

HEKAS

In beginning this article upon the nature of the traditional Sabbatic Mysteries it is pertinent for me to qualify my own position and thus make some statement of the initiatic *provenance* which permits me to write authoritatively upon these matters. It is therefore that i make some statement of my own position in the craft; - at the time of writing this article and for the past few years I have been serving as the Magister of the Cultus Sabbati; having received the formal *passing-on of the power* from two lineages of the Sabbatic Tradition, both of which pre-date those modern revivalist forms of witchcraft, which have become generically , nominalised as "wicca"* . Both of my informing catenae of initiation are currently focused in Essex, although the members of various cells and the resources drawn upon by them are scattered throughout a much wider area with the consequence that the zones of governance served by the Cult constitute a web unsuited to definition by temporal measures. The *Cultus Sabbati* is a present recension of the Craft Tradition constituted by various cells, each of which are using different formulae and modes of praxis covering the spectrum of the Arte Magical. In stating my own position I should make it apparent that, as Magister, I am responsible for the overall co-ordination and direction of the Cult in it's present phase of development; this does not infer a subjugation of individuals to a single figurehead, but rather to the contrary, the functional role of the Magister permits a cohesion of the earthly power-zones created through the autonomy of each initiate and thus a focus in an holistic design or matrix. Although the lineal descent of the *Cultus Sabbati* from sources, which are defined as belonging to Traditional Witchcraft, is herein - given the present context - the moot point of interest, it is also pertinent for the reader to bear in mind that our lineal descent by other roots has affiliations with a catena of High Magicians dating back many centuries, namely the O.T.O, and has established links upon the inner with various other bodies of transmission and thus the contexts in which the nature and functions of the *Cultus Sabbati* may be interpreted are many and diverse. Beyond what i have stated here regarding myself and the Sabbatic Cult, some readers may already be familiar with my work through the book which I had published in 1992, namely *The azoetia: A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft*, - a work wherein i sought to define the Quintessential Principles of the Arte Magical as they are specifically transmitted within the Tradition of the Sabbatic Mysteries, and thus it is to this work that the interested reader may have recourse to refer in the course of this article.

(*In old forms of the craft where this term has been used or adopted, the pronunciation is as follows:- 'Wicca' is pronounced 'Witcha', 'Wiccan' is likewise 'Witchan': this is a notable distinction to the pronunciation of these terms in revivalist forms of craft.)

Of Form and Function

Within the various situations nominalised as 'Workings' by the numerous practitioners of Magick in all it's varied forms, there are obviously going to be numerous definitions of what actually constitutes 'Work'. I am myself curious to know of such definitions, if indeed they have even been considered by the majority. I am interested to know because it is this 'work' which constitutes the *function* of any magical practice. It is at this juncture which I will offer a brief definition of what I myself, might consider to be the vital nature of the magical 'working' :- Any Practice/activity which refines and develops consciousness constitutes the work of the Magical Operator , and it is this characteristic or distinction, which underlies the true function of the Arte.

By this measure, we may then determine that any practice or activity which does not refine or develop consciousness is divorced from the true function of Magick, and is thus redundant.

I make this definition with a distinct purpose in mind, namely it's bearing upon the current survivals and the present re-vivals of the Sabbatic Tradition with regard, to the emphasis placed upon the preservation of old practices.

The *forms* utilised by the Sabbatic Cultus in the practice of it's craft, the ritual choreography and geometry, the myths, the ritual instruments and so on and so on... are based upon a number of principles which govern function. Principles which, although definable, are highly subtle in essence, being universal in their application , infinite in their means of application via their modification in accordance with the diversity of context, and which are the very *letters and numbers* which constitute the Witches' Alphabet and thus the *Grammar* of the Arte Entire.

In the various recensions offered to us as accounts of Traditional Craft practices there is often great emphasis placed upon the antiquity of the spell/rite/technique, etc. but little reference to the actual knowledge encoded in the practice . It is the preservation of the *forms* irrespective of their *function* which seems to be foremost in the presentation of material as being old and genuine craft. This is of value from a historical and an antiquarian point of view, but to an initiate of the Sabbatic Tradition, it is a perspective misaligned to it's nature, and this is perhaps why, in discussions of the Sabbatic Tradition those who are still using ritual forms designed with a function out of context to their own lives will often cling to these forms and defend them as if they were the very thing of magic itself. When the form used is bereft of the current which once informed it, it is merely a fossil and no longer of utility. The Sabbatic Tradition is continually evolving; nothing is lost when we slough off the outgrown skins of the past and move on. The intrinsic nature and functions of the Tradition cannot be lost because they are transmitted from initiate to initiate entire whenever the *passing-on of power* occurs. It is in the ritual act of transmission that the current is passed on in the circle; when this transmission occurs, all of the knowledge of the Whole Tradition, from the First-born to the Last-dead of Witchblood, is passed on and it is the task of the receiving initiate to re-member the body of the Tradition in and for themselves according to the context of their place in this world.

There is a distinct emphasis here on the necessity of the individual recension of the mysteries; this on the surface level creates the scope for a number of diverse and even contrary interpretations of lore and modes of practice, but on the inner there is a congruency of the Tradition preserved in the Principle aforementioned; the 'scattered' effect of external diversity within systematic representations has an overall effect, that of permitting maximisation of the Current's transmission in the Outer; upon the Inner the *grammar* of the Sabbatic lore permits the most individualised recensions of the Tradition to function harmoniously within a group context. This has been proven true in practice and is not an attempt to represent an ideal framework.

The distinctions made above regarding *form* and *function* are sometimes difficult to detect since many of the structures and techniques used by Craft are consistent and have almost always been used, but it is in their manner of application that one with discernment may note that these self-same forms, although having in themselves certain intrinsic values , are being used irrespectively of the knowledge which they encode and thus are being dealt with on levels other than those operated upon by the evolving consciousness of the aspiring adept. This however does not mean that these practices don't work., merely that their function is minimised by the context. I am stating matters in this way solely in order to make practitioners conscious of their own approaches, but also with the hope that any readers of traditional descent may consider and perhaps grasp the fact that the Current in itself may use many vessels to facilitate transmission, but all vessels are only of importance in their own temporal context. Beyond this they are without value to the Current; the methods you use may be centuries old - this is unimportant, it is their constant refinement which is the living and vital quality of the Tradition. I am in no way espousing any abandonment of such old practices, merely the re-assessment of their context and interpretation, for very often the old spells are the best - and for very good reasons. I have deliberately been specific only insofar as will permit the maximum interpretation of these words by the traditional, or otherwise, and in as many ways as possible with regard to their own work.....

Andrew Chumbley

HEKAS

Origins of the Sabbatic Tradition

In discussing the origins of the Sabbatic tradition one may assume a number of differing perspectives - anthropological, socio-historical, metaphysical, mytho-poetic and so on...I have read numerous theories expounding speculative notions about the Craft's antiquity or modernity, and also a few pieces written by those with first-hand experience of Old Craft practices. In the former instance these differing perspectives tell us more about the people that wrote them and the 'truth' which they wish to make acceptable, and are very often superimpositions of ideas already set in their minds before any actual experience has occurred; this is evident when the Craft is analysed from without. In the case of first-hand documentation or comment upon the Traditional Craft we must be wary ourselves of presenting the particular recension of the Craft that we are at home with as 'the way it has always been and always will be'. There is also a tendency, which approximates an inverted snobbery, to make something out of 'peasant' origins and something shameful about the idea of a Craft Tradition which is not confined by a sense of 'folk' origination. Despite this being a slight digression I can state that in former days part of my own lineage came from Buckinghamshire and the few people who met together were more often than not simple womenfolk who set great store in the basics of circle-craft and wort-cunning, but nonetheless the current transmitted from these folk origins retains a knowledge which will adapt itself to accurate expression whatever the context. It would thus be somewhat unfair of me to insist that the practices of these womenfolk should be repeated today merely because of some artificial sense of nobility placed in their humble state;; it is worthy nonetheless to remember them with honour and to preserve certain important customs and oral teaching. I could also make comment upon the influence and co-operation between old witches and ceremonial magicians which stretched across the divisions of society and was unhindered by nominalisations which artificially divide the 'types' of magical operators, when in fact the difference between such types lies solely in the specific modes of application for principles which are common to all. To categorise and segregate one form of practice from another is only of use on occasion, in matters of discussion where distinctions are relevant and should be made apparent, but in my experience there are forms of old craft practices which are identical to those of both ceremonialists and shamans; underlying the surface structures which establish the accurate function of a practice in a given context there are the Principles which constitute the very essence of the Tradition: the Circle of the Craft is the Arena of Eternity!

Returning more specifically to the matter of the origination of the Sabbatic Tradition, we may establish a more fruitful enquiry by opening up more than one area of derivation and thus demonstrate a nativity of the Craft which is like both a seed-scattered field and a single ear of corn.

The emphasis placed upon the importance of basic circle-craft within Sabbatic lore is indicative of a simple truth which is only to be known by those who have experienced it at first-hand, - when you stand within the circle cast true about you like the horizon itself, then you are at the very instant of the tradition's beginning; you stand there at one, through the power of lineage, with the first-born of Witchblood, and your presence within the circle is testimony to the pact which preserves the lineage from today until the last-to-die of the line has stepped therein: this is the course of the Tradition amongst the race of men. For myself I need to look no further than the Circle for the origination of the way! There burns the first fire and the vision amongst the flames, there the cipher writ amongst the forms of charm and wort, there lie both heart and hearth.

And yet I am myself curious to know whence came the wand and dagger, whence came the charms that I myself may know and teach; I am curious to re-member the steps of my ancestors around the circle's encompass and trace back through through the centuries the weave of the tradition's design. In this curiosity there is a second realization known solely through the practice of arte: the tradition you draw upon is native to the land upon which you stand, solely because the power must ever be drawn direct

through the earth where-e'r you might happen to be. The Circle is the Gate which opens into the earth and allows in/egress through the power of the land.

There is more than one history here to tell; we might look to the history of our techniques and seek to discover whom it was that introduced any one of the plethora of technicalities of spell-craft, or we might seek out the history of the names which we use to call our requisites of arte. These histories are remembered in the very current itself, as each initiate of the tradition adds and refines to what has gone before and then, in their own turn, passes their knowledge on - the current is imbued with their spirit and these live on in the passing-on of the power - the Mighty Dead now live within our own flesh!

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From an etymological perspective we may trace back certain key words in Craft terminology and by deduction and inference attempt to form ideas regarding the origin of practices and the evolution of symbols. This will only reach back into the time when names were first given and thus to the edge of mythic time, beyond this our practices alone may reveal that which is veiled to the intellectual acuity of academia ..For between the histories that we may trace there is a hidden story uncharted by mere books of paper and the memories of civilisation; this secret history is that of the wandering few who exchanged knowledge at the isolate cross-roads where-ever their peregrination of chance might cross paths with another. "return to the circle for there the ghosts of old still tread their Path and it is in your own breath that they find voice today!"

Therefore, to begin once more with the 'circle' - we may find that there are spells of incantation for circle-craft which date back to the earliest written inscriptions in Ancient Mesopotamia circa the Early Dynastic Period (2400BC). The magic circle in Babylonian Sorcery was called *zishurru* - meaning 'flour which makes a boundary'; this was because the circle was traced out by a trickle of flour - a practice still used in the Craft and the rites of the Voudoun. The magician or witch was therefore 'the en-circling one' and this may be seen by looking at the names attributed to a sect of witches or sorcerers in Ancient Persia - the *Yatukan* - a sect believed to be of direct descent from the magicians of Chaldea and Babylon; this name is derived from the same roots as the name for sorcerers in the *Atharva Veda*, namely *Yatuvidah* - meaning 'Those who bewitch'. These early sorcerers were also called *abhicarika* - which is derived from the Sanskrit *abhi-car* meaning 'to bewitch or encircle'. This infers a continuation from Babylon into regions both east and west-that is, into the Near Middle East and into regions of Asia, it is highly plausible that from the area of Mesopotamia, and more latterly Persia, certain practices spread into Europe, Greece, Asia Minor and beyond. There are zones upon the earth's surface which are terrene corollaries of the physiological *chakras* and it is from these points that waves of transmission emanate at periodic intervals; these zones may be regarded as the clefts where-from the earth's menstruum issues forth in bloody libation to nourish and permit the replenishment of the stellar core: the World-heart. Upon these waves of transmission are borne the seeds of knowledge, oft' carried in the hands of nomad and wayfarer, they are cast out upon the receptive soil of many a-land and culture.

Although we may on further study find that certain applications and methods of circle-craft stem from specific cultural regions, this does not exclude the likelihood of primitive circle-craft existing prior to the syncretism of techniques via migration of peoples or individuals. I make this point for a simple reason, when Man observes the seasons around him, the wheel of the agricultural year, the circle of the moon in her seasons and the great cycle of the Polar Circumcession, he will base his spiritual expression, his magic, upon these perceptions and consequently the circle will arise as a central motif. This is a point to be taken into account and distinguished from the transmigration of techniques demonstrating very specific applications of the motif. We may also add a further interesting etymological note at this juncture, namely that the Sorcerer - being 'He who en-sorcels', is also 'He that en-circles', since 'to ensorcels', from *ensorcellement*, is 'to encircle', also we may cite *sortiere* - 'to cast lots', and thus the Sorcerer is the *type* of the magical operator who casts the Circle of Arte to bind and align the turning of chance to the design of will.

We may to give further examples of derivations, cite certain terms and symbols familiar to Craft practitioners and show their analogous counterparts in the Arabic tongue:

Athame - the Witches' Knife - stems from the word 'Adh' hamme', meaning *the Blood-letter*; this name was used by the *Dhulqarneni*: a sect of magical practitioners in Morocco.

Coven - the *Covine* - the name used for the Witches' circle of initiates, this stems from the word *Kafan*, meaning 'a winding sheet'. A cerecloth or funeral vestment was the garment used by the aforementioned sect in their rituals; this was indicative of the symbolic interconnection of Life and Death.

Sgian-dhu - the Scottish Knife - speculatively analogous to the *Skan-do-la*, the Mandaean ritual knife.

Sabbat - the Witches' Rite - stemming from *Az-sabbat*, meaning 'the forceful Occasion' and from the *Sa-ba-tu* - the Sumerian Lunar Rite of the Goddess Inanna; this term by means of linguistic confluence equates with the Semitic *sabbath*. Note also that the *Ahl-i-haq*, the People of truth - a middle-eastern tribal group, preserve a rite called the *Sabz* which means 'the Making Green of Things'; they also sacrifice a cockerel at Dawn to mark the liminal edge of night: a custom which has become a glyph of a certain arcanum in Sabbatic Lore.

Esbat - the Witches' lesser rite of meeting where each initiate gives account of their recent work to the Master and Mistress of the Circle; there is a Persian word identical *esbat*, meaning 'to prove' or 'to give account'.

Baphomet - the 'idol' said to have been worshipped by the Templars. Its form was that of a goat's head with a torch between the horns and thus is identical to the Sabbatic Goat: an Icon used in Sabbatic Cult to denote certain arcana. In Arabic the word is analogous to *Aby-fi-hamat* - 'the Black Head of Wisdom' or 'Seat of knowledge' and constitutes a cipher of certain secret practices used in sects and tribes preserving a gnosis of ancient origin in Persia and from thence disseminated through the migration of Arab peoples and influences into Europe and Spain: the Arabic trilateral root FHM forms the words meaning 'to perceive, understand', 'Wisdom' and 'Black'.

The symbol of the goat with a torch, to indicate intellect, betwixt its horns was a symbol of the Aniza Tribe, as was a sign identical to that called 'The Witches Foot' - this served as the tribal mark or *wasm*.

We may go on to give yet further examples which will provide links between the words used today within the Sabbatic rites and mysteries and their counterparts throughout the world both today and in antiquity; but it is here of use to merely give these few examples and thus infer the wealth of interconnection which the seeker may avail himself of.

The manner in which terms are spread like the 'scattering' of seeds and the etymology of certain code-words indicates that aspects of the Sabbatic Tradition are to be found in the Middle East, most notably within the tribes which preserve pagan forms of ancient Gnostic beliefs and practices. Within this concurrence there is a secret design of teaching which will in time unfold, revealing here but a fragment of its effect in disseminating knowledge - techniques of specific *form* and *function* - through the identification between correspondent symbols that transcends cultural division and permits the timely vessel of environment to serve as the silent host of power.

Further evidence may be seen in the practices of the Sect known as the Revellers and in the Persian magical sect known as the *Maskarae* (from whence the word 'mask'), both of whom are descended from Sufic lineages and whose connections to practices classed as belonging to the Craft will grant the enquirer a bridge between present-day recensions of the Cultus and its counterparts in the Middle-East. It should not however be concluded that this line of enquiry is sufficient to explain our own practices fully, rather it serves to elucidate one wave of transmission which has empowered the techniques of the Cultus; there are

both previous and more recent connections which could also be unravelled, but these are all subject to the aspersions of historical conjecture and will, for the present, be withheld. I merely reiterate the point that the entire history of the Sabbat lies within its own circle; in our myths and rites there are footprints, the witchmarks of eld, which will reveal these secrets at such a time when star, heart and hearth are aligned aright. There is a thread of ancient gnosis which lies in the hands of the Sabbatic Initiate whether he know it or not - it remains there to empower his work.

We should however not neglect to mention Egypt, for it is Khem *-the Black Land-* that we derive the word which is off' the first word in the magical rite and which I have given as the title for this article - 'Hekas'. Here the word existed in the form *Heka* or *Hekau* meaning 'the power of magick'; it is believed to derive from the sound of the frog and thus supplies us with a totemic association with the batrachia employed by the Witch and the Horse-whisperer. 'Hekas' also gave us *Hekate* - the greek name of the Goddess who keeps the Gateway of the Triple Cross-roads*, *Hexe* - the spell, Mark or Charm, *Hag* - the Black Goddess of the Old Moon, who in Khem was represented as *Hekt* the frog-headed mother of incantation.

It was in Egypt that the role of Stellar Worship was at an apotheosis in recorded history; as man looked to the heavens there turned the Great Dragon about the zenith, marking out the year and tracing the ancient circle in the firmament of Nu.

From thence recall the Dracontiae, the circles of stone which mark the crossroads of hidden and secret tracks of force within the earth, reflecting the web of the star-lit heights; recall the Crooked Path which crosses the sacred isle of Albion and lies throughout all the lands of the earth - where-e'er upon the Serpents back is placed the Witches' Step!

When next you tread the circle round, when next you face the Quarters and call upon their Guardians, remember the far-flung design of which you are a part; remember that the Path upon which you now stand goes both back and forth, across the traverse of all Time and Space, throughout that self-same design: Here lies both Hearth and Heart!

Remember too, that this is but one narrative of a tale whose tellings are as many as the tongues which bring it to voice!

Andrew Chumbley

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*Re. The Threefold and Fourfold symbolism of the Crossroads in the Traditional Sabbatic Lore see *Azoetia: A Grimoire of the Sabbatic Craft*.

Readers interested in the connections made in the course of this article might also be interested to read my book, *Qutub: The Point*, which deals in part with the symbolism of the Yezidis, Mandaeans and connections between the Sabbatic and Sufic symbolism.

Further information pertinent to these and tangential area may be gained from *The Sufis* by Idries Shah, also the works of Lady Drower, and in regard to Babylonian Sorcery I recommend the works of R.C. Thompson.