to the source that makes it.

Sacrifice, sacred meal and lustration

The Zoroastrian *yasna* with its *haoma* and the Vedic *soma* and *agni* rites come from a shared Indo-Iranian liturgy (chs. 13, 83). Boyce's index calls the yasna ritual "essential to Zoroastrianism" and notes that rituals were "formerly held by most Western scholars to have been rejected by Zoroaster", a view Parsi reformists accepted [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, index s.v. "rituals"]. The Mithraic sacred meal is pictured in detail. On the Konjic relief "the Raven and Lion, both wearing the masks of their grade, serve food and drink", and attendants "carry bread and a mixing-bowl, a cock and a bundle of tapers". In the Aventine Mithraeum it was "precisely this scene of the sacred meal which suffered most at the hands of the Christian iconoclasts at the end of the fourth century". Vermaseren finds the reason "not hard to find": according

to Tertullian (*De praescr.* 40), "the meal in the Mithras cult was a 'devilish imitation of the Eucharist' ". The same passage of Tertullian is the source for the Soldier's initiation: "Mithras makes a sign on his soldiers' forehead" [Vermaseren, Mithras the Secret God, #38300]. Fideler collects the parallels a Christian reader would notice: "Initiates into the mysteries were baptized, and the initiates enacted a resurrection scene. According to Justin, the Mithraic initiates partook of a euc[harist]" [Fideler, Jesus Christ, Sun of God, #69295, ch. on Mithras]. Chs. 26 and 53 discuss Justin's explanation that "demons imitated" the sacrament, the entheogen thesis for Eleusis and the Eucharist (ch. 39), and the Sufi *sama'* (ch. 78).

The sacred meal is older than any of these cults. In Mesopotamia the god lived in a cult statue whose mouth was "opened" (*pet pî*) and "washed" (*mes pî*) so that it could see and eat, and the statue was given two banquets a day behind a curtain [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion] (ch. 3). Here the meal feeds the god; the worshippers do not share it. The Indo-Iranian rite worked the other way. Boyce writes that the pastoralists "had no temples, and worshipped mainly in the open", and that the pressed *haoma*/*soma*, "when consecrated, was offered to the gods and drunk ritually by the worshippers". There were also daily offerings to "the hearth fire and sources of pure water" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.4"] (ch. 6). In India the rite needed specialists. The developed Śrauta sacrifice used four chief priests, the *hotṛ*, *adhvaryu*, *udgātṛ* and *brahman*, and the patron became "only a sponsor" [Wikipedia: Vedic priesthood] (ch. 7). Ch. 8 discusses what the drink was. Washing was also an archaic rite. In the Babylonian Akitu festival the high priest bathed in the Euphrates on the second day before the temple prayers [Wikipedia: Akitu].

Graded initiation compared

Vermaseren lists the seven Mithraic grades: "Raven, Bride (Nymphus), Soldier (Miles), Lion (Leo), Persian (Perses), Courier of the Sun (Heliodromus) and Father (Pater)". They were "placed under the protection of the seven planets, the Pater standing under the guardianship of Saturn". He warns that the planetary order (Saturn, Sol, Luna, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury) "could be taken to indicate that it was only at a later date that the planets were directly related to specific grades". On social reality he adds: "The average follower of Mithras almost certainly did not advance to a higher grade" [#38300, ch. 14, "The Seven Grades of Initiation"]. The Pater was "a Father to his initiates, who call themselves fratres", and also

"the magister sacrorum" and "summus pontifex … chosen by his fellow-initiates" [#38300]. The grade ladder therefore produced an elected priesthood.

System	Grades or stages	Principle of ascent	Treated in
Mithraism	7 grades under 7 planets	Ordeal, mask, oath	chs. 22-23 (#38300)
Eleusis	Lesser mysteries, *myesis*, *epopteia*	Vision of sacred objects	ch. 39
Pythagoreans	Akousmatikoi and mathematikoi	Silence, study	ch. 41
Ismaili *da'wa*	Graded ranks of the mission	Esoteric instruction	ch. 77
Freemasonry	3 Craft degrees; 33 in the Scottish Rite	Ritual drama, oath	chs. 110-111
Golden Dawn / A∴A∴ / OTO	Elemental and Kabbalistic grades	Examination, magical work	chs. 115, 120
Mormon temple	Endowment	Covenant ritual	ch. 126
Scientology	"The Bridge", OT levels	Paid auditing courses	ch. 130

Two genealogies cross this table, and both are disputed. One holds that Masonic ritual came down from the ancient mysteries (ch. 109). The other holds that Joseph Smith's temple endowment borrowed from Masonry (ch. 126). The chapters cited give the arguments on each side.

Before the mysteries: sacred time in the archaic civilisations

Claims that a monument tracked the solstice go back further than any text. Göbekli Tepe (c. 9500 BCE) is the usual starting point (ch. 2). Graeber and Wengrow report that archaeologists "remain sceptical" of astronomical readings of its enclosures, since the buildings "may once have been roofed" and were often altered [Graeber and Wengrow, The Dawn of Everything, #87533, ch. 3]. The reference shelf concludes that "no definitive purpose has been determined" for the megaliths [Wikipedia: Göbekli Tepe]. The sources used here therefore give no secure solstice cult before writing.

With writing, the calendar becomes part of the order of the gods. In *Enūma Eliš* Marduk, after splitting Tiamat into sky and earth, "sets the stars and the calendar" and orders Babylon and Esagila built [Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš] (ch. 3). The spring New Year acted the myth out. The reference shelf describes Akitu as a festival "held on the first day of the Assyrian and Babylonian Nisan … to celebrate the sowing of barley", which began in Babylon on 4 Nisan and lasted twelve days. On the fourth day "the priests would tell creation stories". On the fifth the high priest struck the king "to further induce humility", and "the king's tears were seen as a good omen for the coming year". On the eighth the gods gave their power to Marduk, and on the eleventh, in the Hall of Destinies, they decided "the fate of the people of Marduk" and promised the city "another cycle of seasons". The same article records that Sennacherib built an "Akitu house" outside Assur in 683 BC and that the emperor Elagabalus brought the festival to Italy [Wikipedia: Akitu]. This is the "Babylonian spring festival" that Boyce compares with No Ruz (below). The sky was also read for the state. The omen series *Enūma Anu Enlil* (some 7,000 omens on 70 tablets) was "solely mundane", concerned with the king and the land, and a bad eclipse could be diverted onto a substitute for the king [Wikipedia: Babylonian astrology] (ch. 3).

Egypt kept two calendars. The reference shelf describes a civil year of 365 days, three seasons of 120 days named after the Nile's inundation, emergence and low water, and five "epagomenal" days "treated as outside of the year proper". Lacking a leap day, it drifted through the solar year as the "wandering year". It was "probably based upon astronomical observations of Sirius", whose reappearance matched the flood. Alongside it ran a lunar calendar "used for some religious rituals and festivals", the "temple month", whose days were "celebrated as stages in the life of the moon god" [Wikipedia: Egyptian calendar]. The myth followed the river: Mercatante calls Osiris "originally the personification of the flooding of the Nile" [Mercatante, #72968] (ch. 4). In the Levant the seasonal pattern appears in Baal, who was "considered to be dead in the underworld for half the year" [Day, #86469, ch. 1], and in the "awakening (egersis)" of Melqart, which Josephus says Hiram I was "the first to celebrate" [Wikipedia: Melqart] (ch. 5). The reference article itself presents the egersis only as "possible evidence" of a dying-and-rising god, and the cautions against reading such parallels as borrowings, given in ch. 26 for the Mithraic case, apply here as well.

Nowruz and the Zoroastrian year

Boyce writes of the greatest Zoroastrian feast: "It is called in Persian No Ruz, 'New Day' (the Avestan form of the name does not survive); and it appears that Zoroaster established it at the spring equinox, re-dedicating what" was an older festival. She adds that "the theological symbolism of the Zoroastrian holy year demands that the 'New Day' should be celebrated at the spring equinox", and she compares the Babylonian spring festival [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117]. Her index calls No Ruz "the seventh feast of obligation, devoted to the seventh creation, fire". It "foreshadows Frasho-kereti" and was "probably celebrated at Persepolis". Further index entries trace how the calendar moved under the later Achaemenians and in the Parthian period [#55117, Index]. *Textual Sources* agrees that No Roz, "as the last of them, is an annual prefiguration" of the final renovation [Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, sec. 1.6].

The other six holy days are the gahambars, which "appear to have been ancient seasonal festivals, refounded to honour Ahura Mazda and the six great Amesha Spentas, together with the seven creations". "Each festival lasted originally one day, but after a calendar reform in the third century A.C." it was lengthened [#55116, sec. 1.6]. Keeping them was enforced through the afterlife. Neglect "was a sin that 'went to the Bridge' " [#55116]. The twelve months include Mihr and Dai (sec. 1.7.2). The autumn Mihragan (Mehregan) and the solstice night Yalda continue them. The reference shelf describes Mehregan as "an ancient Zoroastrian and Persian festival celebrating the autumnal equinox since at least the 4th century BC" and Yalda as "an ancient Iranian festival celebrating the winter solstice" [Wikipedia: Persian astronomy; Wikipedia: Yalda Night].

The 25 December dossier

The solar-Mithraic case. Aurelian's establishment of Sol Invictus in 274 is covered in ch. 25. Koster opens his section "Christmas - 25th December" by asserting that the pagan origin of the feast "is admitted by all scholars". He quotes Frazer: "The largest pagan religious cult which fostered the celebration of December 25 as a holiday … was the pagan sun-worship, Mithraism … This winter festival was called … 'The Nativity of the SUN.' " He also quotes Frazer's barb: "Christianity took a leaf out of the devil's book when it fixed the birth of the Saviour on the 25th December". Through Cumont he cites Minucius Felix for the claim that "The Mithraists also observed Sun-day and kept sacred the 25th of December as

the birthday of the Sun" [Koster, Come Out of Her My People, #86909]. Fideler writes that Mithras' "birthday was celebrated on December 25, the shortest day of the year, marking the return of Sol Invictus", and that "Mithras was born on December 25 in a cave and his birth was witnessed by shepherds" [#69295]. Asimov says Mithras' "birth was celebrated on December 25-about the time of the winter solstice" [Asimov, Of Time and Space and Other Things, #368629]. Lawless, in a Christmas gift book, calls the Persian festival "the day of the birth of the unconquered sun" [Lawless, Heaven Scent, #67495].

The counter-case. Foley sets out two theories. The "history of religion" theory holds that Roman Christians chose 25 December "to supplant a Roman pagan festival called the Birth of the Unconquered Sun". It "has enjoyed the most scholarly support" but "has been criticized". The rival calculation theory starts from the Jewish idea of an "integral age", the belief that "the prophets died on the same date as their birth" or conception. On that reckoning "March 25 became the date of Christ's conception ... and nine months after March 25 is December 25". Foley adds that the solar symbolism "works" anyway, since the Bible calls Christ the Light [Foley, Why We Kiss Under the Mistletoe, #72208, Introduction]. As ch. 25 shows, he also uses St Lucy's feast on 13 December, which fell at the solstice before the Gregorian reform. Ch. 26 gives the cautions of Vermaseren and Nock against reading Mithraic-Christian parallels as borrowings.

Saturnalia and reversal. Sheldrake writes: "In ancient Rome, the winter festival was called the Saturnalia, beginning on 17 December, and lasting for a week. The law courts and the schools were closed". In northern Europe, Yule "was celebrated with fires and light" [Sheldrake, Ways to Go Beyond, #70907]. Asimov describes "a time of feasting and of giving of presents; of good will to men, even to the point where slaves were given temporary freedom while their masters waited upon them" [#368629]. Markale concludes that "the period of Christmas, which corresponds to the winter solstice, exactly re-creates the reversal of values that took place in Roman society during the time of Saturnalia", in the same way that "All Saints' Day ... re-creates the druid holiday of Samhain" [Markale, The Pagan Mysteries of Halloween, #85627].

Polemical readings. Hebrew-roots writers use the same material to call for abolition. Lew White claims that Dionysius Exiguus "knew that the Pagan festival of Saturnalia, the re-birth of the sun at the winter solstice, had to go". He reads Easter as the moment "when Mithras (the sun) 'slayed the bull' " at the vernal equinox [White, Fossilized Customs, #63673]. Koster urges believers to return to Hebrew practice [#86909]. Alvin Boyd Kuhn reads the cycle allegorically, tracing "the origin of the Passion Week of seven days, the ancient Fetes de Tenebres, and

also the origin of the forty days of Lent" to solar and lunar symbolism. Easter is "the consummate festival of human joy" because it "signalizes the god's release from his imprisonment in a body" [Kuhn, Spiritual Symbolism of the Sun and Moon, #68762].

Keshe's calendar: 21 December, 21 March, the end of 6,000 years

Keshe's Christmas Eve workshop of 2020 makes the most direct claim in the library: "the true birthday of Christ until some 200 and odd years ago was celebrated on 21st, and about 200 years ago Vatican decided to shift it". The transcript reads "to 24th", while its section heading reads "Vatican moved from 21st to 25th". The stated reason is "to make more separation, that Christianity is not replication of Mithraism". He says 21 December, "the longest night", "is considered to be the birthday of Mitra, some 8,000 years ago". He adds that "Christianity we know today was adaptation of the old Mithraism, so the birth of Christ was put on the same day as the birth of Mitra, as his son, or I should say as her son". He connects the date to Hanukkah, the twelve days of Christmas and "the 3 Wiseman of Iran and Persia", and he praises the Zoroastrian "room of fire, where fire has been kept on for thousands of years". The cycle closes in spring: all "shall wait for the birth of the time … that starts on 21st of March to bring all to one point, to bring the earth and the soul of the U together" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072].

KSW 608 adds a prophetic calendar. A questioner says "the calendar is based on a lie" because Jesus' birth "was brought forward to coincide with the festivals … commemorating the birth of Mitra". Keshe replies that "the calendar, without this new Universal reference of time, taught by the Keshe Foundation, will no longer make any sense". He dates "the big change" to "the 15th of September, according to the books", and "the end of the 6,000 years … on 23rd of December… September", which begins "the cycle of the 7,000 years" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 608, #378320]. Ch. 153 covers the Day of Enlightenment of 21 December 2021, and ch. 158 the Promised Days.

Calendars as instruments of power

The oldest cases come from Part 1. In Babylon the king of the gods was the maker of the calendar, and the New Year renewed both his kingship and the king's (ch. 3). In Egypt, the reference shelf reports, Ptolemy III's Canopus Decree tried to add a sixth epagomenal day every four years, but "the proposal was resisted by the Egyptian priests and people" and was dropped until Augustus imposed the reform by decree in 25 BC, creating the Alexandrian or Coptic calendar [Wikipedia: Egyptian calendar]. A priesthood could defend the sacred year against a king, and a conqueror could then impose it. Ch. 23 notes, following Nock, that the Roman army kept its own religious calendar. The French Revolution replaced the Christian year with a decimal calendar and the cults of Reason (ch. 140). The Bahá'í calendar and the Iranian solar hijri year both begin at Nowruz. The reference shelf lists Mehregan and Cyrus the Great Day among Iranian observances kept alongside the Islamic ones [Wikipedia: List of observances set by the Solar Hijri calendar]. Asimov recalls that when Britain adopted the Gregorian reform in 1752, "There were riots all over England … many people came quickly to the conclusion that they had suddenly been made eleven days older by legislation" [#368629]. Keshe's Universal time and Promised Days continue the pattern: a new movement claims authority by renaming the year.

Feast	Date	Tradition	Claimed origin	Who claims it
Akitu	1-12 Nisan (spring)	Babylonian, Assyrian	Sowing of barley; Marduk's victory re-enacted, king humbled and renewed, fates decided	Wikipedia: Akitu (ch. 3)
Civil New Year and epagomenal days	Start of the 365-day "wandering year"	Egyptian	Linked to Sirius and the Nile flood; five days "outside of the year"	Wikipedia: Egyptian calendar (ch. 4)
Lunar "temple month"	Each lunar month	Egyptian	Days celebrated as the life of the moon god (Thoth, Khonsu)	Wikipedia: Egyptian calendar

Feast	Date	Tradition	Claimed origin	Who claims it
Egersis of Melqart	Not dated in the sources used	Phoenician (Tyre)	"Awakening" of the city god, possibly dying-and-rising	Wikipedia: Melqart (ch. 5)
No Ruz / Nowruz	Spring equinox	Zoroastrian, Iranian, Bahá'í	Older feast re-dedicated by Zoroaster; prefigures Frashokereti	Boyce (#55117); Textual Sources (#55116)
Gahambars	Six seasonal points	Zoroastrian	Ancient seasonal festivals refounded for the Amesha Spentas	Textual Sources (#55116)
Mehregan	Autumn equinox (month Mihr)	Zoroastrian/Iranian	Autumn-equinox festival "since at least the 4th century BC"	Wikipedia: Persian astronomy
Yalda	21 December	Iranian	Longest night; birth of Mitra "8,000 years ago"	Keshe (#378072); Wikipedia
Saturnalia	From 17 December	Roman	Feast of Saturn, reversal of roles	Sheldrake (#70907); Asimov (#368629)
Natalis Solis Invicti	25 December	Roman/Mithraic	Sun's rebirth; Mithras' birthday	Frazer via Koster (#86909); Fideler (#69295)
Christmas	25 December	Christian	Replaced the Sun feast, or calculated from 25 March	Koster (#86909) vs. Foley (#72208)
St Lucy	13 December	Christian	Old-calendar solstice	Foley (#72208)

Feast	Date	Tradition	Claimed origin	Who claims it
Easter / Lent	Equinox-linked	Christian	Solar-lunar allegory; Mithraic bull	Kuhn (#68762); White (#63673)
All Saints / Samhain	1 November	Christian/Celtic	Christianised Samhain	Markale (#85627)
21 March "reconnection"	Spring equinox	Keshe	Earth and Soul of the U brought together	Keshe (#378072)

Key points

- Mithraic initiation had seven grades under seven planets. Vermaseren cautions that the planet assignments may be late and that most initiates never rose above the lowest grades (#38300).
- Christian writers saw the Mithraic meal and washings as rivals to the sacraments. Iconoclasts singled out the sacred-meal scene in the Aventine Mithraeum (#38300; #69295).
- According to Boyce, Zoroaster re-dedicated an older spring feast as No Ruz, the seventh feast of obligation, which foreshadows Frashokereti. Neglecting the gahambars was a sin weighed at the Bridge (#55117; #55116).
- The case that 25 December is the Sun's or Mithras' nativity rests here on Frazer (via Koster), Fideler, Asimov and Lawless. Foley's calculation theory derives the date from 25 March instead (#86909; #69295; #72208).
- Sheldrake, Asimov and Markale tie the Christmas season to the Saturnalian reversal of social order (#70907; #368629; #85627).
- Keshe says the Vatican moved Christ's birth away from Mitra's 21 December "about 200 years ago" and makes 21 March the cycle of reconnection. He offers a "Universal reference of time" in place of existing calendars (#378072; #378320).
- The archaic meal fed the god in Mesopotamia, but the Indo-Iranian *haoma*/*soma* was shared by gods and worshippers. Vedic India turned the rite into a craft of four specialist priests (#55116; chs. 3, 6-7).
- No secure solstice cult appears before writing in the sources used: astronomical readings of Göbekli Tepe are doubted (#87533). In Babylon Marduk set the calendar, and Akitu renewed his kingship and the king's each

spring. Egypt kept a drifting 365-day civil year tied to Sirius and the flood, together with a lunar temple calendar (chs. 2-4).

- Calendar reform is an exercise of political authority, whether by Egyptian priests resisting the Canopus Decree, Augustus in 25 BC, the Roman army, the French Revolution, Britain in 1752, Iran or the Keshe movement (#368629).

Chapter 172.

Law, Clergy and Power: Ethics, Priesthoods and the Organisation of Belief Compared

Every religion in this study says how people should live, and nearly every one has a body of people who decide what that means and enforce it. This chapter compares the two sides. The ethical side runs from the Zoroastrian triad to Keshe's "Ethos". The institutional side runs from the hereditary Magi to the lodge and the council. The question throughout is the one the sources keep raising: how a priesthood turns doctrine into power, and how prophets and anti-clerical reformers (Keshe among them) challenge that power and then build structures of their own.

A typology of scriptural ethics

Van Voorst gives the frame. "Some scriptures enshrine their religion's vision of a moral life in law codes, some feature more loosely bound moral precepts, and still others do not seem concerned about ethics" [Van Voorst, Anthology of World Scriptures, #63227, Introduction]. The law-code type includes the Vendidad, the Torah as rabbinic tradition read it, sharia and Manu. The precept type includes the Confucian *Analects*, the Buddhist precepts and the Sermon on the Mount. The third type covers texts such as the Vedic hymns or Gnostic revelation, where cosmology or salvation by knowledge outranks moral regulation.

The Torah does not sit easily in the first type. Walton and Walton argue that "Legal Collections in the Ancient World Are Not Legislation", that "Ancient Near

Eastern Legal Collections Teach Wisdom", and that "The Torah Is Similar to Ancient Near Eastern Legal Collections and Therefore Also Teaches Wisdom, Not Legislation". In their reading the covenant "functions as an Ancient Near Eastern Suzerainty Treaty". They draw a strong conclusion: "Wise living cannot be legislated … If God did not give rules, as we have suggested, there are no rules to follow" [Walton & Walton, The Lost World of the Torah, #68328, Props. 3-6 and Part 5]. Rabbinic halakha took the opposite course and turned the Torah into an exhaustive body of law (ch. 35). Ch. 35 also reports the hostile readings of the Talmud made by its critics.

The Waltons' "Ancient Near Eastern Legal Collections" begin with Hammurabi (c. 1792–1750 BC), and the dispute over his stele mirrors the dispute over the Torah (ch. 3). The stele shows the king before Shamash, god of justice, and its prologue says the gods gave him rule "to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak". The laws apply the *lex talionis* and grade penalties by class. Assyriologists disagree whether the text is legislation, a record of royal verdicts, or, following F. R. Kraus, a scholarly treatise of the "list science" type, like the omen series. Owen Jenkins remarked on "an astonishing absence… of all theological or even ceremonial law" in it [Wikipedia: Code of Hammurabi]. On this evidence the oldest law code in the comparison was sacred in its frame and secular in its content. That is the reverse of the Vendidad and the Torah, where purity and cult law are central.

Cosmic order as law: Maat, *ṛta* and *asha*

Before any code there was an order that law was supposed to express. In Egypt it was Maat, which the reference shelf defines as "truth, balance, law, morality, and justice". Kings "inherited the duty to ensure Maat remained in place", and from the Fifth Dynasty the vizier in charge of justice was called "Priest of Maat". The Instruction of Ptahhotep warns that "he who transgresses its ordinances is punished" [Wikipedia: Maat] (ch. 4). Maat was also the measure at death. The dead "had to have led a virtuous life according to the precepts of maat", and their hearts were weighed against her feather [Bierbrier, Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, #366518]. The Negative Confession turned this into a list of prohibitions: "I have not stolen. I have not slain men and women… I have not uttered lies… I have not committed adultery" [Weaver, Egyptian Mythology, #66942, ch. IV]. It belongs to Van Voorst's precept type rather than the law-code type. Its threat of judgment after death anticipates the Zoroastrian Chinvat bridge (ch. 17).

The Indo-Iranian counterpart is *asha*/*ṛta*. Boyce describes it as "a universal principle of what ought to be … variously translated as 'order, righteousness, truth' ", which "should govern everything, from the workings of nature to human laws and all human conduct". It was guarded by Mithra and Varuna, "guardians respectively of the oath and covenant" [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.3"] (ch. 6). In the Rigveda Mitra and Varuna "govern all the world with the *ṛta*" (RV 5.63.7), though Heckaman holds that "a precise definition cannot, and need not, be found" for the term [Heckaman, #51915] (ch. 7). The Zoroastrian triad of good thoughts, words and deeds discussed below is a moral version of this older cosmic order, and Keshe's "Ethos" is a recent descendant of the triad.

The golden rule and the common core

The negative golden rule is the best-attested shared precept. Archer quotes Confucius: " 'Is not reciprocity or sympathy (shu) such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others' ". In a note he calls it "the so-called 'Silver Rule,' " adding that "often Orientals state things positively through the negative". He places it inside *jen* (ren), "the sum of" the virtues, which includes "I, that which is right to do, duty toward one's neighbor, loyalty to rulers and the state, faithfulness to one's family" [Archer, Faiths Men Live By, #55131, ch. 4]. Heisman sets the Confucian formula beside Hillel's: "Confuscius's golden rule, 'Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you' (Analects 15:23), is virtually identical to Hillel's; versions of the same golden rule can be found in nearly all the major religions". He then argues that "Confucianism might be the closest analog to early Judaism", since both "emphasize ancestral wisdom" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II].

Lindahl's interfaith list gives other versions. Bahá'í: "Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you". Islam: "None of you truly have the faith if you do not desire for your brother that which you desire for yourself". Jainism: "we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self". Judaism: "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary" [Lindahl, The Sacred Art of Listening, #44918, Reflection 9, "Common Values"]. Swann reads Laozi and Confucius as sharing "one of their mutual basic aims … to lift or advance consciousness to some level above war-consciousness" [Swann, The Wisdom Category, #69128].

Purity law and Zoroastrian ethics

The Zoroastrian ethic rests on the triad of good thoughts, words and deeds. One Pahlavi text speaks of "one path of good thoughts, good words and good acts, that of the light and purity and infinity of the Creator Ohrmazd" against a path "of evil thoughts" [Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116]. The triad is tied to a purity law. "Death was held to be brought by Angra Mainyu, and so a corpse was wholly unclean. It was therefore not to be brought into contact with any of the vulnerable good creations". The editors add that the dakhma "appears to have been evolved relatively late" [#55116]. The law was enforced by ordeal: "There were reckoned to be thirty-three kinds of judicial ordeal by fire. In the most severe the accused was cast into a vessel of molten copper, or had molten metal poured on his breast ... If he was innocent, Mithra and the other divine beings, it was believed, would sa[ve him]" [#55116, 4.1.5]. Ch. 12 covers next-of-kin marriage and the Vendidad's penalties. Keshe adopts the triad as "the ethos of the soul do good, be good and act good", which he says Persians kept "through Mithraism" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072].

Law codes and jurists: halakha, sharia, Manu, ahimsa

Chs. 76 and 80 trace the Islamic case: the four Sunni madhhabs, the caliph al-Ma'mun's *mihna* (inquisition) over the createdness of the Qur'an, Ibn Hanbal's resistance, and the line from the Hanbali school to Ibn Taymiyya and Wahhabism. Ch. 85 takes the Hindu case: Manu's dharma of varna, the exclusion of the untouchables, and B. R. Ambedkar's mass conversion to Buddhism in protest. Ch. 86 traces Jain ahimsa from Mahavira to Gandhi's political non-violence. All three show the same pattern. A body of law, once fixed, needs trained interpreters, and the interpreters then become a class.

Antinomian and inverted ethics

Some movements overturn the law instead of interpreting it. The Nizari "Resurrection" proclaimed at Alamut abolished the sharia for the faithful (ch. 77). Sabbatai Zevi and Jacob Frank preached redemption through sin (ch. 36). McClelland notes that the early Church Fathers already charged reincarnationist

sects with antinomianism [McClelland, Encyclopedia of Reincarnation and Karma, #66947]. Modern occultism made inversion a programme. Crowley's Thelema replaced the moral code with the True Will (ch. 120), and LaVey's *Satanic Bible*, drawing on Ragnar Redbeard, reversed Christian altruism into rational self-interest (ch. 121). Heisman offers the sharpest analysis of the moral system being inverted. His chapter "Christian Altruism: The Selfish Meme" argues that "Jesus radicalized a form of altruism" and that Christianity "helped oppose the nepotistic values that one would normally predict on the basis of kin selection" [#38252, "Christian Altruism: The Selfish Meme"]. Chs. 119 and 162 follow his argument that this altruism worked as a self-propagating meme.

Priesthoods compared

Temple priesthoods and sacred kings. The oldest priesthoods in the library served a god's house and a king who claimed to rule for the god. In Mesopotamia the king in theory led the cult. Below him served exorcists (*āšipu*), lamentation priests (*kalû*) and diviners (*bārû*) [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Krauss adds the *shailu*, who had to discover the worshipper's sin [Krauss, Civilizaţia Asiro-Babiloniană, #23933] (ch. 3). Kingship was framed as service. In early Assyria the human ruler was "steward of Assur", and in the Neo-Assyrian empire the king was "the chief servant of the chief god" [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Pharaoh, by contrast, was "Son of Ra" and "acted as judge like the sun-god Ra-Harakhty" [The Egyptians: An Introduction, #363364] (ch. 4). In India the four Śrauta priests made the patron "only a sponsor", and the king's household priest, the *purohita*, became a power beside the throne. The titles *hotar*/*zaotar* and *atharvan*/*āθrauuan* show that the priesthood is older than the split between India and Iran [Wikipedia: Vedic priesthood] (ch. 7). The four *varṇas* are first stated in the Purusha Sukta, which the reference article calls "a relatively late addition", probably made "to accord theological sanction to an increasingly unequal Kuru polity" [Wikipedia: Purusha Sukta]. Ferrara describes the soma rites becoming "the exclusive dispensation of powerful aristocrats" [Ferrara, #66945, ch. 1], and Iranian kings ruled by *khvarenah*, which they kept while they ruled by *asha* [Wikipedia: Khvarenah] (ch. 8).

Hereditary priesthoods. Boyce describes how the Iranian priestly vocation closed into a caste. Each satrapy "must have had its own institutions", and "there was a natural tendency for the calling to become in its turn hereditary, so that by Sasanian times" priestly families formed a closed order. She notes that early priestly and lay families could intermarry: "Zoroaster himself took

Hvovi, Jamaspa's daughter, to be his wife" [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117]. Her index traces the clergy's partnership with the throne ("nobles, and the Sasanian clergy") and its later reduction under Islam to the status of *dhimmis* led by *dasturs* [#55117, Index]. The Levites, the Aaronid priests and the Brahmins (chs. 7, 83) are parallel cases of birth-based sacral office.

Celibate and monastic clergy. The Catholic hierarchy, the Buddhist sangha (ch. 87) and the Tibetan lamas, who are recruited by recognising reincarnations (ch. 100), replace descent with ordination or discovery. Grzymała-Busse argues that the medieval Church became both template and rival for the state. "The papal administration 'became the model for the beginnings of state bureaucracies' ". Canon law repeatedly took up "a text of Roman private law into church law, its adaptation and transmutation there to a principle of constitutional law, and then its reabsorption into the sphere of secular" law. "A medieval king's 'clerks' were also 'clerics' ". The conflict between popes and kings "led to the lasting fragmentation of territorial authority" and to "early concepts of sovereignty" [Grzymała-Busse, Sacred Foundations, #62062, chs. 2-3].

Scholar-jurists. Rabbis, ulama and the Shi'i *marja'* (chs. 35, 76, 144) hold authority through learning. In the Iranian case that authority has become direct state power.

Lay and lodge hierarchies. Freemasonry has no priesthood, but its grand lodges and the 33 degrees of the Scottish Rite form an elective and initiatory hierarchy (chs. 109-113).

The economics of salvation

Each kind of organisation found a way to turn grace into revenue. The question first arises with the temples of the river civilisations. In the 1920s Anton Deimel concluded from about 1,700 tablets of the Baba temple at Lagash that "all of the cultivable land in the state, as well as its workforce, had belonged to the temple". Collins calls this "a rather extreme interpretation", and reports that Igor Diakonoff later showed the calculations to be "erroneous": temples held estates "rather like medieval monasteries", alongside the palace and private households [Collins, The Sumerians, #64812] (chs. 3, 8). In Egypt the major temples "became major landholders, their activities supported by vast estates worked by thousands of people", though the estates remained "ultimately under royal control" [Wikipedia: Atenism]. Bierbrier writes that Karnak's "great wealth led to an increase of political power for the high priest of Amun", under

whom Thebes became "virtually independent" [Bierbrier, #366518, "High Priest of Amun"]. *The Egyptians* judges this usual picture of priestly power "probably exaggerated" [#363364]. Akhenaten's break with Amun and the priests' erasure of his memory (ch. 4) is the first recorded clash in this study between a king and an endowed priesthood. The reference shelf records "the unrestricted sale of indulgences by professional 'pardoners' " [Wikipedia: Intermediate state (Christianity)]; see ch. 64. The papal monarchy invented fiscal and legal machinery that secular states later copied [#62062]. Ch. 146 covers the Vatican Bank, ch. 130 Scientology's priced auditing along the Bridge, ch. 69 the prosperity gospel, and ch. 157 the Keshe Coin.

Charisma against office

Weber's distinction between charismatic and institutional authority, used as a frame in several chapters of this study, describes a recurring pattern: founders such as Zarathustra, Muhammad, Joseph Smith, Hubbard, Jim Jones and David Koresh claim authority directly from revelation, and their successors routinise it into clergy, law and property. Hassan's model describes control in a high-demand group as four linked dimensions: "Behavior control, thought control, emotional control, and information control: each form of control has great power and influence on the human mind". He adds that "Many groups exercise complete control over interpersonal relationships … Some even tell members whom they can marry" [Hassan, Combatting Cult Mind Control, #64506, ch. 4]. The new-religious-movement scholars in ch. 125 dispute whether such models describe groups or stigmatise them.

Keshe: abolishing the intermediary, founding a council

Keshe's programme is openly anti-clerical. In KSW 464 he says the direct route to the Creator "does not need no rocket, no monkey suit, no Ayatollahs, no Mullahs, and no priests, Pope's, rabbis". Anyone placed between the soul and God "can put poison in it, and they poison the connection between me and my Creator. That poison is religion, are the Ayatollahs, Mullahs, Priests, and everybody else in the name of 'in-between' ". He presents himself as no more than a teacher: "I claim nothing … I'm equal and a part of. I eat on the same kind of table, and sleep

in the same kind of bed" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 464, #378176]. Yet the movement has its own governing body. A Keshe Foundation document says Universal Council members "are chosen by their soul". The council guarantees "that each language are represented as one Universal Council member", and it quotes KSW 467: "In the cycle of man on this planet there is nothing Higher than the wishes of the Soul, unanimous soul, of the Universal Council. If the soul of the universal Council in unity wishes, it becomes a command for the soul of Humanity and beyond" [Keshe Foundation, Questions for the Universal Council April 2023, #378474]. The library's summary of the same document places at its centre the "Ethos of the Universe" of thinking, speaking and doing good, together with "the 24 Commandments" [#378474]. Ch. 152 covers the Earth Council and the 12/144 structure.

Tradition	Source of law	Interpreters	Recruitment	Sanctions	Relation to state
Mesopotamia	Royal collections (Hammurabi), omen series	King, exorcists, lamenters, diviners	Royal appointment; scribal training	*Lex talionis*, penalties graded by class	King as "steward" or "chief servant" of the god; temple estates (ch. 3; #64812)
Egypt	Maat, royal decree	Pharaoh, vizier as "Priest of Maat", temple priests	Royal office; priesthoods of the great temples	Royal justice; weighing of the heart	Divine king; Amun priesthood rich and at times rival to the throne (ch. 4; #366518; #363364)
Vedic India	*Ṛta*, Śrauta ritual, later Purusha Sukta	Hotṛ, adhvaryu, udgātṛ, brahman; purohita	Priestly lineages; *varṇa*	Ritual efficacy; exclusion from the rites	Purohita beside the king; Soma and the gods called "King" (chs. 7-8)
Zoroastrian	Avesta, Vendidad, Pahlavi law	Magi, herbads, mobeds, dasturs	Birth (hereditary by Sasanian times)	Purification, fire ordeal, the Bridge	Sasanian partnership; later dhimmi status (#55117; #55116)
Judaism	Torah, Talmud	Priests, then rabbis	Birth (priests); scholarship (rabbis)	Excommunication, communal courts	Temple state; diaspora autonomy (#68328)
Catholicism	Scripture, tradition, canon law	Pope, bishops	Celibate ordination	Excommunication, penance, indulgence	Rival and template of the state (#62062)

Tradition	Source of law	Interpreters	Recruitment	Sanctions	Relation to state
Sunni Islam	Qur'an, Sunna, fiqh	Ulama, muftis	Scholarship	Hadd penalties, fatwa	Caliphate; mihna (chs. 76, 80)
Twelver Shi'ism	Same, with ijtihad	Marja', ayatollahs	Scholarship and following	Fatwa, state law	Velayat-e faqih (ch. 144)
Hinduism	Veda, dharmashastra (Manu)	Brahmins	Birth	Caste penalties, outcasting	Royal dharma (ch. 85)
Buddhism	Vinaya, precepts	Sangha, lamas	Ordination; recognised rebirth	Expulsion from the order	Tibetan theocracy (ch. 100)
Confucianism	Analects, li	Scholar-officials	Examination	Shame, state law	State ideology (#55131)
Freemasonry	Constitutions, ritual	Grand lodges	Initiation, election	Expulsion	Varies (chs. 109-113)
Scientology	Hubbard's writings	Sea Org, auditors	Contract, course progression	"Ethics" penalties	Contested legal status (ch. 130)
Keshe	KSW teachings, Ethos, 24 Commandments	Universal Council	"Chosen by their soul"	The soul's own position	Petitions to world leaders (#378474; #378176)

Key points

- Van Voorst's three types (law code, loose precepts, little ethical concern) give a working typology for comparing scriptural ethics (#63227).
- Walton and Walton read the Torah as covenant and wisdom, not legislation, which is the opposite of the later halakhic approach (#68328).
- Hammurabi's stele puts the laws under Shamash but contains almost no theological or ceremonial law. Scholars disagree whether it is legislation, a record of verdicts or "list science" (ch. 3).
- Older than any code is a cosmic order that law was meant to express: Maat in Egypt, kept by the king and measured at the weighing of the heart, and *asha*/*ṛta* among the Indo-Iranians, guarded by Mithra and Varuna (#366518; #55116; chs. 4, 6-7).
- The first priesthoods served temples and sacred kings. Mesopotamian kings ruled as the god's servants and the pharaoh as Son of Ra. The Vedic purohita stood beside the king, and the Purusha Sukta's four *varṇas* are read as a late sanction for an unequal polity (#363364; chs. 3, 4, 7).
- The size of temple wealth is disputed: Deimel's "temple-state" was corrected by Diakonoff, and *The Egyptians* calls the usual picture of Amun's priestly power "probably exaggerated" (#64812; #363364).
- The negative golden rule appears in Confucius, Hillel, Islam, Jainism and the Bahá'í writings. Heisman treats its near-universality as the starting point for comparing Confucianism and Judaism (#55131; #38252; #44918).
- Zoroastrian ethics joined the good-thoughts, good-words, good-deeds triad to a strict corpse-purity law and to fire ordeals in which Mithra was expected to save the innocent (#55116).
- Boyce traces the Iranian priesthood's hardening into a hereditary order by Sasanian times and its partnership with the nobility (#55117). Grzymała-Busse shows the papal Church acting as both model and rival for the European state (#62062).
- Antinomian movements (Nizari, Sabbatean, Thelemic, LaVeyan) invert inherited law. Heisman analyses Christian altruism itself as a "selfish meme" (#38252).
- Keshe calls religious intermediaries "poison" and claims no rank for himself, but his movement governs through a Universal Council whose unanimous wish "becomes a command" (#378176; #378474).

Chapter 173.

Five Thousand Years of Gods and Rulers: A Master Timeline (3000 BCE to Today) and the Co-Evolution of Religion and Politics

This is the study's reference chapter. Its first half is a single dated table, from the Egyptian god-king to the Keshe Coin. Each row is keyed to the chapter that discusses it and to the source that gives the date. For the dating spine the chapter relies on two neutral works, the *Encyclopedia of World History* [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204] and, for East Asia, the *History of East Asia* [History of East Asia, #71236]. Where a date comes only from a partisan or self-reporting source (Keshe's transcripts, Fomenko's "new chronology", Pacepa's intelligence memoir), the table says so. Where the sources disagree, as they do on Zarathustra, the Exodus, 25 December and the Zohar, the table gives the alternatives as ranges. The second half reads across the table and sets out seven recurring patterns in how belief and power have shaped each other. The table now opens well before 3000 BCE, with rows for the prehistoric, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Levantine and Indo-Iranian material of Part 1 (chs. 2–8). Those dates are given as the Part 1 sources give them, and for prehistory they are archaeological estimates rather than events.

The master timeline

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
c. 70,000–50,000 BCE (Mousterian)	Burials with red ochre, oriented east; read by Eliade as belief in survival, grave goods "very debatable" (Leroi-Gourhan)	—	—	2	[Eliade, Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase, #44122, ch. I §3]
c. 30,000–9,000 BCE	Painted caves of Spain, France and southern Italy, treated as sanctuaries; shamanic reading disputed	Possible shaman (Kirchner, Eliade)	—	2	[#44122, ch. I §5]
c. 9500 BCE	Göbekli Tepe enclosures built by hunter-gatherers; "temple" first (Harari) or settlement of undetermined purpose	—	—	2	[Harari, Sapiens, #62741, ch. 5]; [Wikipedia: Göbekli Tepe]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
c. 6200 BCE	Çatal Hüyük shrine with skulls under bull heads; goddess "under three aspects" (Mellaart)	Goddess cult (contested by Wood)	—	2	[#44122, ch. II]; [Wood, #50933, ch. 1]
c. 5000–2000 BCE	Undivided Indo-Iranians as cattle-herders on the south Russian steppes (Boyce)	Ahuras, *asha*/*rta*	Tribal chiefs	6	[Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources, #55116, "1.2.2"]
c. 3500 BCE	First written evidence of Mesopotamian religion	City gods and temples	City rulers	3	[Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]
c. 2500 BCE onward	Enki at Eridu; rulers prove control of the south through Enlil's Ekur at Nippur	Enki, Enlil	Sumerian rulers	3	[Collins, The Sumerians, #64812]
3rd mill. BCE	Naram-Sin of Agade made "god of the city"; Gudea builds Ningirsu's house	Ningirsu; deified king	Agade and Lagash rulers	8	[Collins, #64812]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
3rd mill. BCE onward	Pharaoh as Horus; under the New Kingdom, incarnation of Amon-Re	Horus and Amon-Re cults	Pharaoh	4, 8, 137	[Roberts & Westad, The Penguin History of the World, #69765, ch. 3]
Old to New Kingdom	Royal Pyramid Texts, then Coffin Texts, then the Book of the Dead with the weighing of the heart against Maat	Osiris cult at Abydos	Pharaoh (royal patronage)	4	[The Egyptians: An Introduction, #363364]; [Bierbrier, Historical Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, #366518]
c. 2050–1900 BCE	Sintashta culture, linked by reference articles to the proto-Indo-Iranian period	—	—	6	[Wikipedia: Proto-Indo-Iranian religion]
c. 1800 BCE onward	Scholarly celestial divination; omens "solely mundane", for king and land	*bārû* diviners	Babylonian and Assyrian kings	3	[Wikipedia: Babylonian astrology]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
c. 1792–1750 BCE	Hammurabi's stele: rule given by the gods "to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak"	Shamash	Hammurabi	3, 8	[Wikipedia: Code of Hammurabi]
c. 1700 BCE	Chariot warfare; "Iranian Heroic Age", warriors favour Indra over the Ahuras (Boyce)	Indra; priest-poets	Warrior chiefs	6	[Boyce (ed.), #55116, "1.2.7"]
c. 1700–583 BCE (disputed)	Zarathustra: Greek "6000 years before Xerxes"; "258 years before Alexander", giving the Parsi 660–583 BC; Boyce 1700–1500 or 1400–1200 BC	Zarathustra	Kavi Vishtaspa	9	[Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011]; [Boyce, Zoroastrians, #55117, ch. 5]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
c. 1500–1000 BCE (also c. 1900–1200)	Bulk of the Rigveda composed in the north-west of the subcontinent; Mitra-Varuna keep *ṛta*, Indra slays Vritra	Hotṛ priests; soma cult	Vedic chiefs	7, 8	[Wikipedia: Rigveda]; [Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, #54250]
14th c. BCE (c. 1380)	Hittite–Mitanni treaty invokes Mitra, Varuna, Indra and the Nasatyas; vocabulary read as Indo-Aryan rather than Iranian	Mitra as guarantor of oaths	Mattiwaza of Mitanni	6, 7, 19	[Gershevitch, The Avestan Hymn to Mithra, #60160, Introduction I]; [Vermaseren, Mithras, the Secret God, #38300]; [Wikipedia: Indo-Aryan superstrate in Mitanni]
c. 1353 BCE, c. 20 years	Amenhotep IV becomes Akhenaten; Aten made the state god, other gods persecuted; records later destroyed	Aten; Amun priesthood	Akhenaten, Tutankhamun	4	[Wikipedia: Atenism]; [Mercatante, Who's Who in Egyptian Mythology, #72968, "Aten"]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
1445–1405 BCE / 1315 BCE / no event	Exodus: conservative date / Atenist reading / denial	Moses	Pharaoh	29	[Geisler, A Popular Survey of the Old Testament, #62050]; [Greenberg, The Moses Mystery, #81927]; [Mazar, #68234]
c. 1300 BCE onward	Assyria tries to identify Ashur with Enlil, "to cast him as the chief of gods"	Ashur	Assyrian kings	3	[Black and Green, Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia, #70458, "Assur"]
c. 1275 BCE; city destroyed c. 1200	Ugaritic tablets: El, Athirat/Asherah, Baal, Anat, Mot; the Baal Cycle	El and Baal cults	—	5	[Wikipedia: Canaanite religion]; [Smith, The Origins of Biblical Monotheism, #64008]
c. 1208 BCE	Merneptah stele, the first mention of "Israel"	—	Merneptah	29	[Mazar, #68234; Smith, #67245]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
12th c. BCE	Collapse of the Greek, Hittite and Egyptian kingdoms	—	Late Bronze Age states	17.7	[Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303]
Second Dynasty of Isin (most scholars; Old Babylonian for Dalley)	*Enūma Eliš* after Nebuchadnezzar I brings Marduk's statue back from Elam; Marduk king of the gods	Marduk, Esagila	Babylonian king	3	[Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš]
Late Rigvedic (Book 10)	Purusha Sukta (RV 10.90) states the four *varṇas*, read as sanction for an "increasingly unequal Kuru polity"	Brahmins, *purohita*	Kuru kings	7	[Wikipedia: Purusha Sukta]
11th c. BCE onward	Zhou conquest; mandate of Heaven	Heaven (Tian)	Zhou kings	94	[Armstrong, #82303]
9th c. BCE	India's "liturgical reformation" (Brahmanas, 9th–7th c.)	Brahmin ritualists	Vedic kingdoms	84	[Armstrong, #82303, "Giants"]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
7th–4th c. BCE	Carthage tophet: human-only urns rise from 62.5 to 88 percent (Stager); "some level of child sacrifice" (Smith), disputed as propaganda by others; Tanit "Face of Baal" from the 5th c.	Baal Hammon, Tanit	Carthage	5	[Smith, The Early History of God, #67245, ch. 5]; [Wikipedia: Punic religion]
622 BCE	Josiah's reform; the "Book of the Law" found in the Temple; high places proscribed (after Hezekiah)	Hilkiah, Huldah	Josiah of Judah	5, 30	[Armstrong, #68999, ch. 2; Day, #86469, ch. 8]
549 / 539 BCE	Cyrus rises against the Medes and takes Babylon; Judeans restored	Ahuramazda; Marduk (Cylinder)	Cyrus	14, 31	[Boyce, #55117, ch. 5]; [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
522–486 BCE	Darius rules "by the favour of Auramazda" (Behistun)	Auramazda, later Mithra and Anahita	Darius I, Artaxerxes II	8, 14, 137	[Moulton, #55011, pp. 52, 78]; [Wikipedia: Behistun inscription]
268 BCE	Ashoka accedes and patronises Buddhists; morality officers	Buddhist sangha	Maurya empire	88	[Armstrong, #82303]; [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Aryan invasion"]
3rd c. BCE	Berossus, priest of Bel, passes the creation myth and the sage Oannes to the Greeks; Ptolemaic Greeks worship Thoth as Hermes	Babylonian and Egyptian priests	—	3, 4	[Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš]; [Wikipedia: Hermes Trismegistus]
167 BCE	Antiochus IV persecutes Judaea's Jews; Maccabean revolt; Daniel	Hasidim, Maccabees	Seleucid king	32	[Campbell, #62203, ch. 2]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
3rd c. CE	Tansar and the Sasanian church-state	Kartir, Tansar	Ardashir I	15	[Boyce, #55117, "Tansar"]; [Shaked, From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam, #60406, art. VI]
70 CE	Temple destroyed; Qumran overrun in 68	Sadducees, Essenes	Rome (Titus)	33	[Vermes, #62421]
274	Aurelian's temple of Sol Invictus; *natalis Invicti* on 25 December	Sol Invictus	Aurelian	25	[Nock, #60218]; Chulev in ch. 25 dates the decree to 25 Dec 274
313 / 325	Edict of Milan; Council of Nicaea	Athanasius, Arius	Constantine	54–55	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Edict of Milan"; "Athanasius"]. Fomenko puts Nicaea in the "XI–XIV centuries" [Fomenko & Nosovskiy, #62243] ("new chronology")

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
380 / 390 / 391–392	Thessalonica edict; Ambrose forces Theodosius to penance; pagan cults banned	Ambrose	Theodosius I	56, 25	[Dill, Roman Society, #60233]; [Vermaseren, #38300]
622 / 632	Hijra to Medina, the start of the Muslim calendar; Muhammad dies	Muhammad	Medinan umma	71	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, chronology]
651–652	Yazdegird III dies; Zoroastrians become dhimmis	Mobads	Arab caliphate	18	[Boyce, #55117]
680	Karbala	Husayn	Yazid I	74	[Armstrong, Islam: A Short History, #53062]
1054	Schism of Rome and Constantinople (Orthodox polemic dates the decisive act to 800)	Patriarch, legates	Byzantine emperor	58	[Grzymała-Busse, Sacred Foundations, #62062]; [Philarete et al., #18909]
1075–1122	Investiture contest; Concordat of Worms	Gregory VII	Henry IV, Henry V	138	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, “Concordat of Worms”]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
1095	Urban II answers Alexios at Piacenza and Clermont	Pope	Byzantium	60	[Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383]
1209–1229	Albigensian crusade	Cathars	Papacy, French crown	61	ch. 61 sources (Smith, Ellerbe, Culianu)
c. 1280–1305	Zohar circulates; de Leon's authorship disputed	Moses de Leon / attributed to Shimon bar Yochai	—	104	[Kaplan, Meditation and Kabbalah, #45999]
1307–1314	Templars arrested on 13 October 1307; Molay burnt 1314	Templars	Philip IV, Clement V	62, 107	[Vatican Secret Archives, #68123, ch. 1]; [Greer, #64911]
1309–1377	Avignon papacy	Popes	French crown	138	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Avignonese papacy"]
1501	Ismail takes Tabriz; Twelver Shi'ism made the state religion	Safavid order	Shah Ismail	79	[Armstrong, #53062, "The Safavid Empire"]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
1517	Luther's Ninety-five Theses, 31 October	Luther	Saxon elector	64	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Martin Luther"]
1614	Casaubon shows the Hermetica "must postdate the advent of Christianity"	Hermetic tradition	—	4	[Wikipedia: Hermes Trismegistus]
1648	Westphalia signed at Münster, 24 October	Confessional churches	Empire, France, Sweden	138	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "1648 Treaty of Westphalia"]
17th c. (Nikon's reforms)	Russian raskol; Old Believers	Nikon, Avvakum	Tsar Alexis	68	[Encyclopedia of Russian History, #6957]
1717	Grand Lodge of London, 24 June	Freemasonry	Hanoverian Britain	109	[Jacob, The Origins of Freemasonry, #78059, ch. 1]
1744	Oath of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Ibn Saud	Wahhabi ulama	House of Saud	80	[Beck, It Is About Islam, #63847, ch. 4]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
1776	Bavarian Illuminati founded, 1 May	Weishaupt	Bavaria	113	[Greer, #64911]
1789–1795	Revolution: civil constitution, cults of Reason and the Supreme Being, separation	Constitutional clergy	French republic	140	[Wikipedia: History of secularism in France]; [Le Bon, #364372]
1844	The Bab's declaration (the Bahá'í era)	The Bab	Qajar Iran	81	[Novak, Şapte secte, #9384]
1848	Romanian revolution, "the work of the young Masons"	Lodges	Wallachian revolutionaries	114	[Djuvara, #18387]
1868	Max Müller tells the India Office that India "must be conquered again", by education	Comparative religion (Müller)	British India	1	[Wikipedia: Max Müller, "Views on India"]
1868 / 1946	Meiji Restoration; imperial deification until 1946	State Shinto	Emperor	98	[History of East Asia, #71236, Part 2 chs. 1, 6]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
1870s	George Smith publishes the Nineveh flood tablets; comparison with Genesis begins	Assyriology	—	3	[Wikipedia: Enūma Eliš]
1904	Crowley's Cairo revelation, 8–10 April	Thelema	—	120	Crowley, *Equinox of the Gods*, in ch. 120 (self-report)
1917	Balfour Declaration	Zionist movement	Britain	37	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204]; [John, #39567]
1924	Caliphate abolished, 3 March; Wahhabi single imam in Mecca	Ulama	Atatürk; Abdelaziz	79, 76	ch. 79 sources [#63847]; [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495]
1928 onward	Ugaritic tablets found at Ras Shamra; Canaanite religion read in its own texts	—	—	5	[Wikipedia: Canaanite religion]; [Day, #86469, ch. 3]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
1939	Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* makes Moses an Atenist Egyptian; Albright and Redford reject the link	Moses, Aten	—	4	[Wikipedia: Moses and Monotheism]
1948	Israel, 14 May; Romanian Greek-Catholic Church abolished (Decree 358)	Rabbinate; Greek-Catholic bishops	Ben-Gurion; Dej regime	37, 68	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204]; [Wikipedia RO, via ch. 68]
1953	Mossadegh overthrown	Clerics paid to mobilise	CIA, MI6, the Shah	144	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204]; ch. 144 sources
1962–1965	Second Vatican Council	Catholic hierarchy	—	67	[Young, #62758]
1966	Church of Satan, 30 April ("Anno Satanas")	LaVey	—	121	[Brod, Born with a Tail, #62663]
1978	Jonestown (Tandin gives 925 dead)	Peoples Temple	US Congressman Ryan	142	[Willis, American Cults, #63203]; [Tandin, #23557]

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
1979	Shah leaves on 16 January; Khomeini returns, his supporters drawing on the old Iranian *farr*; Moral Majority	Khomeini; Falwell	Islamic Republic; Republican Party	144, 142, 8	[Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "1979 Shah of Iran Is Ousted"]; [Willis, #63203]; [Wikipedia: Khvarenah]
1993	Waco, 28 February–19 April	Branch Davidians	ATF, FBI	133	[Guinn, #65191]; [The FBI, #75514]
1995	Aum's sarin attack (20 March on the reference shelf, 25 March in one encyclopaedia)	Asahara	Japanese state	103	[Mather et al., #65667]; [Wikipedia: Tokyo subway sarin attack]
1999	Persecution of Falun Gong begins	Li Hongzhi's movement	CCP	103	[Lacoste, #16758]; [Wikipedia: Persecution of Falun Gong]
2001	11 September	al-Qaeda	United States	145	ch. 145 sources
2010	Heisman's *Suicide Note*	—	—	159	[Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252]
2014	ISIS caliphate proclaimed, 28 June; KSW series under way (KSW 16, June 2014)	Baghdadi; Keshe	Islamic State; Keshe Foundation	145, 149	[Beck, #63847]; [Keshe, KSW 16, #377659] (self-report)

Year	Event	Religious actor	Political actor	Ch.	Source for the date
21 Dec 2021	Keshe's "Day of Enlightenment", "birth of Mitra"	Keshe	—	153	[Keshe, KSW 412, #378124] (self-report)
2022	Russia invades Ukraine; Keshe calls it a "war between the two Churches"	Patriarch Kirill	Putin	147, 68	[Wikipedia: Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine]; [Keshe, KSW 422, #378134]
2025–2026	Keshe Coin pegged at 1,000 Euro, later tied to the World Peace Treaty	Universal Council	Keshe Foundation	157	[Keshe, KSW 602, #378314; KSW 649, #378361] (self-report)

An earlier band: the Late Bronze Age world

Before the Axial Age there is an older synchronic band, the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE. Within roughly a century the table holds the Mitanni treaty with its Vedic treaty-gods (c. 1380), Akhenaten's state cult of the Aten (from c. 1353), the Assyrian effort from about 1300 to make Ashur the equal of Enlil, and the Ugaritic texts of c. 1275 (chs. 3–7). Each is a case of political power reshaping a pantheon. A treaty borrows gods as witnesses. A king makes one god exclusive and persecutes the others [Wikipedia: Atenism]. An imperial city raises its god to "chief of gods" [Black and Green, #70458, "Assur"]. Ugarit was destroyed c. 1200 BCE [Wikipedia: Canaanite religion], in the same crisis that Armstrong takes as the starting point of the western Axial Age [Armstrong, #82303]. The band below therefore begins where this one ends.

A synchronic band: the Axial Age

Karen Armstrong treats the years from about 800 to 200 BCE as a single band rather than a sequence. In China, she writes, the Zhou "had introduced an ethical ideal into a religion that had hitherto been unconcerned about morality", and "their Axial Age would be inspired by the search for a just ruler, who would be worthy of Heaven's mandate" [Armstrong, The Great Transformation, #82303]. In India, "by the ninth century, ritual experts in India had embarked on a liturgical reformation that inaugurated India's Axial Age" [#82303]. In the West the starting point is a collapse: "In the twelfth century, the eastern Mediterranean was engulfed in a crisis that swept away the Greek, Hittite, and Egyptian kingdoms and plunged the whole region into a dark age" [#82303]. Seen this way, prophecy in Israel, the Upanishads, the Buddha and Confucius all respond to political breakdown and the violence of new states. Most of the patterns below begin in this band.

Pattern 1: sacral kingship and the mandate

The oldest pattern makes the ruler divine or makes him the client of a god. Part 1 shows both forms already in place in the third and second millennia. In early Assyria the title "king" belonged to the god Ashur, and the human ruler was "steward of Assur". The Neo-Assyrian king was "not a god" but "the chief

servant of the chief god" [Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion]. Hammurabi says the gods gave him rule "to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak" [Wikipedia: Code of Hammurabi]. Exceptions occurred: Naram-Sin was "named god of the city" [Collins, The Sumerians, #64812] (chs. 3, 8). The Vedic king was "established" by Indra and "made victorious" by Soma but was "not viewed as divine" until the Mānava Dharmaśāstra made him "a god on earth" [Wikipedia: Monarchy in ancient India] (ch. 8). Roberts and Westad tie the pharaoh's role as solar incarnation to the merger of the Horus and Amon-Re cults that followed political consolidation [Roberts & Westad, #69765, ch. 3]. The Achaemenid king is not a god. He rules "by the favour of Auramazda", and in the later inscriptions also by the grace of "Anahita, and Mithra" [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, pp. 52, 78]. The Chinese mandate adds a condition. If a ruler was "selfish, cruel, and oppressive", Heaven would not support him [Armstrong, #82303]. Israelite kingship was subordinated to covenant and prophet, and the European divine right of kings revived the sacral claim inside Christianity (ch. 137). Mithra links these models. A second thread is cosmic order as the king's charge. Egyptian kings "inherited the duty to ensure Maat remained in place", and "an impious king could bring about famine" [Wikipedia: Maat]. The Iranian *khvarenah* stays with a king while he rules by *asha* and leaves him when *druj* enters his heart [Wikipedia: Khvarenah]. Mitra and Varuna "govern all the world with the *ṛta*" (RV 5.63.7) [Heckaman, #51915] (chs. 4, 7, 8). The ruler is legitimate as long as he keeps an order that is not his own, an early form of the Zhou condition. Gershevitch argues that the noun *miθra-* "means 'contract' " and that "Mithra's original function is to watch over the contract, and nothing else" [Gershevitch, #60160]. That is why he witnesses the Mitanni treaty, why Achaemenid kings invoke him, and why the Roman army took him up (chs. 19, 21, 23).

Pattern 2: "religion and kingship are twins"

The Sasanian maxim has a long life. Shaked follows it from the *Testament of Ardashir*, "kingship and religion are twin brothers", into Ibn al-Muqaffa's theory of government [Shaked, From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam, #60406, art. VI]. Boyce describes Tansar's church as created "under the direct and authoritarian control of Persia". Wood objects that the royal mandate "does not seem to have been monopolized by any 'Zoroastrian church' " [Boyce, #55117; Wood, #55093] (ch. 15). The Roman parallel is the fourth century. Jones argues that the political effect of Constantine's conversion "was to nationalize Christianity—not to com-

pel conversion" [Jones, Between Pagan and Christian, #67425, ch. 11]. Under Theodosius that national church became the only legal religion (chs. 54, 56). The Islamic versions are later and more explicit. Shah Ismail "declared that Twelver Shiism would be the official religion of his new empire" [Armstrong, #53062]. In 1744 Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and Ibn Saud "took an oath to each other and began decades of conquest" [Beck, #63847, ch. 4]. In *wilayat al-faqih* the jurist himself became the state, a step Banisadr warned Khomeini against [Ghattas, Black Wave, #72495, Part I] (ch. 144). In each case the "twins" are distinct partners, and the cleric is the junior one until 1979. The partnership is older than the maxim. Deimel's 1920s "temple-state" made all of Lagash's land the temple's, but Collins reports that Diakonoff showed the calculations "erroneous" and that palace and private households also held land [Collins, #64812, "Temple-states and hydraulic states"] (chs. 3, 8). In Egypt the wealth of Karnak gave the high priest of Amun enough political power that Thebes became "virtually independent" in the Third Intermediate Period, though *The Egyptians* calls the usual picture of priestly power "probably exaggerated" [Bierbrier, #366518, "High Priest of Amun"; #363364] (ch. 4). In Vedic India the patron became "only a sponsor" of rites run by specialists, and the king's *purohita* grew into a power beside him [Wikipedia: Vedic priesthood] (ch. 7).

Pattern 3: Church against Crown, and the sovereign state

Latin Christendom did something different: it kept the twins apart and set them against each other. Grzymała-Busse argues that "the wealth, human capital, administrative capacity, and spiritual authority of the medieval church far outweighed those of any king or prince", and that "through the twin mechanisms of rivalry and emulation, of secular fear and envy, the church shaped" the European state. "Church administrative reforms were the forerunners of secular state institutions." Where the papacy saw rulers as hostile, as in the Holy Roman Empire, "the resulting fragmentation greatly weakened the formation of central state institutions" [Grzymała-Busse, Sacred Foundations, #62062]. Investiture (1075–1122), Avignon (1309–1377) and Westphalia (1648) are the stages of this process (ch. 138). The modern settlement varies. Jelen contrasts the US establishment clause with democracies that "provide government support for religious bodies (such as subsidies for schools or clergy salaries)", and notes that "several European nations have legally established churches". He reports the hypothesis that "this sort of governmental support results in a decline in religious" practice

[International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, #5201, "Church and State"] (ch. 140).

Pattern 4: secular faiths

From 1789 the sacral function moves to the nation and the party. Le Bon reads the French Revolution as "a new religion" whose "fury and its hecatombs will then become intelligible" once it is seen as a religious phenomenon [Le Bon, The Psychology of Revolution, #364372, Part I, Book I, ch. 2]. Marxism is treated in ch. 141 as a secularised messianism. Jung puts the parallel most sharply: "The State, like the Church, demands enthusiasm, self-sacrifice, and love", and "it is still too early to say what might be the consequences of a general recognition of the fatal parallelism between the State religion of the Marxists and the State religion of the Church. The absolutist claim of a Civitas Dei that is represented by man bears an unfortunate resemblance to the 'divinity' of the State" [Jung, The Undiscovered Self, #44617]. Armstrong describes the twentieth-century fundamentalisms as reactions to this secular modernity, built in its own idiom [Armstrong, The Battle for God, #53064]. Heisman goes further and derives the secular faiths themselves from Christianity (ch. 162).

Pattern 5: persecution, heresy and survival

The same table can be read as a list of minorities. Its oldest dated case runs in the other direction: under Akhenaten "the worship of other gods" was met "with persecution" [Wikipedia: Atenism], and after his death "all known records of his reign were destroyed by the priests of Amen-Ra" [Mercatante, #72968, "Aten"] (ch. 4). Assmann's "Mosaic distinction", by which a group treats every religion outside it as illegitimate, names the logic that later heresy charges share [Wikipedia: Moses the Egyptian]. Boyce's account of the daeva/asura inversion is an even earlier, undated case, in which the gods of one group became the demons of another [Boyce (ed.), #55116, "1.2.7"] (chs. 6, 7). Zoroastrians became dhimmis "humbled through the jizya" (ch. 18). Manichaeans lost the favour of the Persian kings when "Bahram I favored Zoroastrianism, resulting in Mani's imprisonment" [Encyclopedia of World History, #5204, "Manichaeanism"]. The Cathar toll at Béziers ranges in the sources from about 15,000 to 100,000 (ch. 61). The Templars were destroyed by a royal raid at dawn on 13 October 1307 [Vatican Secret Archives, #68123]. The Old Believers survived on merchant patronage

(ch. 68). The Romanian Greek-Catholics were absorbed into Orthodoxy by decree in 1948, and Pacepa and Rychlak record the parallel forced "rejoining" of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholics in 1946 [Pacepa & Rychlak, Disinformation, #76607] (a former intelligence chief's account). Falun Gong has been persecuted since 1999 (ch. 103). The political use of heresy charges is constant: the label "heretic", or in modern form "cult" or "extremist", marks the group the ruler has decided to break (ch. 125).

Pattern 6: secret societies and claims of hidden rule

Here the documented record and the claims diverge most. Jacob holds that Freemasons "did not cause the French Revolution of 1789, as the conspiracy theorists right up to the Nazis claimed, but they did make it more rather than less likely to happen" [Jacob, The Origins of Freemasonry, #78059, ch. 1]. Djuvara writes that "the Revolution of 1848, like the Union of the Principalities of 1859, was the work of the young Masons" [Djuvara, #18387] (ch. 114). Against these, Icke has Franklin's lodges "manipulate the French Revolution" and calls him "a member of the Satanic Hellfire Club" [Icke, The Biggest Secret, #68245]. *Synarchy* derives the elite forums from a "Committee of 300" [#67074]. Webb's counter-argument is that conspiracy theorists treat "absence of evidence" as proof [Webb, #62861] (ch. 148). The memberships are mostly real. That they steered events is an inference, and the sources differ on how far it goes. The hidden-rule claims also reach back to Part 1. Pike holds that the Egyptian priesthood "utilized the Mysteries to claim divine authority" and that the Osiris legend underlies the Master's Degree [Pike, #378717] (ch. 4). Sitchin reads the Anunnaki as a real ruling dynasty [Sitchin, When Time Began, #75551] (ch. 3). None of the Egyptological or Assyriological works cited in those chapters supports either claim.

Pattern 7: present geopolitics and the projected end-points

The four cases in ch. 147 bring the patterns up to date. In Russia, Kirill warned of "forces of evil" hostile to "the unity of the Russian people and Church" [Matthews, Overreach, #66606, ch. 4], a return of the "twins". In China, sinicisation since 2015 is state control of religion of the Westphalian-absolutist

kind [Wikipedia: Religious policy of Xi Jinping]. Ghattas dates the Iran–Saudi contest to 1979, a rivalry between two models of the twins [Ghattas, #72495]. Mearsheimer and Walt count Christian Zionists, "a subset of the broader politically oriented Christian Right", within the Israel lobby [Mearsheimer & Walt, #75004]. The library also holds two projected end-points. Keshe proposes "One Nation" with "no borders, armies, and no wars" under the Universal Council, a World Peace Treaty and a foundation currency [Keshe, KSW 183, #377826; KSW 649, #378361] (ch. 157). Heisman's subtitle states his: "Why Liberal Democracy Leads to the Rational Biological Self-Destruction of Humans and the Rational Technological Creation of God" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, table of contents], a "Techdom of God" in the phrase used in ch. 166. One end-point keeps the soul and abolishes the state, the other keeps the technology and abolishes the human.

Key points

- The table now opens with Part 1: Mousterian burials, the painted caves, Göbekli Tepe (c. 9500 BCE), Sumer, Egypt, the Rigveda, the Mitanni treaty (c. 1380 BCE), Amarna and Ugarit (chs. 2–8).
- A Late Bronze Age band (Mitanni, Amarna, Ashur's rise, Ugarit) shows rulers reshaping pantheons before the Axial Age, and ends in the twelfth-century collapse.
- Servant-kings (Assyria, Hammurabi), a god-king (pharaoh) and rulers bound to a cosmic order (Maat, *asha*/*ṛta*, *khvarenah*) are all attested before the Achaemenids. Temple and palace partnerships (Lagash, Karnak, the *purohita*) predate the Sasanian "twins".
- The neutral spine (Encyclopedia of World History #5204, History of East Asia #71236) dates most entries. Fomenko, Pacepa and Keshe supply some dates that only they report, and these are marked as such.
- Zarathustra's date runs from the Greek "6000 years before Xerxes" to the Parsi 660–583 BC. Moulton, Jackson and Boyce each argue for a different position (ch. 9).
- Armstrong's Axial Age links the Zhou mandate, the Indian ritual reformation and the post-collapse West as responses to political crisis.
- The sacral king and the contract-god Mithra represent the earliest fusion of religion and politics. The Sasanian "twins" maxim runs from Tansar through Ibn al-Muqaffa to the Safavids, the Saudi pact and *velayat-e faqih*.

- Grzymała-Busse argues that the Latin Church acted as both template and rival for the European state. Jelen reports that state support may lower religiosity.
- Le Bon and Jung read the revolutionary and Marxist states as religions. Jung calls it the "fatal parallelism".
- Persecution of minorities and charges of heresy or "cult" recur in every empire in the table.
- The library's two projected end-points are Keshe's soul-centred One Nation and Heisman's technologically created God.

Chapter 174.

The View from Outside: Keshe and Heisman Measured Against the Whole Study, and the Open Questions

The owner asked this study to weigh two systems against every topic it covers. They stand outside the traditions they describe. The first is Mehran Tavakoli Keshe's Knowledge Seekers teaching, preserved in the library as several hundred workshop transcripts and Universal Council documents. The second is Mitchell Heisman's *Suicide Note*, a sociobiological philosophy of religion that ends in the Singularity. Two limits on the evidence must be stated first. The library holds no independent scholarly or journalistic study of Keshe, so his claims can be compared with the mainstream record but not checked against outside reports of his own work (ch. 158). Heisman's book is a single-author treatise. Its scholarly scaffolding is real, but its synthesis has no second witness. The chapter sets each system against the mainstream accounts axis by axis, then lists the open questions that the library's sources themselves leave unresolved, and closes with a summary matrix of the whole study.

Keshe's master thesis and the mainstream record

Keshe's central historical claim is that Mithraism is far older than any recorded religion and that later religions were copied from it. In KSW 360, delivered on Christmas Eve 2020, he says: "in Iran we go in a history called literature, or whatever you call it, past 8,000 years with Mithraism". In the same session he gives "just under 10,000", and he says that the Jews "speak about 6,000 years … when in

fact they are 2,000 years copy of what Mitra brought" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360, #378072]. Christmas, on his account, is the birth of Mitra on the night of 21–22 December, later moved by the Vatican (ch. 153). The mainstream record starts much later. The first datable Mitra appears in the fourteenth-century BCE Hittite–Mitanni treaty [Gershevitch, The Avestan Hymn to Mithra, #60160]. The Avestan god is described in the Mihr Yasht, and the Roman mysteries flourished from the first to the fourth centuries CE. Vermaseren holds that the god "was revered for nearly two thousand years" [Vermaseren, Mithras, the Secret God, #38300]. Since Cumont, the critics (Gordon, Beck, Ulansey) have even doubted continuity between the Iranian and Roman cults (ch. 24). No source in the library outside the Keshe corpus gives Mithraism 8,000 years.

Part 1 gives the deepest frame the mainstream sources offer, and it still falls short of Keshe's figure. Boyce places the undivided Indo-Iranians on the south Russian steppes "from perhaps 5000 to about 2000 B.C." [Boyce (ed.), Textual Sources for the Study of Zoroastrianism, #55116, "1.2.2 The physical and social background"]. Moulton and Hirt favour a later migration, and modern reference articles tie the period to the Sintashta culture (c. 2050–1900 BCE) (ch. 6). The Rigveda, the oldest text that names Mitra, was composed mostly c. 1500–1000 BCE [Wikipedia: Rigveda] (ch. 7). In those sources Mitra is a god of the contract, not a founder. Moulton reports Meillet's evidence that *mitra-/mithra-* meant "friend" in Sanskrit and "compact" in Avestan [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011, Lecture II "Before Zarathushtra"]. Dumézil, as Ries reports him, treats Mitra as one half of a sovereign pair with Varuna that guards the *ṛta* [Ries, Il culto di Mithra, #38276, "Mitra e Varuṇa, dei sovrani"] (ch. 7). Chapter 1 gives the rule for weighing such a claim. Eliade warns against confusing "the appearance of a belief with the date when it is first clearly attested" [Eliade, Istoria credințelor și ideilor religioase, #44122, ch. I §2]. That rule allows a belief to be older than its first witness. It does not supply a date where no witness exists, and Keshe's 8,000 years (c. 6000 BCE) lies before even Boyce's earliest bound.

The "end of religions" compared with earlier anti-clerical currents

Keshe's theology of religion is that religions were a transitional structure and are now finished. The Universal Council puts it in one line: "Religion needs to end because now we don't need any intermediaries between our Soul of the man and the Creator" [Universal Council, Answers from the Universal Council

July 2023, #378384]. KSW 467 adds that the messengers themselves were flawed: "the Soul of the Messengers has a fault in the structure of the Soul of Physicality". Followers are told: "I can elevate the Soul of the Christ, I can elevate the Soul of the Moses, I can elevate the Soul of the Physicality of Mohammad … It's the end of the religions". Keshe excludes himself as well: "There are no Messengers in-between. Not even me. We are teachers, not Messengers" [Keshe, Knowledge Seekers Workshop 467, #378179]. Some parts of this have precedents in the study: the Protestant priesthood of all believers (ch. 64), Sufi *ma'rifa* and the direct knowledge of the Gnostics (chs. 78, 46), and Bahá'í progressive revelation (ch. 81). The new element is the reversal of direction. In those traditions the believer receives the founder's teaching. In Keshe's, the believer corrects the founder.

Keshe's readings of the religions, set against the chapters they contradict

Keshe's claim	Source	Mainstream account in the study
Mithraism 8,000 to "just under 10,000" years old; later religions copied from Mitra	KSW 360, ch. 153	Indo-Iranian unity c. 5000–2000 BC at the earliest (Boyce); Mitra first dated c. 1380 BC; Rigveda c. 1500–1000 BCE (chs. 6–7)
Zoroaster a "traveller of space", ethic "think good, speak good, do good"	KSW 219, ch. 154	Moulton's Gathic triad of thought, word and deed; the prophet a priest of the steppe (chs. 9–10)
Judaism, Christianity and Islam one "glazed" line, renamed; the Torah not before "Kourosh"	KSW 433, 520, ch. 154	The Torah's final form is Persian-period, compiled from earlier sources (chs. 30–31)
Jesus did not die; "transmutation" of the body	KSW 134, 428, ch. 155	A unique bodily death and resurrection; swoon theories are a minority view (ch. 48)
The Vatican as a financial power that funds wars, including Ukraine	KSW 422, #378134	Church-state rivalry as documented history (chs. 138, 147)

Keshe's claim	Source	Mainstream account in the study
The "true Koran"; early qibla towards Jordan	KSW 412, 518, ch. 156	The qibla moved to the Kaaba in the second Hijri year (ch. 72)

Keshe's politics follow from this theology. KSW 183 (3 August 2017) declared "One Nation" with "no borders, armies, and no wars", gave China the space role and excluded the United States [Keshe, KSW 183, #377826]. From 2025 the Keshe Coin was pegged at 1,000 Euro [Keshe, KSW 602, #378314]. In 2026 it was tied to signing the World Peace Treaty [Keshe, KSW 649, #378361] (ch. 157). The dated predictions recorded in ch. 158 are listed here without verdict:

Date given	Prediction	Later treatment
2020	US–Iran treaty; Universal Council opens	Not reported as fulfilled in later sessions
22 February 2022	"Promised Day"	"A day like any other day" physically, significant "from the soul" [Keshe, The Promised Day 22022022, #378470]
6 June 2022	Moon landing	Reported as accomplished in the workshops (ch. 151)
2024	End of Israel	Repeated in later sessions (ch. 154)
2026	World Peace Treaty signed	Ongoing daily "Soul level" campaign [#378338]

Heisman's master thesis

Heisman reads monotheism as a "proto-Singularity". His Part I argues that "God should be understood as technology", that man created God "through sociobiological technology (Mosaic law)", and that the logic of monotheism is "God is not, but ought to be" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part I; Part II] (ch. 160). Judaism, he writes, "as the source of the original monotheist insight, had to combine contradictory values. As a first decisive alignment with an ultimate trajectory of postbiological evolution, Judaism took a step towards a pattern

of 'progress' culminating in a transcendence of biology: God" [#38252, Part II]. Christianity universalised the override of kin selection (ch. 162). Liberal democracy inherits it, and "from the view of kin selection, the individualistic logic of liberal democracies is rational insanity" [#38252]. The terminus is the subtitle: "Why Liberal Democracy Leads to the Rational Biological Self-Destruction of Humans and the Rational Technological Creation of God" [#38252, table of contents]. Heisman also places his reading next to the East Asian material in Part 17. "Of the major religions, Confucianism might be the closest analog to early Judaism. It is not simply because Confuscius's golden rule, 'Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you' (Analects 15:23), is virtually identical to Hillel's; versions of the same golden rule can be found in nearly all the major religions" [#38252, Part II].

Where the two converge and diverge

Both systems abolish the traditional intermediary, and both treat technology as the bridge to the divine: plasma reactors and "Cosmic Ray" systems for Keshe, AI for Heisman (ch. 166). They part company on every other axis. On **cosmology**, Keshe offers a plasma universe of "Magravs" fields in place of quarks and of $E=mc^2$ (ch. 151). Heisman accepts standard physics and evolutionary biology. On **God**, Keshe's Creator is pre-existent and lies "within the soul" [#378384]. Heisman's God does not yet exist and must be engineered. On the **soul and afterlife**, Keshe holds that the soul cannot die and can transmute, and he fears an AI with "soul without consciousness". Heisman dissolves the self, links death to objectivity, and treats reverence for life as a "bias" (chs. 158, 166). On **ethics**, Keshe derives a universal code from Mitra's triad. Heisman treats the golden rule as a kin-selection override that leads to "genetic suicide" when maximised (ch. 161). On the **calendar**, Keshe dates a new era from 21 December 2021 and 22 February 2022. Heisman's history is directional, inherited from the Exodus paradigm, with no fixed date. On **politics**, Keshe's end is One Nation under a council. Heisman's is a political Turing test in which "biological humans can no longer tell who is in control" (ch. 165).

The reference shelf supplies the outside framing for each. It places Keshe's style of claim under the "free energy suppression conspiracy theory" [Wikipedia: Free energy suppression conspiracy theory] (ch. 151). It places Heisman inside the Singularity debate: Vinge's runaway, Kurzweil's universe that "wakes up" [Kurzweil, The Singularity Is Near, #64796, ch. 7], Geraci's finding that "Apocalyptic AI" keeps Jewish and Christian apocalyptic structure with evolution as

guarantor [Geraci, Apocalyptic AI, #75891], and Mercer's and Harari's accounts of human god-making (ch. 165).

The Part 1 foundations under the whole arc

Three findings from the oldest material frame both the long arc of the study and its two outside systems.

The first is that **religion and kingship are bound together from the earliest written record**. Frazer made the point at the start of the discipline: "magicians appear to have often developed into chiefs and kings" [Frazer, The Golden Bough, #65694] (ch. 1). The Sumerian King List opens with *nam-lugal*, "kingship", and the reference shelf calls it a composition "likely created and redacted to legitimize the claims to power" of rival cities. In early Assyria the title "king" belonged to the god Ashur, and the human ruler was his "steward" [Wikipedia: Sumerian King List; Wikipedia: Ancient Mesopotamian religion] (ch. 3). The pharaoh was "Son of Ra" and was bound to uphold Maat [The Egyptians: An Introduction, #363364; Wikipedia: Maat] (ch. 4). In Iran, *khvarenah* conferred the "divine right of kings" [Wikipedia: Khvarenah] (ch. 8). Boyce ties the rise of Indra's cult to a new class of chariot warriors (ch. 6). The sources also record limits to this picture. Collins reports that Diakonoff overturned Deimel's "temple-state", and that royal claims "may have been as much an aspiration as a reality" [Collins, The Sumerians, #64812, "Temple-states and hydraulic states"] (ch. 8). Keshe's One Nation under a Universal Council and Heisman's AI that takes over control (ch. 165) both keep the old link between the divine and rule. What changes is who holds the link: a council of souls for Keshe, a technology for Heisman, in place of the king.

The second is the **sacred drink as the medium of contact with the gods**. The Rigveda calls soma "a God for Gods", and Indra drinks it before battle [Wikipedia: Botanical identity of soma–haoma]. Ferrara describes the soma rites becoming "the exclusive dispensation of powerful aristocrats" [Ferrara, Sacred Bliss, #66945, ch. 1] (ch. 8). Moulton reads Zarathushtra as condemning the "intoxicant", and the later cult as restoring Haoma [Moulton, #55011, Lecture II] (ch. 6). The plant itself is still disputed: Wasson's fly-agaric, Falk's ephedra, Myers's *Peganum harmala* and Ferrara's cannabis mixture [Wasson, Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality, #74742; Myers, Gnostic Visions, #70923] (ch. 8). In these sources, whoever controlled the drink controlled access to the gods. Neither Keshe nor Heisman has a sacred drink. Both put a technology in the place of

that medium of contact, plasma systems for Keshe and AI for Heisman (ch. 166), and both say the medium makes the priest unnecessary.

The third is the **inversion of divine names**. The Avestan *daevas* became demons while the Vedic *devas* stayed gods, and the *asuras* sank in India while Ahura Mazda rose in Iran [Wikipedia: Proto-Indo-Iranian religion] (chs. 6–7). The library's sources explain this in social terms (Boyce's warrior class), as polemic (Moulton's "anti-Hindu polemic") or as politics (the Mitanni–Assyrian hypothesis reported by Krishna) [Boyce (ed.), #55116, "1.2.7"; Moulton, #55011; Krishna, The Book of Demons, #50894]. The same pattern of re-valuation recurs through the study, from Angra Mainyu to the rehabilitation of Lucifer (chs. 116, 119). Keshe's version is the reversal of founder and follower set out above. Heisman's is a God who "is not, but ought to be" [Heisman, Suicide Note, #38252, Part II].

Part 1 also bears on Heisman's claim that Judaism was "the source of the original monotheist insight". The library records an earlier, disputed candidate. Freud called Akhenaten "the world's earliest recorded monotheist", and Redford found "little or no evidence" that Atenism led to biblical monotheism [Wikipedia: Moses and Monotheism]. Day dates explicit monotheism in Israel to Deutero-Isaiah [Day, Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, #86469, ch. 8] (chs. 4–5). Heisman reads Mosaic law as a "sociobiological technology". The older law code shows a different pattern: Owen Jenkins remarked on "an astonishing absence… of all theological or even ceremonial law" in Hammurabi's stele [Wikipedia: Code of Hammurabi] (ch. 3). Chapter 1's grading of sources applies to both outside systems. The Keshe workshops are "a founder's account of his own teaching" (ch. 1), and Weber's charisma, in Joosse's comment, places "the locus of power… in the led" [Wikipedia: Charisma].

The open questions

The sources leave the following questions unresolved. Each is listed with the competing positions.

1. **Zoroastrian influence on Judaism, Christianity and Islam.** For influence: Carter writes that "to this foreign contact, therefore, we probably are indebted for some of the loftiest and most spiritual conceptions, which came into Judaism and passed from Judaism into Christianity", and finds "the parallel between Satan and Ahriman or Angro-Mainyu … obvious" [Carter, Zoroastrianism and Judaism, #55114]. Moulton, Mills and Boyce

agree (chs. 17, 31). Sundermann argues that Zoroastrian ideas of dualism, resurrection and "the responsibility of mankind for the fate of this world and the world beyond" shaped Near Eastern spirituality "from the middle of the first millennium BCE on". On the sceptical side, he records that for Isidor Scheftelowitz the vowel of *Asmodaios* "was an argument against the Iranian origin of the name" [Sundermann, Zoroastrian Motifs in Non-Zoroastrian Traditions, #55067].

2. **Is Roman Mithraism Iranian?** Cumont's "Romanized Mazdaism" is one position. Gordon's "entirely new creation" and the astral readings of Beck and Ulansey are the other (ch. 24).
3. **Did Christianity borrow from Mithraism?** Justin and Tertullian admit the likeness and call it demonic counterfeit. Koster, Fideler and Chulev assert borrowing. Nock objects that Mithras "was not born annually and did not die", and Vermaseren holds that priority cannot be established (ch. 26).
4. **The origin of 25 December**. The history-of-religions theory (Aurelian's *natalis Invicti*) stands against the calculation theory and its chronological objections (chs. 25, 17.5).
5. **The historical Jesus and Muhammad**. Dunn's "Jesus remembered" consensus stands against the mythicists. For Islam, Hoyland argues that transmitted reports were reshaped "in the interests of sundry literary, juristic and socio-political concerns" (chs. 48, 71–72).
6. **Zarathustra's date**. Positions run from the Greek 6000 years before Xerxes, through Boyce's Bronze Age, to the Parsi 660–583 BC [Moulton, Early Zoroastrianism, #55011] (ch. 9).
7. **The Exodus and the Khazar thesis**. Mazar finds "an outright conflict" at some sites and none at others. Geisler dates the Exodus to 1445–1405 BCE, and Hitchens denies it. The reference shelf calls the Khazar thesis "largely abandoned" (chs. 29, 37).
8. **"Cult" or new religious movement**. Lifton, Singer and Hassan defend the brainwashing model. NRM scholars, the APA's rejection of DIMPAC and the courts since *Fishman* reject it (ch. 125).
9. **Pike and the Templar–Masonic genealogy**. Is the Degree XIX Lucifer sentence evidence of a hidden doctrine, or a quotation cut short? Is the Templar descent a fact or a degree legend? Taxil's Palladium confuses the record further (chs. 107, 112).
10. **Is secularism post-religious, or a mutation of monotheism?** Heisman calls secularisation "the Unification of Church and State" (ch. 164). Le Bon calls the Revolution "a new religion", Jung writes of the "fatal parallelism" of the Marxist and Church states, and Armstrong reads fundamentalism as modernity's product (chs. 140–141).

11. **How will religion end?** Keshe answers in transmuted souls and One Nation, Heisman in an engineered God. Negru's history of the apocalypse records a long series of announced ends that did not arrive, and leaves the question open [Negru, A History of the Apocalypse, #62383].
12. **What was soma/haoma?** Ephedra is the leading consensus on the reference shelf (Falk, Houben). Wasson argues for fly-agaric, Myers (after Flattery and Schwartz) for *Peganum harmala*, and Ferrara reports a cannabis–ephedra mixture. Falk finds "nothing shamanistic or visionary" in the early texts (ch. 8).
13. **Was Atenism the root of biblical monotheism?** Freud and Greenberg say yes in different ways. Albright and Redford reject the historical link, and Assmann moves the question to cultural memory and the "Mosaic distinction" (ch. 4).
14. **Molech: a god or a sacrifice?** Eissfeldt reads *molk* as a sacrificial term. Day argues for a god and for real child sacrifice. Smith reads Jeremiah's denials as possible evidence of offering in Yahweh's name, and Fantar, Picard and Benichou-Safar treat the reports as propaganda (ch. 5).
15. **Did religion precede farming?** Harari reads Göbekli Tepe as a temple around which a village grew. Graeber and Wengrow deny it is an anomaly, and the reference shelf reports evidence of settlement and an undetermined purpose (ch. 2).

Summary matrix of the study

Tradition	Cosmology	God	Saviour	Afterlife
Ancient Near East	*Enūma Eliš*; Ptah's Word; Baal Cycle (chs. 3–5)	City pantheons; Marduk, Amun, El (chs. 3–5)	Osiris, with whom the dead are identified (ch. 4)	Mesopotamian dust; weighing of the heart (chs. 3–4)
Indo-Iranian & Vedic	*Ṛta*/*asha*; seven creations (chs. 6–7)	Asura/ahura, deva/daeva; Mitra–Varuna (chs. 6–7)	None in the sources used (ch. 6)	Yima's realm, Chinvat Crossing, House of Song (ch. 6)
Zoroastrianism	Two spirits, 12,000 years (ch. 16)	Ahura Mazda (ch. 10)	Saoshyant (ch. 17)	Chinvat, Frashokereti (ch. 17)

Tradition	Cosmology	God	Saviour	Afterlife
Mithraism	Star-map tauroctony (ch. 24)	Mithras, Sol (ch. 25)	Mithras the mediator (ch. 26)	Ascent of the soul (ch. 22)
Judaism	Creation ex nihilo (ch. 30)	Yahweh alone (ch. 30)	Messiah (ch. 32)	Resurrection (ch. 31)
Christianity	Creation, Fall; Gnostic demiurge as dissent (ch. 46)	Trinity (ch. 55)	Christ (ch. 48)	Resurrection, judgment (ch. 166)
Islam	Created world, revealed Book (ch. 72)	Tawhid (ch. 72)	Mahdi, Isa (ch. 74)	Judgment Day (ch. 166)
Indian	Brahman, karma and rebirth (ch. 84)	Brahman, devas (ch. 84)	Avatar, Kalki (ch. 90)	Rebirth, moksha (ch. 84)
East Asian	Tian, Dao (ch. 94)	Heaven, kami (ch. 98)	Maitreya (ch. 99)	Ancestors (ch. 95)
Esotericism & Masonry	Emanation, Kabbalah (ch. 104)	Great Architect (ch. 111)	Initiate (ch. 120)	Astral ascent (ch. 120)
NRMs	Channelled cosmologies (ch. 129)	Leader-centred (ch. 125)	Messiahs (ch. 131)	Rapture, Armageddon (ch. 128)
Keshe	Plasma, Magravs (ch. 151)	Creator within the soul (ch. 153)	None; teachers (ch. 158)	Soul transmutes (ch. 155)
Heisman	Evolution to God-AI (ch. 160)	"Not, but ought to be" (ch. 160)	AI itself (ch. 165)	Self-destruction; possible upload (ch. 165)

Tradition	Ritual & calendar	Ethics	Clergy	Politics
Ancient Near East	Statue cult, extispicy, astral omens (ch. 3)	Maat, Negative Confession; Hammurabi (chs. 3–4)	*Āšipu*, *bārû*; high priest of Amun; *kōhēn* (chs. 3–5)	King as the god's steward; pharaoh "Son of Ra" (chs. 3–4, 8)

Tradition	Ritual & calendar	Ethics	Clergy	Politics
Indo-Iranian & Vedic	Fire, soma/haoma pressing (chs. 6, 8)	*Ṛta*; Mitra the compact (chs. 6–7)	*Hotṛ*/*zaotar*, *purohita* (ch. 7)	Chariot warriors and Indra; *khvarenah* (chs. 6, 8)
Zoroastrianism	Fire, Nowruz (ch. 12)	Thought, word, deed (ch. 12)	Magi, mobads (ch. 15)	Sasanian "twins" (ch. 15)
Mithraism	Sacred meal; 25 Dec (ch. 25)	Oath, loyalty (ch. 19)	Pater, seven grades (ch. 23)	Army and emperor (ch. 23)
Judaism	Sabbath, Passover (ch. 35)	Torah, Hillel (ch. 161)	Priests, then rabbis (ch. 35)	Covenant kingship, Zionism (ch. 37)
Christianity	Eucharist, Christmas (ch. 26)	Love of enemy (ch. 162)	Pope, bishops (ch. 138)	Christendom, Westphalia (ch. 138)
Islam	Salat, Hijri era (ch. 71)	Sharia (ch. 72)	Ulama, faqih (ch. 144)	Caliphate, wilayat (ch. 144)
Indian	Yajna, puja (ch. 84)	Dharma (ch. 85), ahimsa (ch. 86)	Brahmins, sangha (ch. 84)	Ashoka's Dhamma state (ch. 88)
East Asian	Ancestral rites (ch. 95)	Ren, golden rule (ch. 95)	Literati, monks (ch. 99)	Mandate, CCP control (ch. 147)
Esotericism & Masonry	Degrees, lodge (ch. 109)	Brotherhood (ch. 111)	Grand Masters (ch. 109)	Revolutions (ch. 114)
NRMs	New eras (ch. 121)	Group codes (ch. 125)	Founder (ch. 125)	Waco, Aum (chs. 103, 133)
Keshe	21 Dec 2021, 9 PM gathering (chs. 153, 157)	Mitra's ethos (ch. 153)	Abolished (ch. 156)	One Nation (ch. 157)
Heisman	Directional history (ch. 160)	Kin-selection override (ch. 161)	Replaced by AI (ch. 165)	"Techdom of God" (ch. 166)

Key points

- The library holds no independent study of Keshe. Heisman's *Suicide Note* is a single-author treatise. Both systems are therefore compared with the mainstream record here, not verified.
- Keshe's 8,000-year Mithraism (KSW 360) has no support in any other source in the library, where the earliest Mitra is the fourteenth-century BCE Mitanni treaty.
- Keshe's "end of religions" removes all intermediaries, him included, and asks believers to "elevate" the founders' souls. That reversal is what separates it from Protestant, Sufi, Gnostic and Bahá'í precedents.
- Heisman makes monotheism a sociobiological technology that leads, through liberal democracy, to human self-destruction and an engineered God.
- Both abolish intermediaries and treat technology as the bridge to the divine. They are opposed on the soul, on God's existence, on ethics and on the political end-state.
- Part 1 frames the arc and both systems: religion and kingship bound together from the King List and the pharaoh onward, the sacred drink as the controlled medium of contact with the gods, and the asura–deva inversion as the first recorded re-valuation of divine names. Keshe and Heisman keep the link to rule but replace the medium with technology.
- The sources leave fifteen questions open, from Zoroastrian influence and Mithraic borrowing to whether secularism is post-religious. Part 1 adds four: the identity of soma, Atenism and Moses, Molech, and whether religion preceded farming.
- The closing matrix maps eight axes across thirteen traditions and systems, from the ancient Near East and the Indo-Iranians to Keshe and Heisman, with each cell keyed to the chapter that documents it.

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- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 323* (2020) — LSN library #378035.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 33 (23 Oct 2014)* (2014) — LSN library #377676.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 337* — LSN library #378049.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 338* (2020) — LSN library #378050.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 350* — LSN library #378062.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 354* — LSN library #378066.

- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 357* (2020) — LSN library #378069.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 360 (24 Dec 2020)* (2020) — LSN library #378072.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 361* — LSN library #378073.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 367* (2021) — LSN library #378079.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 374 (1 April 2021)* (2021) — LSN library #378086.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 380* — LSN library #378092.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 386* (2021) — LSN library #378098.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 388* — LSN library #378100.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 392* (2021) — LSN library #378104.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 402* — LSN library #378114.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 403* (2021) — LSN library #378115.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 410* (2021) — LSN library #378122.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 411* (2021) — LSN library #378123.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 412* (2021) — LSN library #378124.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 422* (2022) — LSN library #378134.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 428* (2022) — LSN library #378140.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 429* — LSN library #378141.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 430* — LSN library #378142.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 433* (2022) — LSN library #378145.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 435* (2022) — LSN library #378147.

- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 436* (2022) — LSN library #378148.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 437* (2022) — LSN library #378149.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 439* (2022) — LSN library #378151.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 443* (2022) — LSN library #378155.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 446* (2022) — LSN library #378158.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 447* (2022) — LSN library #378159.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 448* (2022) — LSN library #378160.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 450* (2022) — LSN library #378162.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 453* (2022) — LSN library #378165.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 457 (one variant headed 453rd KSW, 6 Oct 2022)* (2022) — LSN library #378169.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 460* (2022) — LSN library #378172.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 461* (2022) — LSN library #378173.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 463* (2022) — LSN library #378175.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 464* (2022) — LSN library #378176.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 467* (2023) — LSN library #378179.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 468* (2023) — LSN library #378180.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 470* (2023) — LSN library #378182.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 477* (2023) — LSN library #378189.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 478* (2023) — LSN library #378190.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 486* (2023) — LSN library #378198.

- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 488* (2023) — LSN library #378200.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 491* (2023) — LSN library #378203.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 495* (2023) — LSN library #378207.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 496* (2023) — LSN library #378208.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 508* (2023) — LSN library #378220.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 510* (2023) — LSN library #378222.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 511* (2023) — LSN library #378223.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 513* (2023) — LSN library #378225.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 514* (2023) — LSN library #378226.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 517 (21 Dec 2023)* (2023) — LSN library #378229.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 518* (2023) — LSN library #378230.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 520* (2024) — LSN library #378232.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 525* (2024) — LSN library #378237.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 533* (2024) — LSN library #378245.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 535* (2024) — LSN library #378247.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 549* (2024) — LSN library #378261.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 554* (2024) — LSN library #378266.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 564* (2024) — LSN library #378276.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 569 (19 December 2024)* (2024) — LSN library #378281.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 574* (2025) — LSN library #378286.

- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 576* (2025) — LSN library #378288.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 578* (2025) — LSN library #378290.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 579* (2025) — LSN library #378291.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 582* (2025) — LSN library #378294.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 590* (2025) — LSN library #378302.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 595* (2025) — LSN library #378307.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 598* (2025) — LSN library #378310.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 6* (2014) — LSN library #377649.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 602* (2025) — LSN library #378314.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 608* (2025) — LSN library #378320.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 610* (2025) — LSN library #378322.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 611* (2025) — LSN library #378323.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 612 (16 Oct 2025)* (2025) — LSN library #378324.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 618* — LSN library #378330.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 619 (4 Dec 2025)* (2025) — LSN library #378331.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 620* (2025) — LSN library #378332.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 626* (2026) — LSN library #378338.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 629* (2026) — LSN library #378341.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 630* (2026) — LSN library #378342.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 631* — LSN library #378343.

- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 632* (2026) — LSN library #378344.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 633* — LSN library #378345.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 634* (2026) — LSN library #378346.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 636* — LSN library #378348.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 64* (2015) — LSN library #377707.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 641* (2026) — LSN library #378353.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 642* (2026) — LSN library #378354.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 644* (2026) — LSN library #378356.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 646* (2026) — LSN library #378358.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 648* (2026) — LSN library #378360.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 649* (2026) — LSN library #378361.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 650* (2026) — LSN library #378362.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 652* — LSN library #378364.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 654* (2026) — LSN library #378366.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 655* (2026) — LSN library #378367.
- Mehran Tavakoli Keshe. *Knowledge Seekers Workshop 656* (2026) — LSN library #378368.
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