
*Les Œuures de M. F. Rabelais D en Medecine ou est contenue lhistoire des faicts heroiques de Gargantua et de son fils Pantagruel.*

## CHAPTER 13

### *Francois Rabelais, and the Herb Pantagruelion*

*Most noble and illustrious idiots, and you, thrice-precious table-rappers, never have you had the good sense to recognize, in the sacred person of the merry Priest of Meudon, one of our greatest masters in the hidden science of the Magi. There is no doubt that you have neither properly read, nor contemplated well at all, his Pantagruelian Prognostications, nay, even that enigma in guise of prophecy which begins the grimoire of Gargantua. Master François was no less than the most illustrious enchanter of France, and his life was a very tissue of wonders, so much so that he was to his own time the unique wonder of the world. Of good sense, and in good spirit, protestant, in a century of furious folly and fanatic upheavals; a magician of the Gay Science during a time of gloomy sadness, good and orthodox priest that he was, he reconciled and knew how to re-unite the most contrary qualities in himself."*

- Eliphas Levi, *Le Sorcier de Meudon* (1861)

Possibly the most intriguing medieval and renaissance figure involved with the history of cannabis was the 16th century Monk, Alchemist and Bachelor of Medicine, Francois Rabelais, (1494-1553). Rabelais is best known for his still-published hilarious epic adventure *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. A bold and bawdy satirical tale of two giants, Gargantua, and his son Pantagruel, the book is equal parts philosophy, sex and fart jokes, slapstick humor, along with outright heresy and a generous a dash of arcane knowledge. As one biographer noted, "His large book is a giant-jest uttered by a giant-intellect" ( Cochrane, 1843). His mockeries of so much that the church deemed holy "led eminent critics to regard Rabelais as a Papefigue, one who gives the Pope the finger" (Marshall/Zegura 2004). The 19th century literary critic Alphonse de Lamartine was less kind and saw Rabelais as a "poisonous, fetid mushroom born in the dunghill of the medieval cloister, the defrocked monks pig who regaled himself in his dirty sty and loved

to spatter his dregs on the face, manners and language of his age" ( de Lamartine, 1856).

*Gargantua and Pantagruel* is of pertinent interest to this study, for the book's well-known cryptic references to cannabis under the name *Pantagruelion*, as well as for its philosophical influence has held on later occultists, and cannabis experimenters, particularly Aleister Crowley, The Hellfire Club, members of *Le Club des Haschischins*, and last of the great alchemists (or plagiarizing fraud, depending on who you ask!) Fulcanelli. During Rabelais' own life, these books were condemned by the religious academics of the Sorbonne for their unorthodox philosophy and by the Roman Catholic church for their mockery of the faith.

Leo Merigot, in *Rabelais and Alchemy*, described this renaissance classic as "a very profound, cosmological and metaphysical work, containing a hidden meaning comparable to that of alchemy, and such as the esoteric meaning that can be derived from other books of neighbouring epochs, *Divine Comedy* of Dante or the *Orlando Furioso*.... Pantagruel would be a revelation of very high mysteries, and 'pantagruellism' would symbolize the thirst for superior truths" (Merigot, 1947/2007). In *Rabelais and the Secrets of Pantagruel*, Prof. J.H. Probst-Biraben, insists on the alchemical and hermetic symbolism inherent in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, "which we cannot deny when Rabelais signals it Himself" and connected it with the works of "the Christians Hermetics... and likewise by the *Fidéli d'Amore* (Faithfull of Love), the Templars, the *Compagnons opératifs'*/(Operating Companions), the Rose-Cross, the Spiritual Alchemists" (Probst-Biraben, 1949).

In his humorous parody of the Grail myth contained in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Rabelais esoterically revealed his vast knowledge of cannabis in a number of chapters on "that famous herb Pantagruelion, cure for all public ills

and private woes, which men call hemp" (Kingsley, 1888). In the tale, fear of one of the hero Pantagruel's dearest friends, Panurge, that if he marries he will be made a cuckhold, results in a ocean quest to to consult the oracle of the "Dive Bouteille" (Sacred Bottle), which is finally tracked down after a lengthy ocean voyage, in India. It is widely accepted as fact that this medieval quest and romp also contains "a mock eulogy in which hemp is praised for its myriad uses" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2003).


As we have seen, in European accounts, in the story of the Grail legend, Parzival was sent on a quest for the Grail, the cup Christ drank from at the last supper, or in some accounts, used to collect his blood as he hung on the cross. The Grail was thought to contain the power to heal the ailing King, (who had also lost his mojo!). In medieval times the people believed the state of the land coincided with the health and virility of the king, and since the King was impotent and dying, the land in turn was becoming barren. In a 1929 edition of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Pantagruelion is described as "a sort of active talisman of Holy Grail calibre, and one which he sets over against the myths contained in the old romances."

## *Early Life*

As shall be discussed, there was more than just cannabis references that troubled the religious and secular authorities of Rabelais' day, and both the controversy surrounding Rabelais, "the Good Cure of Meudon," and his relationship with cannabis started sometime before the first of his books was ever printed. " Antoine Rabelais, the father of Francois Rabelais (c.1494-1553), grew much hemp on his property at Cinais, southwest of Chinon ... and young Rabelais probably helped in its cultivation. Rabelais certainly knew everything known about the character and cultivation of hemp; three chapters of his *Le tiers des faictz et Dietz heroiques du noble Pantagruel* (1546) are devoted to *l'herebe nom me Pantagruelion*, which is simply hemp" (Stearn 1975). His Father also grew grapes for wine, and thus not so surprisingly both of these crops played an important role in his later tales.

Hinting that Rabelais may have grown up with some occult influences, in the November 1880 edition of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* article "Rabelais at Home," the author takes a visit to the 16th-century childhood home of Rabelais, *Clos de la Deviniere* [Diviner] and the author asks: "Why was and is it called 'Clos de la Deviniere'? Had it been the residence of a fortune teller? or was the business of a chemist – which the father of Rabelais pursued – connected with the black-art?" (Couicay, 1880). There were also the remains of an oratory in the grotto of the property, causing Couicay to question, "Did Thomas Rabelais, the father, have this little chapel carved in the rock? were his drugs blessed there?" (Couicay, 1880).

The Rabelais family farm was situated near the Benedictine Abbey of Seuille, "and it was here that he commenced the education which was to qualify him for the profession of a monk. When old enough for his novitiate he entered the Franciscan convent of Fontenay-le-Courti, in Poitou, and he received the order of priesthood about the year 1511. Already he began to fall into bad odour with the monks. He studied Greek with excessive ardour, and whether ... his companions did not like to see their own indolence shamed by his industry, or whether they honestly objected to a passion for heathen writers, it is on record that his studies were considered as little less than heretical" (Cochrane, 1843).

Rabelais must certainly have taken an interesting course in his studies, and his ability to read Spanish, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Hebrew and other languages exposed him to all sorts of arcane and foreign literature. He was familiar with *The Picatrix*, as well as the works of Sufi-aligned alchemists like Geber and Avicenna, along with much more ancient material like the histories of Herodotus, and a clear familiarity with figures like Pythagoras and Zoroaster, along with other Chaldean and Babylonian lore. References to such as these are peppered throughout his magnificent

and hilarious tome. Moreover, this is indicated by Gargantua's advice to his son Pantagruel, "...peruse the books of the Greek, Arabian and Latin physicians; not despising the talmudists and cabalists; and by frequent anatomies get the the perfect knowledge of the microcosm, which is man."

As the last of the "Great Alchemists," the mysterious figure Fulcanelli noted in the early part of the last century: "Rabelais' main book, entitled *Pantagruel*, is entirely devoted to the burlesque and cabalistic exposition of alchemical secrets, of which the *pantagruelism* embraces the totality and constitutes the scientific doctrine. Pantagruel is assembled from three Greek words: *panta*, used for *pante*, completely, in an absolute manner; *gue*, path, way; *ele*, solar light. Rabelais' gigantic hero therefore expresses the perfect knowledge of the solar path, that is to say the *universal way*." (Fulcanelli 1929/1999) "He further embodies his religious appeal through his name for cannabis itself: Rabelais combines 'Pantagruel' with 'lion.' In medieval Christian allegory, the lion has strong ties to Jesus Christ and to the stories surrounding him" (Pelto, 2009). One wonders if their is an allusion to the green-lion as well.

Through a life devoted to study, and the healing arts, Rabelais had mastered the medical, scientific, botanical and historical knowledge of his day. "He was an earnest, patient, severe student, a critical linguist, an adept in natural science. He seems to have acquired all that his age could teach, to have grasped branch after branch of learning with incredible strength, and having thus raised himself to the highest point – he jested" (Cochrane, 1843). Likely due to his pursuit of knowledge as a student, and contempt for his contemporaries even before his books were composed, the "hostility against Rabelais assumed a serious aspect" (Cochrane, 1843).

In 1523, nine years prior to the release of the first in his series of books that make up *Gargantua and Pantagruel,* we know that Rabelais ran into trouble for his course of study. The Greek books of both Rabelais and his colleague the Liberal Humanist Pierre Amy were confiscated by their superiors at the Franciscan covenant. At that time many works in the Greek language were considered potentially heretical. The Catholic Bible was composed in Latin, and conflicting New Testament material written by patriarchs of the Byzantine Christian Church had been composed in Greek and this opened up the Roman Catholic Church to potential criticism. Also, a variety of Pagan and Gnostic texts were written in Greek and it is clear from references scattered throughout *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, that he had been exposed to some of these works. For instance he had translated a large amount of material from the works of Herodotus, and this indicates his likely awareness of passages in Herodotus referring to the practice of Scythians placing cannabis over hot stones in enclosed tents, in

order to capture and inhale the fumes, causing them to "shout with joy" from the effects. We also know Rabelais was familiar with the works of Pliny and Galen, and their ancient passages on cannabis, made way of obvious influence in Rabelais' chapters about the herb *pantagruelion*.

It is not clear what the nature of the information was that Rabelais had been pursuing, but church leaders must have felt threatened by it. Pierre Amy, who as mentioned was singled out with Rabelais over what books he was reading and translating, was forced out of the order as a result of his studies. As for Rabelais, apparently there was more than his academic pursuits which his superiors at the Franciscan order found troubling. "An accusation was brought against him, the effect of which was a condemnation to perpetual imprisonment in the subterranean vaults of his monastery" (Cochrane, 1843). As John George Cochrane described in his excellent 19th-century biography, *The Life and Works of Rabelais*:

> The crime of which he was accused is uncertain, and all sorts of contradictory accounts exist on this subject. According to some he had distributed certain mischievous drugs among the monks, the effect of which was any thing but favourable to the maintenance of vows of celibacy; according to others he made the peasants drunk at a village, and openly preached debauchery; while another record attributes to him the working of a sham miracle, the tale being that he dressed himself up like St. Francis, and stationed himself where the statue of that saint was usually placed, on purpose to astonish the devotees whom he sprinkled with a most unholy substitute for holy water. We have no historical reason for preferring one of these legends from the others, but from what we generally know of the character of Rabelais, and from the tenor of his writings, we should be most inclined to give credence to the last. The condemnation was carried into effect, and he suddenly disappeared from the sight of his friends. Rabelais on bread and water in a subterraneous dungeon! (Cochrane, 1843).

References to "mischievous drugs" circulating among the monks, do sound intriguing considering what we now know about Rabelais' wide knowledge of botanical medicines and keen awareness of cannabis particularly. The rest of Cochrane's comments, especially the unholy act of baptism hinted at, (Cochrane here making an elusive reference to a scene in *Pantagruel*, where the giant washes away his enemies, with his enormous stream of piss) whilst dressed as the saint of his religious order, shows Rabelais' sense of humour was in place and it all fits in with the bawdy and drunken jests found in the tales of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. It's also reminiscent of the

accusations that the Templars pissed on the cross, only here it is a mockery of the sacrament of Baptism intended. If Rabelais' "learning and his oddities had contributed to imprison him, the same causes set him again at liberty. His friends, who were delighted with his qualities, discovered his unhappy position, and not only succeeded in delivering him, but the more influential among them obtained an indulgence from Pope Clement VII" (Cochrane, 1843).

His genius as a student is demonstrated in an account around 1530, during the same period he divested himself of his monkish vestments and began the study of medicine, as well as likely beginning his work on the first installments of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. At "Rabelais' first visit to [the University of] Montpellier. On the day of his arrival he joined the crowd who were on their way to the Faculty of Medicine, to hear a public thesis. As soon as the discussion turned upon the nature of plants, he showed his dissatisfaction by such extraordinary gestures, that he drew upon him the attention of the whole assembly. The dean invited him to enter the lists, and to take part in the discussion, which he did, displaying so much profundity and tact, that he gained general applause, and this thesis was reckoned a sufficient substitute for that which was usually required to obtain a bachelor's degree" (Cochrane, 1843).

As Stewart Pelto has noted in his essay "Rabelais, Pantagruelion & Utopia," it is likely that while attending Montpellier, Rabelais would have read *Le Grant herbier en francoys*, a collection of medical applications of herbs and minerals, as this area of botany was a popular field of study at Montpellier, which Rabelais attended. This medieval herbal also contained recipes for a cannabis topical preparation used to relieve pain (Pelto, 2009).

> ...the remedies prescribed in the herbal demonstrate the intoxicating effects of cannabis as being absorbed not through the lungs, but through the skin itself. For breast pain, the doctor is first instructed to mix cannabis with "gresse," or fat. This is consistent with current knowledge on the subject; since the principal intoxicants in cannabis are not soluble in water, they must be extracted into fat. Once this has been achieved, the intoxicating fat can be substituted for normal fat in almost any recipe, as with the Greeks and their sweetmeats or the Tunisians and their hashish confections. However, this herbal demonstrates that this mixture of cannabis and fat can also be worked into a therapeutical balm, or "emplastre." ... The analgesic benefits of cannabis detailed in this herbal are a direct result of a successful extraction of THC and other intoxicants into a fatty medium (Pelto, 2009).

It is important to know that Montpellier was not just a

place of study in medicine, but also a well-known spot for its practice, along with the purchase of rare medicinal goods. "In addition to doctors with formal training, the medicinally intoxicating applications of cannabis were practiced by the pepperers and apothecaries of medieval Montpellier..." (Pelto, 2009).

Pelto also notes that Montpeller was a popular destination of exotic imports and there is "strong evidence to suggest that the burgeoning city of Montpellier imported cannabis for its value as a medicinal intoxicant... Opium was also brought into the city specifically for its analgesic intoxication, and so the medicinal value of cannabis to do the same can be seen as an echo of this" (Pelto, 2009). "Montpellier merchants also brought to the fairs of Lyon various specialties, such as drugs and medicinal herbs ... apothecaries of the city had gained some fame in the manufacture of various drugs trade secrets jealously guarded" (Jouanna, 1984). Pelto notes historical records from the time, which identify cannabis in import lists of both foodstuffs, and fibres, so it is clear it was being used for multiple purposes. Pelto cites Kathryn L. Reyerson in the respect of the importation of rare and exotic herbs and spices to the destination, who in her book *Society, Law, and Trade in Medieval Montpellier* (1995), noted:

> The attraction of would-be pepperers and apothecaries can also be explained by the longtime reputation of Montpellier in these fields. From the twelfth century and probably earlier, the town had been the site of medical instruction. Medieval medicine was closely related to the practices of apothecaries and pepperers; inspiration for the concoction of special elixirs and alcohols flowed freely here. Moreover, Montpellier was an important port of entry for Levantine goods and the access to spices and herbs of Eastern origin was greatly facilitated (Reyerson, 1995).

As Pelto rightly notes of the medieval concoctions made from some of these substances "The curious mixtures of intoxication and medicine found in foxglove, hemlock, belladonna, and opium sat on the shelves of pepperers and apothecaries ... the folk remedies found in their wonder unguents were not mixtures of intoxication and medicine – the intoxication was the medicine" (Pelto, 2009).

In his book, *De la sorcellerie et de la justice criminelle à Valenciennes (XVIe et XVIIe siècles)* [Of Witchcraft and criminal justice at Valencian (16th & 17th)] (1861), the 19th century writer Théophile Louise, referring to the "famous Pantagruelion of Rabelais, or, to put it simply, hemp," also noted the use of cannabis and other drugs, all of which he saw as agents of the Devil's Sabbath, in the apothecaries of the time. "They were stramonium, solanum

somniferum, whose root, taken in low doses in wine, fills the imagination of the most charming illusions, henbane and opium. Opium, administered alone in certain proportions, mixed with the sleep that it determines, daydreaming so powerful and so sweet, that no reality can match the charm.... At that era where we are – 16th and 17th centuries – the greed of gain had led the apothecaries to prepare all these drugs. We learn it by [Pierre] Leloyer. This good man is terrified to see that it now sells the Devil in bottles: 'and no more to heaven, he said, that he was not so common in the trade!'.... From that time on, [many] resorted more and more to this brutality to take the illusion in beverages..." (Louise, 1861).

Thus it seems likely, that upon arriving at Montpellier in "the 1530s to study medicine, Rabelais gained exposure to a lengthy tradition of importing poisonous plants from around the Mediterranean and extracting their intoxication into various compounds, potions, and elixirs" (Pelto, 2009). A view that fits perfectly with that we have already seen in regards to the quintessences and arcana of alchemy. As Pelto has also shown, Rabelais worked evidence of this influence into his works. "...apothecaries of Montpellier were respected for their knowledge of plants, and this much is reflected in Rabelais's work. On days when the sky was overcast and showering down rain, Ponocrates would take Gargantua to these shops instead of out into the field to practice botany" (Pelto, 2009).

We can be sure Rabelais based his character's interests upon his own. Fulcanelli noted "while in Rome in 1536" Rabelais acquired "'medicinal plants and ... objects of curiosity,' imported from Cyprus, Candia, and Constantinople" (Fulcanelli, 1929/1999). So, the idea that he would have had both familiarity and access to imported hashish delicacies and other islamic preparations of the herb, is not at all out of reach. As Mikhail Bakhtin commented, in his notable biography *Rabelais and his World*, in "the famous praise of 'pantagruelion' ... Rabelais ... has a popular tone similar to that of ... the collector of medicinal plants and of the vendor of wonder unguents" (Bakhtin, 1965/84).

As his biographers have noted, the period of acceptance and respect at Montpellier while Rabelais studied medicine was short lived, and he again ran into problems. "The quiet life which he was now leading soon terminated, and an event happened which was most important in its influence on his fortunes. The fire of persecution broke out against all who were suspected of holding heretical opinions." Cochrane notes the persecution of Clement Marot, for the eating of bacon on Lent and "Louis Berquin, who was a Lutheran, [and] was burned alive... in April, 1530" (Cochrane, 1843).

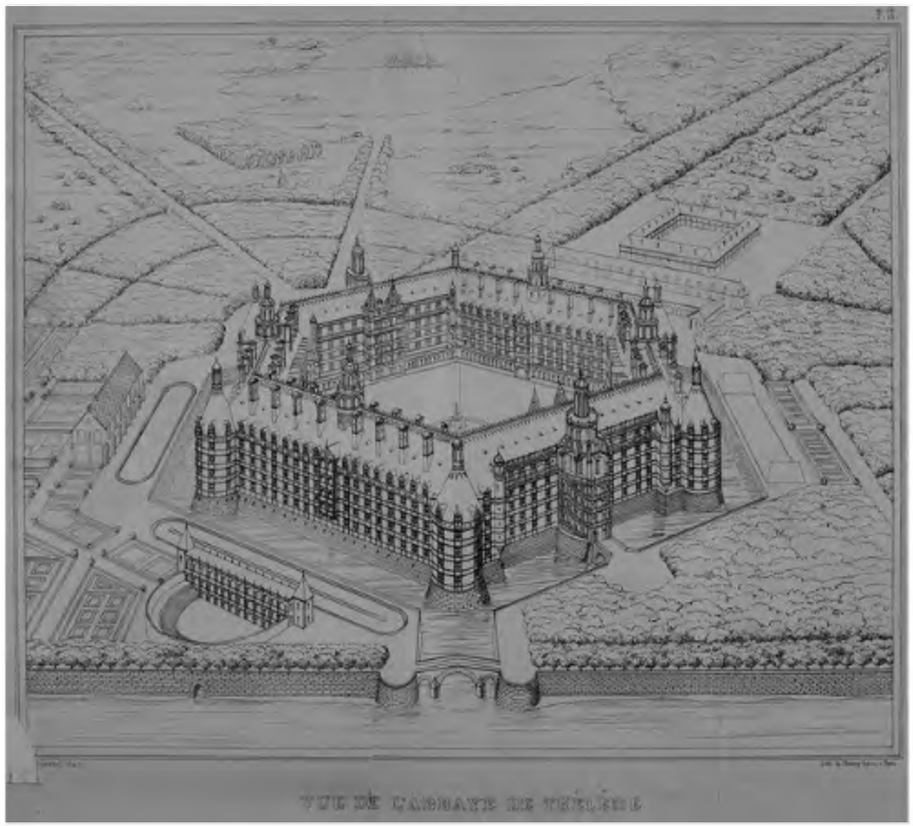
As Joseph Knight also noted of Rabelais in this period "Of the small circle of his intimate acquaintances during his residence at ... Montpellier while prosecuting his

studies in medicine, one, Etienne Dolet, was tortured first, then hanged, and lastly burned ... in Paris; a second, Bonasventure Desperers, the author of *Cymbalum Mundi*, committed suicide, through fear of a similar fate; Marat, a third, after related imprisonment, died in banishment at Turin..." (Knight, 1877). By this time, "Rabelais, who hated monks as monks hated him, had said quite enough against those of his vicinity to be in a perilous situation" (Cochrane, 1843). As Rabelais would later write of his fellow monks in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*: "They mumble out great store of legends and psalms, by them not not at all understood, they say many *patenotres*, [Lord's prayer] interlaced with *Ave Maries*, [Hail Mary] without thinking upon, or apprehending the meaning of what it is they say, which truly I call *mocking of God, and not prayers*." Rabelais felt they were more concerned with keeping up appearances, than serving the people, lest they "lose their victuals, their manchets, and good fat pottage."

Likely due to his brilliance and wit, "Though the boldest and most outspoken of the reformers of his age, Rabelais escaped the perils to which less ardent spirits succumbed, and sailed lightly over the seas of persecution in which his friends and associates were engulfed" (Knight, 1877). Preferring freedom to incarceration, it was with prudence that when he released the first installments of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, he did so using a pseudonym and veiled deep secrets of knowledge with satirical tales to confound those who might persecute him.

## *Gargantua and Pantagruel*

Probably the most recognized comment from Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, is "Do what Thou Wilt," thought to have been borrowed by Rabelais from St. Augustine's (354 A.D.-430 A.D.) "Love, and do what thou wilt." This slogan was said to have hung as a banner over a fictional Abbey of Thelema, which was begun by the bawdy figure of Friar John, a hard drinking and fighting monk, who was the friend of Gargantua and a later traveling companion of his son Pantagruel. In contrast to the dour Christian monastic Abbeys of that day, the Abbey of Thelema is depicted as a bastion of free-thinking and libertarianism, where men and women were treated equally, drank and loved freely, and pursued what-ever so interested them.



*Following Rabelais' descriptions, Charles Lenormant had this depiction created in 1840, in Rabelais et l'architecture de la Renaissance (Restitution de l'Abbaye de Thélème).*

> The Abbey of Theleme is the very reverse of a Catholic religious house, being an edifice consecrated to the highest state of worldly civilization.... Religious hypocrites, pettifogging attorneys and usurers are excluded; gallant ladies and gentlemen ... are invited by the inscription over the gate. The motto of the establishment is.... Do what thou wilt ... and the whole regulations of the convent are such as to

secure a succession of elegant recreations according to the pleasure of the inhabitants, the costume of the "devotees" being the most fashionable of the age (Cochrane, 1843).

The slogan of Thelema, "Do What Thou Wilt," was picked up in the 18th and 19th century by The Hellfire's Club, and then again later, by the well known magician Aleister Crolwey, who adopted the name of "Thelema" as his magickal Word, and "Do What Thou Wilt" as its Law. As Rabelais explained of the philosophy he placed behind this slogan:

> Do What Thou Wilt; because men that are free, well-born, well-bred, and conversant in honest companies, have naturally an instinct and spur that prompteth them unto virtuous actions, and withdraws them from vice, which is called honour. Those same men, when by base subjection and constraint they are brought under and kept down, turn aside from that noble disposition by which they formerly were inclined to virtue, to shake off and break that bond of servitude wherein they are so tyrannously enslaved; for it is agreeable with the nature of man to long after things forbidden and to desire what is denied us (Rabelais, 1535).

That last line, most played out in the story of the forbidden fruit of Eden, and in the history of prohibition behind the mysterious and magical herb, this tome is dedicated to!


Rabelais' own introduction to the books that make up *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, make it perfectly clear he was hiding all sorts of information in them. Being aware of the Church's persecution of heretics such as the Templars, whom he refers to favorably throughout his text comparing them to the tales heroes. Having knowledge of their fate, along with the slaughter of the Cathars in Southern France, the torture and execution of witches, as well as the fate of many of his own colleagues, and having been imprisoned by the Church for sometime himself for his own views and studies, it is clear Rabelais had motivation to be secretive. As Ben Price noted in "Where the Pantagruelion Grows":

> As a free thinker not willing to risk his cherished well-being in a society hostile to what went on in his head,

> Rabelais chose to keep his thoughts private, but not unshared. He shared them with rare individuals who, like himself, were undaunted by their own irreverence, and who were capable thereby of circumventing the rigid convention of literary and grammatical tradition. Through an early form of surrealism, he conveyed his message to those who were not too rigid in their perceptions to understand it (Price, 1989).

In reference to the hidden treasure to be found in his book, Rabelais refers to ancient stash boxes, known as Sileni. "Sileni of old," says Rabelais, "were little boxes like those seen in apothecaries' windows, painted outside with merry wanton figures as harpies, satyrs, bridled geese, horned hares, saddled ducks, flying goats, thiller, harts, and other such pictures, made at fancy to make people laugh – as Silenus master of the good Bacchus, was wont to do – but within were preserved fine drugs, balm, ambergris, musk, civet, precious stones, and other things of high value."

> Whereunto (in your opinion) doth this little flourish of a preamble tend? For so much as you, my good disciples, and some other jolly fools of ease and leisure, reading the pleasant titles of some books of our invention, as Gargantua, Pantagruel ... are too ready to judge that there is nothing in them but jests, mockeries, lascivious discourse, and recreative lies; because the outside (which is the title) is usually, without any farther inquiry, entertained with scoffing and derision. But truly it is very unbeseeming to make so slight account of the works of men ... herefore is it, that you must open the book, and seriously consider of the matter treated in it. Then shall you find that it containeth things of far higher value than the box did promise; that is to say, that the subject thereof is not so foolish as by the title at the first sight it would appear to be (Rabelais).

Rabelais encouraged his readers to dig deep into his text, and ponder the statements made, asking "did you ever see a dog with a marrow bone in his mouth?":

> Following the dog's example, you will have to be wise in sniffing, smelling and estimating these fine and meaty books; swiftness in the chase and boldness in the attack are what is called for; after which, by careful reading and frequent meditation, you should break the bone and suck the substantific marrow in the course of it you will find things of quite a different taste and a doctrine more abstruse which shall reveal to you most high "sacraments" and horrific mysteries in what concerns our religion, as well as the state of our political and economic life" (Rabelais).

The first instalment of Rabelais' famous, controversial book came out later in his life, at the age of 38, We can be sure by this age Rabelais' knowledge and interest were well established. Initially released in a series beginning with his first book, *The Horrible and Terrifying Deeds and Words of the Very Renowned Pantagruel King of the Dipsodes, Son of the Great Giant Gargantua* in 1532, and ending with *The Fifth and Last Book of the Heroic Deeds and Sayings of Good Pantagruel* (1564), which came out more than a decade after his death. Due to its controversial nature the first installment of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* was initially released under the pseudonym and anagram for his own name Alcofribas Nasier, although by the time of the later installments he revealed both his own identity, and that of the plant pantagruelion as cannabis. The first syllable in this pseudonym/anagram, "Al- suggests a derivation from Arabic and hence, a deep knowledge of science..." (Clark/Zegura, 2004). An Islamic influence may have also played a role in Rabelais' knowledge of cannabis.

> Hashish may have been introduced by returning Crusaders, between the 11th and 13th centuries. Although the precise source and various uses of cannabis during this period are matters of historical conjecture, the Crusaders route may account for Rabelais familiarity with the various properties of cannabis, fictionalized as "the plant Pantagruelion." ...Rabelais the physician appears to have recognized the only recently reported analgesic and anti-bacterial qualities of cannabis (Rubin, 1975).

This Arabic influence may also account for the sort of veiled language that *Gargantua and Pantagurel* uses to hide its deeper knowledge, as well as serving as means of transmitting esoteric information that might otherwise get the composer the unwanted attention of the authorities. This sort of allegorical writing, known as "steganography" was used to bury hidden meaning under the deeper levels of the story's text. "Since raising awareness about cannabis during the Renaissance implies a certain risk, he delivers his message in a clandestine fashion that requires the active participation of the reader. He has a penchant for speaking to the reader on a level that lies below the surface of the text.... At every step, Rabelais disguises his illegitimate discussion of intoxication behind the legitimate façade of the plant's fibres" (Pelto, 2009).

Steganography was also known by the term "*cant*" as well as the "green language" (green being the color of initiation) or the "Language of the Birds." "*Gargantua and Pantagruel* by Francois Rabelais is an esoteric work, a novel in cant. The good cure of Meudon [Rabelais] reveals himself in it as a great initiate, as well as a first class cabalist" (Fulcanelli, 1926). The early 20th century figure, Fulcanelli, considered the last of the great alchemists, also

referred to this language of *cant*, as the Language of the Birds, echoing the Sufi author Attar's *Conference of Birds*. Attar's metaphorical use of language in his famous poem *Conference of the Birds* is said to have influenced the symbolism inherent in alchemical literature in both the East and the West. Interestingly, Attar's *Conference of the Birds*, like *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, has also been suggested to have held coded references to hashish, here as the parrot, a symbolism also used by the Persian Sufi poet Hafez, as noted in Chapter 3.

Fulcanelli stated that all initiates, including later Freemasons and other esoteric groups, spoke in *cant* to hide their secrets from the uninitiated, as well as potential detractors. "It remains the language of a minority of individuals, living outside accepted laws, conventions, customs and etiquette. The term *voyous* (street-arabs), that is to say *voyants* (seers), is applied to them...." (Fulcanelli, 1926). As Maxwell has also noted in *Magic and Magicians*, "The Arabian origin of alchymy is indicated by the fanciful terms under which the adepts concealed their drugs and processes; allegorical and symbolic expressions plainly revealing an Oriental character" (Maxwell, 1865). "Alchemical allegory is by no means difficult to read if one bears in mind Sufi symbolism" (Shah, 1964). This sort of coded language filtered into Europe alongside alchemy. "The alchemists were evidently conscious ... that they spoke a secret language and concealed their secrets in peculiar forms or symbols, and that they used a great number of pseudonymous words" (Jung, 1941).

Rabelais' use of this coded allegorical speech likely contributed to his survival in such perilous times for free thinkers. "There were ideas in mid-sixteenth-century France, ideas that were dangerous to hold, and Rabelais is a heretic 'up to but not including the fire.' So although the import of the symbols and, consequently, of the text would be readily comprehensible to the ... 'good people' it was intended to be impenetrable to those outside the inner circle, ...[*Gargantua & Pantagruel*] are deliberately evasive" (Marshal/Zegura 2004). As The French occultist and Freemason Renee Guénon wrote:

> Rabelais' esoterism has often been discussed, though generally in rather vague terms, and we have to recognize that the subject is far from easy. Indeed, many passages in his works give the strong impression of a "secret language" more or less comparable to that of the Fedeli d'Amore, but different in kind, so that a "key" is necessary to translate it, although till now one has not been found. This question is closely related to that of the initiation Rabelais might have received. That he was connected to Hermeticism does not appear in doubt, for the esoteric knowledge of which he gives proof obviously belongs to the "cosmological"[1] order and ... corresponds well to the

specific domain of Hermeticism (Guénon, 1964/2004).

As John Eberly has noted in *Al-Kimia: The Mystical Islamic Essence of the Sacred Art of Alchemy*, "Sufi poets often use terms like 'wine,' ...to describe a spiritual substance with unique qualities, and alchemists use elliptical and often poetic terms to describe their processes. Both make use of multi-layered symbolic language to conceal a unifying and underlying teaching or truth designed to initiate the receptive and confound the literal minded. This initiatory vocabulary ... provides a non-linear point of departure into the mystic unknowing for the attentive recipient.... (Eberly, 2004). I would argue, as evidenced by this book, that cannabis may help and facilitate that bridge of understanding – a quality that has been recognized in other cultures. "The students of the scriptures at Benares are given bhang before they sit to study" (Campbell, 1894).

As the last of the alchemists, Fulcanelli rightly noted, "one should analyze Pantagruel's and Gargantua's saying and ways of speech, if one wants to understand all that is inherent in the work of the powerful initiate that Rabelais was" (Fulcanelli 1929/1999). Clearly, these coded references to cannabis were among those which were meant to be revealed by Rabelais though this stenographic writing technique.

We can be sure Rabelais would have studied the works of the Islamic physician and alchemist Avicenna (ibn Sina), as he mentions the Arabic sage a number of times in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. We have already noted Avicenna's reference to various preparations and Ismaili ties in Chapter 10. His works on medicine were pivotal texts in Europe at the time of Rabelais. "Many well-known Arabic doctors described medicinal uses of cannabis, especially Avicenna.... He mentions the plant in his work, *Canon of Medicine* (ca. 1000 A.D.). This medicinal oeuvre is often considered as the leading and most comprehensive medicinal treatise well into the fifteenth century" (Russo, 2013). Besides Avicenna Rabelais also mentions the islamic alchemist and physician Geber, who refers to *banj* (*bhang*=cannabis) and other narcotics in his writings. As noted earlier, both Geber and Avicenna are widely associated with the medieval art of alchemy, and their texts served as the introductory documents of Alchemy into medieval Europe.

In *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Rabelais also works in a reference to the rare Arabic book of magic, *The Picatrix*, referred to earlier, for its references to the resins of cannabis in a magical incense and other drugs. Rabelais' reference occurs in Chapter 23 of the third book, with a conversation between the characters of Panurge and Friar John about the devil's desire to claim his victims for Hell, and demons surrounding deathbeds. This exchange has Pantagruel's companion Panurge respond to Friar John's

comments, where he speaks "like a Learned Doctor, subtile, and well skilled in the Art of Devilry." Devilry in English being a replacement for the French original's "l'art" in reference to the Black arts, or in some editions "lard" likely in a mock reference to magical ointments. Panurge continues "At the Time when I was a Student in the University of *Tolouse* [Toledo], that same Reverend Father in the Devil, *Picatrix*, Rector of the Diabolical Faculty, was wont to tell us, that the Devils did naturally fear the bright glancing of Swords, as much as the Splendour and Light of – the Sun." Panurge goes on to describe Hercules' descent into hell, and other stories filled with visions of demons. A footnote in an early 19th century edition of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* notes: This Book of Magic ... [is] extremely rare [its] doctrine has been solemnly forbidden/condemned by the church..." That Rabelais was aware of it, is further indications of his deep esoteric ties.

FRIAR JOHN AND PANURGE.

It has been suggested by a number of Rabelais scholars that Agrippa, a figure prominent in the literature on medieval alchemy, can be found in Rabelais' clownish character of the astrologer "Her Trippa," who Panurge consults as to whether he will be made a cuckhold. Although the character bears little in likeness to Agrippa, all of the means by which he predicts whether Panurge shall be made a cuckhold if he marries – (his greatest fear), can be found in Agrippa's *De Occulta Philosophia* (1533). [2]

In the tales of Pantagruel, Rabelais ridiculed other alchemists of his day. In their journey to the Kingdom of Quintessence, Pantagruel and entourage encounter alchemists extracting "farts from a dead ass [donkey]" and his companion Panurge becomes ill through drinking an elixir prepared by "putrefying a great pot full of human

urine with horse's dung" and taking it as a "sacred distillation." As McFarland notes of such scenes in "Abstracting the Essence: Rabelais and Alchemy": "Rabelais ... is ... saying.... The alchemist who would have us believe that his magical elixir will defeat time, miraculously redeem the dead, or somehow reveal the gold which lies hidden in matter, is a charlatan" (McFarland, 1991).

But behind this ridicule of sham alchemists, "Rabelais ... offers alchemy as a metaphor for the production of his own text. On the title page of both *Gargantua and Pantagruel* and the end page of *Pantagruel*, Rabelais refers to his persona, M. Alcofribas, as the 'abstractor of the fifth essence.' This suggests the text is the end product of an alchemical distillation" (McFarland/Zegura, 2004). This is in reference to the alchemical goal of "producing a fifth essence, or quintessence, in the form of a precious metal or a life-giving elixir known as the philosopher's stone (*pharmakon athanasias*)" (McFarland/Zegura, 2004). Rabelais ridiculed alchemists who were trying to make gold and "distinguishes Two Alchemies, as he distinguish Two Astrologies, One Quacksalver and the other one Serious" (Probst-Biraben, 1949).

> Not to say here Scientific, for it's rather about Hermetic Philosophy. In Terms of Alchemy, what René Guénon... Esotericist and Scholar, calls Spiritual Alchemy, interpreting the allegory and the Symbols of the Gold Seekers as Transmutations [of self].... This] Motif... [is] present within Gargantua and Pantagruel, the Mockeries are addressed to the ... the Charlatans and ... the Spagyrical Art are held by Him in Esteem, from which He borrows in very mysterious intentions, Images and Vocabulary (Probst-Biraben, 1949).

Although Rabelais disdained alchemist who sought to make gold from lead, he celebrated the spagyrical alchemists who worked with plants, and we can be sure his references to quintessence and the philosopher stone, were based on the latter. As Fulcanelli also noted:

> His works are signed by the pseudonym Alcofribas Nasier, the anagram of Francois Rabelais, followed by the title Abstractor of Quintessence, which in the Middle Ages used to designate in the popular language the alchemists of the time. The famous doctor and philosopher unquestionably declares himself to be an Adept and a Rosicrucian and put his writings under the aegis of the sacred Art. Moreover, in the Prologue to Gargantua, Rabelais indicates rather clearly that his work belongs to the category of hermetic and acroamatic closed books, the understanding of which requires an extensive knowledge of symbols (Fulcanelli 1929/1999).

*Dore's illustration for Gargantua and Pantagruel, showing a figure wearing a Phrygian cap, which is associated with alchemy, guarding the Abbey of Thelema, while the unworthy, many dressed in the pomp of the church, mill about outside.*

As Guénon noted of Rabelais, "it is incontestable that he was very well able to distinguish between the common alchemy of the 'transmuters gold' and true spiritual alchemy" (Guénon, 1964/2004). Throughout, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, Rabelais alludes to this alchemical connection. "The narrator compares his work to a Silenus Box in which are contained 'fine drugs' which one might find in an apothecary's shop and which will cure digestion and provide bodily comfort.... In short, this text possesses the curative powers of the philosopher's stone" (McFarland/Zegura, 2004).

In his paper "Rabelais and Alchemy," Douglas McFarland continues on this theme, "Furthermore this claim is enveloped in allusions to the secrecy and occultism associated with alchemy ... 'for here you will find individual savor and abstruse teaching which will initiate you into certain very high sacraments and dread mysteries.' The narrator's claim for the medicinal value of his distilled texts reflects similar claims for the philosopher's stone. Both are offered as the rare and precious drug which has been extracted or distilled from crude matter, but which also possesses its own power to transform the base and diseased into the valuable and healthy" (McLarland, 1991). "An alchemical interpretation of the book ... is clearly suggested ... perhaps intended at its inception for a small number of initiates..." (Huchon/Zegua, 2004).

In relation to alchemy, it is also worth noting that the monumental, *Rabelais Encyclopedia*, refers to the herb *pantagruelion* as "mood-enhancing hashish (*cannabis sativa*), and the 'philosopher's stone.'" (Rigolot/Zegura, 2004). That an association between the two existed in the mind of Rabelais, does seem plausible, as comparatively, we have seen that the contemporary alchemical figure Paracelsus called opium the "philosopher's stone." As we have also seen, Paracelsus "mentioned cannabis as a component of the 'Arcana compositum,' which he regarded to be the most important medicine" (Grotenhermen, 2009). Similar alchemical-sounding

names were applied to cannabis in the Arabic world, such as the confectionary *dawamesk* (medicine of immortality). "Medical euphemisms such as *ma'jun* (paste, electuary) or *tiryaq* (theriac) [medicine/antidote] were suitable cover names for all kinds of hallucinogenic drugs, including hashish" (Rosenthal, 1971). According to Botanist Christian Rätsch, In the Arabic literature: "texts discuss the manufacture, use, and effects of *theriac*, a universal antidote, panacea, and tonic ... *theriac* often contained hemp" (Rätsch, 2001).

It is clear that Rabelais initially tried to veil the identity of cannabis. As Mikhail Bakhtin noted, who referred to the connection between *Panatgruelion* and cannabis all too briefly, in *Rabelais and his World*, throughout his works Rabelais identifies many plants by name, and then discusses their uses, however in "describing 'Pantagruelion,' he uses the opposite method, giving a detailed picture of the plant and inviting the reader to guess what it is (hemp)" (Bakhtin, 1965/84). As noted of this in *The Rabelais Encyclopedia*, [which likewise makes little comment on the connection to cannabis]:

> ...Rabelais's hidden thought: had to be decoded as a veiled message of steadfast faith of persecution. For political reasons Rabelais resorted to the ingenious device of enigmatic speech, covertly appealing to his contemporaries for a tacit attitude toward evangelical freedom.... In hermeneutical terms, Pantagruel's eponymous plant could thus be an emblem of interpretive progress toward the full revelation of divine meaning, given the assured unfolding of salvation history (Rigolot/Zegura, 2004).

## *The Herb*

## *Pantagruelion*

> Appearing at the end of the Tiers Livre, [is] the pantagruelion.... It represents the wisdom of the sage Pantagruel and symbolizes the quest for self-knowledge. The chapters dedicated to the description of pantagruelion give, in the tradition of Renaisance writers, an encyclopedic sketch of botany and herbal lore. Rabelais carefully develops the external characteristics of the herb through a detailed description of its various parts and its size. He tells how and when it should be prepared. He then enumerates the several methods known for naming plants in antiquity. For example some were named for their discoverer, as mercuriale for mercury. Others retain the names of their native regions, and still others designate the powers of effects they have. Then, turning again to the pantagruelion, Rabelais shows that these ancient methods of naming plants are precedents for giving it the name of Pantagruel.... The pantagruelion ... is a is a symbolic manifestation of Pantagruel, certainly not in external appearance, but in its intrinsic virtue. It not only has great medicinal value, but as hemp from which rope is made, it also serves as a means to the navigational discovery of new lands and knowledge. An agent for milling bread, it equally provides a source of spiritual food... (Masters, 1969).

In reference to *pantagruelion's* identification with Hemp, Arthur Chappell noted that "since a store of hemp was necessary for a long voyage, the meaning is simple and clear. Nevertheless the close association with Pantagruel, the explanation that all civilized arts were derived from Pantagruelion's miraculous powers, and the striking allusions to burnings, seems to foreshadow quite another meaning, one *deliberately* abstruse and important" (Chappell, 1924).

The discussion of *pantagruelion* and its manifold uses comes about when, Friar John, Panurge and others, join the giant Pantagruel on a Ocean quest. The Quest itself was inspired, as noted earlier, by the fears of Pantagruel's cherished companion, the rogue and clown Panurge, who was gravely concerned that he might be made a cuckhold if he marries, and he wishes to seek out an answer from the Oracle of the Holy Bottle, which was located in far-off India. In the lists of provisions for the voyage is a store of both raw and confected *pantagruelion*, the favoured herb of the said giant. As *The Rabelais Encyclopedia* has noted of this event:

> As the companions prepare to the sea and visit the the Oracle of the Holy Bottle, Pantagruel takes on board a large supply of a mysterious product called Pantagreulion, which the narrator ... describes a textile plant ... with numerous manufactured

applications (clothes, rope, sails, etc.). At the same time, Pantagruelion takes on many other forms, including fire-resistant asbestos, mood-enhancing hashish (cannabis sativa), and the "philosopher's stone." ... More enigmatically, its many virtues are supposed to bring humans together and make them conquer the universe (Rigolot/Zegura, 2004).

As Stewart Pelto has noted this event also makes the philosophy of the Abbey Thelema, nomadic, creating a sort of traveling "Temporary Autonomous Zone," through which its message can spread:

> Rabelais weaves an illicit thread of intoxication through the fabric of his praise for its industrial applications. Even as he plainly raises his appreciation for canvas sails to a utopian level, Rabelais discreetly instructs his fellow citizens in the science of cannabis: its botanical identification, how to ignite the flowers, a likely side effect, and above all the wine-like nature of the intoxication. He surreptitiously spreads his message of cannabis intoxication through the art of steganography, extending the intoxicating utopia of Thélème to all those who will take a cannabis intoxication trip on the Thalamège (Pelto, 2009).

Stewart Pelto makes an important point in noting that the name of the lead ship of the fleet, "Thalamege," is a development of the term "Thelema." Through this "...Rabelais transforms his vision of human happiness from a wine-based abbey into a cannabis-based fleet of ships..." (Pelto, 2009). Further, the celebration of intoxication associated with the Abbey of Thelema, is indicated by each sail of the fleet of ships being emblazoned with the image of some sort of drinking vessel. "All the ships that set sail are decorated with symbols of drunkenness in the form of heraldic devices: a bottle, a goblet, a pitcher (amphora), a wooden jug, a glass, a cup, a vase, a wine basket, a wine barrel (Rabelais describes each ship's device in detail)" (Bakhtin, 1965/1884). As Stewart Pelto has noted, these "heraldic devices are placed onto sails of cannabis ... These ships of cannabis are designed to expand the wine-inspired message of the abbey to a global scale" (Pelto, 2009). Thus with "the abbey of Thélème now rendered mobile, Rabelais is free to extend his model of peaceful intoxication..." (Pelto, 2009).

> The fleet's maiden ship is called the Thalamège, an orthographical extension of the utopian abbey of Thélème, and it stocks this enigmatic herb both raw and cooked into confections...
>
> Rabelais associates the herb with Thélème itself, and with a strong desire to travel. This is evident through the choice of words he uses to introduce the

> characters traveling to the Divine Bottle.... As he calls upon Frere Jan [Friar John], the narrator makes a direct reference to the abbey of Thélème, which can be seen as a reminder of said utopian finale.... Pantagruel's ships have their sterns, bows, kitchens, upper decks, and passageways covered in cannabis. This is in addition to the abundant supply of cannabis both raw and baked into confectionary sweets that the giant has placed aboard... (Pelto, 2009).

The hero of Rabelais' tale, Pantagruel, was described as being connected with his favored plant from the time of his birth "in the season of the great draught, when they were busiest gathering the said herb; to wit, at that time when Icarus's dog, with his fiery balling and barking at the sun, maketh the whole world troglodytic and enforceth people everywhere to hide themselves in the dens and subterranean caves" (Rabelais).

> ...It is likewise called Pantagruelion, because of the notable and singular qualities, virtues, and properties thereof; for as Pantagruel hath been the idea, pattern prototype and exemplar of all jovial perfection and accomplishment; so in this Pantagruelion have I found so much efficacy and energy, so much completeness and excellency, so much exquisiteness and rarity, and so many admirable effects and operations of a transcendent nature that if the worth and virtue therof had been known, when those trees, by the relation of the prophet, made election of a wooden king, to rule and govern over them, it without all doubt would have carried away from all the rest the plurality of votes and suffrages (Rabelais).

In reference to the "trees ... election of a wooden king," Pelto rightly notes "...the scripture transformed here comes originally from Judges. Although in the Bible the trees are led to ruin by the election of a bush, Rabelais reframes the story in a positive way by crowning cannabis their king" (Pelto, 2009).

> With the trees, there is a fundamental problem of education; if only they had been aware of the numerous applications of cannabis, they would surely have elected it to power. This can be seen as an echo of Rabelais's wish for the people of France to become aware of the considerable advantages to be had with cannabis. Its insertion into the Bible joins with the plant's associations to the positive attributes of the medieval lion to form a spiritual dimension that makes it as worthy of a religious intoxicant as wine. As such, cannabis stands to be the ideal intoxicant for a global communion that is respectful and incorporative of multiple religions ... the Pantagruélion episode takes the coexistence of religion and intoxication and expands it to a global scale (Pelto, 2009).

## *Pantagruelion = Cannabis*

In his chapters on the herb *pantagreulion* , Rabelais gives a clear botanical description of the plant. "The leaves sprout out all round the stalk at equal distances, to the number of five or seven at each level; and it is by special favor of Nature that they are grouped in these two odd numbers, which are both divine and mysterious. The scent is strong, and unpleasant to delicate nostrils" ( Rabelais).

After going over the appearance of the plant, with its distinct stalk and leaves, Rabelais gives indication that he will reveal some of the secrets of *pantagruelion*, but not all. Before digging into his description of *pantagruelion's* uses, he writes: "By these means is this herb put into a way to display its inestimable virtues, whereof I will discover a part (for to relate all is a thing impossible to do)." Throughout the text his esteemed value of the plant is expressed over and over, using terms like "sacred herb," "blest pantagruelion," "sacred pantagruelion," "benedict pantagruelion," and "divine pantagruelion" in his descriptions and references to it.

To be sure the reader understands the identity of the plant, a lengthy description of its many industrial applications are given, sails for ships, ropes for hanging, clothes, stitches, paper and seed for birds:

> By its means, by the retention of gusty air are the great ships, ample river barges, the mighty galleons, the ships of thousands and ten thousand hands from their stations launched, and propelled at the discretion of their commanders. By means of it are the nations, which nature seemed to hold hidden, impermeable, and unknown, come to us, us to them. Something which birds couldn't accomplish, however light of plumage that they are, and whatever liberty of swimming in the air is given them by Nature.
>
> Without it would not carry the millers grain to the mill, nor bring back flour. Without it, how would be carried the pleadings of advocats to hearing? How would without it be carried the plaster to the workshop? Without it, how would be drawn water from the well? Without it, what would do notaires, copyists, secretaries and writers? Would not perish the toll rates and rent rolls? Would not perish the noble art of printing? On what would paintings be made? How would one ring the bells? With it are the priestesses of Isis adorned, the Pastophores clad, all human nature covered in first position. All the wool bearing trees of the Seres, the cotton trees of Tylos in the Persian sea, the swans of the Arabes, the vines of Malta do not clothe so many people as does this herb alone. Covers armies against the cold and the rain more certainly commodiously than ever did skins...
>
> The seed issues towards the tip of the stalk and a

> little below. It is as numerous as that of any herb in existence, spherical, oblong, rhomboidal, clear black and tawny, hard, covered with a fragile husk, delicious to all song birds, like linnets, finches, larks, canaries ... and others... (Rabelais).

It has long been suggested Rabelais was simply referring to the fibrous and other industrial qualities of hemp, but this use of fibre for cloth and seed for birds, does not fit the esteem to which Rabelais gives his magical plant. As A.F. Chappell noted of the chapters on the herb *pantagruelion*, in *The Enigma of Rabelais*:

> Now in such a passage the hidden meaning must be fervent study. It is difficult, short of adopting most improbable views on the author of the Tiers Livre, to come to any other conclusion. Fervent study applies to the above passage; and it will unravel the extremely difficult chapters that follow surprisingly well. It had produced all the conveniences of civilization enumerated. It could not be repressed by burnings. It might, the author hoped, enable humanity to attain truth to the consternation of the gods, although he confesses that he cannot expound all its possibilities ("car le tout est a moy vous exposer impossible" – T.L. 50). Undoubtedly, moreover, it was the guiding principle of the new Pantagruel, and surely in their quest of certainty it was more important than ropes. Hemp is a inadequate an explanation of Pantagruelion to which we owe milling, legal practice, building, printing, and geographical discovery, as it was certainly the subject of Rabelais' original (Chappell, 1924).

However, as we shall see, Rabelais' rehash of Pliny's medicinal references to cannabis and other references to *pantagruelion* in the story also refers to uses beyond the industrial.

## *Plagiarizing*

## *Pliny?*

Rabelais "relied considerably upon Pliny's [23 A.D.-79 A.D.] account of hemp for the remarkably long passage on Pantagruelion" ( Chappell, 1924). Rabelais makes a number of references to Pliny by name, and a comparison between Pliny's and Rabelais' works show that he copied almost directly from him in his chapters on *pantagruelion*. Pliny described at length the sowing and cultivation of hemp for fibre purposes in *Naturalis Historia* (The Natural History) a first century Encyclopedia, also describing the use of cannabis in human and veterinary medicine. The following passage from Pliny on the plants' medical qualities, is simply expanded and translated by Rabelais in his description of *pantagruelion* (it is worth noting an early awareness of the now recognized antibacterial qualities of cannabis leaf).

> The juice of this seed will extract worms from the ears, or any insect which may have entered them, though at the cost of producing head-ache. The virtues of hemp, it is said, are so great, that an infusion of it in water will cause it to coagulate: hence it is, that if taken in water, it will arrest looseness in beasts of burden. A decoction of the root in water, relaxes contractions of the joints, and cures gout and similar maladies. It is applied raw to burns, but it must be frequently changed, so as not to let it dry (Pliny).

And Rabelais:

> I shall forbear to tell you how the juice or sap thereof, being poured and distilled within the ears, killeth every kind of vermin that by any manner of putrefaction cometh to be bred and engendered there, and destroyeth also any whatsoever other animal that shall have entered in thereat. If, likewise, you put a little of the said juice within a pail or bucket full of water, you shall see the water instantly turn and grow thick therewith as if it were milk-curds, whereof the virtue is so great that the water thus curded is a present remedy for horses subject to the colic, and such as strike at their own flanks. The root thereof well boiled mollifieth the joints, softeneth the hardness of shrunk-in sinews, is every way comfortable to the nerves, and good against all cramps and convulsions, as likewise all cold and knotty gouts. If you would speedily heal a burning, whether occasioned by water or fire, apply thereto a little raw Pantagruelion, that is to say, take it so as it cometh out of the ground, without bestowing any other preparation or composition upon it; but have a special care to change it for some fresher in lieu thereof as soon as you shall find it waxing dry upon the sore (Rabelais).

## *Pantagruelion Confections*

Further indicating the use of *pantagruelion* above and beyond the industrial and even medicinal qualities of cannabis, Rabelais has Pantagruel, the giant hero of his tale, who shared his name with the said herb, load "confected" *pantagruelion*, along with dried green herbage for a voyage: "amongst other things, it was observed how he caused to be fraught and loaded with an herb of his called *Pantagruelion*, not only of the green and raw sort of it, but of the confected also, and of that which was notably well befitted for present use after the fashion of conserves." As one 19th-century author noted, this "*pantagruelion herb so-greenish and crude that when confected and prepared*, was to be none other than hashish" (Bedot, 1860).

Rabelais refers to 'confected' *pantagruelion*, that it is "befitted for present use after the fashion of conserves." 'Conserves' are made with dried fruits and nuts and are cooked. They have a very thick and chunky texture, and Conserves made with *pantagruelion* of course bring to mind the fore mentioned medieval Mid-Eastern delicacies, like *dawamesk*, the Islamic confection made with hashish, honey and pistachios, and the Moroccan *ma'jun*, made with honey, ginger, nuts, raisins and other spices, as well as Turkish delight, which was often prepared with hashish. Ingested cannabis in such preparations was more the normal means of using it, as the influence of the pipe smoking via tobacco, had not taken hold as a means of cannabis ingestion yet. Considering the influx of Islamic literature and products of the time, it seems likely there was an awareness of such preparations among the more occult minded, of Europe.

Stewart Pelto suggests Rabelais would have been familiar with confected forms of hashish through the popular medieval manuscript attributed to al-Hassan al-Wazzan, a Moslem figure who was captured by a Christian pirate and given as a gift to Pope Leo X, who renamed him Leo Africanus, and was referred to in Chapter 10. While in servitude al-Wazzan is said to have recorded his previous travels and these were after published and became a best seller. Pelto convincingly argues that, "Given both Rabelais's zeal for the global and al-Wazzan's popular and contemporary first-hand account of Africa, there can be no doubt that the former is aware of the latter" (Pelto, 2009). Citing an English translation of al-Wazzan's work, from 1600, Pelto explains.

> ...In his fifth book, al-Wazzan devotes a healthy portion of space to "the mightie citie of Tunis." Near the end of his description, al-Wazzan finds himself amongst the city's prostitutes, who eat hashish confections to remain sexually aroused and in a carefree disposition for their clients: "They haue here a compound called Lhasis, whereof whosouer eateth but

one ounce falleth a laughing, disporting, and dallying, as if he were halfe drunken; and is by the said confection maruellously prouoked unto lust."

The word "Lhasis" must be understood in the manner clarified by the notes of Dr. Robert Brown, editor of the 1896 publication: "'Lhasis' (ihasis in the original Italian) is 'hashish', or Indian hemp." Davis confirms this in one of her own notes: "Right after describing the male and female prostitutes of Tunis, Yuhanna al-Asad talks of the use there of the drug hashish ('el hasis') and its aphrodisiac qualities." Here, al-Wazzan is unmistakably describing the intense effects of cannabis ingested. So powerful are its abilities to intoxicate that even an ounce of this hashish confection is enough to provoke bouts of drunken hilarity, erotic playfulness, and an inability to concentrate. His popular description of Africa provides Rabelais with information concerning both the intoxicating effects of eating cannabis and its use in contemporary Muslim societies (Pelto, 2009).

This passage also brings to mind the role of cannabis in various love philtres, and the accusation brought against the younger Rabelais, that he had been distributing such amongst the monks, that was referred to earlier.

Prior to both Rabelais and the account of al-Wazzan, there were other Arabic-influenced references that have been widely recognized as identifying hashish in European literature, such as *The Decameron* (1353). Rabelais also briefly mentions Marco Polo (1254-1324), and thus indicates a familiarity with the tale of the "Old Man of the Mountain: and the obvious associations it brings up with hashish, and thus revealing more evidence of his knowledge of the Arabic world. As noted earlier, Rabelais refers to the original Arabic text, *The Picatrix*, which contains its own references to hashish incense.

## *Galen's cannabis delicacies*

Beside the reference to "confected" *pantagruelion* for the voyage, Rabelais refers to edible preparations elsewhere "of old amongst the Greeks there was certain kind of fritters, and pancakes, buns and tarts, made thereof, which commonly for a liquorish daintiness were presented on the table after supper, to delight the palate and make the wine relish the better." Rabelais was here likely influenced by the works of Galen (130-200 A.D.), who received a number of mentions in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. "it was customary to give hemp-seed to guests at banquets as a promoter of hilarity and enjoyment" ( Galen). [3] "[S]ome people eat it toasted together with other teasers. What I call 'teasers' is what is eaten for pleasure of drinking during the meal.... If consumed in large amounts," Galen wrote "affects the head by sending to it a warm and toxic vapour" ( Galen/Arata, 2004). "It is possible Galen misinterpreted what he saw.... Like Herodotus, [in describing the Scythians throwing hemp seeds on heated rocks in a tent] he also may have described the parts of the plant used as 'seeds' through ignorance, when resinous material from the whole plant may have been used [i.e. seeded buds]" (Wills, 1998). " Galen ... largely informed Rabelais's writing and medical practice" (Randall/Zegura 2004). Galen was not alone in referencing the use of cannabis-based confections in ancient Greece, Ephippus (4th century B.C.) a writer of comedies, also included cannabis on a list of delicacies (Brunner 1977).

It should also be noted that Rabelais copied Galen's comments about the "toxic vapours' and a 1934 Oxford University Press edition of Rabelais records in a footnote to this same passage that "hashish is made from a gummy secretion on the flowers of this plant, which may explain the following sentence (11. 12-13) where R says that it 'strikes the brain and fills the head with grievous and dolorous vapours'" (Urquhart, 1934).

> It is certain that Rabelais studied Galen while acquiring his doctorate in 1537 in Montpellier, some nine years before the first publication of Le Tiers Livre ... approximately thirty-eight different treatises by Galen were taught at the University of Montpellier during the sixteenth century. Furthermore, Rabelais was in possession of a Greek manuscript of Galen's work that he used to distinguish himself at said university.... By commenting directly on it, rather than from a Latin translation, he was able to attract large crowds to the auditorium (Pelto, 2009).

## *The Transcendent Nature of*

## *In*

*Rabelaisian Dialectic and the Platonic-Hermetic Tradition*, George Mallary Masters noted that the herb *pantagruelion* represents the Christian ideal of "caritas," i.e. Christian love of humankind; charity, it is also worthy of noting. "Caritas is not only concord on the human scale, but also a dialogical link between man and God. The symbol of the *pantagruelion* and myth of Pantagruel illustrate that aspect of caritas" (Masters, 1969). Further, Rabelais' references to the "divine" "sacred"' and "blest" qualities of *pantagruelion* are not the only indications of that placement.

Rabelais may also indicate the psychoactive effects of the plant, which have been deemed spiritual by the more mystically-inclined partakers, through references to "*Pantagruelism*," which he says is rooted in "a certain gaiety of mind pickled in the scorn of fortuitous things," or as alternatively translated "a certain gaiety of spirit, an indifference to all the accidents of daily life." (Descriptions which do indeed indicate the sort of cynical humour and spiritual detachment which the effects of cannabis have been known to provide.) As the 11th century Sufi Sheik Haydar noted: "God has granted you the privilege of knowing the secret of these leaves. Thus when you eat it, your dense worries may disappear and your exalted minds may become polished" (Rosenthal, 1971).

Rabelais was so enamoured with hemp that in his estimation it stood at the very pinnacle of plant life: "in this *pantagruelion* have I found so much efficacy and energy, so much completeness and excellency, so much exquisiteness and rarity, and so many admirable effects and operations of a transcendent nature..." It is interesting that Rabelais speaks of hemp's transcendent nature as he ends one of the chapters devoted to the herb *Pantagruelion* with a Kabalistic-style celestial ascent through the planetary spheres:

> Who knows but by his sons may be found out an herb of such another virtue and prodigious energy, as that by the aid thereof, in using it aright, according to their father's skill, they may contrive a way for human kind to pierce into the high aërian clouds, get up into the spring head of the hail, take an inspection of the snowy sources ...then it is like they will set forward to invade the territories of the moon, whence passing thro' both Mercury and Venus, the Sun will serve them for a torch, to show the way to Jupiter and Saturn. We shall not then be able to resist the impetuosity of their intrusion, nor put a stoppage to their entering whatever regions, domiciles, or mansions of the spangled firmament they shall have mind to see ... all the celestial signs together with the constellations of the fixed stars, will jointly be at their

devotion then... (Rabelais).

Here, Rabelais has repeated the same sort of planetary ascent that we saw described as far back as Gnostic times, and the basis for the later Kabbalistic Sephiroth and the corresponding planets and aspects of consciousness they represent. This is a common theme in magical practice in regards to personal initiation. The medieval French Monk has the gods lament that should mankind succeed in this climb then they will surely: "drink of our nectar and ambrosia, and take to their own beds at night, for wives and concubines, our fairest goddesses, the only means whereby they can be deified."

> Like other forms of mysticism, Kabbala's ultimate aim is union with the divine; this union is often described in terms of sexual union or drunkenness, two subjects explored throughout the five books ... Rabelais ... included its study as a necessary part of humanist education in Gargantua's letter to Pantagruel.... He also showed familiarity with specific Kabbalistic ideas. The mystical quest is often compared to a voyage in search of wisdom, and Panurge in the Fourth Book sets out on a voyage in search of wisdom (Rabin/Zegura 2004).

In alchemical terms this union with the Divine was often referred to as the "alchemical marriage" or "*coniunctio*." This sacred marriage symbolism in alchemy was likely carried over from Gnostic Christians, where Wisdom was personified with the Goddess Sophia. Numerous images in alchemical texts depict this sacred marriage or union of Masculine and Feminine: Sol (Sun) and Luna (Moon), fire and water, salt and sulphur, or the union of King and Queen. The Gnostic Goddess of Wisdom Sophia may also have been identified with the Kabbalistic Sephiroth "Chockmah" (Wisdom). Alternatively, the Sephiroth, Binah, (Understanding) could also be the intended symbolism. Rabelais' lament from the Gods, that through *pantagruelion*, mortal men might make "wives and concubines" of the "goddesses," may make an allegorical reference to this alchemical sacred marriage, "the only means whereby they can be deified."

As we have discussed briefly in Chapter 5 the suggestions that the Templars had taken up their worship of the Gnostic Goddess Sophia, as suggested by von Hammer-Purgstall and others, it is interesting to note that the poet Gilbert Ducher put to words in 1538, that the study of Rabelais revealed the secrets of the Goddess Sophia "*In primis sane Rabelaesum, principle eumdem Supremum in studiis Diva tais Sophia?*"[4] As Leo Merigot notes in *Rabelais et L'Alchimie* "this 'divine wisdom' of which ... Rabelais shows adepts, is not unlike that of the ... Gnostics" (Merigot, 1947).

## *Other Herbs?*

The opening statement of Rabelais' planetary ascent does open up the possibility that some other herbs may have been in use as well. In one scene, the Gods' lament on Pantagruel's use of of *pantagruelion*, concerned that by this his sons may find another "herb of such another virtue" and with that basically storm heaven. In regard to other possible drugs, in Pantagruel, Rabelais does refer to an "opiate cordial" in comparison to his *pantagruelion* books, as well as burning poppy seeds for divination by smoke. "By Capnomancy? On burning coals we will put the seeds of Poppy and Sesame. O the gallant Affair!" ( Rabelais). Curiously, "poppy" was left out of some editions in his reference to capnomancy ( Duchat/Ozell, 1738). Although left out of some editions of Rabelais, we see an almost identical reference in the *Trinum Magicum* (1630): "There was another kind of Captromancy. For either grains of sesame or black poppy were thrown on hot coals, and from the smoke rising the omens were drawn." [5]

Rabelais also "mentions 'Absynthe' (Rabelais, *Œuvres complètes*,...), a drink whose principal intoxicant is found in Artemisia absinthium, or Wormwood; '*Hyoscyame, hanebanes*,' two names for the same delirium-inducing poisonous plant; and '*Aristolochia*,' commonly known as Birthwort, whose toxic acid was believed to aid women in childbirth" (Pelto, 2009). As well, there are passing references to hellebore, mandrake and probably a few others I missed.

Also of possible interest are a couple of references to agaric mushrooms in a curious chapter, titled "How a certain kind of Pantagruelion is not destroyed by fire." "Agaric" is a species of mushroom, that includes known psychoactive strains, such as Fly Agaric.

> Do not compare also, however miraculous it be, that kind of tree which is seen among the mountains of Briancon and Ambrun, which from its roots is produced for us the good agaric, from its body we render the resin so excellent which Galen dares compare to the turpentine; from its delicate leaves retains for us the fine honey of heaven, that is manna, and, no matter how gummy and oily it be, is incombustible by fire... (Rabelais).

This enigmatic passage caught the interest of Paracelsus' biographer Andrew Weeks, who noted similar comments from the German alchemist. Weeks noted other strikingly similar interests of the two contemporary geniuses, one in Germany and one in France, who are thought to have never met or directly communicated.

> Both professed to admire the natural marvels of their native soil. Rabelais' myth-mongering allusion to "celestial manna" (as compared to, though less

potent than, "the herb pantagreulion") would have been more than casual rhetoric to the German. For both could sing the praises of a fabled mountain tree. Rabelais, relating how its roots nourish "the good agaric," how its trunk yields a resin so excellent that Galen compared it to "turpentine" ... and "On its delicate leaves it catches for us that sweet honey of heaven, which is called manna" ... and Paracelsus, no less eager to cite his alchemical knowledge of "agaric" and "manna" and no less enthusiastic that the turpentine tree in the high mountains of his native German lands extracts influences from the heavens ... and that his alchemical art, striving for the higher regions, distills the resin of this wondrous tree into healing balsam.... For either author, what is base or vile is inextricably, if ambiguously, linked to the sublime (Weeks, 2008).

Paracelsus "makes it a point of pride that the alchemist knows about precisely such matters, unlike the academic doctors who cannot tell *agaric* from *manna*" (Weeks, 2008). The Canadian author Robertson Davies fictionalized the discovery of a secret correspondence between Rabelais and Paracelsus in *The Rebel Angels*. Of course, letters between the likes of Rabelais and Paracelsus regarding alchemical or occult matters would have been a risky means of communication at a time when so many were being persecuted for heresy. "It wasn't a time, you know when one great scholar wrote another to ask how his garden was coming along. It was dangerous; the letters could fall into the hands of repressive Church authorities" (Davies, 1981).

It would seem Rabelais and Paracelsus were not the only alchemists that were interested in the study of mushrooms. "The famous Persian doctor and philosopher ... Avicenna (930-1036), was particularly interested in poisonous mushrooms, as was Albertus Magnus, the thirteenth century Dominican philosopher, who first gave its name of fly agaric to *Amanita muscaria*. He fed some flies with milk in which he infused pieces of the fungus; not one of them survived. (Tussaint-Samat & Bell, 1994). (Besides being a Catholic Saint, Albertus Magnus also became known for his alleged interest in alchemy, and contributions to alchemical lore, and allegedly had medical recipes that included cannabis and opium, however these later works are thought to be forgeries written in his name, (see Chapter 9).

## *Fire Proof*

## *Pantagruelion?*

As noted, Chapter 52 of Book III relates the amazing fable concerning: "how a certain kind of Pantagruelion is of that nature that the fire is not able to consume it." In *Rabelaisian Dialectic and the Platonic-Hermetic Tradition*, George Mallary Masters noted of the fire-proof *pantagruelion* references that although like "hemp in appearance, this herb is similar to asbestos. Neither it nor the truth that it represents can be destroyed by fire" ( Masters, 1969). This last statement seems to hold a lot of meaning, at a period known to have suffered heretics to the flames, and the need to be secretive in order for certain ideas to survive the church's fire. Like certain heresies, "...[C]annabis is depicted with phoenix-like abilities to be born again from the flame" ( Pelto, 2009). Pelto saw other meanings in the tale of fire-proof *pantagruelion* as well. Through the use of ... "steganography" Rabelais weaves covert directions concerning the combustion and inhalation of cannabis directly into his overt discussion of its textile value, as well as indications of what cannabis intoxication feels like and what effects it has on the body. In this way, Rabelais increases awareness of the intoxicant..." ( Pelto, 2009).

> ...[T]here is no fire-proof strain of cannabis. If any specimen be forced to co-exist with fire, it will combust and produce intoxicating plumes of smoke. Yet in this final chapter, Rabelais is adamant that there is a fire-proof strain of cannabis, and it is to this outlandish declaration that he refers at the beginning of the chapter when.... He calls this extraordinary example of cannabis "Pantagruelion Carpasien Asbestin" ... Nevertheless, he does not believe that cannabis actually shares any similarities to asbestos, least of all its resistance to flame. He demonstrates in Gargantua that he is perfectly aware of what asbestos actually is, naming it a rock during the Propos des bienyvres.... Rabelais is making this mistake on purpose...
>
> ...Rabelais's purpose in this final chapter is to incite his readership into an incredulous state that can only be satisfied by personally lighting cannabis on fire and seeing what happens ... under the surface he is providing detailed instructions for how to ... smoke cannabis.... Through abundant imagery of wine and fire alongside cannabis, Rabelais hints at the nature of the wine-like intoxication that can be had by lighting it on fire (Pelto, 2009).

A similar view was expressed by Ben Price, in his essay "Where the Pantagruelion Grows." "First, it is noteworthy that Rabelais suggests different varieties of the plant. Second, the statement that the plant will not burn is extraordinary enough to tempt experimentation with the plant in

the presence of fire. Readers smitten by curiosity on this point were equally likely to be smitten, finally and pleasantly, by the singular virtues of the plant Rabelais called 'Pantagruelion.' A happy discovery that would also, upon re-reading the author's words, unlock their secret references and make their meaning plain..." (Price, 1990).

As Rabelais showed some familiarity with *The Picatrix*, it seems likely that he would have known of the use of cannabis resins in a magical incense, and he did refer to poppies for use in *capnomancy*, so we can be sure he was aware of the release of certain elements from combustion and inhaled via *suffumigation*.

In his essay "Rabelais and Alchemy," Leo Merigot suggested that there might be an alchemical meaning behind the story of the asbestos-like form of *pantagruelion*, and there was more to it than Rabelais being "simply wrongly" about a "variety of incombustible hemp" (Merigot, 1947). Merigot noted in the story's description of how this fireproof cloth was used to bind the body of the dead and then burned, coming out of the intense fire clean of bodily debris, and indicating that this may have been a hidden reference to the process of calcination of mineral salts extracted from plant ashes, and asks if this imagery does "not evoke the spagyric philosophy?" (Merigot, 1947).

***The***

## *Pantagruelion Grail*

As noted, Rabelais incorporated his account of the herb pantagruelion in a satire of the Grail myth. This connection is further hinted at by the placement of Pantagruel's father Gargantua in the time of King Arthur, and references to Merlin. In fact Merlin was said to have been the creator of both of the Giant Gargantua's parents, Grandgousier and Gargamelle. In *Merlin: Priest of Nature*, Jean Markale notes: "It must not be forgotten that the sixteenth century never disowned the oral traditions of its rural origins. Rabelais, who embellished his work with multiple anecdotes or reflections borrowed from everything he had heard recounted in his travels through France ... is a striking example of this. And we know that Gargantua is a folkloric figure, the image of an ancient Celtic giant god.... The writer simply revived very old character themes to recast them according to the taste of the day and to express his own ideas about the world and life" ( Markale, 1995):

> Specifically, what made Rabelais decide to write his Pantagruel was the publication in 1532 of an anonymous work about the giant Gargantua. This work offers the oldest literary version of the legend and, curiously, it is closely linked to the theme of Merlin. For just as Merlin participates in the quest for the Grail at least in some way in certain Arthurian romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in this minor epic he is at once involved with the adventures of Gargantua, whom he has, in fact, truly created and with those of King Arthur (Markale, 1995).

Markale refers to the tale "The Real Gargantua," which relates "In the time of King Arthur there was a great philosopher named Merlin, who was more learned in the art of necromancy than anyone else in the world, and who never ceased to help the nobility, from whom he earned for his feats the right to be called the prince of the necromancers.... Merlin was an important adviser of King Arthur..."[6] Merlin warns Arthur that due to his own forecast of deception and detainment by women, he may not always be there to serve the King, and sets out to make the giants for the King's protection. His recipe for this is most curious in relation to what we know about the causes of sorrow for the Fisher king.

> ...Merlin, who 'knew all things, meaning that he knew the past through his arts and the future by the will of God,' takes leave of the king. He goes to the top of a high mountain. 'He carried a phial of Lancelot's blood that he collected from his wounds after he had jousted with a knight, and also the fingernail clippings of the beautiful Guinevere, King Arthur's wife.' Merlin causes an anvil of steel as big as a tower to be built with three enormous hammers. Then 'he had the bones of a male whale brought to him, sprinkled

them with the blood from the aforementioned phial, and placed them on the anvil. These bones were rapidly crushed and reduced to powder. And so, from the heat of the sun, the anvil and hammers, the father of Gargantua was begotten. Afterward merlin had the bones of a female whale brought and he mingled them with the queen's nail clippings."Thus is Gargantua's mother created...."

Merlin wakes the two giants ... Grandgousier and Gargamelle... but since they are naked, they are overcome with desire and copulate ... Merlin says to them : "You have conceived a son who will perform great feats of arms and will aid king Arthur against his enemies." He then... advises them to bring their son, when he has reached the age of seven, to the court of King Arthur, when he has reached the age of seven, to the court of King Arthur.... So Gargamelle gives birth to a son and Grandgousier names him Gargantua...[7]

That Gargantua's parents were made from the figures of Lancelot and Queen Guinevere, Arthur's wife, is of particular interest, as it was the affair of the two that was the cause of the deep depression of King Arthur, and the Kings magical connection to his kingdom caused the whole land to become barren as a result. The whole Grail mythology is based around this, and the restoring of the King's "mojo."

Similarly, in the story of Pantagruel, Panurge's concerns over being made a cukhold, is the inspiration for the quest for the holy bottle. Panurge's fears are the realized concerns of King Arthur, who was made a cuckhold via the victim of Lancelot's wayward and Queen-piercing lance. "The position of Arthur in all this is abject; the posture of the cuckold, never gracious, is further degraded by the fact that the adulterer is the glory of his court, tap-root of his regal power" (Lacy, 2005).

We can be sure Rabelais was familiar with this mythology, as more than a dozen Arthurian romances were printed before 1553. Rabelais himself referred to at least five of them, and two of those were Grail romances. The quest in Pantagruel begins with the comedic goal of finding out whether Pantagruel's cherished and clownish companion might be made a cuckold if he marries, and this is hoped to come about by obtaining the Holy Grail-like "Dive Bouteille," and receiving an answer by drinking of its prophesy-inducing contents. Although a dozen oracles have already hinted to Panurge's inevitable fate, "each time he has reasoned their verdict away; and the voyage itself provides a number of amusing incidents. Yet, like Don Quixote's, it is a fundamentally serious quest directed toward a true goal, the discovery of the secret of life" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2003). In this case the Secret of Life is contained in the "Dive Bouteille." "It is highly

unlikely that Rabelais, who knew his Lancelot and all the other knights of the grail, should not have intended a reference to the grail when he mentioned the 'divine bottle'" (Nerlich, 1987).

Rabelais does make one direct reference to the Grail in *Pantagruel*, as the "sangreal," the old French for the holy Grail, and interestingly he does not equate it with a cup, but something that was contained in that cup, in this case "mustard": "The Queen answered that Mustard was their Sangreal and celestial Balm; that on putting a small Quantity of it in the Wounds of the fallen Chitterlings, in a very short time the wounded were healed, and the dead restored to Life." Although in the case of Rabelais' mockery, mustard becomes shit, as it is well known that mustard was "a common Rabelaisian and contemporary symbol for fecal matter" (Weinberg/Zegura, 2004). References to it as a healing balm does bring to mind the role of the Holy Oil, as described in Chapter 2, which has been connected with cannabis, and one can only speculate at a potential hidden reference by Rabelais. It's replacement with mustard i.e. "shit" may be a shot at the established church, and its placebo replacements.

Rabelais also made a curious reference to the Holy Grail in a letter to a friend, telling his companion who will be coming for a visit, that there is "good wine ... which is being saved here for your coming, like the Holy Grail, and a second, true quintessence" (Rabelais, to Antoine Hullot, March 1, 1542). The reference to the "true quintessence," a term used in *Pantagruel*, again brings to mind alchemical formulas and the various quintessences and arcana that were prepared with cannabis and other substances in this prime period, which has also been associated withe Grail mythology. In combination with reference to wine, it also brings to mind the quest for the Divine Bottle, as laid out in Pantagruel. In relation to "divine" it is worth noting that Rabelais refers to both "divine pantagruelion" as well as noting "divine property of this sacred pantagruelion." The *Dive Bouteille*, or Divine Bottle, is finally located in India, after the lengthy Ocean Voyage, at the underground Indian Temple of Bacbuc, headed by the Priestess Bacbuc. (Bacbuc being the Hebrew word for "bottle").

The entourage enters an underground temple filled with imagery depicting Bacchus's conquest of India, and notably of Dionysus' tutor, the ever-drunk Silenus riding his donkey, and who was discussed earlier in reference to the "Silenus Box" and its contents of rare drugs and such. Notably, Silenus was said to have held the power of prophecy when intoxicated.[8] As Jonathon Ott and others have noted, the wine of Dionysus was not simple fermented grapes. "Dionysus was ... erroneously regarded to be the god only of alcoholic inebriation owing to a misunderstanding of the natures of Greek Wines, potent infusions of numerous psychoactive plants, in which the alcohol served as a preservative, rather than as inebriating principle, and

which often required dilution to be drunk safely" (Ott, 1995).

> Since the wine of Dionysus is a mediation between the god's wild herbal ancestors and the civilized phenomenon of his cultivated and manufactured manifestation in the product fermented from the juice of the grape, it is most probable that this was the way in which the Greeks incorporated hemp into their pharmacopoeia.... Dionysus ... was also said to have returned triumphantly from travels to India, where he would inevitably have been assimilated with the god Shiva, with whom he shares many iconographic similarities, to the extent that they may have been originally the same deity, and both involved with the hemp sacrament (Ruck, et al., 2007).

Although it is unclear whether Rabelais would have been familiar with the possibility of this aspect of ancient Dionysian wine, the effects that Panurge receives at the Temple of Babuc, differ greatly from that which was received from the copious amounts of wine that were partaken of throughout the voyage. Rabelais could have learned about "drugged wine" from a variety of historical and contemporary sources. And this brings up the possibility of some sort of drug-infused wine, as such preparations were known throughout the ancient world and were used by a wide variety of cultures (Bennett, 2010). Rabelais would have been familiar with such preparations via the surviving references from Democritus, in the works of Pliny, both of whom he mentions, and, as noted, even copying parts of Pliny's description of cannabis, in his account of the herb *pantagrueilon*. "Pliny delights in vivid descriptions of these powerful mind-altering drugs and the many diverse reasons for which they were used" (Hillman, 2008). "The gelotophllis of Pliny ... a plant drunk in wine among the Bactrians, which produced immoderate laughter, may very well be identical with hemp..." (Houtsma, et al., 1936/1993).


Pliny referred to other such wine infusions, believed by many sources to contain hemp, and can be found under the names "*thalassaegle*," "*potammaugis*" and "*gelotophyllis*," terms he had inherited from references in Democritus (c.a. 460 b.c.). "Democritus's famous recipe

for a hemp wine is suitable for internal use: Macerate 1 teaspoon of myrrh ... and a handful of hemp flowers in 1 litre of retsina or dry Greek white wine ... strain before drinking" (Rätsch, 2005). Clearly, Pliny and Democritus identified wines infused with psychoactive plants, and Rabelais was familiar with these preparations. Thus, they may well have played a role in the development of his concept of the "*Dive Bouteille*."

Besides these ancient references, Rabelais may as well have been aware of wines used in the Islamic world, that were infused with cannabis and other substances. as such preparations have been suggested, as we have seen, in the case of the Hashishins. Cannabis-infused wines are also recorded in medieval Sufi literature (Rosenthal, 1971) and the variety of wine and alcohol-based cannabis infusions discussed in Chapter 3 and contemporary European reference to cannabis-infused wines, such as that found in the 13th century French manuscript attributed to Villard de Honnecourt, and the recipe of Pope John XXI, referred to in Chapters 5 and 7.

## *Alchemical Elixirs*

As we have seen, Rabelais rejected alchemical seekers of material gold, but embraced spagyric alchemy, and even identified his use of herbal infusions in alcoholic preparations, with his reference to a "good wine ... a ... true quintessence" referred to in his 1542 letter to Antoine Hullot, as well as his title as the "Abstractor of Quintessence" in Pantagruel. Clearly there was a lot of experimentation at this time, in regard to herbs for infusion into this medieval alchemical elixir. That Rabelais could have infused cannabis in such a preparation, due to his title, "extractor of the quintessence" seems quite likely.

Rabelais would clearly have been aware of other such preparations, such as Cardano's cannabis-infused *aqua ardens*. M.A. Screech makes a convincing case that Rabelais drew heavily upon Cardano's work in his composition of *The Third Book of Pantagruel*, in his essay "Girolamo Cardano's De Sapienta and the Tiers Livre de Pantagruel." After a convincing comparison of the parallels of the two texts, (mostly regarding Rabelais' ridicule of various divination techniques in the Herr Trippa episode mentioned earlier), Screech notes that "...Cardano was not an obscure author. Anyone who had read him would have recognized the general area of learning that Rabelais comedy was acting upon" (Screech, 1963). It has also been suggested that Cardano may have been the basis for the satirized alchemist-like figure Thaumaste (Fraser, 1971), who we shall look at later in this chapter.

References to the quintessence also appear in the works of Ramón Lull (1232–1315), who Rabelais was familiar with and whom, like Agrippa, he poked fun at in Gargantua's letter to his Son Pantagruel, referring to him under the name R. Lullius. As noted in Chapter 11 Lull's own writings on the subject, *Der secretis naturae sive quinta essential* (On the secrets of nature or the fifth essence) are thought to have been largely borrowed from the works of an unnamed Jewish alchemist, and possibly not ever penned at all by Lull, just falsely attributed to him.

Clearly, Rabelais was familiar with the alchemical art of tincturing, and making quintessences. It is the title of the "Extractor of the Quintessence," that best identifies Rabelais' potential use of a cannabis-infused elixir, and like a cannabis-infused *arcanum*, he infused his own work with cannabis by hiding it in there as the mythical herb *pantagruelion*. Interestingly, as will be discussed in Chapter 21, the noted 19th-20th century occultist A.E. Waite referred specifically to a reference to a cannabis-infused wine, as "the drink of rare old Rabelais" (Waite, 1887), so this association has clearly been recognized by others.

## *Nectar of the Gods*

Rabelais had the Gods lament that through the herb *pantagruelion* , humanity might "drink of our nectar and ambrosia" and deify themselves. In his excellent essay, "Drugs and the Occult," Professor Dan Merkur notes that a number of "Renaissance esotericians referred to ambrosia, and nectar... [and] discussed the consumption of ambrosia and nectar in language that implied pagan communion" ( Merkur, 2014). He mentions Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), who we know was familiar with *The Picatrix*, and would have known about the many drug references it contains. "The perfect food of man is ... God, with whose nectar and ambrosia human hunger and thirst are continuously aroused" ( Ficino, 1978). [9] Ficino's disciple Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494), asked:

> Who does not seek to be initiated into such rites? ... who ... does not desire, while still continuing on earth, to become the drinking-companion of the gods; and, drunken with the nectar of eternity, to bestow the gift of immortality upon the mortal animal? Who does not wish to have breathed into him the Socratic frenzies sung by Plato ... that by the oar like movements of wings and feet he may quickly escape from here, that is from the world he is lad down as in an evil place, and be carried in speediest light to the heavenly Jersualem (Pico, 1965).[10]

Giardono Bruno (1548-1600), who also demonstrated a familiarity with *The Picatrix*, as Merkur notes, "candidly discussed the psychoactivity of nectar" (Merkur, 2014): "Nectar ... distorts and saddens our nature, and perturbs our imagination, making some gay and without purpose, others unrestrainedly happy, some superstitiously devout, others vainly heroic, other choleric, others builders of great castles in the air" (Bruno, 1964)[11] and again "He lives the life of the gods, he feeds upon ambrosia and is drunk with nectar" (Bruno, 1964).[12]

> The pagan context of ambrosia and nectar in ... Ficino, Pico, and Bruno suggest that they associated the psychoactive substances with classical paganism and not with Christianity. Something similar may be found in Francesco Colonnna's Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, written in 1467.... Using the literary convention of a dream, Colona ... presented fictionalized accounts of extraordinary visionary experiences. In the visionary world nymphs have magic ointments that transform people into birds and asses.... The protagonist, Poliphilo, discovers to his surprise that the transformative ointment aroused him sexually.... Much later ... there is a sequence where a priestess plucks three fruits of a red rose bush ... the fruits prove psychoactive.... 'No sooner had I tasted the miraculous and sweet fruit than I felt my crude

intellect renewed ... the devout and sacred communion of the prophetic fruits ... Poliphilo is told that "to pluck the roses was forbidden at the time, but the priests trafficked in them" (Merkur, 2014).

Rabelais briefly mentions *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Polyphilus, in his *Dream of Love*, Book 1, Ch. 9.) so we can be certain he was familiar with it, and it shares many similar themes to Rabelais own work, and was equally controversial. In her essay, "On the botanical content of Hypnerotomachia Poliphili," Sophia Rizopoulou identifies cannabis in references to "Odoriferous substances ... from frankincense trees (Boswellia sp.), myrrh (Commiphora sp.) [u6'] , benzoin, amygdaloid-benzoin or almond-benzoin ... derived from the resin of Styrax spp ... and Indian unguent ... (attributed to Cannabis sativa L...) [these] provide an insight into exotic plant resources and 'cosmopolitism' ... scents, which enhance sensory perception, [and] might also be a cue for a certain kind of behaviour, in those days" (Rizopoulou, 2016).

*A Phallic god holds a scythe and is surrounded by images and sacred floating wine bottles full of "ambrosia" as a Bull is sacrificed in imagery reminiscent of Mithras slaying the Bull to release the drink of the mysteries, from the*

*Hypnerotomachia Poliphili.*

We also see references to magical elixirs in *Orlando Furioso*, (Ariosto, 1516) where, reminiscent of Panurge's search for the Holy Bottle to see if he will be made a cuckhold if he marries, a character is told to drink an enchanted wine, that is compared to the forbidden fruit of Eden; "drink and mighty marvels shall be seen ... if faithful is thy wife, thou shall drink clean." There are also descriptions of a witch anointing her body and to belladonna, under the name "*Strignum*" a name that associates the plant with witches "*striga*."

There are clear indications that there was an esoteric interest in psychoactive substances shared by many of the artists and intelligentsia in this period of the Renaissance, as we shall discuss further in the next chapter. In *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, the "emphasis is on drinking, for whether wine, nectar, or water is drunk there is no difference in the symbolism. In equating the three images at the metaphysical level, Rabelais uses for his own ends the traditional imagery of the mysteries" (Masters, 1969).

> In the Bachic mysteries of death and resurrection wine symbolizes the fountain of life. Plato, adapting the mysteries to philosophical purpose, makes of wine a fountain of intuitive knowledge and expresses his connotation through the Dionysian furor. similar usage of wine naturally pervade Christian ritual and mysticism. For example, the wine of the Eucharist, because it embodies the blood of Christ, is the fountain of life and grace. In the long line of Christian mystical symbolism Santa Teresa equates the water God pours on the garden of her soul with the contemplative inebriation of wine. Rabelais, in giving wine its fullest meaning, draws on all these traditions and transforms them through his own myth of the voyage to the Dive Bouteille into a philosophical experience of dialect" (Masters, 1969).

## *The Holy Bottle*

Whatever the preparation of the wine served in the Temple of Babuc was and from whence it was derived, is open to speculation. However, it is clear that its intent in the story was to induce a prophetic state in the partaker. Certainly, as the entourage has been partaking of wine throughout their voyage, this particular wine has effects of a different kind.

When they enter the temple, depictions of the Greek Myths of Dionysus decorate the chamber, befitting the home of a sacred wine. The columns of the underground temple, or vault, were painted with the figuration of the planets, the mosaic carpet and the walkway around the fountain (source of truth ), held a heptagonal ridge with a circular basin inscribed in the heptagon;, at its seven corners were seven balusters that held precious stones, corresponding to the seven planets, and on each a statue corresponding to the seven metals: Saturn for lead, Jupiter tin, Phoebus gold, Mars brass, Venus copper,Mercury hydragyre (liquid mercury) and the Moon silver. All these correspondences are Alchemical and Kabbalistic.

Rabelais' tale has it, that after a lengthy initiation in the underground Temple, Panurge is led to a bubbling fountain in the center of which sits the object of their quest, the Holy Bottle:

There the noble priestess Bacbuc made Panurge stoop and kiss the brink of the fountain; then bade him rise and dance three ithymbi ("Dances in the honour of Bacchus." [Dionysus]—Motteux.). Which done, she ordered him to sit down between two stools placed there for that purpose, his arse upon the ground. Then she opened her ceremonial book and, whispering in his left ear, made him sing an epileny, inserted here in the figure of the bottle.

*Bottle, whose Mysterious Deep*

*Do's ten thousand Secrets keep,*
*With attentive Ear I wait;*
*Ease my Mind, and speak my Fate.*
*Soul of Joy! Like Bacchus, we*
*More than India gain by thee.*
*Truths unborn thy Juice reveals,*
*Which Futurity conceals.*
*Antidote to Frauds and Lies,*
*Wine, that mounts us to the Skies,*
*May thy Father Noah's Brood*
*Like him drown, but in thy Flood.*
*Speak, so may the Liquid Mine*
*Of Rubies, or of Diamonds shine.*
*Bottle, whose Mysterious Deep*
*Do's ten thousand Secrets keep,*
*With attentive Ear I wait;*
*Ease my Mind, and speak my Fate*

The references to India and a beverage that "mounts us to the skies" does in many ways bring to mind the Vedic hymns to the divine beverage Soma being used to "mount the sky" R.V.:7:7 (Wilson, et.al., 1888). The name "sky-flyer" for cannabis was used in India up until at least the late 19th century (Campbell, 1894). As noted in Chapter 4 the myths of this same *Soma* have been suggested as the root source of the Grail mythology.

That the Holy Bottle itself was found in India, is interesting in relation to the Grail mythology as well. "...[I]n the cycle of compositions posterior to Wolfram Von Eschenbach, the Grail is won in India by Lohengrin, Parzival's son, accompanied by all the knights " (Eliade, 1985). "L. von Schroeder, [in] '*Die Wurzeln des Sage vom heilgen Graal*,' [(1910)] ... locates the first home of the grail in India..." (Jung & von Franz, 1960/1970).

When Panurge is given the Holy Bottle to drink from he responds to its effects in a fit of poetic and prophetic verse, "he is transported to an ecstatic union with the divine and succumbs to poetic frenzy. Intoxication literally reunites the group with their primal creative energy..." (Albala; Imhof/Zegura, 2004).

After drinking from the Holy Bottle, Panurge is given a flask shaped like a book which had been filled from the pond. Rabelais compared this to Ezekiel eating of a scroll, before the Old Testament's prophet's own fantastic vision (Ezekiel 3:3). This is interesting considering some of Rabelais symbolism elsewhere regarding his book, as a "Silenus Box"; as the product of an alchemical process; chewing it down to the bone to reveal "high sacraments" etc. This theme of a crossover between the written word and strange drugs, is emphasized the concluding chapter of the Voyage for the Holy Bottle, and the answer it gives to Panurge's fear of being made a cuckhold:

> There she took out a hugeous silver book, in the shape of a half-tierce, or hogshead, of sentences, and, having filled it at the fountain, said to him, The philosophers, preachers, and doctors of your world feed you up with fine words and cant at the ears; now, here we really incorporate our precepts at the mouth. Therefore I'll not say to you, read this chapter, see this gloss; no, I say to you, taste me this fine chapter, swallow me this rare gloss. Formerly an ancient prophet of the Jewish nation ate a book and became a clerk even to the very teeth! Now will I have you drink one, that you may be a clerk to your very

liver. Here, open your mandibules.

Panurge gaping as wide as his jaws would stretch, Bacbuc took the silver book – at least we took it for a real book, for it looked just for the world like a breviary – but in truth it was a breviary, a flask of right Falernian wine as it came from the grape, which she made him swallow every drop.

It is impossible, said Pantagruel to Panurge, to speak more to the purpose than does this true priestess; you may remember I told you as much when you first spoke to me about it.

Trinc then: what says your heart, elevated by Bacchic enthusiasm?

With this quoth Panurge:

*Trinc, trinc; by Bacchus, let us tope,*
*[13]And tope again; for, now I hope*
*To see some brawny, juicy rump*
*Well tickled with my carnal stump.*
*Ere long, my friends, I shall be wedded,*
*Sure as my trap-stick has a red-head;*
*And my sweet wife shall hold the combat*
*Long as my baws can on her bum beat.*
*O what a battle of a – fighting*
*Will there be, which I much delight in!*
*What pleasing pains then shall I take*
*To keep myself and spouse awake!*
*All heart and juice, I'll up and ride,*
*And make a duchess of my bride.*
*Sing Io paean! loudly sing*
*To Hymen, who all joys will bring.*
*Well, Friar John, I'll take my oath,*
*This oracle is full of troth;*
*Intelligible truth it bears,*
*More certain than the sieve and shears.*


*Panurge receives the Word of the Bottle, engravings for Oeuvres de Maitre François Rabelais (1797)*

This term "Trinc," also written "Trink," "Trinu," and "Trinch," is of obvious interest, for Trinc has been suggested as a panomphaean[14] word, in use and understood by all Nations, and signifies, 'Drink'. But like the Rabelian catch phrase "Do what thou Wilt," it likely holds much more significance than is noted at a first glance

In *Rabelais et les secrets du Pantagruel* (Rabelais and the Secrets of Pantagruel) Henri Probst-Biraben compares the language used by the priestess Babuc, "the Noble Pontiff of the Divine Bottle" to that of the "Adepts" and in the invitation "Trinc coming from the Divine Bottle. She invites indeed Panurge and His Companions to partake to the Path of Divine Knowledge, as did All the Philosophers and Wise Men of Antiquity.... The Outcome of the Symbolic Voyages and Trial Which They Accomplish in the Unground Temple isn't of materialistic Wine Drinking but of the Spiritual Wine which the Sufis talk of" (Probst-Biraben, 1949). Probst-Biraben went on to suggest that the secret language used in Rabelais work indicated a lineage with "Christians Hermeticists ... the Templars, the Operating Companions, the Rose-Cross, [and] the Spiritual Alchemists" (Probst-Biraben, 1949).

## *Rabelais a Freemason?*

The Freemason, Roiscrucian, Martinist and secret society devotee, Joséphin Péladan, particularly emphasized "Trinch" in his *Le secret des corporations: La clé de Rabelais* (The Secret of Corporations: The key of Rabelais) (1905) and "insisted on explaining Rabelais by Freemasonry... "(Webb, 1974).

> Then was this word: "Trinch!" "Trincker" (Drink), then, would it be the word of Initiation; it might be that of Masonic meals.... It would have been very dangerous to write this in the vulgar tongue. Panurge believes that if the Divine Bottle has let this word go, it's because it is Lost. "It is, by God's virtue, broken or cracked, thus speak the crystaline bottles of our countries, when they're near the fire and crack forth" (Péladan, 1905).

Péladan saw a connection to the Troubadours, Dante, and other elements of Rabelais own time, and then a continuity into the later Freemasons and Rosicrucians. Péladan was a member of the the 19th-century Martinist order founded by Papus. As will be discussed later (see Chapter 22) many Martinists had a profound interest in hashish, Péladan included, and the Martinist journal, *L'Initiation*, even published a poem dedicated to Rabelais and hashish, along with many articles on directions how to properly use the herb and its effects.

In his *Confessions*, the Rabelais enthusiast, Aleister Crowley wrote: "the final secret is in the bottle inscribed TRINC"(Crowley, 1969). In his 1923 Diary notes, for an essay on Rabelais that was never published, Crowley recorded, "Pantagruelion=Elixir or stone: (y) TRINC=ecstasy conferring omnipotence" (Crowley, 1996). It is likely he saw this substance as something relating to hashish. Crowley also made the following interesting comments to Norman Mudd in 1925, "Pantagruelion. Necessity for Abbey [of Thelema] ... Pantagruelion is the material basis of the magical energies, the substance into which you can put any magical energy you desire and will cause the desired result to appear in matter" (Crowley, 1925). It seems clear that Crowley connected this with cannabis. A 1939 poem dedicated to the artist Bob Chanler, published in *Temperance* makes this clear:

**"TRINC"**

**Alcofribas Nasier**

*Oh let us bathe and crown our hair*
*And drink untempered wine!*
*Let ever greater cups ensnare*
*Our souls in traps divine.*

*Soon calms the season of love's rage,*
*And joy grows short of breath;*

*Birth shoots a shaft, weighed down by age,*
*That strikes the target, death.*

*Then come, thou golden goblet brimmed*
*With lust! Though all be vain,*
*There's hope for us, the lion-limbed,*
*In hashish and cocaine.*

*Though death should hale us by the scruff*
*Of neck to's mouldy portal,*
*To-night let us get drunk enough*
*To know we are immortal!*

I would suggest that the term lion-limbed, is a reference to *pantagruelion*, as the body has five limbs (*penta*), and the "golden goblet," here an allusion to the Grail. The poem starts off with a reference to Alcofribas Nasier, which, as noted earlier is an anagram for Francois Rabelais. Crowley, who was at one time the head of the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, a quasi-Masonic esoteric order that claimed secret knowledge dating back to the Templars, uses this same anagram, Alcofribas Nasier, to open an esoteric essay on hashish, *De Herbo Sanctisimo Arabico*, (The Most Holy Grass of the Arabs," that he wrote in 1918, for *Liber Alpeh*, and which he would reprint in his classic book on the Tarot, *The Book of Thoth*, which Crowley composed in 1944. Crowley ends *Liber Aleph*, and proceeds *De Herbo Sanctisimo Arabico*, in *The Book of Thoth*, with the statement: "I cry aloud my Word, as it was given unto Man by thine Uncle Alcofribas Nasier, the oracle of the Bottle of BACBUC. And this Word is TRINC" (Crowley 1944). Crowley gives some indication of his esoteric knowledge of cannabis in the first paragraph of the piece:

> Recall, O my Son the Fable of the Hebrews, which they brought from the city Babylon, how Nebuchadenezzar the great king, being afflicted in Spirit, did depart from among men for seven years space, eating grass as doth an Ox." Now this Ox is the letter Aleph, and is that Atu of Thoth whose number is Zero, and whose Name is Maat, Truth or Maut, the Vulture, the All-Mother, being an image of our lady Nuit, but also it is called the Fool, who is Parsifal "der reine Thor," and so refereth to him that walketh in the way of the Tao ... he is in unity with his own secret nature...

Here, in a few brief words, Crowley gives us a taste of his knowledge and beliefs about his beloved hemp. Notably, Crowley refers to the Egyptian Goddess Maat, whose devotees were reputed to have partaken of a sacramental drink, "the liquor of Maat" that was "comparable to the Hindu's Soma or its Persian counterpart Haoma" (Smith, 1952). Crowley begins the essay with a reference to Biblical indications of hemp use by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, and the eating of grass. As we now know

cannabis was used in the Near Eastern "sacred rites," in which all kings took part. The "Beast" further sees the Biblical analogy to the Ox in the story, as being a cabalistic reference to the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet Aleph, which in fact is symbolic of an Ox and whose number is zero, a number Crowley equated with the Fool card, and it is under this card's designation that *De Herbo Sanctisimo Arabico*, appears in *The Book of Thoth*. In some Masonic Lodges, this card is given to the new initiate starting out on the path. Crowley further relates the cannabis initiate to Parsifal, the hero who restores the the Grail.[15]

Crowley ended *De Herbo Sanctisimo Arabico* with the comment that, "a man must first be an Initiate, and established in our Law, before he may use this method." Crowley is likely here referring to codes of initiation in one of the occult organizations to which he belonged, and this again is also apparent by the veiled nature of his text. As well, this comment indicates Crowley's belief stated earlier, that drugs alone will not enable the devotee to reach the mystical goal, but also vigorous psychological preparation and study are needed.

Crowley took his magical word "Thelema" from Rabelais, as well as the Law of Thelema "Do What thou Wilt" and even his first magical title "Perdurabo" (Latin: "I Will endure to the end") from a "prophetic riddle" in Chapter 58 of Gargantua, that includes the stanza:

*That when this work is done in such a state,*
*Each man may have his own predestined fate.*
*Such was the pact. O how we should revere*
*Whoever to the end can persevere!*

Rabelais uses the term "Trinc" again, or rather the related french word "*trinque*," which is used as a toast, in "The Discourse of the Drinkers" (Chapter 1.V,) and the passage really does seem to emphasize the lineage of certain esoteric groups, and again throws light on Rabelais' own use of this term:

> I drink no more than a sponge. I drink like a Templar knight. And I, tanquam sponsus. [bridegroom] And I, sicut terra sine aqua. [like a land without water]
>
> ...Pour out all in the name of Lucifer, fill here, you, fill and fill (peascods on you) till it be full. My tongue peels. Lans trinque; to thee, countryman, I drink to thee, good fellow, comrade to thee, lusty, lively! Ha, la, la, that was drunk to some purpose, and bravely gulped over. O lachryma Christi, it is of the best grape! I'faith, pure Greek, Greek! O the fine white wine! upon my conscience, it is a kind of taffetas wine – hin, hin, it is of one ear, well wrought, and of good wool. Courage, comrade, up thy heart, billy! We will not be beasted at this bout, for I have got one trick. Ex hoc in hoc. There is no enchantment nor

> charm there, every one of you hath seen it. My 'prenticeship is out, I am a free man at this trade. I am prester mast (Prestre mace, maistre passe.), Prish, Brum! I should say, master past. O the drinkers, those that are a-dry, O poor thirsty souls! Good page, my friend, fill me here some, and crown the wine, I pray thee. Like a cardinal! Natura abhorret vacuum. Would you say that a fly could drink in this? This is after the fashion of Switzerland. Clear off, neat, supernaculum! Come, therefore, blades, to this divine liquor and celestial juice, swill it over heartily, and spare not! It is a decoction of nectar and ambrosia.

References to the bridegroom bring to mind the sort of alchemical sacred marriage discussed earlier, and like a land without water, brings to mind the wasteland the Grail saves. As well, in this revealing passage, Rabelais makes a direct reference to the Templar Knights, and the idea that this order was somehow a group of drunkards does not seem to fit with what we know about them historically. However, it is intriguing in relation to what we have seen about infused wines, and claims that the Templars had an infused preparation known as the "elixir of Jerusalem." In correspondence with the Masonic brother P.D. Newman, I asked him about Rabelais statement "My 'prenticeship is out, I am a free man at this trade. I am prester mast (*Prestre mace, maistre passe.*), Prish, Brum! I should say, master past." Newman responded "As indicated in Samuel Pritchard's *Masonry Dissected* (1730), 'Enter'd 'Prentice' is the term which was once used by the fraternity to designate the first degree of Freemasonry, Entered Apprentice. 'Past Master,' on the other hand, describes one who has in the past acted in the capacity of Master of a Lodge or 'Worshipful Master'" (Newman, 2017). The reference to "free man" here as well, may refer to Rabelais as a non-working Mason, in a working Masonic Lodge, as up until the 17th century, when Masonry made the transition from Operative to Speculative, non-Masonary workers were not allowed into the order.

Paul Naudon, author of *Rabelais: Franc-Maçon* (1954), wrote that "The Masonic keys are found in all the work of Rabelais," adding that they "are mason without apron." Later in *The Secret History of Freemasonry: Its Origins and Connection to the Knights Templar*: "Everything leads us to believe that he [Rabelais] enjoyed the company of craftsmen quite often and that he was at the very least the chaplain for a confraternity of masons" (Naudon, 2005). Referring to Rabelais' statement "To me it is all honour and glory to be dubbed and esteemed as a good *gaultier,*" Naudon explains that the "word *gaultier* can be related to the *gault*, meaning 'cock' that medieval and Reniassance-era masons took as a sobriquet [nickname]" (Naudon, 2005).

In her study, *Rabelais* (1972), the academic Catherine Claude wrote: "I think it quite probable that Rabelais did not ignore Masonry, and that one can often find a Masonic symbolism in his work ... it seems to me that Rabelais at the end of the Middle Ages could very well have been a Mason when the Freemasons were a fraternity of mysticism certainly, but which preserved, subterraneanly, traditions which the church denied; therefore, I readily believe that Rabelais was able to enamel his work with Masonic signs" (Claude, 1972).

In this regard it is important to remember that everything to do with a secret society, would have needed to be veiled. The initiatory details, the languages, the gestures, the legends could not be divulged to the uninitiated and profane. In the Middle Ages there could not have been any books that recorded such rites openly, everything would have had to be transmitted orally and under oath. To reveal such secrets openly, would have been at the risk of death. It would be naive under such conditions to expect Rabelais, if initiated, to offer up complete and exact pieces of Masonic rituals. He would not do it without putting both himself and those he was involved with at great risk of being executed by the Church's fanatics. This is why any form of esoteric Masonry would be so hard to document in this period. However, Rabelais does make the occasional overt references such as this, in his prologue to Book 3:

> Here drinking I deliberate, I discourse, I resolve and I conclude. After the Epilogue I laugh, I write, I compose I drink...
>
> It is good and fresh enough, as you would say at the Beginning of the second Degree. God, the good God of Sabaoth, that is to say, of Hosts, be eternally praised for it...
>
> Among the Diggers, Pioneers and Engineers ... I will serve the Masons, I will put on the Pot for the Masons, and the Meal finished, to the Sound of my little Pipe I will measure the Muzzle of the musing Dotards (Rabelais).

In the "Third Book," Rabelais evokes the legend of Renaud de Montauban, who had killed a nephew of Charlemagne, and took refuge on the site of the future Strasbourg cathedral. He would have been a good workman, but his own aloof nature and considerable abilities as a worker, made him a victim of his colleagues' jealousy, and he was murdered. This theme will be repeated in 18th-century Masonry with the allusion to the murder of Hiram Abiff, the chief architect of Solomon's Temple. Interestingly, Rabelais also works in a reference to the building of Solomon's Temple in this context: "For the erection of Solomon's temple not everyone might offer a gold shekel. Since it is not in our faculty to advance as far as they have in architecture. I am determined to do what Renaud de

Montauban did, to serve the masons" (Rabelais). The French Masonic historian Paul Naudon has highlighted the similarity between the murders of Hiram and the story of the murder of Renaud de Montauban in the late 12th Century in *The Secret History of Freemasonry* (2005). (Renaud also appears as a character in *Orlando Furioso,* where he drinks from a magic fountain.)

In the story, Pantagruel, Panurge and associates visit the Kingdom of Queen Quintessence in order to gain admission to the Temple of the Divine Bottle. There they witness many hilarious and miraculous cures, which brings to mind the claims of alchemists about the quintessences they made. Arriving at the Temple of Bacbuc, they enter the underground temple through a staircase with steps broken up with stops at two and then three and four degrees, and in this it has been suggested there is Masonic symbolism. As well, their guide, the "Noble Lantern," has been compared to the Masonic "Delta" or mystical triangle, generally surrounded by a circle of rays.[16]

Even the role of drinking wisdom from a bottle is loaded with Masonic symbolism. The French Masonic site ledifice.net, in their article 'François Rabelais fut-il un Initié ?' notes of this: "In our rituals do we not invite the apprentices to drink at the source of the truth, and do we not drink the cup of bitterness at the initiation?" "Trinch!" Rabelais explains "is the most joyful and divine word that can be heard ... for drink is the property of Man ... because in this wine there is hidden truth and thus has the power to fill the soul with all truth, knowledge and philosophy." In relation to this, the phrase "*In Vino Veritas*" (In Wine is Truth) hangs over the temple of the Holy Bottle's door. Clearly, this is no ordinary wine that is identified, this is the "wine of the philosophers."

Authors and researchers have been commenting on this connection between Rabelais and Masonry for well over a century. An excerpt from a 19th century edition of The Freemason and Masonic Illustrated, going as far as to suggest that "it is more than likely that Rabelais, who wrote his inimitable budget of fun and satire at a very solemn crisis of the world's history, was himself a Mason.... In a very cautious way he, in the directions given for the Abbey of Theleme, symbolizes many important truths of the order" (Lewis, 1869). In *les Cahiers de la R.L. Villard de Honnecourt N°22,* (a French Masonic Journal, that bears the name of the operative Mason Villard de Honnecourt, who we discussed in Chapter 7 for his own 13th century recipe for a cannabis-infused wine in his Masonic Lodge book) the Masonic scholar Jean Ursin writes that Rabelais' identification as a "*maçon accepté*" and other evidence, "affirms his status as an accepted mason, without any possible discussion, in the first half of the sixteenth century" (Ursin, 1980). As Renee Guénon, (another Freemason, who is known for his own esoteric use of

hashish) explains:

> [A] particularly interesting question is that of the ties Rabelais had with "craftsmen" and their initiatic organizations. His works contain many more or less disguised allusions to certain rites and signs of recognition, which are nonetheless quite clear to any one who knows about these things, and which can hardly have any other provenance, for they have a very marked 'guild' character.... That he had been affiliated with some of these organizations in the role of chaplain is a very likely hypothesis, and it should not be forgotten moreover that there were always close links between the Hermetic and Craft initiations... (Guénon, 1964/2004).


*Design by Emile Boilvin on the title pages of all five volumes of the Editions Jouaust edition of Les Cinq Livres de F. Rabelais (Paris, 1876-1877).*

In *Trinc*, I hear the sound of two glasses tapping in the toast of fraternity, and an indication of connection through these sort of secret societies we have been discussing. Indeed, a a solemn vow and commemoration with a drink

takes place in some Masonic degrees via the "Libation Cup" to this very day. As well, there is also an indication of continuity, as that same glass connects generations in tradition, particularly the sort of secret traditions we have been suggesting, the cup is passed down from generation to generation. However, just as with a secret passed from mouth to ear, a cup passed from hand to hand spills a bit of its essence each time, perhaps arriving in the modern Masonic scene, a now empty chalice, whose once mystical contents, like that of the Grail, have been spilled and forgotten.

## *Pantagruelion Rituals?*

This suggestion adds to the belief that there was a secret organization of Pantagruelists in France at the time of Rabelais, something that Rabelais himself hinted at in *Gargantua and Pantagruel*, referring to "Pantagruelists" a number of times, noting that he is is "welcome in all good companies of Pantagruelists." And this group too may have served him as a source of protection. "A kind of secret society, a jovial freemasonry, appears to have formed by the influence of his writings, which was joined by numbers of young nobles and gentlemen who had been gained by the libertinism and scepticism of the poets, and who became known by the name of Pantagruelists" ( Wright, 1861). John George Cochrane noted that "there is a belief that Rabelais himself was founder of a secret sect called the 'Pantagruelists' ..." ( Cochrane, 1843).

In the story of the Holy Bottle, the 19th-century Rabelais biographer, Couicay, felt that Rabelais may have made a stenographic reference to an actual locale in France, the town of Chinon. "Rabelais speaks of the descent by an arch painted with dance of nymphs and satyrs around old Silenus laughing on his ass. Pantagruel says he knows well where this painted cave of 'the first town of the world' is, having often drunk good wine there." The first town of the world, playing on the Biblical story of Cain, being the first to build a town, and the town's name Chinon, anciently Caino, was founded by Cain! "this derivation was another hit at the pedants" (Couicay, 1880) "... arriving at the oracle ... the narrator brings the reader back to the author's territory , comparing to those in a cellar in Chinon ... Chinon is described as the 'first city in the world' through a false etymology linking the name with Cain's..." (Mackenzie/Zegura, 2004). This lineage also brings to mind Masonry, in relation to the key Masonic mythological figure, Hiram Abiff's hereditary descent from Tubal-Cain, a figure from the Bible, and he in turn a descendant of Cain, the builder of the first city. In the Bible Tubal-Cain, is described as the "forger of all instruments of bronze and iron" (Genesis 4:22). The name Tubal-Cain itself has been interpreted as "he who spices the craft of Cain," all of which flows with Masonic thought.


Couicay felt this same scene may have made reference to the actual site of an underground location on the Rabelais' family property, which he himself had visited. The former home of Rabelais, according to Couicay, was at that later date occupied by peasants. "Their inappreciation of antiquity or even lack of curiosity, appears from the fact that shortly before our visit they had discovered a subterranean stairway, and instead, of exploring it, had filled it up" (Couicay, 1880). Apparently, the author tells us, the air was unbreathable, as each time they tried to descend the medieval stairs, the candles would be blown out, leaving them to conclude the air was toxic. Thus it was filled over, and a wall put in by a Mason, leaving what lay below below a mystery to this day.

## *Secret Signs and Handshakes*

The signs and sigils of secret societies, like later Freemasonry, along with their secret handshakes, may not have been missed by the wit of the prince of parody, Rabelais, as can be seen in a hilarious exchange between Pantagruel's traveling companion Panurge and a British philosopher named Thaumast, [17] who travels from Britain to meet the esteemed Pantagruel: "You have here in your presence an incomparable treasure, that is, my Lord *Pantagruel*, whose great renown hath brought me hither, out of the very heart of *England*, to conferre with him about the insoluble problemes, both in *Magick, Alchymie*, the *Caballe, Geomancie, Astrologie* and *Philosophie*, which I had in my minde." As Arthur Chappell notes of this encounter, "Thaumaste consults Pantagruel on magic, geomancy and the Caballa (though the passage implies ridicule, it is rather of Thaumaste than of the subjects)" ( Chappell, 1924). The signs, tokens and secret handshakes, are seen by Freemasons themselves as a means "whereby Masons are universally known to, and can converse with, each other, though born and bred in different countries, and though they speak divers languages" (Oliver, 1867). This of course is similar to the Green Language, or Language of the Birds, of alchemy that was referred to earlier.

The affair begins with a hilarious exchange that goes on for some pages, with this exchange of gestures:

Every body then taking heed, and hearkening with great silence, the Englishman lift up on high into the aire his two hands severally, clunching in all the tops of his fingers, together after the manner which (alachi/nonnese) they call the hens arse, and struck the one hand on the other by the nailes foure several times: then he opening them, struck the one with the flat of the other, till it yielded a clashing noise, and that only once: again in joyning them as before he struck twice, and afterwards foure times in opening them; then did he lay them joyned, and extended the one towards the other, as if he had been devoutly to send up his prayers unto God. Panarge suddenly lifted up in the aire his right hand, and put the thumb there of into the nostril of the same side, holding his foure fingers streight out, and closed orderly in a parallel line to the point of his nose, shutting the left eye wholly, and making the other wink with a profound depression of the eye-brows and eye-lids. Then lifted he up his left hand, with hard wringing and stretching forth his foure fingers, and elevating his thumb, which he held in a line directly correspondent to the situation of his right hand, with the distance of a cubit and a halfe between them. This done, in the same forme he abased towards the ground, both the one and the other hand; Lastly, he held them in the midst, as aiming right at the English mans nose.

After a lengthy exchange of strange gestures worthy of a Monty Python skit, poor Thaumast, confounded and overcome with his opponent Panurge's signing dexterity, shits himself in front of all who gathered to watch the exchange!

> Panurge presently put the thumb of his right hand under his jawes, and the little finger thereof in the mouth of the left hand, and in this posture made his teeth to sound very melodiously, the upper against the lower. With this Thaumast with great toile and vexation of spirit rose up, but in rising let a great bakers fart, for the bran came after, and pissing withal very strong vineger, stunk like all the devils in hell: the company began to stop their noses; for he had conskited himself with meer anguish and perplexity.

In regard to Rabelais' ridicule of Agrippa, Thaumast, alchemists, secret societies and other occult groups and figures, Guénon speculated that "if one knew precisely to which schools the various individuals ridiculed by Rabelais belonged, we could perhaps to some extent ascertain, through contrast, that to which he himself could be linked, for it does seem that behind these criticisms there must be rivalries among esoteric schools" (Guénon, 1964/2004).

## *Giving the Devil His Due*

In regard to his references to a society of "Pantagruelists," Rabelais makes one particularly interesting reference that combines it with a figure that has long been associated with both the practice of witchcraft and hemp. "I truly hold it for an honour and praise to be called and reputed a Frolic Gualter [Leader] and a Robin Goodfellow; for under this name am I welcome in all choice companies of Pantagruelists" ( Rabelais). As will be explored in Chapter 17, Robin Goodfellow began as a generic name for any kind of demon that aligned itself with witches, and "he is mentioned as early as 1324 in the trial of Alice Kyteler (as 'Robin, Son of Art' – but it is referring to the same character; the 'art' meaning the 'magical art'), and may possibly be mentioned in even earlier records" ( Hatsis, 2016). Moreover, this same Robin Goodfellow seems to have been a Pantagruelist of sorts, as can be seen in his catch phrase. "Robin Goodfellow's refrain 'hempen hampen' uttered, according to Reginald Scot, as he laboured vigorously at night with hemp [(1584)]" (Lamb, 2006). Robin Goodfellow was also known for just the sort of sex-filled antics and practical jokes that fill the pages of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

*Left: Robin Goodfellow, looking like a giant, surrounded by little people. Right: The Greek God Pan.*

The appearance of horned, hoofed, and horny Robin Goodfellow, like Shakespeare's Puck, the same figure under another name, is clearly reminiscent of the Greek god Pan. Rabelais laments the death of Pan, utilizing the works of Plutarch in this context, but then combines the story with that of Christ's demise. As Max Gauna notes in *The Rabelaisian Mythologies*:

> In this perspective, Rabelais's myth, rather than Christianizing Plutarch, is paganizing Christ: having welcomed into his universe a set of intermediaries between God and man outlawed and diabolized by the Church but called by the greatest philosopher and myth maker of the ancient world our guardians and shepherds, he now instates the great god Christ-as-Pan as the greatest of them: the deus naturae and the shepherd God, the chief of the good demons (Gauna, 1996).

In relation to this, it has been noted that both Pantagruel's and his friend Panurge's names are "derived from the Greek root pan.... However, the resemblance does not end there, for both characters have associations with the Devil and with diabolic forces, Panurge more obviously so... but we should not forget that Pantagruel's name in fact derives from that of a devilkin in a late medieval mystery play. Thus Pantagruel too, has demonic antecedents..." (Donaldson-Evans, 1971). Indeed, Pantagruel, prior to the works of Rabelais, appeared in local literature as a sort of trickster demon, whose antics were on par with those of Robin Goodfellow. The original Pantagruel was "no giant; he 'was a very small devil whose job it was to go round throwing salt into the mouths of sleeping drunkards...'" (Screech, 1979). Thus it has long been recognized that "...Pantagruel is a traditional devil of the medieval popular theatre. (Merkale, 1995):

However, this originally demonic nature of Pantagruel,

became more sympathetic through the writings of Rabelais. "Rabelais transforms the Pantagruel of legend from the mischievous devil of medieval farces who went about instilling thirst by sprinkling salt in sleepers' throats into a philosopher-prince" (Masters, 1969). "Pantagruel, the popular devil of fifteenth-century mystery plays transformed by Rabelais into a messianic Christ figure..." (Stephens, 1989). As has been noted in *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World*:

> Rabelais's Gargantua et Pantagruel was the first major work to present demonic figures who are both sympathetic and even justified in their rebellion. The giant Gargantua and his son Pantagruel ... are comic, secularized demons. The most interesting character is Panurge, whose name, "doer of all things," suggests the multifaceted personality of the Devil. Like the traditional Devil, Panurge shifts his appearance, costume and manner to fir the situation. He has been a student at Toledo, a city known as a centre of hermetic magic, and there he had worked with the "rector of the faculty of diabology, the Reverend father Picatris [Picatrix]." Panurge is the prototype of the worldly Mephistopheles in the Faust literature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: tall, handsome, elegant, and of noble lineage, though the observant could discern his demonic origins in his pallor, his blemishes, and his great age of over three hundred years (Russell, 1990).

Obviously, such an association did not go completely unnoticed and without consequence. The medieval religious reformer, John Calvin, attacked the recently deceased Rabelais thusly: "'Here is a boor who mocks the Holy Scriptures: like this devil called Pantagruel and all this filth and scurviness.... They are mad dogs who disgorge their ribaldry against the majesty of God and wished to pervert all sacred things..." (Calvin, 1555).[18]

## *Despite*

Rabelais, best efforts at concealing the esoteric references to cannabis and other occult secrets incorporated into his comedic work, some failed to see the humour. *Gargantua and Pantagruel* caught the ire of the Authorities of the Church and concerns about its esoteric content resulted in it being condemned as heresy and banned in 1547, causing Rabelais to go into hiding. Although the book returned to print, some later versions appeared missing what were still deemed offending chapters, due to their descriptions of *Pantagruelion* identifying it as cannabis, as well as references to poppies for *capnomancy*. "For long periods these chapters were banned by the church, and in many modern translations of *Pantagruel* they are omitted" (Price, 1989). Although little mention of cannabis was made by the medieval church, it does seem there was some association with the black arts, considering the ban on the chapters of Pantagruelion. In *De la sorcellerie et de la justice criminelle à Valenciennes (XVIe et XVIIe siècles)* [Of Witchcraft and criminal justice at Valencian (16th & 17th)] (1861), Théophile Louise (1822-1890) wrote "this famous Pantagruelion of Rabelais, or, to put it simply, hemp, was certainly a early a powerful agent of the Sabbath" (Louise, 1861) thus, this connection also seems to have lasted through the intervening centuries.

In my 1854 edition Rabelais, in his fifth and last book of the series, reveals to us quite plainly: "the good Pantagruelion which is hemp." Other editions reveal this secret elsewhere in the text, and it is unclear as to when this connection was first made apparent in print. Rabelais states that he felt it was time to reveal more plainly his cryptic message, and get rid of the cipher that hid it: "Now, my friends, that you may put in for a share of this new wisdom, and shake off the antiquated folly this very moment, scratch me out of your scrolls, and quite discard the symbol of the old philosopher with the golden thigh, by which he has forbidden you to eat beans, that is, Pantagruelion books." (Which of course contained replete references to the herb Pantagruelion, hemp). In relation to Rabelais' reference to "beans" it is worth noting that in medieval Arabic literature "bean" [*fulah*] is also clearly used for hashish pills..." (Rosenthal, 1971). There are also connections with the symbolism of the bean and hemp in European traditions.[19]

Rabelais tells the reader that he had not revealed the secrets concerning cannabis earlier because he wanted to have the opportunity to enjoy it himself for a while, "for you may take it for a truth, granted among all professors in the science of good eating, that he enjoined you not to taste of them for the dunsical-dog leach was so selfish as to reserve them for his own dainty chops." Author Ben Price commented that "through exaggeration" Rabelais,

"made it clear that he was writing satire: *It endangereth bad and unwholesome blood, and with its exorbitant heat woundeth them with grievous, hurtful, smart and noisome vapours.*' In other words, Rabelais was gaffing, smoking grass will give you gas and make you fart!" (Price, 1989). Hemp isn't known for giving you gas, but beans most certainly do.

Rabelais had been dead for some years when the last book of *Pantagruel* was published, and when writing it,[20] he may have known it was time to reveal his secret to mankind more plainly, lest it be lost forever. He tells us that his great works (books) are finished: "Now though we have in our mother-tongue, several excellent works in verse and prose. I have made bold to choose to chirrup and warble my plain ditty, or as they say, to whistle like a goose among the swans, rather than be thought deaf among so many pretty poets and eloquent orators. And thus I am prouder of acting like a clown, or any other under part, among the many ingenious actors in this noble play, than of herding among the mutes, who, like so many shadows and cyphers, only serve to fill up the house and make up a number."

Rabelais knew he would suffer the wrath of the Roman Catholic Church for what they would perceive as heresy: "To the heathen philosopher succeeded a pack of capusions monks, who forbid us the use of beans that none but their nasty selves might have the stomach to eat it, though their liquorice chops watered never so much after it." Switching analogies between his books, and the secret of the plant *pantagruelion* hidden within its pages, Rabelais refers to both shelling the beans, i.e reading the book, but also being sure to ingest these *pantagruelion* beans, like a drug, and he is very clear on that last point in his analogy: "...be sure, I say, you take my advice, and stock yourselves with good store of such books, as soon as you meet them at the the bookseller; and do not only shell those beans, but even swallow them down like an opiate cordial, and let them be in you; I say, let them be within you: then you shall find, my beloved, what good they do to all clever shellers of beans."

He also had an idea of what his fate might be for exposing these forbidden secrets, as he states in the following comment, "Oh! they'll cost me an estate in hempen collars. For I hereby promise to furnish them with twice enough as much as will do their business, on free cost, as often as they will take the pains to dance at ropes end, providently to save charges, to the small disappointment to the finisher of the law." (He had given them enough rope to hang him.) And so Francois Rabelais disappeared from history. The reference to hempen collars is another revealing of pantagruelion as he refers to the plant's use for the fibre of the hangman's noose a number of times in his works.[21]

"It was the pantagruelion manufactured and fashioned into a halter and serving in the place and office of a cravat."

Rabelais included a dark comedic reference to hemp as the fibre behind the hand man's noose, in his description of *pantagruelion*:

> Any clergy, whether secular or myth bound, will feel threatened by a perceptual tool which allows the common man to transcend conditioning and experience unmediated clarity. This is what Rabelais knew would happen to the Medieval priests if he openly discussed the remarkable qualities of the plant, Pantagruel. It is the same fear-ridden reaction we see gripping ... conservatives and the beneficiaries of other perceptual pogroms when it comes to any frame of mind that they have not included in the "official" scenario of reality. Any transcendental short-cuts or non-prescription vehicles toward "feeling better" undermine the reality-mediating role of the authorities (Price, 1989).

To get back at his detractors, Rabelais at times would ridicule them in his texts, such as the monk Gabriel de Puy-Herbault, and the well-known French religious reformer John Calvin. Calivin had ranted about Rabelais, Agrippa and others in his *De Scandalis* (On Scandals, 1550), condemning them for "vomiting up their execrable blasphemies against Jesus Christ and his teachings" particularly pointing the finger at "the others like, Rabelais" who held "diabolical pride" in their blind rejection of the Church's teachings and interpretation of the Bible. Rabelais responded in his Fourth Book in 1552, by thinly

veiling their names "Demoniacles Calvins imposteurs de Geneve" and "les en- graigez Putherbes" and depicting them on a list of "deformed and misshapen monsters against Nature." Calvin is said to have continued his attack on Rabelais, even after his death.

As Knight noted in the 19th century, it was something of a miracle that Rabelais did not die in prison or through execution. "...[To] what cause then, may be attributed the comparative impunity with which the boldest and most formidable adversary of the papacy launched his satires? it is necessary to use the qualifying word 'comparative,' since Rabelais, though he died in peace and honour, did not wholly escape the fangs of bigots" (Knight 1877). "Rabelais could easily have been burned at the stake for his writings. All four books were considered heretical – that is, damaging to the central teachings of the Catholic Church – and condemned by the religious authorities in France immediately after they appeared in print" (Beck, Zegura, 2004).

> Again and again he had to fly from one city to another, now hurrying to Rome, where strange as it may seem, views concerning heresy were more tolerant than elsewhere in Catholic Europe, now hiding himself and living by his profession at Metz; making friends at one time with the King, and at another with the Pope, and seeking always the patronage of the most liberal among the french prelates. That protection was always forth-coming was due to the fact that he had sheltered himself behind the robes of the jester, and that he never failed to move the laughter of those whom he appealed for shelter or patronage (Knight, 1877).

In the 19th century account, "*The Life of Rabelais*," the authors noted that as a member of an ambassadorial retinue on a visit to Pope III, when given the opportunity to request a favour from the Papacy, Rabelais is said to have begged the Pontiff for excommunication.

> So strange a request having caused much surprise, he was ordered to say why he made it. Then addressing himself to that pope, who was doubtless a great man, and had nothing of the moroseness of many others: "May it please your holiness," said he, "I am a Frenchman, of a little town called Chinon, whose inhabitants are thought somewhat too subject to be thrown into a sort of unpleasant bonfires; and indeed, a good number of honest men, and amongst the rest, some of my relations, have been fairly burned there already. Now would your holiness excommunicate me, I should be sure never to burn." My reason is, that passing through the Tarantese, where the cold was very great, in the way to this city, with my Lord Cardinal du Bellay, having reached a

little hut, where an old woman lived, we prayed her to make a fire to warm us; but she burned all the straw of her bed to kindle a faggot, yet could not make it burn; so that at last after many imprecations she cried, "Without doubt, this faggot was excommunicated by the pope's own mouth, since it will not burn." In short, we were obliged to go on without warming ourselves. Now, if it pleased your holiness but to excommunicate me thus, I might go safely to my country (Urquhart; Motteux, 1849).

## *Rabelais' Last Word*

To critics who would say he was a fool to reveal so much in his books, Rabelais answered:

> If you say to me, 'Master, it would seem that you were not very wise in writing to us these flimflam stories, and pleasant fooleries:' I answer you, that, that you are not much wiser, to spend your time in reading them. Nevertheless, if you read them to make yourselves merry, as in manner of pastime I wrote them, you and I both are far more worthy of pardon than a great rabble of squint-minded fellows, counterfeit saints, demure lookers, hypocrites, zealots, tough friars, buskin monks, and other such sects of men, who disguise themselves like maskers, to deceive the world; for whilst they give the common people to understand that they are busied about nothing but contemplation and devotion in castings, and maceration of their sensuality....

Clearly, Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is not only a medieval comic classic, but also a renaissance-era repository of occult knowledge and lore. In regard to the chapters concerning the herb pantagreulion, although often dismissed as boring or irrelevant enough to ignore, by the vast majority of Rabelais scholars,[22] it is clear that Rabelais himself put great care and effort into including them, and we can be sure he had his reasons for doing so under the veil of stenography and symbolism. Indeed, these chapters have still been deemed so controversial, that unlike the bawdy sex filled jokes of the tome, they are still excluded from some modern publications of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*.

Although little discussed in the modern day, we do know that the popularity of the work lasted some centuries, despite various attempts at its suppression, and that Rabelais himself put his own life at risk with its publication. "'Pantagruel' was prohibited by the council of Trent, and is inserted in the index of forbidden books published by the court of Rome" (Cochrane, 1843).

Rabelais' influence on the later occult scene of the 18th and 19th century is very clear., We have the Hellfire Club adopting the motto of "Do What Thou Wilt" and the 19th-century Magician Eliphas Levi , like the later Fulcanelli, noted of the stenographically hidden secrets of Rabelais works in his classic *Transcendental Magic*: "The sages must therefore speak occasionally. Yes, they must speak, not to disclose, but to lead others to discover. *Noli ire, fac venire*, was the device of Rabelais, who, being master of all the sciences of his time, could not be unacquainted with magic. We have, consequently, to reveal here the mysteries of initiation"(Levi, 1856). Levi was so taken by Rabelais, that he wrote a trilogy of novels on him. [(*Rabelais à la Basmette* (1847), *Le Seigneur de la Devinière* (1850), *Le*

*Sorcier de Meudon* (1861)]. Moreover Levi later noted "*Gargantua and Pantagruel* are books of perfect occultism, where, under symbols just as bizarre as, but less unhappy than the devilries of the middle ages, hide all the secrets of wholesome thinking and living, which constitute the true basis of high magic acknowledged by all the great masters" (Levi, 1861).

We also know that members of the Haschischins Club in Paris, were aware of Rabelais' esoteric reference to cannabis, for one of their most prominent members, Theophile Gautier (1811-1872), made cryptic references to it when describing his hashish visions: "What bizarrely contorted faces. What abdomens huge with Pantagruelion mockeries. All the Pantagruelion dreams passed through my fantasy." Not surprisingly other references to the magical properties of Pantagruelion occur in literature. The name "Pantagruelion," even appears in 19th century Pharmacological Lexicons, in relation to medicinal and intoxicating varieties of cannabis (Oliva, 1853).

Clearly, the idea that *pantagruelion* refers to hashish and other intoxicating preparations alongside the industrial applications of the plant is nothing new. The 19th-century French tale, "Pantagruelion ou Chanvre-Cauchemar" (Pantagruelion or Nightmarish Hemp) tells the story of a young man who falls in love with a beautiful hemp spinner. When he is given a book about The Old Man of the Mountains, the leader of the Islamic hashish cult, and then ponders its pages after partaking of some hashish, he takes off on an astral voyage to far of Syria. "Come on, Cannabis, do your job; I deliver myself to You body and soul; mounts to my brain, clip firmly under my skull your many strings, and do strongly make dancing during this night, at your leisure, the puppets of my intelligence. Force them to discover for me the secret of Martha the spinner" (Bedot, 1860). As well, an 1857 edition of *Atlantic Monthly* included the following references to pantagruelion in a tale of a Princeton University student's experiments with cannabis in "*Clarion's picture: a legend of Nassau Hall*":

> "Did you never, in reading Rabelais, feel that somehow there was a profound and reverential symbolism underlying the wild froth of words in which the histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel have come down to us? that in all that olla-podrida of filth, quip, jest, wicked folly, and mad wisdom, was yet hidden, like the pearl in the oyster, a deep and most mystic system of world-philosophy?"
>
> "Anan ?" said Mac, looking at the boy curiously.
>
> "For instance, in what the good Cure' of Meudon says about the 'herb Pantagruelion,' – did the symbolism and esoteric meaning of all that never strike you?"
>
> "Oh, yes," cried Mac, with a singularly significant smile, "I see how it is now. I understand. Hum,

wonder what your mother would say, if she knew you were a friend of Panurge's, and did draw such inferences from his wisdom! Yes, mon enfant, I have long felt the profundity of Pantagruelion, not less than the oracular efficacy of Bacbuc. And no one can deny that the thinnest strand of Manila, if not full of mysteries per se, can at least open the way for us to the very innermost crypts, and hence may be styled potentially a very gateway to Eleusinia."

"I do not mean that, Mac, – not the mere mechanical warp and woof of it, to hang beggars and sots with, – but the more potent essence, the inner cosmic power of it, to rouse the soul into grand expansive consciousness, and then to suspend it far above the carks and cares of this weary world, to sew it aloft to some leaf of the Tree of Life ... the herb Pantagruelion was no other than Haschish, the expander of souls!" (Spencer, 1857).

Since it was first written about, we can be sure that there have always been those who are drawn to discover and explore the wonders of Rabelais' *Pantagruelion* for themselves. Indeed, it would seem that like the philosophy of Thelema, "Do What Thou Wilt," the draw to the identification of cannabis in the tale is one of the main messages Rabelais wished to covertly implant in the mind of the readers. Perhaps this has to do with Rabelais' promise to the reader that study of his work will "reveal to you most high sacraments and horrific mysteries, in what concerns our religion, as well as the state and economic life."

Controversial to the end, the "various profanities which are attributed to him on his deathbed, we shall not repeat here, but there is a tradition of his closing words, which is really impressive. Just before breathing his last, he is said to have collected all his strength for one hearty burst of laughter, and then to have cried out, 'Draw the curtain, the farce is over'" (Cochrane, 1843). Some have suggested that the following quatrain written by his contemporary Nostradamus[23] referred to Rabelais' death :

*The present together with the past*
*Judges by the great Jovialist*
*The world tires of him at last*
*Judged disloyal by the clergy*

Rabelais ends one of his chapters on *pantagruelion*, with the following poem:

*Arabians, Indians, Sabaeans,*
*[24]Sing not in Hymns and Io Paeans;*
*Your Incense, Myrrh, or Ebony:*
*Come, here, a nobler Plant to see;*
*And carry home, at any rate,*
*Some Seed, that you may propagate,*
*If in your Soil it takes, to Heaven*

*A thousand thousand Thanks be given;*
*And say with France, it goodly goes*
*Where the Pantagruelion grows.*

We can see here that Rabelais saw his cherished *Pantagruelion* as something that could serve to unify diverse nations and their people, and something that should be shared by all.

Francois Rabelais, I salute you my Brother, and dedicate this Book to your great and bold spirit. Rabelais had "more strength in his teeth and scent in his bum" (to borrow a saying he used), than any man in Europe at that time. "And if you desire to be good Pantagruelists, that is to say, to live in peace, joy, health, making yourselves always merry, never trust those men that always peep out through a little hole" (Rabelais).

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[1] A group associated with Dante.

[2] see (Zegura 2004)

[3] Dublin Journal of Medical Science, Volume 2, 1845.

[4] (Merigot, 1947).

[5] Thank you to Tom Hatsis for bringing this to my attention.

[6] From a quote in (Markale, 1995).

[7] Ibid.

[8] The following is an Orphic Hymn, to Dionysus' tutor Silenus (Taylor translation):

"Great nurse of Bacchus, to my pray'r incline, Silenus, honor'd by the pow'rs divine

And by mankind at the triennial feast illustrious dæmon, reverenc'd as the best:

Holy, august, the source of lawful rites, rejoicing pow'r, whom vigilance delights

With Sylvans dancing ever young and fair,

head of the Bacchic Nymphs, who ivy bear.

With all thy Satyrs on our incense shine, Dæmons wild form'd, and bless the rites divine;

Come, rouse to sacred Joy thy pupil kin, and Brumal Nymphs with rites Lenæan bring;

Our orgies shining thro' the night inspire, and bless triumphant pow'r the sacred choir."

[9] From a quote in (Merkur, 2014).

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Tope - to drink alcohol to excess, especially on a regular basis.

[14] (Relating to Zeus, father of the Greek gods, in his role as sender of all oracular voices).

[15] Interestingly, Liber Aleph, was written for a specific

individual, Charles Stansfeld Jones, also known as Frater Achad, and while writing this book, through a series of synchronistic events, I learned that he lived for 20 years, just a few doors down from the house I was raised in, 12 years before I was born, I actually met his widow as a child, and Crowley visited him there. The two also used hashish in a number, of rituals and recorded one of these the same year Liber Aleph was written, on April 20th, 1918!.

[16] As noted by the french Masonic Site ledfice.org: "During the descent into the temple of the Dive Bottle descending a staircase turning two and then three and four degrees, Panurge asks: 'Is it here?'

'How many degrees have you counted?' says the Noble Lantern.

'One, then two, then three and four!' answers Pantagruel.

'How much does it make.'

'Ten.'

'By the same pythagoretic tetrad multiply what the result' says the lantern.

'It's Ten, Twenty, Thirty, Forty.'

'How much does the whole thing'.

'Hundred.

-'Add the first cube, these are eight (23); at the end of this fatal number we shall find the door of the temple. And note that it is the true psychogony of Plato so celebrated by the academicians.'

Note that 100 plus the first cube, ie 8, gives the upper angle of the Delta of our Lodges. Nothing is trivial, I tell you!"

[17] (Likely a play on Thaumaturgy, formed from Greek words, thaûma, meaning "miracle" or "marvel" and érgon, meaning "work," usually used in reference to a magician or miracle worker).

[18] Third Sermon on Deuteronomy, (1555), as quoted in (Plattard, 1968).

[19] There was are later medieval European references to a tradition aimed at foretelling the height of the forthcoming hemp crop, by randomly selecting a King and Queen of the Bean. On the date of the Epiphany two beans would be inserted into a cake, and slices were given out randomly. The man and woman who received the beans would be made king and queen. "If the King were taller than the queen, then the male plant would be taller than the female (and the fibre would therefore be better)" (Abel, 1980). One could also loosely speculate on symbolism in the tale of Jack and Beanstalk as well, considering the potential shamanic analogies inherent in the tale of using a magic plant to reach otherworldly adventures, and the

Gargantuan sized giant of that tale, see (Bennett & Larsen, 2003).

[20] There are notable opinions that hold the last book, was written by a devotee of Rabelais earlier work.

[21] ["Others we have heard, on the instant that Atropos cut the thread of their lives, grieviously complain and lament that Pantagruel held them by the throat; but (alas) it was not at all Pantagruel, he was never an executioner; it was Pantagruelion, doing the duty of a halter and serving them as cravat."]

[22] "In Rabelais scholarship, there have been numerous reactions to the Pantagruélion episode, and while each critic advances his or her own slight interpretive variation, they all tend nevertheless towards two general conclusions. The first is that these chapters are dull. Greene 'confesses' that the detailed description of cannabis is here 'tiresomely catalogued'. In their article 'Rabelais, la Botanique et la Matière Médicale – le Pantagruélion' (1997), Claude Viel and Jack Vivier state that one... literally yawns with boredom... Rigolot is puzzled as to why Rabelais would even spend time on 'ce propos terne et laborieux,' given that Pliny has already accomplished more elegantly the same..." (Pelto, 2009).

[23] I have indicated elsewhere the possibility Nostradamus may have employed some sort of psychoactive substance for mirror scrying (see Chapter 11)

[24] Sabeans are a surviving Gnostic sect.

## CHAPTER 14

# *Freemasons, Alchemical Guilds and Secret Societies*

*For we are brethren of the Rosie Crosse;*
*We have the Mason Word and second sight,*
*Things for to come we can foretell aright.*

– Henry Adamson, *The Muses' Threnodie* (Perth, 1638).

The alleged connection of the Templar and Rabelais to secret societies and the various occult guilds that formed around alchemy, brings to mind the origins of groups like the Freemasons, Rosicrucians and other hidden sects, in relation to the occult use of drugs and other aspects we have been discussing.

As von Hammer-Purgstall explained in *Mysterium Baphometis Revelatum*, a document that would flavour the topic of secret societies evermore after its publication.

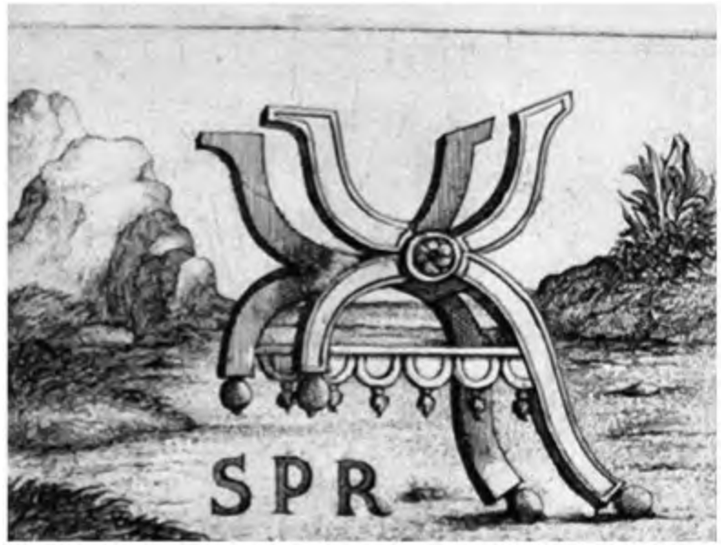
> We believe that "temple of wisdom" ... established in Cairo at the end of the eleventh century, to have been the very first Masonic Lodge to which histories attest.... There were various levels to it, through which the candidate was launched. Ultimately he was taught to believe nothing and that it is permissible to do anything. Apostles of this incredible sect were soon diffused through all of Asia. Everywhere they would seek and adopt followers. Thus this new, impious doctrine, under the name Ismailis, acquired very great fame, and with fame, power. From the number of these apostles, too, was the well-known Hassan Sabah, founder of the Assassins. He became the leader of this most famous order through sword and dagger. He resided in Persia in the citadel called Alamut, and ruled over two very large priories according to his own whim, one of them belonging to Chorassania, in the East, the other one, the western, in the mountains of Syria.... He was involved with the Templars in various interactions, both in peacetime and wartime, so that, at first defeated by the Assassins, they later became tributaries to him.
>
> The identity of the symbols of the Templars with those of the Freemasons having been demonstrated by evidence, and the rites of both... (von Hammer-Purgstal 1818).[1]

Although the overlaps and ties between the histories, rites and philosophies of Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry are too numerous to list, the general view of the Rosicrucian movement, alternatively, is that they formed as a sort of secret Alchemical guild in the 17th century.

> A number of Rosicrucian works were published in the early 17th century, such as the Fama Fraternitatis in 1614, and the Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosencreutz in 1616. Both works describe the

Rosicrucian Brotherhood and create a mythical history of the order, with the Chemical Wedding suggesting that Rosencreutz was a Red Cross knight, and the Fama describing the spiritual centre of the Rosicrucians, called the House of the Holy Spirit, and the discovery of Rosencreutz's tomb (Harrison, 2009).

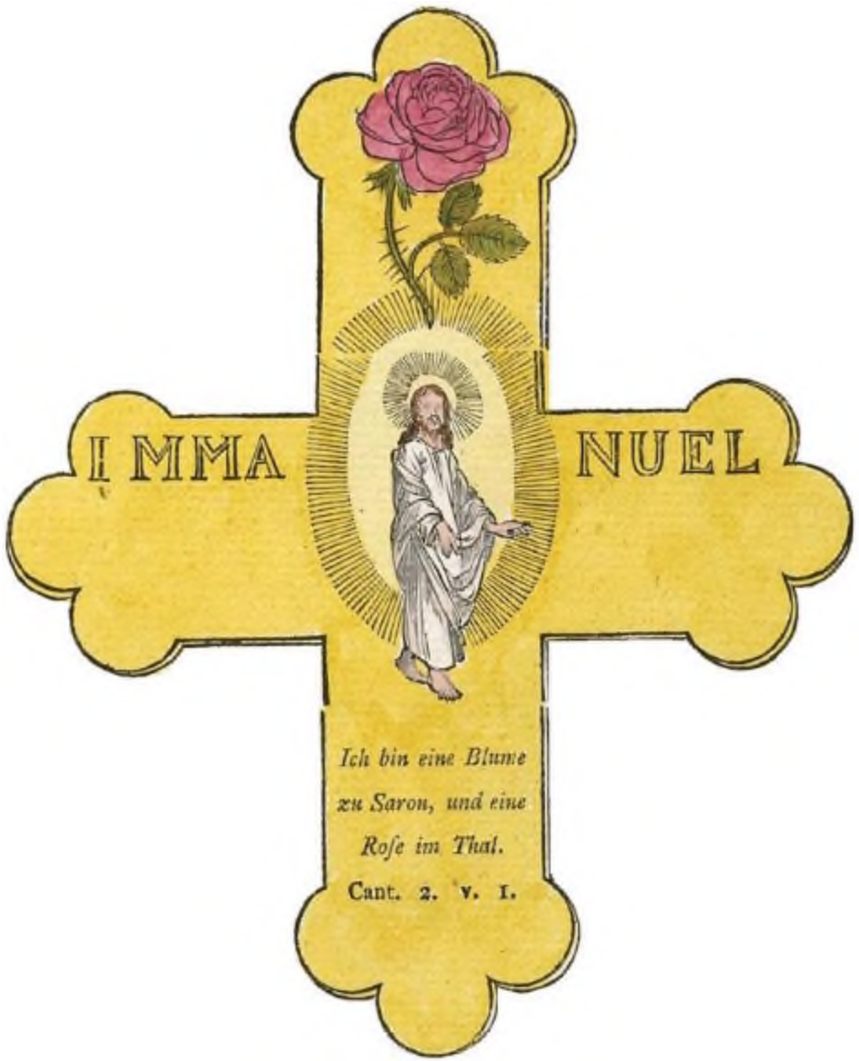
However, there is some indication that potential connections between the use of entheogens and alchemical guilds such as the Rosicrucians, is older than the 17th century date usually ascribed to its formation. Khunrath, the alchemist who was discussed in Chapter 12, was considered an influential Rosicrucian pioneer, and studied under Paracelsus; later he would deeply influence his English associate Dr. John Dee. It has been suggested that an image of a double cross, with a rose in the center of Paracelsus' small book of prophecies, *Prognosticatio Eximii Doctoris Paracelsi* (1530), is indicative of the activity of the Rosicrucians prior to the 17th century, via their well known symbolism of the combined rose and cross.




*Pre "Rosicrucian" depiction of the Rose Cross in Prognosticatio Eximii Doctoris Paracelsi (1530).*

In relation to the clear islamic influences on the Rosicrucians and figures like Paracelus, it is worth noting that the 11th-12th century Persian poet, Omar Khayyam, remembered for his friendship with the *Hashishin* leader Hassan I-Sabbah, used the symbolism of the rose for hashish, in a poem noted earlier: "I will therefore place this hashish in my cup of wine and thus I will strangle the serpent of my grief. / The drinker alone can understand the language of the rose and of the vine, and not the faint-hearted, and the cheap of wit. To those who have no knowledge of hidden things, ignorance is to be pardoned..."[2] Others have suggested the symbol of the rose was used around the same time in Portugal, at the Covenant the Order of Christ, which used to be home to

the Knights Templar, on a vault of an initiation room.




It has also been suggested of Agrippa, who as noted was an associate of Paracelus, that in "1508 he had joined a secret society that studied the 'hidden' nature from a Neoplatonist nature..." (Hatsis, 2015),[3] (The same sort of world view held in magical texts like *The Picatrix*, and pretty standard in Hermeticism.) The Father of Psychology, Carl Jung, also noted this connection. In his discussion of the term the "Mysterium" in alchemy, Jung saw evidence of some sort of secret alchemical guild. "Agrippa (*De incertitudine scientiarum*, ch. XC) mentions an alchemical initiation vow which may possibly refer to the existence of secret societies" (Jung, 1970):

> We are dealing with the term "Mysterium" in alchemy.
>
> The word, in its common use, usually refers to something like an organisation, a secret society, or cult, such as the Eleusinian Mysteries.
>
> Their secrets were jealously guarded, so well that, in the case of the Eleusinian Mysteries especially, we have no authentic information about them....
>
> In the course of my investigations, I came on an interesting passage in AGRIPPA VON NETTESHEIM's famous book: "De Incertitudine et Vanitate omnium Scientiarum et Artium" 1653. (On the uncertainty and vanity of all the sciences and arts.)
>
> ...Agrippa was exceedingly well read in the old philosophers and the writings of the Fathers, and he devotes a section of his book to alchemy.
>
> He says: "I could therefore say a great deal about this art (which is not so very hateful to me) if no vow of silence existed (those who are initiated into the

mysteries take this vow). Beyond this, this vow has been so constantly and religiously kept by the old philosophers and authors, that no philosopher of recognized authority and no reliable author has ever referred to it (the secret) with a single word."

You see he speaks of a vow of silence and says that no alchemistic author ever mentions the secret ... so his remark, that he could say a lot about alchemy and that he does not really hate it, means, in other words, that he was an admirer of the art.

...One can therefore conclude he means what he says, and that he was really hindered by a vow of silence."

...One of the reasons [for this vow of silence] can undoubtedly be found in the persecution of heretics.

...If they were afraid, they had good reason for their fear, and that alone must have forced them to be secretive.

...It is interesting, therefore, that the alchemists say themselves that they use a language intended to conceal; and (quite apart from the general fact that the mystery must be kept secret) they say the language which they use is mystical or symbolic (Jung, 1941).

Numbers of researchers and authors have suggested that the visionary art of the Dutch painter Hieronymus Bosch (1450s-1516) was due to influences from his association with certain secret heretical sects of the time, and the use of drugs. In *The Secret Heresy of Hieronymus Bosch* (1995), Lynda Harris suggests that Bosch was a member of a surviving branch of the Cathar Heresy, and took part in Manichean-style rituals that involved certain sacramental preparations. Alchemical connections to Bosch's work have been suggested by Laurinda S. Dixon, in *Bosch's St. Anthony Triptych: An Apothecary's Apotheosis* (1984) and Madeleine Bergman, in *Hieronymus Bosch and Alchemy: A Study on the St.Anthony Triptych* (1979).

As Nils Büttner has noted in *Hieronymus Bosch: Visions and Nightmares*, for better or worse, "Biographies of the artist ... have portrayed Bosch as ... a painter of heresy closely associated with secret sects. He has been identified with the heretical 'Brotherhood of the Free Spirit', whose mystical teachings provided him with motifs for his pictures. He has been seen as an Adamite, a Cathar, an astrologer, an alchemist ... and was said to have used 'magic potions' or psychedelic drugs" (Büttner, 2016).

The idea that Bosch can be associated with a secret society, such as The Brethren of the Free Spirit, and used drugs, can be traced back to the hypothesis of Wilhelm Fraenger (1890-1964), one of the world's foremost authorities on Bosch's work, who first made these claims in 1947, and continued to hold them until his death. Like the metaphorical "language of the birds" used to hide the

secrets of alchemy, Fraenger suggested that secrets were coded into Bosch's paintings. "...Bosch's metaphorical images are a system of hieroglyphs – half generally accepted representation, half a riddling game of hide-and-seek – that we can now recognize as a secret revelation" (Fraenger, 1952).

The Free Spirits allegedly practiced erotic rites and some have suggested the use of herbal potions and witches salves as well. Fraenger thought Bosh's visions particularly indicated use of a member from the nightshade family, specifically mandrake. "To have portrayed the narcotic effects of these nightshade plants so expertly, faithfully, and suggestively, Bosch must have had personal experience with them. The Dutch painter appears to have been a predecessor of Thomas De Quincey, Charles Baudelaire, and Edgar A. Poe, who deliberately used drugs to create illusionistic art" (Fraenger, 1994). This has become a not uncommon view among Bosch historians. Robert L. Delevoy's *Bosch: Biographical and Critical Study* (1960), makes a similar suggestion:

> There is no denying that the world Bosch shows us is a world of dreams. Can these strange visions have been due to drug-taking? Dare we assume that the painter resorted to some phantasmogenic drug so as to give free rein to his subconscious self and attain one of those "abysses of the psyche" to which Henri Michaux had access under the influence of mescaline? As it so happens, a recent discovery lends support to this theory. Professor Peuckert of Gottingen University unearthed the recipe for a stimulant named "witches' pomatum" in a 16th century book, made some, and tested it on several persons. All, after a deep sleep of twenty hours, had the same tale to tell; all had dreamed of flying, of orgies in the company of satanic creatures, of visits to the netherworld. To suggest that Bosch may have used similar means to attain a region of the personality normally inaccessible, is in no way to belittle the value of his work. Far from impairing the creative faculties, drugs can stimulate them. Rimbaud, Huxley, Artaud and Michaux in our own time testify to this (Delevoy, 1960).

This view has in no way been limited to art historians. The noted Professor Robert Fossier (1927-2012), who specialized in the middle ages, in reference to the availability of cannabis, opium and various other substances, pointed to Bosch's visionary art as evidence of such use. "The strange visions, psychedelic impressions, and cerebral troubles brought on by the consumption of such substances were beyond the powers of description of a user, but when he could hold a brush, the result was the fantastic visions of Hieronymous Bosch" (Fossier, 2010).

Others have suggested Bosch could have come into contact with drugs, even without any association with secret societies of the time, simply through the medicines of the era, such as opium, or witch ointment recipes, which were often also used medically. Mandrake particularly seems to have been used in the treatment of Saint Anthony's Fire (ergotism). In this regard, it is important to remember that ergot, although it is quite toxic, and can cause the loss of fingers, toes, noses, and even death, also has potent hallucinogenic effects similar to those of LSD. Ergot grows on rye, and in medieval times, ergotism was sometimes a deadly byproduct of rye bread. Thus some have said, Bosch's visions could have also come through ergot-infected rye bread.

This figure from Bosch's St. Anthony's Fire, has been suggested as a anthropomorphic representation of a mandrake root.

One of the most common treatments for St. Anthony's fire was in fact mandrake, and it was used in rather potent preparations as a remedy. Mandrake "root heals Saint Anthony's fire" (Culpeper, 1653). "The roots boiled with ivy and oil heal St. Anthony's fire" (Westcott, 1834). Mandrake wine was often used to alleviate the symptoms of St. Anthony's fire, as well as an anaesthetic to prepare patients who required amputations due to the gangrene caused by ergotism. In this case, hallucinations could have come both from ergotism and mandrake as well as various other drugs that might be used in the treatment of the malady, such as other nightshades and opium. The mandrake root became so desired in the middle ages, it became "the source of a thriving trade. The mandrake could be worth 2 to 3 times its weight in pure gold..." (Feller & Landa, 2010).

*This red berry has been seen as a coded depiction of the fruit of a mandrake.*

It has also been suggested that images of the mandragora were incorporated by Bosch into his famous painting of Saint Anthony, in the form of a giant red berry in the lower left of the main panel, which certainly does appear to be the ripened fruit of the mandrake. Across from this on the lower right side of the panel, a strange looking man, who seems to be part plant and is scaled, is said to represent the root of the mandrake (which sometimes does resembles a person). Unfortunately, scant biographical information remains on Bosch from his own period, and most of this speculation is based on his artwork, rather than any sort of written historical information or records.

In relation to psychoactive plants being incorporated in classic works of art, it is worth noting that Sandro Botticelli's (1445-1510), famous painting *Venus and Mars*, has been noted by Art historian David Bellingham and horticulturalists at Kew Gardens to contain a specimen of a nightshade species well known for its use in witchs' brews and ointments. As noted in the UK newspaper, *Telegraph*: "The lovers in one of the National Gallery's most famous paintings may be depicted experiencing the effects of a hallucinogenic drug, according to an art expert.... A plant being held by a mischievous-looking satyr in the bottom right corner of the painting has been recognized as a specimen of *Datura stramonium*, a plant which causes madness and the urge to take one's clothes off" (Collins, 2010). It should be noted that Botticelli was particularly devoted to the works of Dante, and illustrated and painted portions of his *Inferno*.

Masonic writers, who were also involved with Rosicrucian circles, such as Albert Pike, Rene Guénon and Manly P. Hall have suggested that *The Divine Comedy* (1321) by Dante Alighieri (1265-1331), expounded Rosicrucian philosophy and ideals. Others have suggested a strong influence from esoteric Islamic secret societies, and even further back, to ancient Zoroastrian influences, can be found in Dante's conception of *Paradiso* and *Inferno*, as described in his famous otherworldly journey.

Going back decades, a number of scholars, particularly Islamic ones, have suggested that Dante derived "his conception of the moral structure of Heaven and Hell from Muhammadan eschatology" (Gowen, 1924). As Gowen explained in his article "Dante and the Orient," Islamic influences may have reached Dante in a number of ways. Dante's mentor Brunetto Latini is known to have visited the Spanish kingdom of Alfonso X, at a time when Islamic influences were at a peak, and gave us *The Picatrix* and likely the Grail legends as well. However, "the writer from whom Dante may have derived the most ... is Ibn el'Arabi, a native of Spain who died in 1240..." (Gowen, 1924). As noted earlier, contemporary Islamic critics of Ibn el' Arabi criticized the "disorderly visions and ravings" on which he based his works and claimed they were "instilled in him by his addiction to hashish" (Knysh, 1999). Ibn el' Arabi died a quarter of a century before Dante was born and he "wrote an account of his journey through the other world and is even said to have left behind him drawings and charts of Hell and Paradise" (Gowen, 1924). Dante's favourable opinion of Islamic figures like Averroes and Avicenna can be seen with his placement of them in the milder limbo, alongside Socrates and Plato.

> The hadith literate of Islam contains so many parallels with passages in the Divina Comedia that it would be strange indeed had no knowledge filtered through from the one system to the other, especially if we bear in mind the many ways in which the

westward tide of Islam influenced other than religious literature in Spain, Provence and Italy (Gowen, 1924).

In this regard we are reminded of the alchemical influences we have already discussed. As Gowen notes in "Dante and the Orient" these *hadith* accounts that are being compared to Dante's tale, are all "based upon the one famous legend of the Night Ride of Muhammad to heaven ... and if we are willing to allow ... the influence of the Night Ride upon Dante, we must be prepared to go much farther and find our real Dantean sources in literature even more remote than that of Islam" (Gowen, 1924). This tale of the Night Ride is also retold in the *Dabistan*, which we discussed in Chapter 3 for its account of Muhammad's own preparation and use of cannabis as bhang. The shamanic event occurs for Muhammad, when he is "suspended between sleep and waking," which does indicate an altered state of consciousness. This state was induced by "three cups of water from the sacred well of Zemzem," which enabled him to ride the mythical "Seraph-beast Borak." This drinking of three cups is very reminiscent of what we have read in Zoroastrian accounts, where various figures drink a concoction infused with a potent cannabis extract, leaving their bodies comatose, but releasing their souls to travel. In Muhmmad's case, after a stop-over at a sacred temple, Muhammad rode Borak "up to the gates of Paradise and traversed the spheres, which correspond exactly to the Dantean heavens" (Gowen, 1924).

Noting the similarities to earlier Persian accounts, H.H. Gowen, suggested "borrowings from Zoroastrianism." As we have seen in Chapter 3, alongside such mythological borrowings from the earlier Persian mystics by later figures of esoteric Islam, was the use of cannabis for such purposes as those described. "Islam [also] became subsequently the channel through which were carried to the West many fruitful themes, possibly, even the story of Jamshid's cup to be the basis for the Holy Grail..." (Gowen, 1924). In regard to Dante's tale and Zoroastrianism, this can be seen in the "idea of the Bridge of Judgement, known in Zoroastrian as the Chinvad Pul, and the the Muhammadan as Al-Sirat..." (Gowen, 1924). Gowen saw "plain evidence of borrowing" of this imagery in one Zoroastrian document particularly. "the Pahalwu document known as the *Book of Arda Viraf*" and he felt this similarity to Dante'a account was so profound that the author might "fittingly be entitled 'the Pahlawi Dante'." We have already discussed this particular book for its account of the hero Arda Viraf's consumption of a potent cannabis elixir before setting out on his influential astral voyage in Chapters 2 and 3. As Gowen describes:

It is ... sufficient here to state the the Book of Arda

> Viraf considerably antedates the earliest literature of Islam. It opens with the lament of the sages over the scepticism of the land since the religion of the pious Zardusht has been destroyed by the "accursed Alexander of Rome." Then in order to revive the faith of men, it is suggested that a man be chosen who, divesting himself of his body, shall traverse the unseen world and bring back to men a true report as to Heaven and Hell. Out of forty thousand virtuous men Arda Viraf was chosen for this momentous embassy, and on a certain day was given a cup of "hallowed wine," or hashish, according to the prescribed method. Then he lay down on the couch where on his body was to repose ... while the freed spirit, under the guidance of the angel Srosh, journeyed the the Persian Paradiso and Inferno. On awakening, the sage related to the assembled Dasturs ... the adventures.... He had crossed the Bridge of Judgment hand in hand with the angel... (Gowen, 1924).

Gowen goes on to explain further profound similarities between this account and Dante's, and concludes that those who look into it will find that the "general resemblance of the scheme of Arda Viraf to that of the *Divinia Commedia* will be at once apparent, and as there can be no count that it was borrowed by Islam and accommodated to the legend of the night Ride, so there need be no doubt on the connection between the Persian and the Florentine work" (Gowen, 1924).

Dante has also been connected with both secret esoteric Islamic circles and the use of cannabis. "Recent research has shown that Sufi materials were sources of Dante's work. His Sufic affiliations must have been known to the alchemists of the time" (Shah, 1964). "Others have gone further and suggested that that Dante had knowledge of esoteric doctrines – perhaps those of the Knights Templar – which went back outside the particular doctrines of esoteric religion to a Gnostic source" (Cocking, 2005). "Claims of Dante's connections with the Templars first surfaced in the seventeenth century. They were investigated and defended especially by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82) "... Certainly the *Commedia* contains considerable symbolism connected with the Templars and the Temple ...[T]he Templars were exterminated in 1307-12 (about the time Dante was writing the *Inferno*) on grounds of heresy... secrecy and obscurity were necessary afterwards, since any defence of the Templars or their ideas could be interpreted as heresy" (MacLennan, 2001). "Many of the most obscure allegorical passages [in *Commedia*] receive their most coherent explanation when related to the crisis of the Templar order" (Anderson, 1980). Rudolf Steiner, Julius Evola, Gabriel Rossetti, and others, have suggested that Beatrice, in Dante's *Divine Comedy*, was in reality the Gnostic Goddess, Sophia,

whose worship had been picked up by the Knights Templar, in their sojourn in the East.[4]

More recently, rock star turned occult historian Gary Lachman has noted:

> There are clear links between the Templars and Dante. Dante uses the seal of the Templar Grandmaster, and eagle and a cross, as a symbol in The Divine Comedy. He also has especially vile places in hell set aside for [Templar enemies] Philip the Fair and Pope Clement V. Some like Rene Guénon have argued that Dante was a member of an auxiliary branch of the Templars, La Fede Santa ("The Sacred Faith"), an idea first presented by Gabriele Rossetti. Others have suggested that Brunetto Latini (1210-1294), Dante's teacher, was a Templar, or at least a member of La Fede Santa, and that he initiated Dante. The descriptions of hell in The Divine Comedy are supposed to be literal accounts of Dante's initiation experience in an underground cave. Perhaps most suggestive is the fact that Dante's last guide in Paradiso, who leads him to his mystical vision, is Bernard of Clairvaux, who gave the Templars his blessing and who wrote their rules. Dante is also said to have taken a mysterious journey to Paris while the immolation of Jacques de Molay (the Templar Grandmaster) took place (Lachman, 2015).

In relation to this study, and what has been suggested about the Templars esoteric use of hashish, and a continuation of such use through alchemy and other esoteric avenues, it is interesting to note that Dante can be included in such speculation as well. The respected Dante scholar, Barbara Reynolds, has suggested Dante may have been inspired by cannabis experimentation, beginning with a reference to a notorious Babylonian king who was known for eating "grass":

> As to his unworthiness ... he cites the example of Nebuchadnezzar, who was granted knowledge of divine truths by means of dreams, which he later could not recall – a somewhat puzzling example, since Nebuchadnezzar had periods of insanity, eating grass and believing himself to be an animal. Beside this may be set another strange example in the first canto of Paradiso, in which he compares himself to Glaucus, who through eating a herb was transformed into a sea-god, as he, Dante, was "transhumanized" on ascending into heaven...

*...like Glaucus, who a herb was said to taste*
*And so an ocean an ocean deity became.*
*Transhumanizing could not be expressed*
*In words, so let the example serve, the same*
*Who with the said experience was graced.*

> These two references to Nebuchadnezzar and to Glaucus, who both consumed herbs, may be oblique allusions to stimulants which produced effects comparable to what Dante claims to have experienced. He was familiar with the Latin version of the work of Dioscorides, the first-century Greek physician... ('the Good collector of simples'), as he calls him when he sees him in Limbo. Knowledge of herbs and medicinal potions was passed from country people and herb-gatherers to apothecaries, and herb gardens were a common feature of monasteries. From the early fourteenth-century manuscript Tractus de Herbis it is evident that the plant Canapa (Cannabis Sativa) was known and available. So to was Aloe vera, from which a substance called aloes was obtained and used medically. Another plant was called 'grains of Paradise'. If Dante partook of some such psychedelic substance, perhaps in the company of the Fedeli d'Amore, when they gathered to perform and discuss their poems, this might partly account for his (and their) experiences of heightened awareness, as described in La Vita Nouva... (Reynolds 2006).

As Reynolds explains, Dante stated he could not say more about the details of the invocation which led to the otherworldly flight, stating at the end of his oration, "Anxiety as to my domestic circumstances presses upon me so heavily that I am obliged to defer this and other tasks of public utility." Interestingly, the later high-ranking Freemason, Arturo Reghini, likely inspired by Dante's passages, also made reference to Glaucus magical herb in reference to cannabis. "...Hashish, the grass par excellence in Arabic... can make wonderful changes in the state of consciousness; it certainly has some affinity to the grass that made Glauco a God, the vivax gramen of which is Ovid" (Reghini, 1922). I say it's likely in this context, as Reghini wrote an essay on Dante and a group he was closely associated with "The Secret Language of the *Fedeli d'Amore*."[5] "The *Fedeli d'Amore* (The Faithful of Love) were a group of poets practicing an erotic spirituality, which can be seen as an application of chivalric ideas (including courtly love) to the regeneration of society" (MacLennan, 2001).

Reghini flowed with other researchers who held the view of Sufi, Templar and alchemical influences, on the *Fedeli d'Amore*, and pointed to their use of the sort of "green language" that was known to have been used by such groups. He also suggested that the lustful love poems of Dante and the *Fedeli d'Amore* were veiled hymns to the Goddess of Wisdom, using the names of various women to conceal her identity. It has been suggested that "the poetry of the *Fedeli* contains heresies, which were disguised to hide them from the Inquisition. Many terms can be interpreted in two or more ways, but it is not so clear whether this was deliberate secrecy or a symbolic language

automatically understandable to initiates. Certainly secrecy is advocated in the works of Dante and his contemporaries..." (MacLennan, 2001).

> There are many similarities of style and content between Sufi poetry and the poetry of the Fedeli, especially in their idealization of the Beloved as Holy Wisdom or Intelligence. This has led some of Valli's followers to propose that the Fedeli were a ... secret order of Sufi dervishes. However, there were many other sources for Islamic influence.... The Templars may have brought the Fedeli some of these ideas, as well as the tradition of Solomon's Temple as the dwelling place of Wisdom (Sapientia). Indeed, there may have been an alliance between the Fedeli and the Templars (MacLennan, 2001).

Again like the Templars, the *Fedeli d'Amore* are thought to have, in the occult view, embraced an erotic form of spirituality that ran counter to the asceticism preached by the church, this has also been claimed by some writers of both alchemy; and Rosicrucianism. As such, to avoid the inevitable suppression and persecution, all such groups were compelled to secrecy.

Jung noted that there was an "allusion to the flower which so often represented the mystery in the Middle Ages, in Dante's *Paradiso*." The noted 19th century American Freemason, Albert Pike, suggested that the *Divina Commedia* contained elements such as "initiation into independence of spirit, a satire on all contemporary institutions, and the allegorical formula of the great Secrets of the Society of the Roses-Croix" (Pike, 1871). As Pike noted Dante's "Heaven is composed of a series of Kabalistic circles, divided by a cross, like the Pantacle of Ezekiel. In the centre of this cross blooms a rose, and we see the symbol of the Adepts of the Rose-Croix for the first time publicly expounded and almost categorically explained." Pike indicated that the ritual of the 18th degree of the Scottish Rite, the "Knight, or Sovereign Prince of Rose Croix, of Heredon" was colored with imagery from the *Inferno*: "The third chamber represents Hell. All the punishments and tortures described by Dante are seen there, in the midst of fire, painted on a transparency that covers all the walls; besides which there is no light. On each side of the door, on the inside, is a human skeleton, holding an arrow in its right hand" (Pike, 1857). The reference to the "transparency" and other props can be explained by the effects of the phantasmagoria that crept into Masonry under Schröpfer and other later Masonic magicians, as will be discussed in Chapters 20 and 21.

The high ranking Freemason, Rosicrucian and convert to Islam Dr. Jean-Henri Probst-Biraben (1875-1957), also felt that this same symbolism may have indicated a formative Rosicrucian influence. "The rather frequent presence of the Rose in the Poem makes it possible to think of

proto-Rosicrucian allusions" (Probst-Biraben, 1935). Probst-Biraben also referred to what he saw as the Masonic symbolism present in Dante's work, in *Dante et le Symbolisme Maçonnique* (1929). As he explained in *Symbolisme Cohérent de Dante*:

> ...[T]he poem is not a simple imaginary journey in the three regions, of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, but a symbolic, graduated narrative of Initiation. It is not only that, The veiled teaching of the Metaphysics of the Old World is summarized in the Work, with allusions to applications: alchemical, astrological ones, for example. There are generally political interpretations, bitter criticisms direct or hidden under the mantle of allegory, of the historical events of medieval times in which Dante lived...
>
> ...It was believed that the expressions found in the Masonic rituals and in the Divine Comedy proved an identity of sources, that is, a literary derivation on the one hand, and ceremonial derivations on the other, Teachings and symbolisms which are their traditional language, stemming from esoteric fraternities of which the great Tuscan was a part....
>
> ...As there are 3 worlds hierarchized, 3 countries: Hell, Purgatory, Paradise, there are 3 groups of lodges: blue, red, black. Many details resemble those which characterize the successive stages of the Initiatory Societies, mark important points of instruction
>
> Let us not insist on Masonry, most of its rituals were composed in the eighteenth century by men fond of hermeticism, magical pythagorism, practical qabbalah. The books of alchemy, spagyric medicine, astrology, Hebrew angelicology, the commentaries of the clavicles, appeared in the libraries of the nobles and the rich bourgeois ... Masonry contains many things, which are residues of all kinds, perhaps even incomplete discipleship lessons of authentic Rosicrucians...
>
> ...If there is kinship, it is by the great identical doctrines, all of which, more or less, have possessed without interruption representatives, capable of playing leadership roles in all Societies and Fraternities, we shall not say Only initiatic, which would indicate a higher level, but initiations. Nothing important was done without formal transmission, in ritual and symbolic form. Each religion, or race, has given different shades, but the background is unique...
>
> ...The rather frequent presence of the Rose in the Poem makes it possible to think of proto-Rosicrucian allusions. It is admitted that the doctrines of the Rose + Croix are the development, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of teachings spread in Christian hermetic circles after the destruction of the

> Order of the Temple [Templars], probably harmonies of Near Eastern and Western Science and religion, transmitted symbolically (Probst-Biraben, 1935).

Clearly, Probst-Biraben sees in Dante the same type of veiled symbolism of esoteric secrets, and political and theological criticism, that was incorporated into Francois Rabelais *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. As we have seen, we can also bring Rabelais into the subject of secret societies, with his indications of a hidden group of *Pantagruelists*, (see Chapter 13) along with references to the Templars and others indications. Probst-Biraben also wrote a book on Rabelais, *Rabelais et les secrets du Pantagruel*, revealing some of the book's esoteric truths, and certainly saw a kinship with Dante's style and work, noting that Rabelais "warns us that he employs a Secret Language, The One of Dante Alighieri and of the Bohemian Troubadours" (Probst-Biraben, 1949). This of course is the Language of the Birds, the "*cant*" of the Alchemists, where allegory and symbolism hide deep esoteric truths.

> We will insist on the Symbolism from Tales of Giants, on the Hermetic they enclosed, which we cannot denied when Rabelais signals it Himself, and on the moral sense, and social equity, fraternal, all evangelical, which he withhold in the annunciation of an Ideal Republic, where the Kings will be the Fathers of their Subjects, where the Judges will be incorruptible, the Warriors Folks of Courage and Honour, the Academic Folks' Real Scholars, the Physicians Doctors; competent and devoted, etc. ... an Authentic City of God. Of All Times Dreamed by the Christians Hermeticists, whose realization was pursued by Them and likewise by the Fidéli d'Amore' (Faithfull of Love), the Templars, the Compagnons opératifs'/ Operating Companions, the Rose-Cross, the Spiritual Alchemists (Probst-Biraben, 1949).

As we have seen, Rabelais' influence on later occultists in general has been long lasting and widespread, and a part of this has included the use of *Pantagruelion*, i.e., hashish for mystical purposes. That cannabis and other drugs could have been part of these same historical esoteric streams which have been suggested here, going back through various secret societies, alchemists, Templars, and back into the Islamic counterparts of this, is clearly plausible. In *The Esoterism of Dante*, Guénon explained that in regards to the "history of esoteric doctrines ... several important manifestations of these doctrines coincided, within just a few years, with the destruction of the Order of the Temple [Templars]. There is an unquestionable connection between these events..." (Guénon, 1925/2005).

> In the early years of the fourteenth century, and doubtless already in the course of the preceding

> century, there was... in France as well as in Italy, a secret tradition ... the very one that later was to bear the name of Rosicrucianism. The denomination Fraternitas Rosae-Crucis appears for the first time in 1374, or ... 1413 ... [but] was perhaps fully formed only in the sixteenth century; but we have ... seen that the Rose-Cross Symbol is certainly much earlier (Guénon, 1925/2005).

The Rosicrucian movement, as noted earlier, was a secret society and alchemical guild, that was initiated in the 17th century. The publication and distribution of a number of mysterious anonymous pamphlets from the brotherhood, exclaimed the order's intent to transform European society, science and the arts. In their first manifesto, *Fama Fraternitatis Rosae Crucis* (1614) posted throughout Paris, they proclaimed that they were already established, albeit invisibly, and in their second they promised those who were worthy would find them, or be found. "The thoughts attached to the real desire of the seeker will lead us to him and him to us."

The *Fama Fraternitatis* reveals the story of the order's founder "Father C.R. (Christian Rosenkreuz) who, like the Templars before him, had traveled to Jerusalem and received the secret teachings of the alchemists and sages of the East, traveling through Arabia, Egypt, Fez and Spain, eventually bringing this knowledge to Germany. With its rich history, claims of esoteric knowledge and promise of instituting a new Golden Age, it became a magnetic attractor for some of the best and brightest minds of Europe of that day. Well-known Alchemical figures such as Michael Maier (1568-1622), Robert Fludd (1574-1637), Elias Ashmole (1617-1692), Gabriel Naudé (1600-1653), Thomas Vaughan (1621-1666) and others were drawn to the works of the order, and wrote in their celebration and defense.

In *The Real History of the Rosicrucians*, A.E. Waite writes that Robert Fludd, the English Rosicrucian, classified various forms of magic under headings, and these included: "Natural Magic ... that most occult and secret department of physics by which the mystical properties of natural substances are extracted" and "Venefic Magic [which] is familiar with potions, philtres, and with various preparations of poisons" (Waite, 1887).

Rosicrucian writing depict a spiritual form of alchemical practice, and the writings of figures associated with them like Khunrath, Michael Maier, and others give no indication of the worldly pursuit of gold-making. Any purification of matter indicated is similar to the sorts of multi stage initiations that go back to the time of the Gnostics and Mithraism, and are typical of the Hermetic planetary Kabbalistic type of magical initiations.


*A sacred alchemical tree depicted in the works of the Rosicrucian figure Michael Maier, from the Musaeum Hermeticum (1677). "Count Michael Maier [...] was an outstanding figure in the Rosicrucian controversy. There is little doubt that he was an initiated member of the Rosicrucian Fraternity, empowered by the Order to promulgate its secrets among the philosophic elect of Europe. [...] He was profuse in his use of emblems and the greater part of his philosophical lore is concealed in the engravings which illustrate his books" (Hall, 1928).*

Maier, and other Rosicrucians, give clear indication of the use of certain plants. In his *Septimana Philosophica* (1620), Maier refers to the magical herb moly of Greek myth. As Greek and Roman authors wrote of this herb: "The most renowned of plants is, according to Homer, the one that he thinks is called by the gods moly, assigning to Mercury its discovery and teaching of its power over the most potent sorceries" (Pliny, 1st century A.D.): "Hermes gave Odysseus moly – the most effective of magic drugs – but his companions, in their stupidity, were transformed by Circe from men into irrational animals" (Theocritus, 3rd century A.D.). Maier identifies his version of *moly* as a fragrant and clearly chemically active herb. "Long have I had in my nostrils the scent of the herb moly which became so celebrated thanks to the poets of old ... this herb is entirely chemical. It is said that Odysseus used it to protect himself against the poisons of Circe and the perilous singing of the Sirens. It is also related that Mercury himself found it and that it is an effective antidote to all poisons. It grows plentifully on Mount Cyllene in Arcadia..." (Maier, 1620). Other writers associate *moly* with alchemical tinctures and the Green Lion.

*I call it the Flower of Honey,*
*The Flower known to the Wise...*

*Homer knew it well, and called it Moly...*
*The gods also have bestowed it upon man*
*As a singularly great gift,*
*Designed to assuage and comfort him.*

*It is called the Red and Green Lion...*

- Certain Verses of an Unknown Writer,
Concerning the Great Work of the Tincture,
Benedictus Figulus, (1608).[6]

In an article in the 19th-century literary magazine *The Athenaeum*, in a discussion of the blissful state of "Keyf," they note that some of the early Rosicrucian documents indicate some sort of Eastern alchemical transformative medicine, under the name "Honey-dew pill":

> The one quest of every living creature is to arrive at a "profound state of perfect self-complacency," nothing more. But, as regards man at least, in order to do that without artificial means, the happiest and rarest conjunction of circumstances is necessary. The mind must be properly balanced; there must be a proper amount of healthy self esteem, but without the faintest tinge of egomania, and the body above all, the nervous system – must be perfectly attuned to every wave of surrounding conditions. This is what makes the Easterns abuse matter as they do; this is what makes the Syrian Gnostics exclaim so piteously, "Matter is darkness – matter is evil – and of matter is this body, and to become incarnate is to inherit sorrow and grievous pain." Then come all the countless conditions of life and society pressing upon the soul through this delicate net. The quest of self-complacency, therefore, is difficult, yet it is not an altogether hopeless one. There are two states in which the healthy man may find it – first, in action ; secondly, in " Keyf."

The "self-complacency" of action is Western. Every healthy Englishman knows it. "Keyf," though far from being foreign to the Western temperament, is in its essence Eastern. The word is Turkish. It means that delicious, indolent enjoyment by the senses of the movements of the outer life which a healthy Turk feels when rolled up in a ball in his divan; and which, in England, a truant schoolboy knows when, having tired him self with "bird-nesting," he lies on his back among the buttercups, and lazily tries to follow the lark among the summer clouds. The "complacency" of action is unknown to the Oriental; naturally, therefore, the summum bonum with him is "Keyf." Now "Keyf" can be artificially obtained by opium, hashish, and other drugs.

This is why he takes to them. This is why the benches outside the coffeehouses were full of "Theriakis, awaiting the blissful effects of the pills."

Between action and "Keyf" "self-complacency" at the best is only partial. Yet, most of us are content to accept the best we can get. Genius, however, never does and never can accept the best it can get. Its yearning for perfection is shown here as in all things. Hence its enormous activity – hence its enjoyment of "Keyf," – hence its despair at finding itself, as it so often does, in the Sahara that lies between these two Paradises; hence, alas! its sometimes mad and fatal quest of Les Paradis Artificiels. There is no rest for genius: it must work or perish.

It is more lamentable than wonderful, then, that in Europe sensitive natures especially fall victims to opium and hashish; it is more lamentable than wonderful that genius, having once tasted "respite and nepenthe," should long for a return of vanished sights – one as "eagerly" as the lost princess-beggar girl, in the Rosicrucian story, longed for a return of the wonders that had defiled before her in her "starving sleep" on the "Old Bridge," when – with the mystic "Honey-dew pill" in her mouth (given to her by Rozenkreuz's friend, "the well-beloved from Fez" of the Fratres Roris Cocti) – she tasted such sweets and saw such sights that she must, if the dew-pill was opium, have been a more successful opium-eater than Coleridge or De Quincey, or if it was hashish, a more successful hashish-eater than Beaudelaire or Monte Cristo. For, though starving at the time, she was – if we are to believe the original, of which the following is a translation...

*Eating fruits with angel-like feeder?,*
*In crimson caves, by the gorgeous sun;*
*Then eating wild honey by shadowing cedars*
*On holiest slopes of Lebanon;*
*And then with the sylphs, in azure spiceries*
*Perfumed from earth with the souls of the flower?;*
*Then eating with gnomes in dazzling iceries...*
*Halls 'neath the hills, and gem-woven bowers;*
*Then eating in Eden, where never a troubling*
*Shakes the tender-petalled soul,*
*By rivers with milk and honey a-bubbling...*
*Eating still, as on she did stroll*
*Through shining meadows – Heaven's savannahs...*
*Winds with music and amaranth spiced,*
*Drinking the Dews – eating the Mannas –*
*Eating the Brotherhood's Orient Mannas...*
*On pastures of Heaven whose Shepherd is Christ.*[7]

She may be taken, indeed, as a symbol of genius lost in the arid wastes of life...

(*The Athenaeum*, 1877).

The references to "mannas" in this context is reminiscent of the earlier alchemical references to manna that we have discussed, as well as references to those from "Overseas fed with manna and divine visions" in the alleged Templar document the "Secret Rule" that turned up, or was forged, in the 19th century.


*The Mirror of the Wisdom of the Rosy Cross* (1618), by Theophilus Schweighardt Constantiens, believed to be Daniel Mögling, has a similar fumigation tent to that depicted in Khunrath's work. This image is one of my own favorite alchemical depictions. We see the alchemist in the act of invocation in his fumigation tent, with an open grimoire and lamp to read it by, and the scientist-magician-al-chemist in prostration and invocation, with a smouldering brazier of incense nearby. With some green speculation and lose interpretation, certain symbolism can be seen. The hillside with its two caves can be seen to be a human skull, split into left and right brain, the right side lifting a cup from the creative waters, and the left analyzing, separating, measuring – and in between the two, the child of the marriage of the sun and the moon, the awakened pineal gland. But perhaps this is just the incense I have burning...

The *Speculum Sophicum Rhodostauroticum* does make some sort of veiled reference to a "weed," and in a way that is reminiscent of the "Language of the Birds" of the Sufi Alchemists,

> Follow me, imitate the birds as in my figure, fly in the free air, go gently. There is no peril in delay, but in haste. Let the dove fly from thine ark and seek out the land. If she bring thee an olive branch be sure that God has helped thee, and thou shouldst in turn help

> the poor. But if the dove stays away without a sign then go into thy herb garden and feed thyself meanwhile upon the lovely herb "patientia" (in so far as it has been planted in thy garden), but beware, as thou lovest thy soul, of the weed "desperation," for although Iulianus says: "He who is not ready today shall be less so tomorrow" which is to be applied to presumptuous heads who would break into wisdom against the laws of God and nature – may the thrown dice fall!

Other intriguing Rosicrucian references have been noted. Newman points to the works of the German alchemist and Rosicrucian, Samuel Richter, also known as Sigmund, and *Sincerus Renatus*, who was born at the end of the 17th century and passed some time after 1722. Richter's 1710 book, *Die warhaffte und vollkommene Bereitung des philosophischen Steins der Brüderschafft aus dem Orden des Gülden-und Rosen-Creutzes*, (The prepared and perfect preparation of the philosophical stone of the Brotherhood from the order of the Golden and Rosen Cross):

> The only herb that Richter mentions by name is one Helenam Vesperam, a plant that is completely unknown to us ... Helenam Vesperam is recommended medicinally ... for the treatment of a number of symptoms, including but not limited to aches and pains, insomnia, nausea, and bronchitis. For all practical purposes, Helenam Vesperam could very well be an allusion to Cannabis sativa, the same of which is sued to treat all of those symptoms.... Regarding the name of the perhaps fictional herb, Helen, daughter of Zeus, is credited in Homer's Odyssey with adding to wine a mysterious drug called nepenthe, which would "quiet all pain and strife and bring forgetfulness to every ill" (Newman, 2017).

The suggestion that the Nepenthe of Homer, originally a preparation of cannabis, was first suggested by Freemason Dr. Thomas Arnold in 1786. Since then, numerous researchers have concurred.[8]

The distinction between intoxicating Eastern varieties of cannabis, and the inactive European industrial varieties was first noted by a well known 17th century scientist, who clearly identified with the Rosicrucian movement of that day.

> The Latin name indica has been associated with psychoactive Cannabis since 1747, although the British polymath Robert Hooke earlier proposed "Indian hemp." The locative term indica links the plant with India, which European scholars considered its "natural" habitat. The name persists because in 1783 a french naturalist chose "indica" to name a new species, which he considered "very distinct" from

European hemp. The "principle virtue" of Cannabis Indica was "to derange the brain ... and give a sort of gaiety." "Cannabis indica" became a pharmacological term in the nineteenth century and current taxonomy of the psychoactive subspecies and domesticated variety (Duvall, 2014).

Hooke noted that "Indian hemp" was different from European hemp, based on the accounts of its effects from a sailor who had experimented with it in Sri Lanka. Hooke lamented that seeds from this "Indian hemp grown in England, failed to produce any effect and "hath lost its virtue."[9] This led to the understanding of how climate affected resin production.

Hooke provides us with the first direct references to cannabis' psychoactive properties that I could find from a figure associated with the Rosicrucians. We know of Hooke's interest in the Rosicrucians through surviving letters between him and the folklorist, antiquarian, archaeologist and occultist, John Aubrey (1626-1697). "In 1676 Hooke and Aubrey apparently thought of founding an alchemical society: 'July 14. with Mr. Aubery to whom I spoke of Rosicrucian club'" ('Espinasse, 1956). Apparently Aubrey was thought to have some connections to this secret society. A Dr. George Garden wrote Aubrey noting indications of Rosicrucian knowledge in his book of "hermetick philosophie... let me know if there be anie person in England that goes under that name..."[10] Although a number of Aubrey's work were published posthumously, the only works that were printed during his own lifetime were occult related. His Miscellanies (1696; reprinted with additions in 1721), were a collection of chapters on "hermetick philosophy" that included tracts on "Prophesies," "Transportation in the Air," "Converse with Angels and Spirits," "Second-Sighted Persons," etc.

An interest in psychoactive substances and the magical documents of Dr. John Dee were also subjects the two friends shared. In a memorandum to a reference to hemp used in English Folk magic (Chapter 17) Aubrey shows his awareness of its effects, comparing them to other drugs, and noting where such substances could be purchased. "Green Hemp-leaves will make one to be in the same condition with Dotroa [Datura?].So Opium; and Lachissa [Hashish] which is made of green Hempe. From Mr. Wylde Clarke, merchant and Factor at Sancto Crux in Barbarie."[11]

Hooke was one of the most respected minds of his day, an architect, scientist and philosopher, he is credited with measuring London, and remembered for his pioneering work with microscopes and pendulum clocks. However, some historians have suggested that he may have been overlooked for some of his greatest achievements. His Rosicrucian co-conspirator John Aubrey, in a letter to the antiquarian Anthony Wood, may give some indication of

the depth of this situation.

> ...About nine or ten years ago, Mr. Hooke wrote to Mr. Isaac Newton of Trinity College, Cambridge, to make a demonstration of this theory (of gravity), not telling him, at first, the proportion of the gravity to the distance, nor what was the curved line that was thereby made. Mr. Newton, in his answer to this letter, did express that he had not known of it; and in his first attempt about it, he calculated the curve by supposing the attraction to be the same at all distances: upon which, Mr Hooke sent, in his next letter, the whole of his hypothesis, that is, that the gravitation was reciprocal to the square of the distance ... which is the whole celestial theory, concerning which Mr. Newton has a demonstration, not at all owning he received the first intimation of it from Mr. Hooke. Likewise Mr. Newton has in the same book printed some other theories and experiments of Mr. Hooke's, as that about the oval figure of the earth and sea: without acknowledging from whom he had them...
>
> Mr. Wood! This is the greatest discovery in nature that ever was since the world's creation. It never was so much as hinted by any man before. I know you will do him right. I hope you may read his hand. I wish he had written plainer and afforded a little more paper.
>
> Yours,
>
> J. Aubrey[12]

Apparently this issue was cause for a bitter feud between Isaac Netwon and Hooke, and it has been suggested that when Newton became head of the Royal Society after Hooke's death, he had the latter's portrait removed. Hooke had been the curator of experiments of the Royal Society, a member of its council, and this removal of a portrait seems to be part of a pattern to take away the man's legacy. The Royal Society itself is of interest, as it has long been noted that it started out as just a sort of Rosicrucian club. Hooke, Aubrey and others had been discussing an *Invisible College*. References to an invisible college began appearing in German Rosicrucian pamphlets in the early part of the 17th century. This historical influence is even recognized by the modern-day Royal Society on their website "The origins of the Royal Society lie in an invisible college of natural philosophers who began meeting in the mid-1640s to discuss the new philosophy of promoting knowledge of the natural world through observation and experiment, which we now call science."


*Illustration from Speculum sophicum Rhodo-stauroticum, (1618) depicting a Rosicrucian College. Frances Yates refers to this image as the "Invisible College of the Rosy Cross."*

Many of the Royal Society's founding members were practising alchemists, Freemasons, and also likely secret Rosicrucians. This was also a time where scientists might find themselves on the pyre of fire beside the heretics, so we can be sure there was a need for secrecy. We know from historical letters that one of the original founders, Robert Boyle, a noted Freemason, had written numbers of people about his interest in opening an Invisible College, a subject detailed by Frances Yates in *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment.* In one 1647 letter, Boyle certainly deems the Royal Society as the Invisible College: "The best on't is, that the cornerstone of the *invisible* or (as they term themselves) the Philosophical College, do now and then honour me with their company ... men of so capacious and searching spirits, that school-philosophy is but the lowest region of their knowledge; and yet, though ambitious to lead the way.... [T]hey take the whole body of mankind to their care."[13] As John Aubrey noted, "In 1662 Mr Robert Boyle recommended Mr. Robert Hooke to be Curator of the experiments of the Royal Society, wherein he did an admirable good work to the commonwealth of learning in recommending the fittest person in the world to them."[14]

Indicating the organization's interest in cannabis, Hooke gave two lectures on the effects of the herb to the fellows of the Royal Society, at the end of 1689 and in the beginning of 1670.

**An Account of the plant called Bangue**

> It is a certain plant which grows very common in India, and the Vertues or Quality thereof, are there very well known; and the Use thereof (tho' the Effects are very strange, and, at first hearing, frightful enough) is very general and frequent; and the Person,

from whom I receiv'd it, hath made very many Trials of it, on himself, with very good Effect. 'Tis call'd, by the Moors, Gange; by the Chingalese Comsa; and by the Portugals, Bangue. The Dose of it is about as much as may fill a common Tobacco-Pipe, the Leaves and Seeds being dried first, and pretty finely powdered. This Powder being chewed and swallowed, or washed down, by a small Cup of Water, doth, in a short Time, quite take away the Memory and Understanding; so that the Patient understands not, nor remembereth any Thing that he seeth, heareth, or doth, in that Extasie, but becomes, as it were, a mere Natural, being unable to speak a Word of Sense; yet is he very merry, and laughs, and sings, and speaks Words without Coherence, not knowing what he saith or doth; yet is he not giddy, or drunk, but walks and dances and sheweth many odd Tricks; after a little Time he falls asleep, and sleepeth very soundly and quietly; and when he wakes he finds himself mightily refresh'd, and exceeding hungry. And that which troubled his Stomach, or Head, before he took it, is perfectly carried off without leaving any ill Symptom, as Giddiness, Pain in the Head or Stomach, or Defect of Memory of any Thing (besides of what happened) during the Time of its Operation. And he assures me, that he hath often taken it, when he has found himself out of Order, either by drinking bad Water, or eating some Things which had not agreed with him. He saith, moreover, that 'tis commonly made Use of, by the Heathen Priests, or rambling Mendicant Heathen Friars, who will many of the meet together, and every of them dose themselves with this Medicine, and then ramble several Ways, talking they know not what, pretending after that , they were inspired. The Plant is so like Hemp, in all its Parts, both Seed, Leaves, Stalk, and Flower that it may be said to be only Indian Hemp. Here are divers of the Seeds, which I intent to try this Spring, to see if the Plant can be here produced, and to examine, if it can be raised, whether it will have the same Vertues. Several Trials have been lately made with some of this, which I here produce, but it hath lost its Vertue, producing none of the Effects beforementioned...

...this I have here produced, is so well known and experimented by Thousands; and the Person that brought it has so often experimented it himself that there is no Cause of Fear, tho' possibly there may be Laughter. It may therefore, if it can be produced, possibly prove as considerable a Medicine in Drugs, as any that is brought from the Indies; and may possibly be of considerable use for Lunaticks, or for other Distempers of the Head and Stomach, for that it seemeth to put a Man into a Dream, whilst yet he

> seems to be awake, but at last ends in profound Sleep, which rectifies all; whereas Lunaticks are much in the same Estate, but cannot obtain that, which should, and in all Probablity would, cure them, and that is a profound and quiet Sleep (Hooke, 1689).

From Hooke's description, there are unnamed others who were experimenting with the substance at the time, in the "thousands." This is no small number and, considering who Hooke's friends and colleagues were, and indication of who was using it in this time and place. As he was a close friend of Elias Ashmole, a Freemason, Rosicrucian and fellow member of the Royal Society, who will be noted in Chapter 15, was known to have been familiar with the drug-infused magic of Grimoires like *The Picatrix*, and *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salmomonis*, it only seems to likely that Hooke would have known of this occult use as well. Hooke also wrote about opium in relation to "Narcotic Steams," noting that it can cause sleep and in too large a dose death. Hooke is said to have "kept himself going with liberal doses of cannabis and poppy water (laudanum)" lamenting in a diary note in the midst of a bout of insomnia, "took Dr. Goddard's syrupe of poppy, slept not" (Jardine, 2003). Besides the use of drugs, Hooke may have held some sort of occult concept of sex, and kept track of his orgasms, using the symbol of Pisces in his diaries to identify when he had sex with one of his servants.

Hooke, who like many of the fellows of the Royal Society, actively pursued an interest in alchemy, also had a soft spot for the earlier magician and scientist Dr. John Dee, and had "tried to rescue his reputation by arguing that the Spiritual Diaries [records of his scrying] were a 'concealed history of art and nature' relating to contemporary events" (Yates, 1972). Hooke gave a lecture at the Royal Society on mirror scrying, that mentioned Dee, Trithemius and others. This was an interest that other members of the Royal Society apparently shared:

> ...It is evident from Hooke's references to the "many Discourses" he overheard among friends at the Royal Society that the angel conversations were a popular topic there. In a lecture given to the Royal society on the subject, Hooke referred scathingly to the angel conversations as "Dr. Dee's Delusion," though he considered Dee to have been "an extraordinary Man, both for Learning, Ingenuity and Industry."... he agreed the documents were a valuable weapon against atheists, "Enthusiasts, who altogether depend upon new Revelations," and those unfortunate enough to seek witches, conjurers, and astrologers. Nevertheless, Hook like Dee ... found something of interest in the diaries. he believed the conversations

should not be accepted at face value, but were a form of cryptography – one of Hooke's own passions – which hid valuable information the Dee had gathered for Queen Elizabeth (Harkness, 1999).

In Hooke's view the bulk of Dee's magical writings were cryptographic, as he explained in his lecture to the Royal Society on Dee's *Book of Spirits*:

> To come to the Book itself. Upon turning it over and comparing several Particulars, it one with another, and with the writings of the said Dr. Dee, and considering also the History of the Life, Actions and Estate of the said Author, so far as I can be informed, I do conceive that the greatest part of the said Book, especially the Names, Speeches, Shews (Shows or Signs), Noises, Clothing, Actions and the Prayers and Doxologies et cetera are all CRYPTOGRAPHY, and that some parts of that which seems to be a Journal of his VOYAGE and Travels into several parts of Germany are also Cryptographical. That is, that under those feigned stories, which he there seems to relate as matters of fact, he hath concealed Relations of quite a different thing.

In this regard, it is also important to remember the political intrigue that followed many of these magicians and the secret societies they associated with. However, Dee was also clearly a practicing magician, and his tool of choice was the magic Mirror, and this particular art had a clear association with cannabis and other herbs in this period, and is referred to in a number of magical grimoires, as we shall see in the next chapter.

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[1] As Translated in Tyman, 2017).

[2] (McCarthy, 1889).

[3] Citing (Nauert, 1965).

[4] Albert Pike, Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, (1872); René Guénon, El Esoterismo de Dante, (1925); Manly Palmer Hall, The Secret Teachings of All Ages: The Fraternity of The Rose Cross, (1928).

[5] Reghini's essay on the Dante and the Fedeli d'Amore originally appeared in Julius Evola's Introduzione alla magia (1927-1929: English translation, 1971). Evola, as we noted, wrote on the mystical use of drugs, and belonged to the Ur Group, which used such substances in alchemical styled initiations.

[6] Translated by (Waite, 1893).

[7] Unfortunately I was unable to identify which of the early Rosicrucian texts was referred to here, for further examination.

[8] See (Bennett, 2010). As the Nepenthe was infused in wine, it is important to note that ancient Amphorae, clay wine vessels from an Egyptian site, from the time period in

question, revealed evidence of cannabis. In the 2004 paper, Pollen analysis of the contents of excavated vessels – direct archaeobotanical evidence of beverages, Manfred Rosch refers to vessels collected from a site in Saruma/ Al-Kom Al-Ahmar in Middle Egypt on the Nile: "At this place the Institute of Egyptology of the University of Tubingen is excavating a graveyard which was used from the 6th Dynasty until the Roman period.... Here some wine amphorae were excavated, from the bottom of which we obtained samples of organic material for pollen analytical investigations.... The useful plants, Cerealia and Humulus/Cannabis were present" (Rosch, 2004). However these may just be evidence of pollen fragments that made their way through the wine making process, rather than a direct infusion.

[9] As quoted in (Duvall, 2014). The British Naturalist and Physician Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1753) also noted a distinction between Bangue and European Hemp, recommending a emulsion of it for gonorrhoea as well as noting its "narcotic virtue" (Garidel, 1715).

[10] From a quote in (Hunter, 2001).

[11] Reprinted in (Buchana-Brown, 1972).

[12] "Robert Hooke as a Precursor of Netwon," (Jourdain, 1913).

[13] From a quote in (Yates, 1972).

[14] Aubrey's Brief Lives, (1983).

## CHAPTER 15

# *The Sepher Raziel, Cannabis, Mirror Magic and Crystal Gazing*

Mirrors, and other objects with reflective surfaces, have been important magical tools since ancient times. As we also saw with the Goblet of Jam, that provided both an intoxicating beverage and a reflective pool in which to see visions, we can be sure that drugs in this form of divination have been paired together from early times as well. Interestingly, this combination also appeared in at least two popular renaissance era grimoires, and this traditional pairing can be followed in literature, well into the early 20th century.

In reference to what we have already stated about ancient and medieval use of topical preparations of cannabis and other drugs for magical and religious purposes, one of the most interesting references occurs in the 16th-century grimoire, *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, where it is used for seeing spirits and devils in a magic mirror. Often "referred to as "Sepher Raziel," and also known as "Liber Salomonis," this grimoire has seven known surviving versions in manuscript form. It should be noted that *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* is also referred to under its library catalog names Sloane MS 3846 and Sloane MS 3826 were particularly looked at for this study, and these catalog names are used to distinguish it from a variety of similarly named grimoires. *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* was transcribed in 1564, by a William Parry of London at the bequest of one John Gwyne. It is seen as a "Christian product, though one which borrowed from Jewish, Arabic, and Græco-Roman scholastic and folk sources" (Karr, 2007).

This magical text was written in the Solomonic tradition, which also brought us the still-popular *The Keys of Solomon*, and both texts, which come from the same period, have been attributed to the ancient Hebrew king, in an attempt to give them more authority. Even in the ancient world, Solomon was highly regarded for his knowledge of magic, as we have seen in the 1-3rd century, *The Testament of Solomon*, and its account of the king forcing a demon to spin hemp. As well, Solomon's "legend figures into late traditions of Freemasons. Rumours which suggest the wise king left secret books of magic seem never to have died – nor have slumbered – since ancient times" (Karr, 2013). And indeed, we shall find a number of well-known Freemasons were in possession of this grimoire. As the *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* records, "I Salomon put such a knowledge & such a distinction, & explanation in this booke to evry man that readeth or studieth it, that he know whereof he was and from whence he came" (Sepher Raziel, 1564).

> Most sixteenth-century manuscripts of magic remain unedited and unpublished, perhaps because the

> majority of them ... are dominated by liturgical conjuration. This is a style of magic that has attracted less academic attention than Solomonic magic and Renaissance theurgy, perhaps because it is perceived as a hangover of the medieval period. However, liturgical demon conjuring is every bit as typical of early modern magic. Copiers of Solomonic magical texts like the Sepher Raziel sought to return to purified form of conjuration drawn from Kabbalistic Jewish traditions supposedly passed down from Solomon himself, at a time when Renaissance humanists were interested in recovering the Kabbalistic tradition (Foreman, 2015).

In regard to Solomonic magic, and the role of the Kabbalah, there may have been some survival of the ancient cannabis use that was suggested in Chapter 2, among later Jewish Kabbalists and Alchemists. The Kabbalah is a system of mysticism considered by many to be the secret teachings of the Jews, and holds a number of parallels with the Jewish and Christian Gnostic sects of the 1st-4th century A.D., as well as with the sort of astral magic contained in the *Ghayat AlHakim* and *The Picatrix*, which also survives in Hebrew translations, some taken directly from the original Arabic.

Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan has noted of early Kabbalistic schools who used magic and other means of communion for mystic exploration, that "some practices include the use of 'grasses,' which were possibly psychedelic drugs" (Kaplan, 1982). As mentioned earlier, Kaplan's *The Living Torah* includes cannabis as a possible candidate for the Hebrew *kaneh bosem*, "due to cognate pronunciation" (Kaplan, 1981). The Kabbalistic text the Zohar records:

> "There is no grass or herb that grows in which G-d's wisdom is not greatly manifested and which cannot exert great influence in heaven" and "If men but knew the wisdom of all the Holy One, blessed be He, has planted in the earth, and the power of all that is to be found in the world, they would proclaim the power of their L-rd in His great wisdom" (Zohar.2,80B).

Prof. Benny Shannon, who has speculated about ancient Jewish use of psychoactive substances, felt somewhat vindicated when he was directed to the works of the medieval Kabbalist and scholar Rabbi Jacob Ben Asher (*Rabbeinu Be'cha'yei ben Asher*),(1255-1340). "Rabbeinu Be'cha'yei writes that the purest of foods were created at the very beginning of Creation in order to allow for the attainment of higher knowledge. He explicitly relates this to the biblical tree of knowledge, and comments further that such higher knowledge can also be gained through the use of drugs and medicines available at his time. In addition he notes that the Manna had such qualities as well" (Shannon, 2008). Clearly cannabis and its various preparations,

along with opium and other psychoactives, were well-known for mystical properties at Ben Asher's time.

In his *De Occulta Philosophia* (1651) Agrippa refers to how "Rabbi Israel made certain cakes, writ upon with certain divine and angelicall names, and so consecrated, which they that did eat with faith, hope, and charitie [charity], did presently break forth with a spirit of prophecie [prophecy]. We read in the same place that Rabbi Johena the son of Jochahad, did after that manner enlighten a certain rude countryman, called Eleazar, being altogether illiterate, that being compassed about with a sudden brightness, did unexpectedly preach such high mysteries of the Law to an assembly of wise men, that he did even astonish all that were neer him" (Agrippa, 1651); a description that indicates more than sigils on cakes were in use, although the ingredients of said cakes are not included.

Like the Zoroastrian royalty and priesthood, as well as the Levites, there are indications that early Kabbalists enjoyed the use of the herb, but prevented its consumption by the common people. In the *P'sachim*, "Rav Yehudah says it is good to eat... the essence of hemp seed in Babylonian broth; but it is not lawful to mention this in the presence of an illiterate man, because he might derive a benefit from the knowledge not meant for him. – *Nedarim*, fol. 49, col. 1" (Harris, et al., 2004). Other sources have noted a Kabbalistic comparison to the effects of cannabis with divine perception, noting an "intriguing reference to cannabis in the context of a fleeting knowledge of God: *Zohar Hadash, Bereshit*, 16a (*Midrash ha-Ne'elam*)" (Matt, 1983).

As we saw in Chapters 1-3, use of cannabis-infused wines goes back to ancient times in the Mid-East. References from Zosimos to cannabis infused wines, who was heavily influenced by Jewish sources in his writing on alchemy, (see Chapter 10) in the 3-4th century, as well as the saffron and cannabis resin combination used in wine referred to by Rabbi Immanuel Löw in the 2nd century [(Sabb. 14. 3 ed. Urbach; Löw, 1924)], indicate Jewish use in this context. This use continued into the medieval period and such infusions of cannabis and other substances were in use in Quintessences and other forms by Jewish alchemists and mystics, as we have seen in Chapter 11 and elsewhere. As we shall see, it seems likely there was also an awareness of unguents and incenses prepared from cannabis thoughout this same period.

This brings us into the era of Merkavah Mysticism, (100-1000 A.D.), which is centered on the sort of visionary experience had by the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel who, as we saw earlier, came to his experience through eating a "scroll." Aaron Leitch believes Merkavah Mysticism held a strong influence over the later western magical tradition. "The Merkavah's use of ritual drugs, its focus upon talismans and seals, the summoning forth of Angelic gatekeepers, and the gaining of mystical visions are elements

that run throughout the grimoiric spells" (Leitch, 2005).

That cannabis might have played a role in such forms of Jewish mysticism, is indicated by references to it well into the late medieval period. in Another interesting reference can be found with Rabbi Berel Wein, who has written and lectured extensively on Jewish history, and has connected the use of hashish with the Kabbalistic-inspired Jewish messianic movement of the 17th century. Wein refers to the Morrocan Jew, Joseph ben Zur, who was popularly identified with the prophesied messianic figure Messiah ben Joseph, a claim that was propped up by Rabbi Elisha Ashkenazi and thousands of Jews in Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia believed this and followed Joseph ben Zur as a result. According to Wein:

> Joseph ben Zur was probably mentally unstable. At the very least, though, he was guilty of a very prevalent habit in the Middle East: smoking hashish. Now, smoking hashish in the 17th century was not seen in the same negative light as the modern world views it. Nevertheless, Joseph ben Zur was both slightly touched and usually high, which together is a lethal combination. He claimed he saw a vision when an angel came to him and said that he was the Messiah ben Joseph... (Wein, 2013).

This scenario of scrying under the influence of cannabis fits with both the suggestion of cannabis in the Kabbalistic writing referred to, as well as the confirmed use of cannabis for scrying in the Kabbalistic-inspired *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, which was composed in this same time period,.

As the occult writer A.E Waite explained of *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*: "It is an English translation of a Latin original... and purports to have been sent to Solomon by a prince of Babylon, who was greater and more worshipful than all men of his time.... The Latin title of the the treatise is said to be *Angelus Magnus Secreti Creatoris*; it was the first book after Adam, was written in the language of Chaldea and afterwards translated into Hebrew" (Waite, 1911). (There are no known surviving copies of the Latin original referred to.) Stephen Skinner, in a recently published translation of *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis,* suggests the roots "were probably a Hebrew original, filtered though a Latin intermediary, to the present Middle English version" (Karr & Skinner, 2013).

Julia Cresswell, who has written extensively on British myth and magic, suggests "that although the manuscript may be sixteenth century, some of the language is rather old-fashioned for that date, except perhaps for an old person writing in the early sixteenth century. I would guess that the text is a reworking of an earlier one, pushing the origin of the material back into the Middle Ages" (Cresswell, 2006). Occult writer Damon Lycourinos agrees with this, suggesting *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*

is "derived from thirteenth century Latin sources" (Lycourinos, 2012).

This brings us closer to the date of the first Latin translations of the influential Jewish Kabbalistic magical book, *Sepher Raziel ha-Melakh*, with which *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* is often confused because of the similar names ( the shortened "*Sepher Raziel*" is used for both). The history of the two are hard to separate, sharing a number of thematic commonalities besides names, and it seems obvious the later English grimoire was somewhat based on the earlier Jewish versions and its Latin translations. The *Sepher Raziel ha-Melakh* was translated under the orders of the 13th-century Spanish King Alfonso, who had a keen interest in magical and alchemical documents, and he was also responsible for translating the Arabic book of black magic, *The Ghayat AlHakim,* into Spanish and Latin, becoming *The Picatrix*. Because of these similarities *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* is often placed with similar documents that represent "abridged vernacular copies of the Alfonsine Liber Razielis" (Page, 2012). However, despite having in "common ... the name source of angelic inspiration, and a few short passages [1]... [they] represent two different 'Raziel' traditions" (Kar & Skinner, 2013).

The text itself tells us that prior to this, it had been passed down through the hands of figures like Adam and Solomon, and it reveals the ultimate author as the Angel Raziel. A number of other medieval magical texts claim this authorship as well, and this seems to have been a way of describing a document that was in part scryed or channelled. "The most explicit transmission of Jewish magical material into the Christian Latin tradition of magic was the translation of works associated with the name – Raziel an angel present in Jewish angelology and Arabic astrological texts who was said to have revealed a book of secrets to Adam" (Page, 2012). The name Raziel itself means "secrets of God," and this is a fitting title for the Promethean transmitter of secrets that the figure represents in the magical tradition.

The Judeo-Christian mystic origins are obvious, as *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* is clearly reminiscent of the planetary accession-based magic of Gnosticism, Merkavah and the Kabbalah. "The text is divided into seven sections, covering different topics including the use of astrology, incense, timings, purity, and the seven heavens and their angels. As can be seen from the sevenfold emphasis, this is another essentially planetary grimoire" (Lycourinos, 2012).

The area of interest in relation to this study lies in the second book, which details the virtues of stones, herbs and beasts. Plants play an important role in the magic of *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*. For as the grimoire explains, it was by Adam and Eve's sin of eating the forbidden fruit that they were expelled from Eden and the company of God. The Angel Raziel, feeling empathy for lost humanity, in a sense played the role of Prometheus,

and shares the secret knowledge of plants so that the descendants of the first couple might be restored to their former place of Glory. As the Grimoire records of this:

> "Know thou that in herbs is vertue of the most that may be.... Know thou that among herbs there be some with which thou may do good & euill. As to heale & make sicke. And so understand thou in these that shall be said furthermore. And Adam said by a tree came wretchednes into the world that is by the tree I sinned in it. And Raziel said, An herbe shall be thy life. And Salomon said, A tree shall be & shall wexe of which the leaues shall not fall. And it shall be medicyne of men" (Sepher Raziel, 1564).

Apparently cannabis was held in high regard in the search for knowledge. In the *Sepher Raziel*, cannabis is combined with artemisia, also known as wormwood, a key ingredient in the famous 19th-century liqueur of the poets, absinthe. Wormwood contains thujone, a psychoactive chemical, that attaches itself to the same receptor sites in the brain that THC, the active chemical of cannabis, does. As the *Sepher Raziel* instructs of the use of these combined plants for magical invocation:

> The third herbe is Canabus [cannabis] & it is long in shafte & clothes be made of it. The vertue of the Juse [juice] of it is to anoynt thee with it & with the juse of arthemesy & ordyne thee before a mirrour of stele [steel] & clepe thou spiritts & thou shallt see them & thou shalt haue might of binding & of loosing deuills [devils] & other things" (Sepher Raziel, 1564).

There are two acts of magic being combined here, *katapharmakeuo* which means "to dose (or anoint) with drugs" and *katoptromanteria*, "divination by means of mirrors."[2]

In regards to *katoptromanteria*, also referred to as *captromany,* it has long been known that trance states "could be induced by gazing at polished or shiny surfaces illuminated by lamps, through a kind of self-hypnosis" (Luck, 2006). "Mirrors ... [have] long been part of shamanic paraphernalia. As a receptacle of for souls, the mirror often served as a means for entering the trance state" (Flaherty, 1992). This of course is the magic "mirror, mirror on the wall" that survives in fairy tales. "All ancient civilizations had such things (crystals, pools of water or ink, silver or glass mirrors) and the magical literature abounds in directions for their manufacture and use" (Deveney, 1997). Rabelais shows his familiarity with the practice by magicians of his time, and alludes to its use dating back to the Roman period, "Captromancy is held in such account by the emperor Didius Julianus" (Book 3). "The art of using mirrors in divination and prediction of individual destiny (named catoptromantia) is found in the Dionysian

testimonies.... A very large number of Greek and Roman vases show Bacchantes[3] or Satyrs dancing in trance while gazing into a portable mirror" (Caputo, 2013).

In regard to the Renaissance situation, and noting descriptions of magic mirrors in the works of Shakespeare and elsewhere, Whitby notes that there "is no shortage in literature of references to scrying with mirrors ... but first-hand accounts of the practice are rare, since it could and did lead to trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities" (Whitby, 2012). Whitby describes a number of legal cases against crystal and mirrors scryers, making it clear why this was mostly a secret practice. The Bard referred to magic mirrors in *Macbeth*, as well as *Measure for Measure*; "Takes note of what is done, and like a Prophet Lookes in a glasse that shewes what future euile Either now, or by remissenesse."

In *Archetypal-Imaging and Mirror-Gazing*, Giovanni B. Caputo gives us some insights into the long-standing use of magical mirrors:

> Mirrors have been studied by cognitive psychology in order to understand self-recognition, self-identity, and self-consciousness. Moreover, the relevance of mirrors in spirituality, magic and arts may also suggest that mirrors can be symbols of unconscious contents. Carl G. Jung investigated mirrors in relation to the unconscious, particularly in Psychology and Alchemy.... Recently, empirical research found that gazing at one's own face in the mirror for a few minutes, at a low illumination level, produces the perception of bodily dysmorphic illusions of strange-faces. Healthy observers usually describe huge distortions of their own faces, monstrous beings, prototypical faces, faces of relatives and deceased, and faces of animals. In the psychiatric population, some schizophrenics show a dramatic increase of strange-face illusions. They can also describe the perception of multiple-others that fill the mirror surface surrounding their strange-face. Schizophrenics are usually convinced that strange-face illusions are truly real and identify themselves with strange-face illusions.... Strange-face illusions may be the psychodynamic projection of the subject's unconscious archetypal contents into the mirror image. Therefore, strange-face illusions might provide both an ecological setting and an experimental technique for "imaging of the unconscious."
>
> .... the mirror in itself may create altered states of consciousness and trance when the mirror is displayed at a low illumination or when the subject has assumed drugs or alcohol (Caputo, 2013).


*Burning Incense before a magic mirror, 19th-century engraving by Caroline Augustus Feilding.*

Although Caputo unfortunately does not expand on the use of drugs with mirrors, the subject in itself is a fascinating area of study. When *katapharmakeuo* collides with *katoptromanteria*, sparks definitely fly. I myself can attest to the intensity of what Caputo refers to as "strange-face illusions" from the combination of a variety of psychoactive substances and mirrors, and I have talked to many other psychonauts who have commented on this same effect. Historically, the use of cannabis in conjunction with magic mirrors seems to have been particularly pervasive. Prof. Georg Luck noted that it was also sometimes burnt for these same purposes. "Hallucinogenic mixtures known in Byzantine times included frankincense with ground hemp leaves (hashish). Smoke from this mixture apparently helped a medium to see images in a mirror. This is a form of captromancy" (Luck, 2006). Skinner has suggested that *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, "may owe some of its contents to Byzantine Greek" (Karr & Skinner, 2013), so perhaps there is a connection here in regard to magic mirrors and cannabis.

The *Sepher Raziel* seems to indicate that Adam himself may have used this method of invocation and divination: "he [i.e. Adam] spake with deuills & with dead men & of them counsail he enquired & they sufficiently to him answerd" (*Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, 1564). This is particularly interesting in relation to a surviving reference on an ancient Assyrian tablet from the Louvre collection that records a topical preparation of "hellebore, cannabis and lupine," that was rubbed on "So that god of man and man should be in good rapport," (Russo 2005) and more especially so, in relation to what has been suggested about the Hebrew use of *Kaneh Bosm*, in the Holy Anointing Oil, and its similar use for scrying in smoke. Although the surfaces of smoke and mirrors are different, the method itself is identical; in the case of a darkened mirror, the vague

outlines and movements reflected, sufficed as a similar means to the billowing movement of smoke, in which shapes and movement were given meaning by the stimulated imagination of the diviner.

Tolka Scrolls notes of the importance of the combination of mirrors and cannabis in the magical tradition in his *Visible & Physical Manifestation of Spirits*:

> ...[T]he Sepher Raziel ... states that you can ordain yourself with the juice of Cannabis and Arthemesy, before a steel mirror, and that it will give you the power to see spirits and other abilities, but the point is that the mirror is legitimate in the grimoire tradition as it is mentioned in one of the source texts of later works. Now the use of drugs here which should never be followed without checking local laws and indeed health risks (some highly poisonous things are suggested) are common in that grimoire. A grimoire that is amusingly one of the oldest with reference of non-physical appearance of spirits" (Scrolls, 2012).

The popularity of magic mirrors in the 16th and 17th centuries caused the debunker Andreas Libavius (1555-1616) to lament there was no lack of those who pretended to "construct from the motion of the stars and from the constellation magic mirrors, gems, globes and many similar devices for exploring the future." As we shall see, the combination of drugs and scrying mirrors was also a popular method, and it has persisted into the modern era.

However, it should be noted that Don Karr and the prolific occult writer Dr. Steven Skinner, who is also a practising magician, barely comment on the actual chemistry or effects of the herbs listed in *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, and no comment is made in regards to the sCrying ointment. Indeed, in his commentary Karr is actually critical of Aaron Leitch's suggestion of drugs in Jewish *merkavah* magic, without mentioning the references in the very book of Jewish-based magic he was writing in. This lack of acknowledgement is made even more curious by the fact that in *Techniques of High Magic* (1976) Skinner and co-author Francis King list the following Astral projection ointment popularized in the 1890's (some occultists decided to step through the looking glass!): Lanolin – 5 ounces; Hashish – 1 ounce; Hemp flowers – 1 handful; Poppy flowers – 1 handful; Hallebore – 1/2 handful, (Skinner & King, 1976). So it is not likely he was unaware of their use in later magic.

Skinner seems to disregard the role of psychoactive substances in magic altogether, even in regards to fumigation, which he suggests was really based on good and bad smells. Spirits, "are sensitive to certain things, and one of those is smell, so every magical ritual has the burning of incense. MacGregor Mathers thought it was so that you could manifest the spirit in the incense, other people so it could cloud the mind of the operator. In fact it

manifests an atmosphere the spirit can manifest into, if the smells are nice. At the end of the ritual you reverse it and you burn something that is very unpleasant, and this helps send the spirit back from whence it came" (Skinner, 2017). Skinner goes on to say that even mild body odor can dissuade a spirit from appearing! This is interesting, and shows how the role of drugs in magic and history, has given way to what is indeed much more "magical thinking." We see this same sort of disregard for the established historical role drugs played in witchcraft, in both books on witches and with modern practitioners of neo-witchcraft. As with *The Picatrix*, most commentators of *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* are usually more concerned with the topics of astrology and spell castings, and little attention is payed to what substances are used, and what effects they might have.

We know that this method of divination was particularly popular at the time, as a very similar recipe, along with large portions of *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomins*, was repeated in another important grimoire that was composed more than a decade later, the *Book of magic, with instructions for invoking spirits, etc.* (ca. 1577-1583), renamed *The Book of Oberon*, which will be discussed in Chapter 17 for its relationship to Fairy magic. We will refer to it as "*The Book of Magic* (*BoO*)" – *The Book of Oberon*, from here forward.

The *Book of Magic* (*BoO*) represents a catalogue of spells, invocations, summonings, and herbal recipes that was gradually collected by unknown compilers and represents the type of manuscript that was owned by working magicians of the period. Besides excerpts from *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, excerpts from other magical texts such as *Heptameron, Enchiridion, The Offices of Spirits*, and *The Key of Solomon*, can also be found in this beautifully illustrated manuscript. References to a Friar Bacon in the text have also led to suggestions that this is a reference to 13th-century Friar Roger Bacon, know as Doctor Mirabilis, and remembered for his interests in science, alchemy and magic, with detractors accusing him of using "nigromantic charms" and "the enchanting forces of the devil." *The Famous History of Fryer Bacon* (1627), describes a glass of "excellent nature, that any man might behold any thing that he desired to see within the compass of fifty miles round about him" (Browne, 1627). "*Francis Picus* [(1469-1533)] says, that he read 'in a book wrote by Bacon, that a man might fortel things to come by means of the mirror *Almuchesi*, composed according to the rules of perspectives; provided he made use of it under a good constellation and first brought his body into an even and temperate state by chymistry'" (Barrett, 1801).

Cannabis appears in a list of "Notable good herbes," in the *Book of Magic* (*BoO*), which was obviously repeated by a copyist from *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, although with a notable variation of the recipe. "Anoint thee with the

Joice of Canabus & the Joice of Archangell & before a mirrour of steele call spirits, & thoue shalt see them & have power to binde & to loose them." The "arthemesy" of *Sepher Raziel*, is replaced with "Archangell" in *The Book of Magic* (*BoB*). Suggestions for the identity of the herb referred to as "archangel" include "white nettle" and "mugwort," however, I am more inclined myself to suggest Angel's Trumpet, i.e. *brugmansia*, also known as *Devil's Breath*, or possibly *datura*, which was also referred to by this name. Both of these candidates are extremely psychoactive, even when applied topically, and this recipe would give us something closer to the classical "witches ointment" than the less powerful, but still psychoactive "arthemesy" i.e. wormwood, of the earlier *Sepher Raziel*. We can be sure this difference in ingredients is intentional as "Athemesia" i.e. "artemesia" appears elsewhere in *The Book of Magic*. Other potent psychoactive plants have been identified in the recipes of *The Book of Magic* (*BoO*), such as henbane, mandrake and the black poppy.

As Whitby has commented, we "may therefore presume that there was an established method of scrying and an established ritual of invocation. Such instructions were probably circulated in manuscript along with other magical works" (Whitby, 2012). As cannabis and other psychoactive substances are identified in popular grimoires from the period, particularly for use with mirror scrying and invocations, this leads us to a new understanding of the actual secret practices of magicians from the era, and we can be sure this often included the use of psychoactive substances.

The archetypical magician of the medieval age, Dr. Faust, (whom some say was a real historical figure), for instance, is shown both drinking magic elixirs and also using the magic mirror. As well, in Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus*, fumigation is indicated in the "Bad Angel's" command: "now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist, Into the entrails of yon lab'ring clouds, That, when you vomit forth into the air, My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths, So that my soul may but ascend to heaven" (Marlowe, 1592).

*Woodcut of Faust within a magic circle invoking a demon. The story of his pact with the Devil, and the Magician's*

*eventual collection to hell, has served as a dire warning for all who pursued magic from the late medieval period, down to the modern era.*

Faust drinks the Magic Potion

Faust and the Magic Mirror

Frederick Dannaway suggested that this reference from *Dr. Faustus*, along with medieval, renaissance and later recipes that included drugs, "suggest a psychoactive agent in the various arts of libanomancy and skrying" (Dannaway, 2009). Indeed, as we shall see, other medieval and renaissance figures who may have used this method can reasonably be put forth. With Dannaway, we can speculate that perhaps "the secret flames of the *philosophi per igne* of the medieval ages were sprinkled with psychoactive

powders that produced magic visions. The examples of possible psychoactive incenses in witchcraft, alchemy and European paganism are legion" (Dannaway, 2009).

It has long been suggested that Nostradamus predicted the future with a Magic Mirror, or alternatively by gazing into a bowl of water (*hydromancy*). Nostradamus begins his series of 942 Quatrains with verses that could well indicate some sort of fumigant, as well as magical rites, being used to induce a prophetic state:

*Sitting alone at night in secret study;*
*it is placed on the brass tripod.*
*A slight flame comes out of the emptiness and makes*
*successful that which should not be believed in vain.*

*The wand in the hand is placed in the middle of the tripod's legs.*
*With water he sprinkles both the hem of his garment and his foot.*
*A voice, fear: he trembles in his robes.*
*Divine splendor; the God sits nearby.*[4]

Nostradamus also referred to the "secrets that are revealed by the subtle spirit of fire"which could indicate something being burnt. We know from his surviving writings that, besides being a seer, Nostradamus also held an advanced knowledge of herbalism. In reference to psychoactive plants, and medieval use, it has been suggested that the "prophetic apothecary Nostradamus exemplifies the alternative tradition that is the heir to traditions marginalized by the Christian Church. His visions may [have] been induced by some of these herbal incenses" (Dannaway, 2009). As noted elsewhere, "Nostradamus used various forms of meditation to induce his ecstatic trances and visions. These methods included the mildly hallucinatory powers of nutmeg..." (Gossop, 2016).[5]

In relation to the planetary-based magic of the *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, it is worth noting that "Paracelsus ... describes the construction of magic mirrors through the fusion of seven metals [representing the 7 planets] in order to establish a connection between macrocosm and microcosm" (Caputo, 2013). Paracelsus left instructions for their construction and use, but did not advise on the use of narcotics for this purpose, such as the opium he was known to have prized (at least, that I am aware of). But in his description of their manufacture, he made it clear that not all was being said, lest the secrets may fall into the hands of the unworthy and ignorant. In reference to how they might be used Paracelsus stated "you may see the events of the past and the present, absent friends or enemies and see what they are doing.... You may see in it anything that has ever been written down, said or spoken ... you may see in it anything, however secret it may have been kept" (Hartmann 1891). Paracelsus' use of narcotics for both magical and medical purposes, however, is well indicated

as we have seen, along with his likely familiarity with *The Picatrix*.

*Marie de Medici studying a magic mirror showing a glimpse of her future. Nostradamus in magic circle at right. (Engraving, 1900) .*

The Sloane MS 3846 version of *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* came "bound up with a number of other extracts from writers like Cornelius Agrippa..."(Karr & Skinner, 2013). Agrippa, who like Paracelsus, shows a familiarity with psychoactive plants and their preparations, included instructions for magic mirrors in *De Occulta Philosophia*. As with the invocation of ghosts into the mirror of *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, "Agrippa was rumoured to possess a magic mirror in which he could divine future events, and he also dabbled in necromancy, believing he could conjure up the spirits of the dead" (Drury, 2012). "Agrippa consulted a magic mirror in which 'the dead seemed alive,' as one witness asserted" (Pendergrast, 2009). Prof. Georg Luck suggested that the "effects of frankincense" which is now thought to be mildly psychoactive, "were... known to Agrippa... [H]is *De Occulta Philosophia* (1510; repr., 1533) describes a system of mirrors that allows the practitioner to project images of daemons or spirits into a column of smoke from incense. As the smoke changes shape, the spirits appear to move" (Luck, 2006) – techniques that would later be mastered by Phantasmagorists like Schröpfer and Eckartshausen, as discussed in Chapter 20.

In Book 3 of his *De Occulta Philosophia*, in a chapter about the use of potions and other means to induce "phrensie" as in a prophetic trance, he refers to the use of fumigations with a form of a magic mirror that was reflected on an angle off of the water of a sacred fountain:

> There was also a propheticall fountain of Father Achaia, constituted before the temple of Ceres, where they that did enquire of the event of the sick did let down a glass by degrees tied to a small cord, to the top of the water, and certain supplications and fumes being made, the event of the thing did appear in the glass (Agrippa, 1533).

Another variation of the cannabis magic mirror recipe appears in C.J. Thompson's *Mysteries and Secrets and Magic*, (1927). Formulas that he claimed were taken from a renaissance grimoire that contained ancient magic.

> Take canabis viz. hemp, artemesia and stand thee before a steele glass and through God's help to see and bind loose spirits, but if ye anoint ye glass with juice of artemesia it is better.
>
> A steele glass well polished and must be anonynted with the juice.
>
> To cause apparitions to be visible to ye sight you must take, artemesia, hemp, flax, cardamoms, anise, camphire, coriander, hyperico,. aloes wood, apia mortegon [chicory] (Thompson, 1927).

The author of this grimoire adds that this last preparation is "A marvellous effacious fumigation to cause a man to see visions on the air and elsewhere."[6] Some interesting differences in this grimoire's references in regards to mirror scrying and those of *Sepher Raziel*, and *The Book of Magic* (*BoO*), are that the cannabis is "taken" in an unspecified manner, and the only anointing is done on the actual mirrors. The anointing of the mirror here is interesting in relation to the Mirror Narcotique, of Cahagnet and other 19th-century figures who were experimenting with mirrors and drugs, along with discs, rings and other items that were infused and magnetized with cannabis and other substances.

Like *Sepher Raziel:Liber Salmonis*, the grimoire Thompson held refers to the construction of a magical ring. Whereas Sepher Razaiel gave instructions for a "Gold Ring" dedicated to the Sun, Thompson's grimoire offers instructions in the same style for a lead ring, dedicated to Saturn, to be used for receiving oracles, and mentions cannabis in its construction, as noted in Chapter 12. Elsewhere Thompson does have a recipe for a topical preparation of cannabis:

> "Of perfumes," says a writer of the sixteenth century: "A perfume made of hempseede and of the seeds of fleawort, violett roots, and parsley ... maketh to see things to come and is available for prophesie" (Thompson, 1927).

Likely, as in other ancient references, "hempseede" included the chaff around the seed, which contain the psychoactive resins of cannabis, otherwise it would have no psychoactive effect and signifies a source of "contagious magic," i.e. the powers of cannabis experienced in more powerful formulas, was seen as a spiritual force in the plant, that could be summoned and used in other ways, including magnetizing objects, as in the rings, discs, and mirrors discussed above.

Grimoires like *The Picatrix* and *Sepher Raziel* could often be found together which, considering their similar styles

of planetary magic and conjurations, is not really that surprising. Skinner refers to the magus Richard Napier (1607-1676) who was the owner of a manuscript copy of *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salmonis*, and also had a copy of *The Picatrix*, which he in turn had inherited from the Astrologer and alchemist Simon Forman (Karr & Skinner, 2013). We can be sure Napier, and others who got to view them, saw these texts as instruction manuals, and did not collect them as mere novelties. "Richard Napier, a former pupil of Simon Forman, was a practitioner of crystallomancy..." (Whitby, 2012).

Napier's Copy of *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salmonis*, is likely the one that ended up in the hands of the 17th-century alchemist and Freemason, Elias Ashmole. The version, Sloane MS 3846, contains a hand written note from Ashmole, with a comment accompanying a red wax seal from a magic ring, listing the magical names engraved on the ring. It is also worth noting that there was a handwritten note from Ashmole left in a copy of *The Picatrix*, (Sloane 3679), identifying it as a gift from Napier to the astrologer William Lilly, whose placement of cannabis under the planet Saturn was noted. Lilly refers favorably to mirror scrying in his autobiography[7] and associates its powers with the Queen of Fairies, who appears in *The Book of Magic* (*BoO*). Knowing whose hands *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salmonis* is known to have passed through, gives us an idea of "who was familiar with, read, and may have practiced, the magical methods outlined in *Sepher Raziel*" (Karr & Skinner, 2013). Interestingly, Ashmole is also remembered for preserving the works of Dr. John Dee, another magician known for his use of magic mirrors.

**Did**

## *Dee and Kelley use drugs for scrying?*

The Elizabethian mathematician, scientist, astrologer, astute businessman and magician Dr. John Dee (1527-1609), "had a famous 'mirror' by which he claimed to contact all manner of angels and dead spirits" (Dyer, 2010). Dee had a variety of magic mirrors and crystals a particular favorite was a flat obsidian stone that is on display at the British Museum, and his scribe John Kelly "did all his feats upon The Devil's Looking-glass, a stone..." ( Butler, 1663). Zachary Grey commented on this verse, "This Kelly was chief seer ... to Dr. Dee ... and bred an apothecary, and was a good proficient in chemistry, and pretended to have the grand elixir (or philosopher's stone).... He pretended to see apparitions in a chrystal or beryl looking-glass (or a round stone like a chrystal)" ( Grey, 1806). The Sloane MS 3846 copy of *Sepher Raziel*, has been noted for its composition in handwriting similar to that of Dr. Dee's scryer Edward Kelly, ( Karr & Skinner, 2013).

In Dee's own accounts of his invocations, or "Actions" as he referred to them, there are numbers of references to smoke, indicating the possibility of some sort of fumigation, as well as references to the use of potions and ointments. "These Actions are the records of visions and angels and other spirits and the message delivered by them as seen and heard by the scryers [often Edward Kelley] with the aid of a crystal ball, and then immediately related to Dee, who though present saw and heard nothing" (Whitby, 2012). In Dee's record of these Actions, we read how "smoke filled the place" and an invoked entity states, "I smell the smoke: procede Syr, in your purpose"and these could indicate sufumigation. Other references indicate some sort of elixir in use that clearly put a person into a drowsy state: "taste of this potion yay the savour onely of the vessel worketh most extremely agaynst the maymed drowsines of ignorance. Yf the hand be heavy, how weight and ponderous shall the whole world be? What will Ye?" (Dee/Peterson, 2003).

In one account from *John Dee's Actions With Spirits*, (1581-1583) there is a lament about the lack of drugs for an operation, and the use of ointments in their place: "I haue forgotten all my drvggs [drugs] behind me. But since I know that some of you are well stored with sufficient oyntments, I do entend to viset you onely with theyr help. you see, all my boxes are empty? – EK [Edward Kelley] he sheweth a great bundell of empty poticharie [apothecary] boxes." This brings a response from the figure invoked "How cometh it, that you pretend to come for a favorable diuine powre and all your boxes ar empty" (Whitby, 2012). The exchange over the lack of drugs also indicates that drugs were not an unusual part of these scrying sessions, as Kelley says he "forgot" them, as if he usually had them. As Kelley had a reputation as a bit of a con-man and swindler, one wonders whether the concern about lack of

drugs was the spirit's or Kelley's! In this regard, it should also be noted that the angel's scryed by Kelley, also commanded that he and Dee share not only possessions in common, but also their wives! And these orders were apparently followed for at least one tryst.

This is not to suggest that all of Dee's workings with Kelley were based purely on acts of fraud perpetuated by the latter on the former. It seems likely "that Kelley both genuinely went into a trance like state and consciously fabricated visions and revelations to maintain his credibility in the eyes of Dee" (Whitby, 2012). Even if we are to discount the actual invocation of angelic entities, along with the assumption of actual trickery, it is "arguable that many of the visions may have arisen from Kelley's subconscious, perhaps after concentration in the crystal (he frequently saw nothing for the first fifteen minutes) had induced in him some mild state of trance" (Whitby, 2012). The actions and effectiveness of drugs in this respect cannot be downplayed, nor the delay of time before the visions, or rather drugs, kicked in. A manuscript from Ashmole, (MS. 204, art. 18) is a "List of drugs probably written by Dee"(French, 2013). Unfortunately, this manuscript does not seems to have been reprinted anywhere, and although a photographed reproduction of the actual ms. is available online I was unable to make sense of Dee's handwriting, so I could not consult its contents.[8]

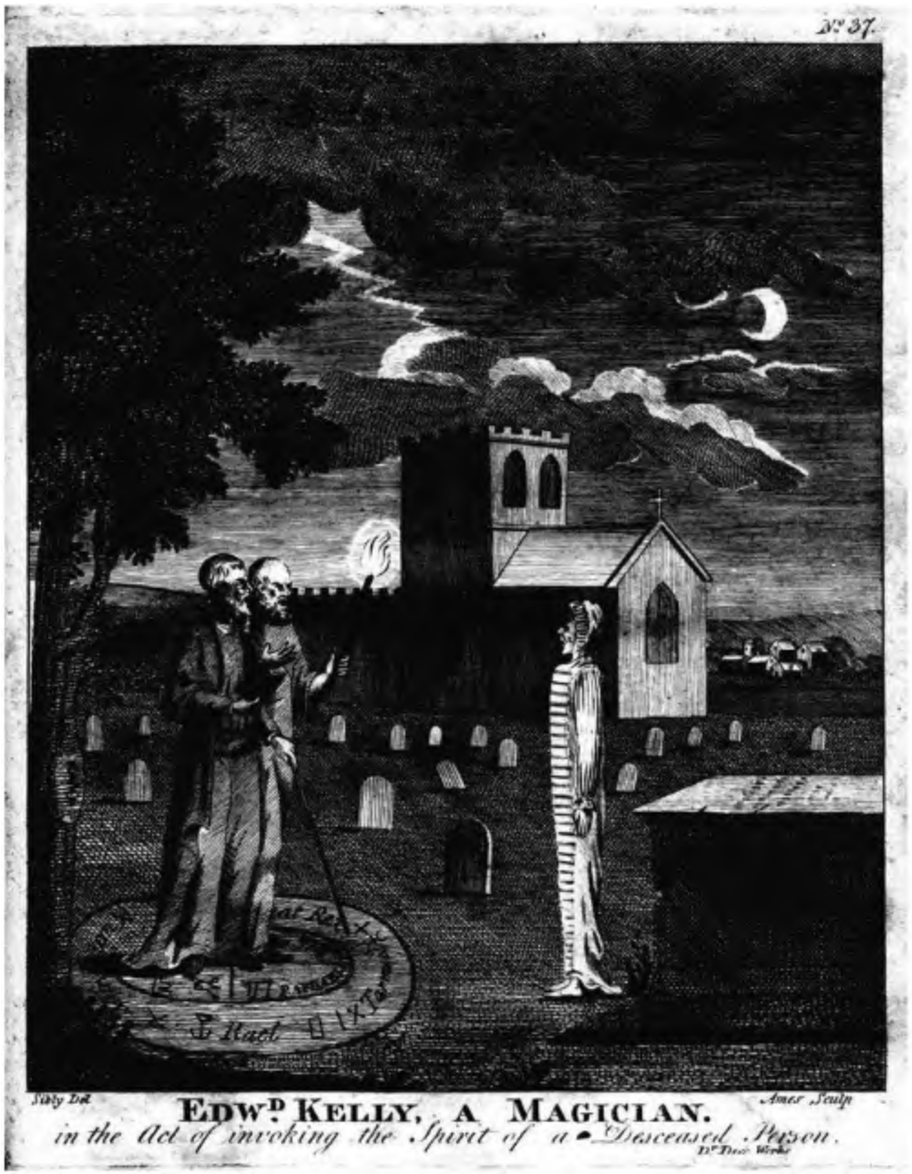
In the classic play *The Alchemist*, by Ben Jonson (1572-1637), a satire based in part on the personalities of John Dee and his scribe Edward Kelley, there are allusions to the use of drugs, and they do seem to be tied with the compounds and extracts of alchemists and apothecaries. As we saw in Chapter 11 such preparations were in use by alchemists at this time, and available in apothecaries.

*Right: Dr. John Dee's Magic Mirror, on display with a crystal ball used for the same purposes at the British Museum. Left: Illustration of Dee sits before a crystal ball while the alchemist and scryer Kelley prepares some sort of potion. The crocodile hanging above Dee, is an indication that he had access to rare items from distant lands.*

Jonson's play describes a main character, "Abel Drugger," shortened to "Drug," as "One whose name is Dee, in a rug gown, there's D and rug, that's drug." "This is evidently levelled at the celebrated Dr. John Dee ... a great pretender to astrology, alchemy and magic" (Gifford, 1875). This character is also described in the play as being "busy with his spirits," and his shop's "alchemical magic will draw clients... who will pay for drugs and potions that, like the elixir of life, hold the promise of restorative effects, for consumption by the ounce or the jarful" (Julian & Ostovich, 2013). Other references in *The Alchemist* indicate the actual use of such drugs: "drug money us'd to make your compound"; "Indian drug"; A ship from Ormus (a place in Persia) containing a "commodity of drugs," and lines like "This is true physic, this your sacred medicine: No talk of opiates to this great elixir ... this will work some strange effect, if he but feel it" and other references to "elixirs." In regard to the references to elixirs in the play, there is also a clear alchemical association made: "your elixir, your lapis minerals, and your lunary"; "Your elixir, your lac virginis, your stone, your medicine and your chryosperm." Ashmole, and Lilly,[9] who had access to Dee's works, agreed "he certainly had the elixir" (Gifford, 1875). As truth often comes through jest, we may take these references as indications that the idea, at least, that Dee and Kelley, along with other Alchemists and magicians, were using psychoactive substances in their magic, was not uncommonly held, and allusions towards that were recognizable to a 17th century audience of a popular comedy.

Although Jonson's work is a mockery of Dee and Kelley, it is a fact that Kelley was well known for his knowledge of alchemy, and treatises he wrote on the subject have survived; as well, he had worked as an apothecary's apprentice prior to joining forces with Dr. Dee.

*Detail from Henry Gillard Glindoni's painting of Dee, performing a magical act in front of a royal audience. Notice the crystal ball on the table behind Dee.*




*17th-century engraving of Edward Kelley and Dr John Dee practicing necromancy within the safe confines of a magic circle.*

Richard Deacon, in *John Dee: Scientist, Geographer, Astrologer and Secret Agent to Elizabeth I* (1968), suggested Kelley was using cannabis and other substances in Necromantic practices, but this was based on later 19th century authors writings after the fact.

> Eliphas Levi, the nineteenth century historian of magic, Professor E. M. Butler, the author of Ritual Magic and A. E. Waite all took an interest in Kelley and their revelations on the techniques used at this time in "questioning the dead" hardly improve Kelley's reputation. The actual questioning had to be preceded by a blood sacrifice and a fast of fifteen days, with a "single unsalted repast after sundown." The latter should consist of black bread and blood, or black beans and milky and narcotic herbs. In addition the questioner must "get drunk every five days after sundown on wine in which five heads of poppies and five ounces of pounded hempseed had been strained for five hours, the infusion being strained through a cloth woven by a prostitute" (Deacon, 1968).

As no earlier source than Levi can be found for this recipe and ritual, it is hard to suggest it as a basis for the work of Dee and Kelley. These claims can unfortunately be placed alongside the unsubstantiated suggestions of hashish and opium use along with the acquisition of the

fabled *Necronimicon*, put forth by the retired police department employee, M. Kienholz. Kienhol, seems to have taken the stories of the *Necronimicon* quite literally. In her book *Opium Traders and Their Worlds*, she ties the controversial grimoire with Dee, and his notorious scryer Edward Kelley. In reference to the *Necronimicon*, she wrote that, "While in Prague in 1586, Dee and Kelly searched out and plagiarized a copy of *Necronimicon* by Abdul Alhazred of Yemen, who developed a kind of incense containing 'olibanum, storax, dictamus, opium and hashish'" (Kienholz, 2008). Kienholz also claimed Dee "was Queen Elizabeth's special agent" and suggested he was a likely candidate for advising "the British to deal in opium." Unfortunately, Kienholz's claims don't seem to be particularly credible, as the vast majority of researchers consider both the Necronimicon and Abdul Alhazred to be the creations of Lovecraftian lore.

A clear reason that Dr. Dee and Kelley would not have written openly about their use of drugs in invocation, is that both suffered persecution throughout their lives for their activities. Because of this they had to be very secretive. For example, the accounts from their crystal scrying cited earlier in reference to fumigation, ointments and potions, were in fact carefully hidden and were not discovered till decades after Dee had passed away, by a couple who had a acquired an old chest that had at one time been owned by Dee. Apparently a secret panel popped opened one day and revealed accounts that were hidden inside. "After Dee's death, his papers were passed to Freemason Elias Ashmole, and Ashmole spent a good deal of time and effort researching the difficult text. He was fascinated by Dee and Kelley's work, and tried to commune with the angels during a succession of séances from 1671 to 1676" (Harrison, 2017). Ashmole, as noted, was familiar with both *The Picatrix* and *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* as well. We can also be sure that Ashmole would have had access to cannabis, opium and other rare drugs prescribed in such works, through his close association and friendship with Dr. Robert Hooke, who lectured on the subject, and who shared Ashmoles keen interest in the works of Dr. Dee.

Although at times a celebrated Magician at Queen Elizabeth's[10] court, at others, Dee felt a very real threat, due to rumors and accusations of witchcraft. In 1583, a mob, believing Dee's familiar was the Devil, ransacked his home and library, and some rare manuscripts were lost as a result. One wonders if copies of *The Picatrix*, or the *Sepher Raziel*, with its cannabis recipe for seeing devils and spirits in mirrors, or similar such manuscripts, like *The Book of Magic* (*BoO*), that we now know were in circulation in that place and time, were destroyed in this house invasion. As Teresa Burns has noted of this same period, in regard to the secrecy needed in owning or copying *The Book of Magic*(*BoO*):

The year 1583 is a sort of cut-off point for much tolerance of non-state supported magical activity in England. Works like Reginald Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft – published in 1584, the year John Dee and Edward Kelly left for Poland England and the year an arch-Puritan, John Whitgift, became Archbishop of Canterbury and chief censor of printed texts – managed to attack highbrow Hermeticism like Dee's and the charismatic religions more popular among the poor at exactly the same time...

Perhaps the most famous early 16th century grimoire, Cornelius Agrippa's De Occulta Philosophia, was not really considered objectionable reading early in Elizabeth's reign, and thus one can find a record of it in places like John Dee's library as well as several contemporaneous libraries at Oxford and Cambridge. But by the 1580s, while one might already own old compilations like that of Agrippa's, one might not want to write anything new or at least not write it and have anyone else know about it. Had someone compiled and tried to print the same material after 1584, at the very least the work would have not received ecclesiastic approval (unless it is worded, like Scot's Discovery of Witchcraft, as an attack, particularly an attack on Catholics). Because of this political climate, it's no wonder that we don't know what happened to the Book of Magic from 1583 until someone copied part of it in the 17th century. It was not a very safe manuscript to have... (Burns, 2014).

In 1587, due to rumors of necromancy, Dee and Kelley had to defend themselves in front of the Catholic Church. "The Papal Nuncio and the Jesuits at Prague wanted Dee and Kelley to confess that they were dealing with evil spirits" (Whitby, 2012). Dee defended himself adequately, while Kelley angered them with chiding remarks about the behavior of many priests of the day, causing one of his accusers to say later he considered tossing him out the window to his death, which was apparently not that uncommon in Prague in those days. Dee lamented how people saw him as a "companion of the hell-hounds, and a caller and conjurer of wicked damned spirits" (Dee, 1590).[11] These sorts of accusations have followed both Dee and Kelley into the modern day, and on the flip side, the Enochian Language, developed by Kelly through the angels he saw within the crystal ball, still figures with practitioners of ceremonial magic.

Considering texts like *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis*, and *The Book of Magic* etc. [aka *The Book of Oberon*], explicitly refer to the use of cannabis and magic mirrors, for the purpose of seeing "devils" and "spirits," the following references seem to indicate there was some awareness of these combinations amongst the authorities. Michael Dalton certainly seems to be referring to the ceremonial

magician rather than the country witch in his following condemnation against "Conjurers" who "believe by certain terrible words, that they can raise the Devil, and make him to tremble; and by impaling themselves in a circle (which, as one saith, cannot keep out a mouse) they believe that they are therein insconsed, & safe from the Devil whom they are about to raise; and having raised the Devil, they seem by prayers, and invocation of Gods powerful Names, to compel the Devil to say, or do what the Conjurer commandeth him" (Dalton 1618). Possibly influenced from accounts of Dee and Kelley, Dalton, in *The Country Justice*, (1618), which became a sort of text book for identifying witches and magicians, condemned the "Sorcerer" who "work and perform things (seemingly at the least) by certain superstitious and ceremonial forms of words (called Charms) by them pronounced: or by Medicines, Herbs, or other things applied, above the course of nature, and by the Devils help, and Covenants made with him" as well as the "Soothsayers, or Wisards, which divine and foretell things to come ... and ... do answer by the Devil (or by his help) fc. they do either answer by voice, or else do set before their eyes in glasses, Chrystal stones" (Dalton, 1618). So Dee and Kelley would have had plenty of reasons to keep secret about the means, methods and sources of instruction in regards to their scrying, as would other magicians.

*Image of a cannabis-like plant from the Voynich Manuscript.*

Both Dee and Kelley have been connected with the mysterious *Voynich Manuscript*, which has an image which is strikingly similar to earlier depictions of cannabis. The vellum on which *Voynich Manuscript* is composed has been carbon dated to the early 15th century (1404-1438); however the text itself may have come sometime later. Its origins are unknown. In *The Complete Remastered Voynich Manuscript*, Dr. Jay Winter notes Roger Bacon has been suggested as a possible author, but also that "Dee himself may have written it and spread the rumour that it was

originally a work of Bacon's in the hopes of later selling it" (Winter, 2016). Adding to this "Several people have suggested that, just as Kelley invented Enochian to dupe Dee, he could have fabricated the Voynich manuscript to swindle the Emperor [Rudolph] (who was already paying Kelley for his supposed alchemical expertise)" (Winter, 2016).


*Image of male and female cannabis from De Materia Medica (77AD).*

Interest in magic mirrors may have infiltrated into the

famous Renaissance school of the occult, the "Invisible College" more popularly known as the Rosicrucians. "The association of 'magical mirrors' with Rosicrucianism goes at least as far back as the publication of the first Rosicrucian manifesto *Fama Fraternitatis* in the early 17th century, wherein is described a 'Vault' having seven sides or walls, and each wall being a door that opens to a chest in which contained among other things 'looking glasses of divers virtues'" (Newman, 2011).

In his comments on *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salominis*, Skinner, notes that "the influential alchemist Andreas Libavius (1555-1616) ... speculated that one of the *Sepher Raziels* was the founding document for the Rosicrucian cosmology of angelic spheres. It is therefore likely that a copy ... of one of the *Sepher Raziels* passed through his hands. Over a century later, the mystic Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was also reported to have been influenced by *Sepher Raziel* in his opinion about angels" (Karr & Skinner, 2013). Interestingly, the later 19th-century spiritualist, L. A. Cahagnet, who traveled in Rosicrucian circles, and who used topical and ingested cannabis preparations with magic mirrors, dedicated an influential book on hashish-based spiritualism to Swedenborg. Moreover, Cahagnet claimed that when contacted in a 1840's seance, Swedenborg had endorsed the use of hashish to induce trance for contacting the dead.

In relation, Samuel Butler's (1613-1618) famous comedic poem *Hudibras*, does seem to insinuate that the use of fumigants and psychoactive substances, along with crystal balls, planetary magic and invocations, were a part of Rosicrucian magic:

*...The Rosicrucian way's more sure*
*To bring the devil to the lure*
*Each of 'em has a several gin,*
*To catch intelligences in:*
*Some by the nose with fumes trepan 'em*
*As Dunstan[12] did the the devil's grannum ;*
*Others with characters and words*
*Catch'em as men in nets do birds;*
*And some with symbols, signs and tricks,*
*Engrav'd in planetary nicks,*
*With their own influences will fetch'em*
*Down from their orbs, arrest, and catch'em;*
*Make'em depose and answer to*
*All questions ere they let them go...*

–(Butler, 1678)

A reference from Butler to the sorts of quintessences and arcana discussed in Chapter 11 should also be noted: "Each of 'em has a several gin,/To catch intelligences in'." The next verses in Butler's parodic poem refer to the "devil bird" in the pommel of Paracelsus' sword, that Naudé and other's identified as opium, and Kelley's "Devil's looking

glass." It would seem the "orbs" referred to were likely the classic crystal balls, used in the same way as "magic mirrors" to entrap spirits for questioning. "...[T]hese lines ... attributes to the Rosicrucians several means of calling down the spirit world, and immediately following he associates with the brotherhood a representative group of magicians who, by this time, had come to be associated with occultism in a general sense. These include Paracelsus, who was not a Rosicrucian, Kelley, and Agrippa, each of whom, according to Hudibras, has his own means of demonic conjuration"(Linden, 2015). As well, we see a reference to fumigation for invocation, in Butler's reference to the Rosicrucian use of "fumes" for "trepan'em"...

Interestingly, the use of cannabis for magical purposes, particularly mirror divination, as referred to in the *Sepher Raziel*, was still very popular among occultists of the 19th century.

> A long book might be written about nineteenth-century crystallomancy.... Crystal workings clearly played a great part in their researches, providing them with a gateway to another world (in whatever sense), whether directly or through the use of a medium ... in France, hashish was often used. When used with rituals and with intention of commuting with angels, scrying formed a branch of ceremonial magic in the Judeo-Christian tradition. It stimulated the scientific imagination, at a time when some 'natural philosophers' were not quite ready to exclude incomprehensible phenomena from consideration. Lastly, to some experimenters it seemed to offer a channel of communication with the dead, hence a promise of their own survival (Godwin, 1994).

As P.D. Newman, who has written extensively about potential references to psychoactive substances in the occult, as well as magic mirrors, has noted:

> Amidst the second half of the nineteenth century, during a time that has come to be known as the Occult Revival, the curious practice of spirit communication was spreading like ectoplasm. From seances and psychic changelings to magic mirrors and table toppings, spiritualism and communication with the dead became all the rage on both sides of the pond, greatly influencing the minds of those who would contribute largely to the esoteric literature of the era. One of the primary modes of spirit communication that was widely practiced at the time was crystal or mirror gazing, known also as catoptromancy or skrying. This was accomplished with the use of prayers, invocations, and the burning of psychotropic incenses and consumption of a number of narcotic, hypnagogic, and entheogenic plants and substances. These include but are not limited to cannabis,

> opium, nitrous oxide, and even psychedelic fungi. It is believed by practitioners of the art that the spirits of all manner of deceased and discarnate figures may be called into the crystal mirror, and thereafter petitioned for the knowledge, favours, etc., that the querent requires or desires. Some of the key players during this period include visionary Rosicrucian Paschal Beverly Randolph, psychic Spiritualist Emma Hardinge Britten, Helena Petrova Blavatsky of the Theopsophical Society, and especially Freemasons Frederick Hockley and his students F.G. and Herbert Irwin – the last of whom having actually died of a laudanum overdose following a session with the crystal ball (Newman, 2011).

Blavatsky's use of hashish will be discussed later, and well aware of the use of magic mirrors from her days as a spiritualist, she referred to them as a "most interesting field of 'conscious clairvoyance'" (Blavatsky, 1883). "Frederick Hockley (1809-1885) was a highly influential British occultist who divided his time between transcribing magical manuscripts and practicing 'crystallomancy,' as he called it, which is described by him as the art of 'invocating by magic crystals or mirrors" (Newman, 2011).

Hockley, who was a Freemason Grand Steward, and member of the Royal Arch, in his youth had been a pupil of Francis Barrett, author of the celebrated grimoire *The Magus*, and himself the author of *Invocating by Magic Crystals and Mirrors* (1869/2010). Hockley had been using magic mirrors since he was a teenager and likely learned about them, as well as the occult use of drugs, from Barrett, who warned against their use, while at the same time showing his experience and awareness of them.

> There are some perfumes or suffumigations and unctions which make men speak in their sleep, walk. and do those things that are done by men that are awake, and often what, when awake, they cannot do or dare do. Others again make men hear horrid or delightful sounds, noises and the like.
>
> And, in some measure, this is the cause why mad and melancholy men believe they hear and see things equally false and improbable, falling into the most gross and pitiful delusions, fearing where no fear is, and angry where there is none to contend. Such passions as these we can induce by magical vapours, confections, perfumes, collyries, unguents, potions, poisons, lamps, light, &c; likewise by mirrors, images, enchantments, charms, sounds, and music; also by divers rites, observations, ceremonies, religion, etc. (Barrett, 1801).

Hockley prepared a "Crystal with a spirit attached" for the famous Sir Richard Burton, as well as a black mirror ... which he used ... in the same manner as you would a

crystal" and he claimed to have communicated with Burton through it (Hockley, 1871).[13] (Burton had considerable knowledge of drugs like hashish,[14] peyote, opium and *amanita muscaria* mushrooms, as well as the tantric-like methods of "magical eroticism"). As Joscelyn Godwin clarifies of Hockley's statement, the "'attaching' of a spirit to a crystal ... was the ... ritual referred to by Barrett as 'consecrating'. Crystals were dedicated to different types of spirits, usually classified after the seven planetary angels..." (Godwin, 1994). Besides contacting angels and living people through his mirrors, "Hockley had no doubt that some of the spirits were real, departed human beings" (Godwin, 1994). In his introduction to the recent publication, *EXPERIMENTUM, Potens Magna in Occult Philosophy. Compiled and Scribed by Frederick Hockley*, Dan Harms "wonders if the references to the ritual use of cannabis and opium in Experimentum signal tools that Hockley used" (Harms, 2012).

We know that Hockley had access from an early date and later owned large parts of a manuscript copy of the 16th-century The Book of Magic (BoO), which he referred to as "a Folio Manuscript on Magic & Necromancy Written by John Porter, 1583." From a young age, Hockley knew and worked for John Denley (1764-1842), at Denley's famous occult bookstore, that was frequented by the likes of Barrett, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Lord Bulwer Lytton, as well as "members of the Mercurii, a secret magical society whose members included several apparent owners of parts of V.b.26. [The Book of Magic]: Robert Cross Smith ('Raphael'), John Palmer ('Zadkiel' until the death of Smith, when he became 'Raphael'), and George Graham. Celebrated miniaturist painter Richard Cosway (1742-1821), the earliest known owner of V.b.26 [The Book of Magic (BoO)], was also likely a member of the Mercurii" (Burns, 2014). An 1841 edition of The Familiar Astrologer, by Mercurii member Raphael, included a full account of Eckartshausen's 18th century experiments with psychoactive fumigants, (Chapter 20) and also "*A Legendary Charm Used by Witches for Magical Purposes.*" "*Taken from an old blacit letter missal, in the possession of the* 'Mercurii,' which also states that 'the muttering of this charm, while concocting drugs or simples, balsams or elixirs, contributes marvellously to their efficacy'" (Raphael, 1841).

*Hail to thee, holy herb,*
*Growing on the ground,*
*All on mount Calvary*
*First wast thou found.*
*Thou art good for many sores*
*And healeth many (wound;*
*In the name of Saint Jesu!*
*I take thee from the ground.*

Among Hockley's duties at Denley's bookstore, was hand copying and illustrating from old magical

manuscripts. Harm's recent publication of *EXPERIMENTUM*, likely represents such a work, and Hockley did a masterful job of illustrating and transcribing such works. Amongst experts from other renaissance sources, *EXPERIMENTUM* specifically repeats the cannabis-scrying formula from *The Book of Magic* (which itself was borrowed from *Sepher Raziel*). "Anoint thyself with juice of canabus and archangel, and before a mirror of steel, call Spirits, and thou shall see them, and have power to bind and to loose them" (Hockley/Harms, 2012). As a devotee of the magic mirror, we can be sure the technique described stood out in Hockley's mind, as it did to the various patrons of Denley's occult shop where it was circulated, and the original manuscript was treasured. It should also be noted that in regard to his own practice of scrying, "Hockley was immersed in the work of John Dee and Edward Kelley, collected Enochian material, and had spent hours and hours conjuring spirits..."(Burns, 2014). This influence may have left its mark on later 19th-century magic and into the present day, as the "original Golden Dawn's Enochian materials most likely came from Frederick Hockley" (Burns, 2014).


*Hockley also included the Invocation of Oberon in some of his transcripts, and we can see clearly through similarities that his version of the King of Fairies was inspired by that in the original, The Book of Magic.*

In 1886, Hockley released *The Offices and Order of Spirits: The Occult Virtues of Plants & Some rare Magical Charms & Spells*, which is basically his transliteration of the first half of *The Book of Magic* (*BoO*). *The Offices and Order of Spirits* included the cannabis mirror-scrying recipe, as well as directions for fumigating opium. "Apium [Opium][15] hath great power upon winds and devils and phantasies" (Hockley, 1886/2011). In this respect it should be noted that Herbert Irwin, who was one of the teenaged scryers

Hockley was known to have used, as they thought virginity was an important factor in psychic powers, is known to have come to his demise from an opium overdose taken during a scrying session. This may have led to more caution from Hockley in discussing this aspect of his techniques, and thus the reason so little has been written about this in reference to him. Irwin's own book, published posthumously, also titled *The Book of Magic* (2014), has large sections on magic mirrors and as the publisher notes, it "also discusses the magical uses of opium itself, about which he is ambiguous, considering it potentially demonic. Never-the-less, he took opium to assist his skrying and died of an opium overdose."

Emma Hardinge Britten, also referred to by Newman, who was well known for mirror scrying, wrote that "...in order to profit by my mirror, I would advise the ceremony to be performed with a certain dignity, and to have recourse only to what may act on the imagination or nerves, as much by a normal or spiritual magnetism as by the assistance of perfumes. All those that bear or shed a sweet, pleasant smell, are suitable for the good spirits ; such as incense, musk, gum-lac, etc.; and for evil spirits, the seeds of henbane, hemp, belladonna, anise, or coriander, etc. Each seeks his own atmosphere, or one akin to it" (Britten, 1876). Elsewhere she referred to a variety of other substances to induce the trance state: "The Soma juice, hasheesh, opium, the napellus, and distillations procured from two or three species of acrid fungi,[16] are considered the most effective narcotics appropriate for inducing the trance condition" (Britten, 1876).

> It is ... well known that the Asiatics and orientals of the present day, together with a larger number of europeans than is generally supposed resort to the use of hasheesh, opium, Soma drink, and other pernicious narcotics, as temporary stimulants, or to induce ecstasy and the trance condition. The medieval mystics, and even the poor ignorant beings accused of witchcraft, resorted still more frequently to unguents and fumigations. The latter were invariably used in all magical rites, they being deemed efficacious in gratifying the spirits summoned, also in preparing the atmosphere for their demonstrations no less than in exerting an influence upon the invocants, by stupefying or stimulating the senses (Britten, 1876).

Britten also describes a scene in Alexandria where a magician puts a boy into a trance by "burning much incense and uttering many unintelligible formulas" so the child could see a vision in a pool of ink, which was commonly used in replacement of mirrors or crystals, although no indication as to what was in the incense is given directly. Although Britten seems to downplay the combination of psychoactive substances and magic mirrors, her

comments make it clear that such use was taking place in Europe and America at the time. One particularly interesting advocate of this method was the noted French occultist Louis Alphonse Cahagnet. "Cahagnet's methods of inducing trance in his subjects included... both magic mirrors and the use of drugs, especially hashish, as aids to clairvoyance" (Deveney, 1997). "Cahagnet recommended the use of hashish and opium to intensify the visions in the mirrors" (Decker & Dummett, 2002). Moreover, Cahagnet not only used cannabis and other substances to induce trance for mirror scrying, he would also infuse the mirrors themselves with cannabis and a variety of narcotic compounds.

In relation to the topical cannabis preparation referred to in the *Sepher Raziel*, Cahagnet, wrote of a "pomade" or unguent for provoking ecstatic trance, which he described in detail:

> Take flowers of hemp, flowers of red poppy or the wild poppy, then five grammes of hashish in a heclo of lard; to be well covered for two hours over a fire in a vessel of boiling water, use the said flowers, in equal parts, as much as the vessel will hold; keep the whole properly, and use as needed. See how this pomade is employed: the evening, before going to bed, rub it behind the ears, descend along the neck to the carotid arteries, then use it under the armpits, and in the region of the grand sympathethic [sic], which passes under the left breast. Then rub in the same manner the loins, the solos of the feet, the thick part of the arms, and the chest. I do not recommend that it should be rubbed over the solar plexus or the pit of the stomach. After this unction, sleep, well penetrated with the subject which you desire to understand, according to the nervous impressionability will be the order of the sleep.... This pomade is very calming for the gout and rheumatism. After the hands have been used in this friction, they should be washed in the acidulated water of good vinegar and camphorated alchohol [sic] (Cahagnet, 1858/1898).

The addition of poppy to the topical preparation would likely have increased the effects, in comparison with the ointment described in *Sepher Raziel*. Cahagnet not only used topical preparations, but also referred to a "somnambulic liquor," which he felt he had proven to have similar if not even more powerful trance-inducing properties.

> At the end of July, when the hemp is in flower, which is easily known if the powder is scattered by a light stroke on the stalk, which powder is the pollen of the plant; lop the top in such manner as to collect the most possible of these flowers and the powder, without any mixture of the leaves of the plant; let it dry some days in the shade, well spread out upon a sheet

of white paper; then place a moiety of it in a jug, filled with good brandy, and expose it for forty-five hours to the action of the sun, the jug being well covered at the mouth. Draw out. and press the liquid free of the grounds, and keep it to serve thy needs. One to three spoonsful [sic] of coffee with half-a-glass of good wine are sufficient to aid the intuition, and free the spiritual sight of the Magnetic Somnambule [sic] from the material clouds which hinder him. If thou puts the same quantity in an infusion of the lime-tree, in tea or coffee, take this mixture very warm and sugared, before going to bed, and the visions will be very lucid. Thou canst use this mixture as it pleases thee, in coffee, in stimulants, or in soothing drinks. If thy temperament is warm and excitable, use it very moderately; on the contrary, this beverage being a dissolvent of the glaire [sic], thou wilt find it good. Do not expect marked phenomena by its use, but hope for success, with an increase of intuition, just combinations, sound judgement, in fine, a comprehension otherwise extended of that which is presented to thee (Cahagnet, 1858/1898).

Mirrors infused with cannabis and other substances were dubbed *Mirror Narcotique*, "Narcotic mirrors," by Cahagnet. He described them as "globes in crystal, but full of a water distilled from Narcotic plants." In preparing the infusion to be placed in these globes, Cahagnet relayed that he would take a strong pinch of the following substances:

> Belladonna, Henbane, Mandragora, and flowers of hemp, then a head of bruised poppy, and three grammes of opium, macerated for forty-eight hours in a glass retort, of the capacity of two litres circumference, a full moiety of good red wine, after which put all to heat upon a sand-bath to distill; a very clear water is thus obtained, with which fill the globes, to serve for these experiments. Care should be taken that this water is not swallowed, for without being mortal it would give much trouble. Operate in the same manner with these as the other mirrors (Cahagnet, 1858/1898).

He also gives us some idea as to what effect might be gained from some of these substances. "The poppy invites to meditation; the henbane to disputes; the hemp to the sciences; opium to acts of venery; the belladonna to estimation" (Cahagnet, 1858/1898). Cahagnet cited the Baron du Potet (1796-1881), the eminent Mesmerier, who also referred to the use of hashish to induce trance states, for his belief that spirits of the dead could be called into magic mirrors or crystals, in similar fashion to that described in *Sepher Raziel*. "We can sometimes enchain the spirit, that we have evoked, in the Crystal, and hold it there; it is that

which excites the vision, and which, as a messenger, goes to seek those beings, dead or alive, that you demand and constrain to appear" (du Potet).[17] Du Potet, in his turn referred to Cahagnet's use of hashish to contact the dead, in his *Journal of Magnetism*, as well as the use of ointments and hashish for divinatory and out of body experiences.[18] In regard to magnetism and occult matters, "Dupotet's most important discoveries ... concerned the operations of the magic mirror"(Deveney, 1997). The famous 19th-century French magician, Eliphas Levi explained of du Potet's work with mirrors:

> Baron du Potet is of an exceptional and highly intuitive nature.... He establishes triumphantly the existence of that universal light wherein "lucides" perceive all images and all reflections of thought. He assists the vital projection of this light by means of an absorbent apparatus which he calls the Magic Mirror – a circle or square covered with powdered charcoal, finely sifted. In this negative space the combined light projected by the magnetic subject and operator soon tinges and realizes the forms corresponding to their nervous impressions. The somnambulist sees manifested therein all the dreams of opium and hashish, and, if he were not distracted from the spectacle, convulsions would follow.
>
> The phenomena are analogous to those of hydromancy as practised by Cagliostro; the process of staring at water dazzles and troubles the sight; the fatigue of the eye, in its turn, favours hallucinations of the brain. Cagliostro sought to secure for his experiments virgin subjects in a state of perfect innocence, so as to set aside interference due to nervous divagations occasioned by erotic reminiscences. Du Potet's Magic Mirror is perhaps more fatiguing for the nervous system as a whole, but the dazzlements of hydromancy would have a more dangerous effect upon the brain... (Levi, 1927).[19]

Effets du miroir magique de Du Potet : la danse infernale des nains et la tête monstrueuse. (Page 244.)

*An illustration of du Potet working mirror magic, late 19th-century, from Taxil's notorious anti-Masonic work Le Diable au XIXe siècle: ou, Les mystères du spiritisme, la Franc-Maçonnerie luciférienne (1894).*

*Baron du Potet, from La magie dévoilée et la science occulte (1852).*

Cahagnet, who was clearly one of the foremost proponents of this technique, felt certain that through these methods, "Necromancy will be no longer a science mystic and hidden, but a study preparatory and necessary to the religious instruction and morality of all men" (Cahagnet, 1858/1898). Cahagnet introduced many people to this technique of cannabis and drug-infused mirror scrying among those influenced by him was the African American Rosicrucian, Paschal Beverly Randloph (1825-1875).

Randolph ... had a reputation by the early 1850's as a

> typical "trance speaker" who would act as the unconscious medium for various reform-minded spirits... [I]n 1855 ... he traveled to Europe and mixed in the mesmerist circles in France around Baron Jules Du Potet and Louis Alphonse Cahagnet. Unlike most American spiritualists, the French Mesmerists were well versed in the Western magical and occult traditions. Also, and most especially, they used in their evocations magic mirrors or crystals, and drugs, especially hashish. All this was a revelation to Randolph (Godwin, Chanel & Deveney, 1995).

It was here that the American spiritualist picked up so many occult techniques, which he would later bring back to America, and the most notable of these was the use of hashish and magic mirrors. Randolph went on to write an influential treatise of the use of hashish as an aid to trance possession, which he released as a pamphlet and included in one of his early and elaborately titled books *Clairvoyance; How to Produce it, and perfect it, with an essay on Hashish, it's benefits and Its dangers* (1860), as well as an important book on clairvoyant scrying with magic mirrors, *How to make the magic glass, gold mirror of the dead, by the means of which Oriental magi are said to have smart held commerce with spirits*, (1860). Copies of these failed to survive into modern times. However, copies of Randolph's *The Unveiling: Or, What I Think of Spiritualism* (1860) from this same period, did survive, and this was appended with his "world-famous medicinal formulas." These preparations were often made with "the very best Oriental Hemp, upon whose genuineness my correspondents may place implicit reliance" and touted the efficacy of the herb for both a variety of ailments which he offered for sale, and also noted that a preparation of hashish containing *Dowam Meskh* (medicine of immortality) as providing the "serenest and most beatific vision" Randolph had ever experienced (Randolph, 1860).

A later version of Randolph's 1860 paper on hashish, as well as a lot of mirror lore, made it into *The Guide to Clairvoyance: A Practical Manual for Those Who Aim at Perfect Clear Seeing and Psychometry*,(1867), as well as more on the magic mirror in *Seership*! *The Magnetic Mirror* (1875). His *Dealing with the Dead, The Human Soul, its migrations and Transmigrations* (1861), also makes reference to hashish and mirrors, and was very influential in American spiritualist circles of the 19th century.

Robert North gives Randolph's potent recipe for a stimulant powder that was used expressly for mirror scrying in *Sexual Magic* (1988), as well as instructions for building the mirrors:

> "...this powder is dangerous for many men ; it must be used with prudence and as infrequently as possible. When the stimulant powder has made its

effect, it is necessary to continue the work without it."

### The Stimulant Powder[20]

The stimulant powder that we use for our magical experiences is not new. One finds it in many recipes of the middle ages The sorcerers of that era used it for traveling to the festivals of the Sabbat, among other things. Accordingly, we have made some modifications, for the following reasons:

The stimulant powder was prepared in the middle ages by the maceration of plants in human fat. This bizarre procedure was motivated by the knowledge that various substances will more effectively penetrate the pores of the operator if the conductor that is on his skin is identical with that which is found under his skin.

Good results can be obtained, however, with the fat extracted from the sweat of the experimenter.

But in the face of the numerous difficulties of this preparation, we have replaced human fat with animal fat. First of all, we leave it in heavy cooking salt and then we wash it in cold, running water. We repeat this pieces ; and bath five time; and then we plunge the fat into a hot bath. This bath must last for six hours. following.

To the fat thus previously treated, we add the following:

For 100 grams of fat:

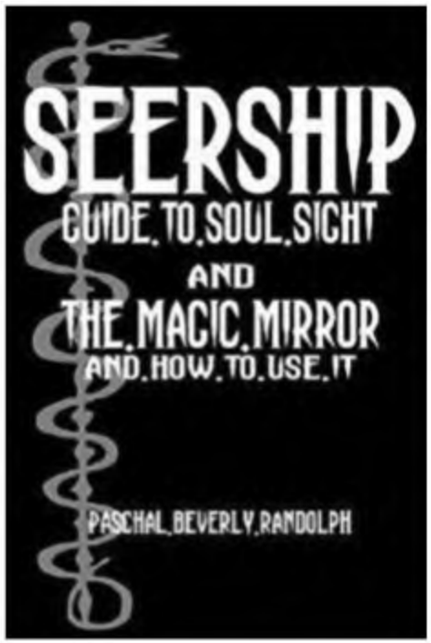
- 40 g. of Hashish
- 50 g. of Henbane
- 80 g. of Pommes d' epis[21]
- 20 g. of Belladonna
- 260 g. of Hemp
- 50 g. of Garlic
- 30 g. of Sunflower Seeds
- 60 g. of Kalmus
- 250 g. of Poppy Flowers
- 100 g. of Flakes of Wheat

When this mixture is completely dry, we filter it in a manner to obtain a very fine powder, which we conserve in a well sealed vase. We use this stimulant powder, thus prepared, one or two minutes before the experience. We rub some of this powder on the solar plexus, the hollow of the throat, the arm pits and behind the knees, the soles of the feet, and the palms of the hands. When the magical operation is terminated we wash ourselves immediately with hot water and rub ourselves with some essence of alum or vaseline.

The Wheat Flakes would service by turning the ointment into a powder, giving us Randolph's "stimulant

powder" and allowing for a more even distribution of the potent ingredients.

After an exhaustive study, Prof. Jocelyn Godwin concluded that Randolph's references to an "elixir of life" identified a hashish preparation, while "The 'philosopher's stone' was the magic mirror" (Godwin, 1994). In *Seership! The Magnetic Mirror*, Randolph, explained in his 19th-century dramatic fashion: "The plane of the mirror is before us, within so few feet or inches; but its lanes lead down the ages, and its roads up the starry steeps of the Infinite. Its field is the Vastness below, above, and around and elsewhere; but the elsewhere contains all life next off life – is an immortal fastness" (Randolph, 1875). Like Cahagnet's *Narcotic Mirrors*, Randolph had recipes that included potent narcotics for a varnish on a magic mirror, and for "liquid condensers," which were also applied between layers of glass.




*A modern reprint of Randolph's work*

Besides the use of drugs for mirror scrying, Randolph advised a six month course of preparatory mental/visual exercises for the practice, that involved reverse imaging, i.e. staring at a simple black dot for a minute, and then looking at a blank surface, there is the optical illusion of a reversed image of the black dot. As Randolph instructed:

> One hangs a white disc on the wall, which is black at the center. One stares at the black center of the disc for 60 seconds, remaining perfectly motionless. This fortifies the capacity for concentration in the student and also his attention. When the prescribed minute elapses, one turns the face – without changing the position of the eyes towards a white surface, on

> which the optical illusion we see is the same disc, but the colors are reversed, the background is black with the center being white (Randolph, 1988).

After practice and managing to mentally hold the reversed image for an extended amount of time, the student was instructed to then proceed in this manner, using instead of black and white, each of the primary colours of the rainbow. After a half year or so of this practice "The willed effect is thus obtained more easily and quickly: a figure appears suddenly on the polished surface of the mirror and you may question this figure that you see" (Randolph, 1988). Randolph placed extreme importance on this method of divination, believing that the "spiritualism of our ancestors was thoroughly acquainted with the secrets of the magic mirror":[22]

> The Urim and Thumim,[23] and all sorts of polished surfaces, were used for religious visions, for the warnings and recommendations demanded by the Gods. Zoroaster skryed before the magic mirror. After him, Socrates, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iambilicus ... Cardan[24] praised their virtues. And later still, Robert Fludd and the great mage and clairvoyant Paracelsus..."(Randolph, 1988).[25]

Randolph saw himself and his own use of magic mirrors as part of this lasting tradition. After traveling in Europe he came to identify himself as part of the mystic brotherhood of Rosicrucians, and this association likely came through contacts he had made there. "From the early 1860s on he was 'The Rosicrucian,' associated in the popular mind with crystal gazing, drugs (especially hashish), [and] secret Oriental brotherhoods" (Deveney, 1997). Randolph's influence in this area seems to have been considerable. The Hermetic Brotherhood of Luxor, another secret order, which drew heavily on the works of Randoph, utilized cannabis in their initiations, providing it mail order for members, as well as providing tractates like, *Instructions for Neophytes in Use of Mirrors*, and *Laws of Magic Mirrors*, (Godwin, Chanel & Deveney, 1995).

Other important 19th-century Rosicrucian figures have been tied to the use of cannabis, and P.D. Newman refers to a number of 19th and early 20th century Rosicrucians that practiced mirror gazing. Newman cites a paper on the order and the stages of occult progress, delivered to the *Societas Rosicruciana* by Freemason John Yarker (1833-1913) that included references on "the use of the 'Crystal Stone' or magic mirror." Yarker likely gleaned much from the works of P. B. Randolph, as he recorded that he had paid his widow four pounds for a collection of Randolph's writings. "The ties of Frederick Hockley," referred to earlier in reference to his writings on magic mirrors and cannabis, to the Rosicrucians, "went unquestioned to such an extent that he was admitted to the Grade of *Adeptus Exemptus* in

the SRIA [Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia] ... without Hockley's ever even having attended a meeting" (Newman, 2011). This later Rosicrucian interest in mirrors was likely carried on from the Renaissance use of such apparatus by Rosicrucians suggested earlier, as was the utilization of drugs to increase their effectiveness.

The German Dr. Franz Hartmann, wrote a number of books on the Rosicrucians, as well as claiming to have studied under the secret order, and if not an actual member, he was well affiliated with those that were. Besides working and traveling with H.P. Blavatsky, he was considered instrumental in the founding of the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, which also drew deeply on Randolph's writings, and was given the title of "Honorary Grand Master of the Sovereign Sanctuary." Hartmann referred to the use of cannabis and other substances to induce trance as well as magic mirrors for this purpose:

> Various means have been adopted to suspend the discriminating powers of reason and render the imagination abnormally passive, and all such practice are injurious in proportion as they are efficacious. The ancient Pythoness attempted to heighten her already abnormal receptivity by the inhalation of noxious vapours ... others use opium, Indian hemp, and other narcotics which render their mind blank, and induce morbid fancies and illusions ... others stare at mirrors or crystals, water or ink (Hartmann, 1893).

Charles Lancin's 1907 Book, *L'au-Dela et ses Problemes* (The Hereafter and its Problems), describes a recipe for infused narcotic mirrors that contained cannabis, similar to Cahagnet's and also reminiscent of the Jam i-Jam, the cup of Jamshid, which contained the sacred elixir, but was also gazed into for scrying:

> Some countryside Sorcerers use a bucket of water, or better a copper Cauldron in which we pour water after having well clean polish the inside to make it shiny.
>
> The Narcotic Mirrors are of similar kind but with this difference that the pure Water is replace by the product from the distillation of a litre of Red Wine in which we steep, macerate for forty-eight hours a pinch of Belladonna, of Henbane, of Mandragora and Hemp Flower, a crushed Poppy Head and three gram. of Opium.
>
> ...For the Lunar Mirrors,[26] consisting of crystal – not of glass – neither massive nor filled with liquid, the source of light that gives the best results for this [mirror] is that of ordinary alcohol, burnt, in which we have previously macerated a sharp pinch of hemp flowers per litre for twenty-four hours. The light obtained by this method, vacillates, spreading narcotic fumes very softly which helps with the success of the

operation (Lancin, 1907).

*"Miroir Des Sorciers" - in (Lancin, 1907).*

Ernest Bosc, another early 20th century hashish initiate, was obviously influenced by Cahagnet's work, as he also gives his recipe containing cannabis and other psychoactive plant for the construction of "narcotic mirrors." Bosc recorded the following in his book, *Les Miroirs Magiques*. "These mirrors were, at one time, in great vogue; they are based on this observation, that the atoms of a narcotic plant sometimes greatly facilitate visions causing it to smell of the fragrance of the plant and even its flower" (Bosc, 1912). As noted in Chapter 2 Bosc also recommended burning from cannabis or hashish, for the similar practice of scrying by smoke (Bosc, 1907).

Eugen Grosche (Gregor A. Gregorius) (1888-1964), the German founder of an O.T.O. offshoot, (or possibly a "disguised O.T.O. lodge"[27]), the somewhat sinister *Fraternitas Saturni*, was also an enthusiast of drug-infused mirror scrying, and in 1920's-30's Berlin, before being chased out by the Nazis in 1936, he "taught mirror magic.... He also prescribed cocaine, peyote extracts, and advocated the use of hashish" (Gordon, 2008). Grosche's form of magic was definitely on the darker side, and no subject seems to have been taboo for his lectures or pamphlets. Even prior to the 1930's he was openly tackling subjects like "Homosexuality and Esotericism," and "Vampirism and Blood-Magic." "Grosche's 'Magical Newsletters' were clear enough about drugs – 'Lodge-School Discourse 7' [(1930)] informed its readers that extract of Peyote-cactus was available through the publishers, also enthusiastically advocating the use of hashish" (Koenig, 1994). He also advertised his own version of the magic mirror.

*A 1920's advertisement for one of Grosche's magic mirrors.*

After WWII, when prohibition of cannabis had completely fallen over the Western World, talk of these practices and recommendation of this age-old technique, virtually disappeared, and if they were still being used by individuals or occult organization, we can be sure they had good reason not to advertise that fact. However, personal correspondence with the Masonic brother P.D. Newman, indicates that at least some modern occultists, and groups, have kept up this practice into the 20th century.


*Illustration from, The Misplaced Dream, a 1913 tale by pulp writer Victor Rousseau Emanuel. The main character sits stupefied by the effects of hashish-infused coffee and smoke*

*from the hookah, while Indian mystics work the magic of a crystal ball.*

Clearly, the combined use of cannabis and other substances with magic mirrors, and other scrying techniques, was a popular and effective method that was utilized by the mystically inclined, for some centuries. If not a doorway to an actual astral realm, even a skeptic would have to admit, it was an effective way of projecting out aspects of the subconscious mind into the seemingly visible world. The use of cannabis seems to have been particularly effective to this end, as we have seen from references in the *Sephar Raziel* from the 16th century down to the late 19th and early 20 century world through occultists like Du Potet, Cahagnet, Randolph, Lancin and Bosc. Perhaps only the mirror itself might reveal how much more widely this technique was used than that.

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[1] Adding to this confusion, is the existence of 2 other medieval texts bearing the same title and holding similar themes. For a through discussion of these different texts see, (Kar & Skinner, 2013)

[2] Definition from Vocabula Magica, (Luck, 2006).

[3] The use of intoxicants in the rites of Bacchantes is well established and goes without saying, and cannabis has been suggested by Prof Ruck and others, as an additive to Dionysian wine (Ruck et. al., 2007). See also, "Cannabis in Ancient Greece: Smoke of the Oracles" (2015), available on youtube.

[4] 1 and 2, from Quatrains – Century I (1555).

[5] Besides his prophetic writings, Nostradamus also wrote on herbal recipes, cosmetics, food and perfumes. "A 'Renaissance man' par excellence, Nostradamus graduated in the humanities at Avignon, and in medicine at Montpellier – as did his fellow doctor, Rabelais. In concocting his own medicines, he aroused the wrath of the apothecaries, and likewise of the Inquisition when he befriended a member of the Reformation. Nostradamus's interest in the virtues of plants led to his first published work, Traité des Fardemens et des Confitures (1555), a recipe book of jams and cosmetics which would today qualify him as a wellness doctor." (Vallois, 2015).

[6] As quoted in The Twentieth Century, Volume 155 (1954) which refers to this same grimoire.

[7] See (Whitby, 2012).

[8] (Dee/Peterson, 2003).

[9] William Lilly, his Christian Astrology, (1647), listed cannabis under the power of Saturn.

[10] Sir Théodore Turquet de Mayerne (28 September 1573-22 March 1654 or 1655) the Swiss-born physician who treated kings of France and England and advanced the theories of Paracelsus recorded that Queen Elizabeth used an emulsion of cannabis with batting to treat the pox, (Garidel, 1715).

[11] From a quote in (Bailey, 1886).

[12] Saint Dunstan the 10th century Archbishop of Canterbury, referred to as a "conjurer" (Grey, 1801).

[13] From a quote in (Godwin, 1994).

[14] Burton seems to have been more than a casual user, "I have smoked it and eaten it for months without other effect than a greatly increased appetite and a little drowsiness" (Burton, 1894).

[15] Brackets are Hockley's. Apium could also be a reference to wild celery or another replant from the same genus. However it is clear Hockley saw this as opium.

[16] This reference is interesting in that the general view is that at this time, only the psychoactive effects of the Fly Agaric were known among mushrooms, and psilocybin varieties remained unknown in the West.

[17] As quoted in (Cahagnet, 1858/1898).

[18] Journal du Magnetism (1858).

[19] from a quote in Magnetism and Magic, (1927) a later english translation of du Potet's work, which was edited and annotated by A. H. E. Lee, Lee cites A. E. Waite's translation of Levi's History of Magic (1913).

[20] Also referred to as "The Instigating Sand" (Traxler, 2012).

[21] Probably a misspelling of Pommes d'epine, which would be Apple of thorns, i.e. thorn apple, datura.

[22] Robert North's reprint of Sexual Magic (1988).

[23] The divination stones worn in the breastplate of ancient Jewish high priests.

[24] i.e. Cardano, who we discussed for his cannabis infused elixir in Chapter 11.

[25] Robert North's reprint of Sexual Magic (1988).

[26] In reference to "lunar mirrors," it is worth noting that there are some long-standing associations between the moon and magic mirrors. "Jung ... quotes and discusses an intriguing text created by Paracelsus ... in which the moon and the mirror are considered equals in their magic powers. According to Paracelsus, the mirror produces inter-relations between different human beings who have gazed or are gazing into it. Moreover, the moon is a mirror. Hence, the moon-mirror creates an explosive effect in the increase of the number of influences and contagions between human beings and astrological effects of the planets" (Caputo, 2013). [I can attest first hand to seeing realistic moving images in the moon under the influence of psilocybin mushrooms.]

[27] Koenig, 2000).

## CHAPTER 16

### *Witches and Weed?*

Although the areas of High Magic are more of an interest to this study, a discussion of Low magic is also in order, as the grimoires, which we have been discussing, fall between the two, and the history of witches shares some common elements in regard to the use of magickal plants. Unlike Hermetic magic, Witchcraft was well established in Europe, long before the crusades. This is not surprising, as witchcraft holds much in common with traditional shamanism, the inherent form of magic, that seems to emerge independently and cross-culturally, all over the globe.

## *The Witches*

The history of the Witches is another area of study where it is hard to distinguish fact from fiction. The truth is perhaps lost somewhere between the descriptions of the Church, who recorded their reasons for persecuting witches, and the fanciful enthusiasm of later researchers in trying to put forth what they thought the witches believed and were doing, based on the little bits of historical material detailing the witches own side, that they can find. "That the evidence has come down to us largely through the hands of those who were victorious antagonists of witchcraft does not make it any easier for us to discover the truth about it" ( Barnett, 1965). Although there were some contemporary writers that took a slightly more scientific and humanistic approach to the topic, such as Johannes Nider, John of Capistrano, Johann Weyer, and Giambattista della Porta, even these are colored by the cultural bias of the time, and come from the perspective of an "outsider."

As the anthropologist Michael J. Harner noted in his essay "The Role of Hallucinogenic Plants in European Witchcraft": "Academicians as well as present-day coven participants have generally failed to comprehend the great importance of hallucinogenic plants in the European witchcraft of former times. Yet once the use of effects of these natural hallucinogens are understood, the major features of past beliefs and practices suddenly seem quite logical and consistent" (Harner, 1973).

In relations to this study, there have been many claims about the relationship between cannabis and witches in various histories devoted to either subject, and unfortunately, much of this seems to have been based on misinformation. Moreover, even the idea that witches used hallucinogenic ointments is still challenged by many scholars. Professor of History at Iowa State University, Michael Bailey, who has written extensively on the subject, stated in correspondence to me "In general, the idea that such 'fantastic' elements of witchcraft (flight, nighttime gatherings, etc) was caused by chemical effects from various 'witches' potions' has been questioned and increasingly debunked.... To the best of my knowledge, cannabis in particular was not associated with witchcraft" (Bailey, 2016). In contrast to this view, stands Tom Hatsis, and his groundbreaking book, *The Witches' Ointment: The Secret History of Psychedelics* (2015), and its well documented and convincing study of "historical origins of the 'witches' ointment' and medieval hallucinogenic drug practices based on the earliest sources." Hatsis brings new clarity to this area of study in a number of ways. Although Hatsis himself has doubts about a role for cannabis in witches ointments, as we shall see.

The witches' ointments were seen as particularly pernicious as they were the vehicle which enabled the witch to

travel to their unholy gathering, the Sabbath!

## *The Sabbath*

The word Sabbath come from the Jewish Shabbath, "day of rest," however the witches version, was said to have been more along the lines of the most debauched party one could imagine, than the day of relaxation intended by the Hebrews, or day of worship of the Christians that also uses this name. The mere accusation of taking part in this forbidden event could easily have resulted in death in this superstitious and fearful time. References to Witches' Sabbaths go back to at least the 11th century, and continued well into the 18th century. What the actual nature of this Sabbath was, or even if it actually took place outside of the imaginings of Church officials and superstitious townsfolk, is for the most part left to speculation.

The Catholic view of the Sabbath, as laid out in books like Francesco Maria Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum* (1608), describe rites that are clearly focused on breaking every Christian taboo and ridiculing the sacraments of the church. One is reminded of the Left Hand Path of some of the more extreme schools of Tantrism, where the breaking of long-held cultural taboos is seen as a path to Liberation. Tantric acts have included things like partaking of prohibited wine, taking potent herbs, sex rites, as well as extremes like eating human flesh and feces, and living in funeral grounds. The copulation with demons so often referred to in descriptions of the Sabbath, for instance, was seen as a Satanic reversal of the holy act of marriage, and the parodies of Baptism, the Eucharist, anointing of the sick, religious hierarchy, were also all duly noted, in horrified tones, in a variety of medieval documents condemning witchcraft.

*Depiction of the Sabbath, Walpurgis Night, (1668).*

Note in the woodcut above the Demon defecating in a pot, and the kissing of the goat's anus. Foul smells were often associated with demons and the devil, and Hell was said to smell like farts, thus the association with sulphur. In Canto XXI of *Dante's Inferno*, a demon leader pays tribute with a fart to a group of passing demonic emissaries hosting Dante and Virgil, and "as a salute, and he of his ass had made a trumpet." The bad smell was also a means of chasing away the devil, who was also tormented with the the fart-like smell of sulphur in Hell. The Christian theologian and reformer Martin Luther (1483-1543) wrote "I resist the devil, and often it is with a fart that I chase him away." This scenario explains some of the more foul-smelling ingredients in some preparations. Fumigations to drive away evil spirits often included foul-smelling ingredients used in magical practices, like Sulphur, Asafcetida, Castoreum, and more especially of Hypericuzn and Vinegar.

## *The Origins of the Witches*

In the 10th century Benedictine Abbot Regino of Prum claimed that the witches marked the continued underground worship of the Pagan Goddess cult of Diana from pre-Christian Europe. Regino lamented those women "seduced by the fantastic illusions of demons, [they] insist that they ride at night on certain beasts alongside the pagan goddess, Diana, and many other women." [1] Inquisitor Tomás de Torquemada's statement "Diana is the devil" in 1487, shows that this view had prevailed for some centuries. Variations of these beliefs are thought to have survived throughout Europe into the early medieval period. Hatsis holds that this view is based on the New Testament's, Book of Acts, and Christian conflicts with the worship of this Goddess, and that beyond that, elements of this "belief was persistent; tenth century common folk still worshiped her or believed they roamed the night with her..." ( Hatsis, 2015). "Due to widespread and ancient nature of her worship, the goddess had many other names beside Diana ... [but] whatever her name, she was usually regarded as a powerful deity, ruling over the weather, animals, sexuality, spinning, weaving, plant life and the abode of the dead" (Evans, 1978). (Weaving and spinning certainly bring to mind hemp, and as we shall see in Chapter 17 this does come up in connection with later witchcraft.)

Certainly, condemnations of the worship of the Queen of Heaven occur throughout the Bible right down to the last of the books written in the New Testament, and sorcery, the Greek "*pharmakeia*," from where we get the term "pharmacy," has long been seen as referring to the magical use of drugs. Dr. David Hillman has discussed the use of cannabis, mandrake, henbane and other more potent hallucinogens, such as those used in medieval witches' ointments, in ancient Greek worship of the Goddess, in topical lotions, which certainly fits in with the later "witches ointments" (Hillman, 2014).

In *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, (2004), Carlo Ginzburg, also favored the idea that witchcraft arose from the worship of Diana, and as he explained, a likely avenue of the tradition may come through the nomadic Scythians, who as has been seen in Chapter 1, were active in ancient Europe, and traded with the Celts.

> In the nocturnal goddess, semi-bestial or surrounded by animals, at the centre of an ecstatic cult of the shamanistic variety, identified with Diana by canonists and inquisitors, we recognize a very remote heir of the Eurasian divinities ... we discern the possibility of ... a historical sequence: nomads of the steppes – Scythians – Thracians – Celts. We have seen that the shamanistic themes, such as ecstasy, the magic flight, animal metamorphosis, were present in the Scythian as well as in the Celtic context (Ginzburg,

2004).

In *Bizarre Plants: Magical, Monstrous, Mythical*, botanist William Emboden noted that "in England, hemp as the traditional role of providing the broomstick upon witches ride. The devilish tradition may harken back to the Scythians who used the branches and leaves in their funeral customs" (Emboden, 1974).

As Hatsis explains, Regino's 10th-century condemnation demoted "Diana (or her folk equivalent) to the ever-expanding catalog of demons in Satan's service. Once this had been established theologians could ascribe any belief in the goddess to diabolism" (Hatsis, 2015). Thus, this led to the more common concepts of witchcraft as Satanic, that has come down to the modern day. In the patriarchal mind, all power must fall to man, and as a result, Diana, fell way to Satan, as the figure worshiped at the Sabbath, at least in the minds of the persecutors.

Other Greek and Roman traditions have also been offered as a potential avenue for the narcotic ointments of later witchcraft. "...[P]erfumes of a powerful odour and penetrative effect seem... to have been employed in some of the Mysteries. In the Orphic Mysteries, for example, a separate perfume was assigned to accompany the invocation of each deity. Indeed the physical and moral actions of odours was a very special study of the ancient Thaumaturgists. Ointments and liniments too, were certainly employed... before consulting the oracle of Trophonius the body was rubbed with oil" (Spence, 1929). In *De la sorcellerie et de la justice criminelle à Valenciennes aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Of Witchcraft and criminal justice at Valencian, 16th & 17th century, 1861) Théophile Louise (1822-1890) wrote:

> ... Greek and Roman Historians Porta, Cardan [Cardano] and some other doctors and naturalist philosophers of the middle ages and the renaissance, made known the properties to certain drugs, by facts which demonstrate that ancient magicians knew how to use them. However, when we examine the substances composing them, one understands all the extravagances of the Sabbath. They were stramonium, solanum somniferum, whose root, taken in low doses in wine, fills the imagination of the most charming illusions, also henbane and opium. Opium, administered alone in certain proportions, puts one into a sleep, with daydreaming so powerful and so sweet, that no reality can match the charm (Louise, 1861).

## *Gnostic Influences*

The use of ointments, and the sort of reversal of typical Catholic beliefs, as was said to occur at the Sabbath, also brings to mind certain elements of some Gnostic sects of the first few centuries A.D., where as we have noted earlier, Yahweh was considered a demon, and the serpent, usually associated with Lucifer, was revered as the messenger of wisdom. The similarities are most profound in relation to allegations of orgiastic rites, and the use of psychoactive substances, both with the witches and the earlier Gnostic heretics, as well as in the reversing of existing Christian symbolism and ritual. Besides the use of ointments, infused wines, incense, etc. discussed in Chapter 2, certain Gnostic sects celebrated an orgiastic rite that involved things like the ingestion of seminal and menstrual fluids as Eucharistic sacraments, akin to the Last Supper and other elements that could be compared to the sort of orgiastic activity of the Witches' Sabbaths and its mockery of existing Christian rituals.

Accusations of Gnostic heresy were leveled at both the Cathars and Witches, going back to at least the 11th century, and this view lasted for some centuries after that. As Bradford Smith explains, well into the renaissance period, the Witch hunter Frederich Förner saw the witches as an extension of the teachings of the Biblical and Gnostic figure, "Simon Magus who initiated all Christian heresies, the 'magic cults' of the Gnostics and their successors, the Manicheans.... Just as Simon Peter founded the Church of Rome, so the other Simon established an anti-church based on demon worship" (Smith, 2005). Jacques LaCarriere, in *The Gnostics*, suggested that witchcraft may have been a later devolved form of Gnostic practices, that, after being passed down secretly in a prohibitive environment, had lost much of their meaning and philosophical origins.

> ...[I]t is conceivable that once the mythological context of these [Gnostic] practices was lost [through Catholic prohibition of such cults] and the soteriological system that produced them totally forgotten, they simply degenerated into black magic rituals and Luciferian practices. The Black Mass is not far removed from the Barbelognostic ritual... and it is no mere chance that certain aspects of these rites are found, right down to the present day, among Luciferian sects, where they are spiced with cabalistic demonology. The ambivalence of the whole Gnostic attitude, the perpetual temptation that oscillates between rigorous asceticism and rigorous debauch (since both have the same soteriolagical value) is to be found there and, in the historical evolution of Gnosticism, was translated into... magic Luciferism... (LaCarriere, 1977).

Gnosticism, as a potential influence and avenue for the

development of witches, seems to be a topic that has been little explored in the academic world. If there is anything to it, it would seem to either represent; A) a debased form of Gnosticism, which had wandered far from its more philosophical roots, and lost much of its meaning as it passed from mouth to mouth among the common folk, as suggested by LaCarriere; or B) An interpretation projected onto them, based on accounts of early Christian Era Gnostic heretics, that were developed from a concerned and superstitious clergy trying to identify rituals they did not understand, and using the Church's own previous condemnations of heretics, in this case Gnostics, they projected this imagery onto the "witches."

## *Islamic Influences and the Brujas of Spain*

Typically witch drugs of the early medieval period contained substances like Datura, henbane and mandrake. Substances so potent that the safest way to take them was topically, as they could easily prove fatal if ingested in too strong a dose. "Datura ... likely came into Europe proper centuries before the Age of Exploration by way of Arabic learners living in Al Andalus (i.e., modern Spain)" ( Hatsis, 2015). This Arabic connection to datura use, was also noted by Idries Shah, and he felt the same path was followed by mandrake as well. Noting the use of both plants by certain dervish groups connected with the Brujas of medieval Spain, he referred to how mandrake and datura "were reputed to have been used by witches, to induce visions, sensations of flying and in rituals" ( Shah, 1964).

In *The Sufis*, Idries Shah tells us there is an Arab origin for the European witches: "Who brought the witches to the West? In the medieval form, from which most of our information derives, undoubtedly the Aniza tribe" (Shah, 1964). Pointing to evidence like the similarities between the witches circle and the circular dance of the medieval dervishes, Arab words used in witches' spells, and the use of hallucinogenic plants and ointments in both systems, Shah puts forth a reasonable argument that modern witches can find at least a part of their origin in a group founded by Abu el-Atahiyya (748–828):

> His circle of disciples, the Wise Ones, commemorated him in a number of ways after his death. To signify his tribe, they adopted the goat, cognate with his tribal name (Anz, Aniza). A torch between goat horns ("the devil" in Spain as it later became) symbolized for them the light of illumination from the intellect (head) of the "goat," the Aniza teacher. His wasm (tribal brand) was very much like a broad arrow, also called an eagle's foot. This sign, known to the witches as the goosefoot, became the mark for their places of meeting. After Atahiyya's death before the middle of the ninth century, tradition has it that a group from his school migrated to Spain, which had been under Arab rule for over a century at that time (Shah, 1964).

In regard to a Spanish Islamic connections to drugs and witchcraft and their transition into Europe, *The Picatrix* must also be considered as a potential axis for this. This Spanish and Islamic connection need not negate the earlier suggestion that there was a Scythian connection to witchcraft, and European witches marked the continuation of that tradition. As noted in relation to the Grail, if witchcraft had descended from Scythians, the lack of cannabis in medieval recipes may have been caused by the same shift in the trade routes which carried the more psychoactive preparations of it, and were cut off. As a result other

more accessible, and in many cases, more potent plants may have come into more prominent play. Due to the spread of Indo-European culture by groups like the Scythians and Persians, aspects of this same culture existed in both Europe and the Mid-East, although they had been cut off from each other for some centuries. Thus in this case, the Brujas of Spain could mark a meeting point, and a trade route between the existing, and in origins at least related, cults of witchcraft.

That descendants of the Scythians came to use substitutions for the sacred plant of their ancestors, has been known to take place. Ginzburg notes the example of the Ossetians of the Northern Caucasus, "remote descendants from the Scythians of antiquity, the Alans ... of the Middle Ages ... having an Iranian religion" (Ginzburg, 2004). A 19th-century account of this group describes the religion of the Ossettes as a "bizarre mixture of Christianity and ancient superstition." They pay particular homage to the prophet Elijah, who as we have seen becomes the patron saint of cannabis, al Khidr, in the Islamic world, a figure connected to the Green man mythology.

> Goats are sacrificed to him [Elijah] in caves, and they eat their meat: then they spread the skins under a large tree and worship them, particularly during the prophet's feast day, that he may deign to ward off hail and grant a rich harvest. The Ossetians often visit these caves and intoxicate themselves with the smoke from the rhododendrum caucasicum which plunges them into a deep sleep: the dreams that ensue are considered as omens ... they also have professional soothsayers who live on the sacred cliffs and predict the future in exchange for gifts... (Ginzburg, 2004).

Here we see elements of the goat-worship of the witches, and the use of a potent fumigant in replacement of the cannabis used in the more ancient Scythian rituals. Thus we can see how such cultural elements may have also survived in Western Europe, albeit with their own particular cultural flavor. Then, as with the Grail, there is a reconnection with the tradition via the Crusades and Mid-Eastern traditions that sprung from the same earlier roots.

## *The Salve of the Sabbath*

Despite lack of clarity as to their origins, the the use of potions, fumigants and ointments in witchcraft seems quite clear. In the 15th century, reports of witches' flying ointments began to appear in the historical record in the writings of figures like Johannes Hartlieb (1410-1468) and Alfonso Tostado (1410-1455) and then continued to occur for some centuries after. It is in the works of the alchemist Girolamo Cardano, who we discussed for his cannabis infusion and references to hashish in Chapter 11, that "the words *witches* and *ointment* appear side by side for the first time" ( Hatsis, 2015). Such use continued and came to be considerably widespread. A 1670 account from Swedish witches, who worshiped a figure named "Antecessor," claimed that he, "gives us a horn with a salve in it, wherewith we anoint ourselves ... whereupon we call upon the Devil and away we go." "In ... France in 1652 a witch confessed that 'when she wished to go to the dances, she anointed herself with an ointment given to her by a man-witch, who was sent by the Devil'" ( Murray, 1933).

The witch hunter Pierre de Lancre (1553-1631) stated that "there are two sorts of witches, the first sort are composed of witches who, having abandoned God, give themselves to drugs and poisons. The second are those who have made an express renunciation of Jesus Christ and of the Faith and have given themselves to Satan. These perform wonders."[2] Centuries later, in his essay "Drugs of the Devil," Bernard Barnett would counter, "Medieval witchcraft was not... an empty invention of superstitious minds, but involved the practical use of potent hallucinogenic drugs" (Barnett, 1965).

> The hallucinogenic hypothesis – Running throughout the medieval period, as earlier, is the story of drugs. The Biblical term for witch is the same as for her cauldron and, in Latin, veneficium means drug, poison or magic. It seems that many of the witches were drug addicts.... In this connection it is pertinent that the witch-cult and the persecution seems to have gained prominence after the Crusades (Barnett, 1965).

Although in the earliest accounts, descriptions of the witches Sabbath were assumed to be evidence of the Devil's diabolical powers, "sixteenth century scientists like Cardano or Della Porta formulated a different opinion: "...flights, apparitions of the devil were the effect of ... the use of hallucinogenic substances contained in vegetalle concoctions or ointments. The suggestion offered by these explanations survives" (Ginzburg, 2004). Reginald Scot's *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) repeats an account, allegedly from Della Porta (1535-1615), (who was himself quite versed in the occult), where Della Porta beat a witch in order to learn the secrets of her ointment!:

Now (saith he) when I considered throughlie hereof, remaining doubtfull of the matter, there fell into my hands a witch, who of hir owne accord did promise me to fetch me an errand out of hand from farre countries, and willed all them, whome I had brought to witnesse the matter, to depart out of the chamber. And when she had undressed hir selfe, and froted hir bodie with certeine ointments (which action we beheld through a chinke or little hole of the doore) she fell downe thorough the force of those soporiferous or sleepie ointments into a most sound and heavie sleepe: so as we did breake open the doore, and did beate hir exceedinglie; but the force of hir sleepe was such, as it tooke awaie from hir the sense of feeling: and we departed for a time. Now when hir strength and powers were wearie and decaied, shee awooke of hir owne accord, and began to speake manie vaine and doting words, affirming that she had passed over both seas and mountaines; delivering to us manie untrue and false reports: we earnestlie denied them, she impudentlie affirmed them. This (saith he) will not so come to passe with everie one, but onlie with old women that are melancholike, whose nature is extreame cold, and their evaporation small; and they both perceive and remember what they see in that case and taking of theirs.

As Francis Bacon (1561- 1626) recorded in *Sylva Sylvarum*, (1627):

> And therefore, as diverse wise judges have prescribed, and cautioned, men may not too rashly believe, the confessions of witches, nor yet the evidence against them. For the witches themselves are imaginative, and believe oft-times, they do that, which they do not: And people are credulous in that point and ready to impute accidents, and natural operations, to witchcraft. It is worthy of observing that, both in ancient, and late times; (as in Thessalian witches, and the Meetings of Witches that have been recorded by so many late confessions;) the great Wonders which they tell, of carrying in the Aire; transforming themselves into other Bodies; & etc. are still reported to be wrought, not by Incantations, or Ceremonies; But by ointments, and Anointing themselves all over. This may justly move a Man to think that these Fables are the Effects of Imagination: for it is certain, that Ointments do all (if they be laid on any thing thicke,) by Stopping of the Pores, ... and send them to the Head extremely. And for the particular Ingredients of those Magical Ointments, it is like they are Opiate and Soporiferous. For Anointing of the Fore-head, Neck, Feet, Back-Bone, we know is used for Procuring the Dead Sleeps: and if any man

> say, that this effect would be better done by Inward Potions; answer may be made, that the medicines which go into the Ointments are so strong, that if they were used inwards they would kill those that use them: and therefore they work protently, though outwards.[3]

Cultural beliefs, set and setting, along with the substances used, influenced the nature of these visions, and the "trip" taken. "...[N]o substance, no ecstatic technique, can by itself, cause the recurrence of such complex experiences. Against all biological determines one must emphasize that the key to this codified repetition can only be cultural. Nevertheless, the deliberate use of psychotropic or hallucinogenic substances, while not explaining the ecstasies of the followers of the nocturnal goddess ... and so on, would place them in a not exclusively mythical dimension" (Ginzburg, 2004). However, some of the plants used in witchcraft, are generally known for producing nightmarish, rather than dreamlike visions. "The flying ointments contained goodies like belladonna, henbane, nightshade, etc. The really dangerous neurotoxins – which may account for the 'terrifying appearance' of a lot of the Goetic spirits too" (Leitch, 2016).


*A witch casting spells over a steaming cauldron. Engraving by H.S. Thomassin (1687-1741) after Demaretz. Note the open grimoires, plant bundles, human remains, and other items of*

*magical invocation included in this engraving.*

This seems to be the line of thinking expressed by Doctor of Theology of the Paris Clergy, M. L'Abbé Lecanu, in his elaborately titled, *Histoire de Satan: sa chute, son culte, ses manifestations, ses œuvres, la guerre qu'il fait à Dieu et aux hommes: magie, posessions, illuminisme, magnétisme, esprits frappeurs, spirites, etc., etc. : démonologie artistique et littéraire, association démoniaque, imprégnation satanique ou le sacrement du diable* (History of Satan: his fall, his worship, his manifestations, his works, his war with God and men: magic, possessions, illuminism, magnetism, spirits, spiritists, etc.: Artistic and literary demonology, demonic association, satanic impregnation or the devil's sacrament) (1861):

> We know ... of the composition of the ointment by the means by which the sorcerers procured themselves the ecstasy that represented the pleasure of the Sabbath to them. Predisposed to the habit of these kind of visions, could they dream of any other thing? And moreover, we know that the kind of hallucinations caused by a similar substance is often the same. So it seemed to assist them to their favourites gathering; to be carried through the sky by the Idol that they had by custom Adored, and the next day, awakening, they found themselves exhausted, with lassitude and fatigue, from a nightmare that seemed to them a reality; so that most, all maybe, believe it in good faith. The base of this ointment, named Terrible Unguent, was always the inactive carrier; but Ache, henbane, hemlock, poppy added their dangerous properties. Belladonna, furious nightshade, Aconite, berle, cinquefoil, acorum, poplar buttons came to be joined with the soot, to make it even more terrible.
>
> And if after the external use, and even sometime internal use of similar substances, death did not commonly follow, it's that their combinations in exact proportions were the fruits of long experiences and of scholarly research. The Chinese's that poison themselves with Opium or with Hashish, also knows the quantity that suits for not dying.
>
> These are, the transports by the Devil for which of a great number of sorcerers have perished in the flames, the judges not knowing better themselves in discerning fantasy from reality: but finally, after observation, it is possible to note, by a great number of examples, that the no "transportation" took place, and as always we had to come back to the church decisions: the transport of magicians by the Demon to the Sabbath is imaginary. Paolo Minucci, Lawyer law-consultant of Florence, living in XVIIe (17) century; André Laguna, Medicine Doctor to Pope Jules III; Bodin, Jean Baptiste à Porta, Alciat, the Cardino Cajetan, Pierre Rémy, have engaged to these kind of

research's. The famous Gassendi himself did not remain a stranger, and all have noted the same fact of a furious sleep occasioned by some liniments soporific (Lecanu, 1861).

One of the myths of the witches' salve is that the fat of a baby was used in its composition. In this regard, it should be noted that similar Christian accusations were hurled against the Gnostics before this, and by early detractors of Christianity against Christians, and later Christians against Jews, so it seems doubtful that there is much validity to this claim. The Sufi Master Idries Shah has suggested that mandrake may account for the accusation that witches used babies in the preparations of their potions ointments.

> It will be remembered that the witches made a brew from the bodies or severed members of unbaptized babies. The mandrake root, it will be remembered, is "human" in shape. It is traditionally thought of as a tiny simulacrum of a human being. A tiny human being is a child. As a plant we could hardly expect it to be duly baptized. And ingredients of the ointment seem to be this form of an "unbaptized one" (Shah, 1964).

Shah claimed to have had an experience with mandrake himself. Using the pseudonym of Akron Daraul, in his book *History of Secret Societies* (1961), Shah relates the story of an interview over a meal with a Tibetan Lama, who projected Shah's soul out of his body. He claimed to have saved a sample of the meal shared and to have had it analyzed in a chemical laboratory, and found that it contained evidence of mandrake and henbane.

Scopolamine is the primary active constituent of *Mandragora officinarum*, and due to the potential overdose, as with the chemical ingredients of some of the other plants used in witches ointments, it was often applied topically for safety reasons or when ingested, prepared with those by skill in working with it. As we saw earlier, mandrake's use for magical purposes goes back to ancient times, and at times it has appeared in recipes with cannabis. "Moses Maimonides, most learned of the medieval Jewish theologians regarded mandrake as useful in virtually all forms of sorcery" (Wilson, 1973). "Hildred of Bingen (twelfth century) observed that 'In mandragora the influence of the devil is more present than in other herbs; consequently man is stimulated by it according to his desires, whether they be good or bad'" (Pope, 1977).

However, others took accounts about witches making flying ointments from babies much more seriously. Lord Veralum is quoted as describing in Francis Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum* (1627): "the ointment that witches use is reported to be made of the fat of children digged out of their graves; of the juices of smallage, wolfbane, and cinquefoil,

mingled with the meal of fine wheat; but I suppose the soporiferous medicines are likest to do it, which are henbane, hemlock, mandrake, moonshade, or rather nightshade, tobacco, opium, saffron, poplar-leaves, &c." All this is generally considered a fantasy of the church however, from what we have seen of the use of human remains in *The Picatrix*, and elsewhere, it is not completely without the realm of possibilities in some cases. Such interpretations were taken quite literally for centuries, and even in the modern imagination, babies as an ingredient of the witches' ointment is still part of the myth and lore.

In *Mysteries of Magic*, C.J.S. Thompson claims a 16-17th century formula of a witches' ointment consisted of "*Verspertillionis sanguinem* and *Solanun somniferum* boiled together in oil. To this Indian hemp and stramonium were sometimes added, and the whole made into an ointment with the blood and fat of nightbirds" (Thompson, 1927/2005).

Unfortunately, Thompson lists no source for this, and his recipe seems to have been in part derived from one given by Della Porta (1535-1615), with the suggestion of possible additions from the 19th century magus, Eliphas Levi (born Alphonse Louis Constant; 1810-1875), the famed defrocked monk turned magician, who is often credited with the magical revival of the 19th century. Levi listed the first part of Della Porta's recipe and added "We imagine that opiates like the pith of green hemp, datura stramonium, and the laurel-almond, would enter with no less success into similar compounds. The fat or blood of night-birds joined to such narcotics, with the ceremonies of black magic, would impress the imagination and determine the direction of dreams" (Levi/Waite, 1897). Levi's comments on witches potions and ointments have influenced the imaginations of generations since.

> In the middle ages, the necromancers profaned tombs and compounded philtres and ointments with the grease and blood of corpses; they mixed aconite, belladonna, and poisonous fungi therewith; then they boiled and skimmed these frightful mixtures over fires composed of human remains and crucifixes stolen from churches; they added the dust of dried toads and the ashes of consecrated hosts; then they rubbed their foreheads, hands and stomachs with the infernal ointment, drew the Satanic pentacle, and evoked the dead beneath gibbets or in desecrated cemeteries. Their howlings were heard at great distances, and the belated traveller fancied that legions of phantoms were issuing from the earth; the very trees assumed in his eyes affrighting shapes, flaming orbs seemed glaring in the thickets, while the frogs of the marshes appeared to repeat hoarsely the words of the Sabbath. It was the mesmerism of hallucination and the contagion of madness

(Levi/Waite, 1886).[4]

The reference to fungi is interesting, and one wonders if fly agaric or some other psychoactive species is what is specifically referred to. Levi mentions mushrooms elsewhere in reference to nefarious "philtres" that "extracted the poisonous and narcotic humour from fungi" (Waite/Levi, 1886). As Hatsis has noted, the renaissance French physician Jean de Nynauld made reference to an "ointment of sorcerers" that included the addition of "sleepy" and maddening" mushrooms. These were used along side "henbane, opium, deadly nightshade, and other drugs '... by the devil to disturb the enslaved mind ... [cause] various figures and representations on the senses ... [and] show the shadows of the underworld'" (Hatsis, 2015). Although I am unclear as to the effect of mushrooms in a topical application, and I am doubtful of such, this may indicate some folk or magical awareness of mushrooms that Nynauld picked up on and worked into his account; or a case of 'contagious' or sympathetic' magic," i.e., whereby things known in magic, in this case its effects, and assuming that somehow any association with the substance brings some of that spirit in.

Other 19th-century authors also included cannabis in variations of the "flying ointments" of the medieval period. Paschal Beverly Randolph, (1825-1875), in reference to a "stimulant powder" containing henbane, hashish, cannabis, belladonna, datura and garlic, that he used for mirror scrying, also seemed to have taken references to human fat in the ointment quite literally:

> The stimulant powder was prepared in the middle ages by the maceration of plants in human fat. This bizarre procedure was motivated by the knowledge that various substances will more effectively penetrate the pores of the operator if the conductor that is on his skin is identical with that which is found under the skin.
>
> Good results can be obtained, however with the fat extracted from the sweat of the experimenter.
>
> But in the face of numerous difficulties of this preparation, we have replaced human fat with animal fat...[5]

This was not an uncommon practice among occultists, well into the 20th century. "Variations of flying ointment were also used by occultists and high magicians as a way to open astral doorways, using ingredients such as hashish, hemp flowers, poppy seeds, hellebore, cinquefoil and belladonna" (Bramshaw, 2009). However, none of these recipes can be traced beyond the 19th century.

In his extensive study of source material, Thomas Hatsis felt he was unable to find any evidence that identified the use of cannabis in "witches' ointments." in this respect, it should be noted that, if European cannabis was

used topically, any effect beyond a mild medical CBD is doubtful. Moreover, considering some of the other ingredients used in such preparations, even if quality cannabis was used, it is unlikely that it would be felt much compared to henbane, datura, and mandrake, etc. Topical preparations of cannabis are by no means the best delivery system for its psychoactive properties. However, cannabis could conceivably have played a medicinal role of sorts in such preparations, perhaps acting against the neurotoxicity and toxicity of some of the other plants involved.

Hatsis notes only a single reference in an "anonymous fifteenth-century leechbook ... [that] differs from others [recipes] in its lack of magical prepwork ... [and is on] the border between folk medicine and learned medicine..." (Hatsis, 2015). The recipe for the "Emplastrum bonus strutorium" referred to, "contained known psychoactives including cannabis ... nightshade, and henbane" (Dawson, 1934).[6] Hatsis suggests that this recipe "is one of only a few mentions of that plant anywhere in the medieval record; its sporadic inclusion in recipes makes it unlikely that it was used regularly, and so therefore not to be discussed in this chapter [Roots of Bewitchment]" (Hatsis, 2015).

However, Hatisis does not include the pivotal magical document *The Picatrix* in his study, and this foundational grimoire likely influenced both low and high magic, and contains a number of recipes involving cannabis, opium and other drugs. As well, later renaissance period references to magical ointments that contained cannabis were also discluded. Further, after discounting cannabis, Hatsis goes onto directly mention *The Lacnunga*, another Leechbook (old English medical text) in the very next paragraph, in reference to the holy salve, which as we have seen in Chapter 8 contained cannabis, and which he fails to identify. Although a Christian-themed text, *The Lacnunga* does contain spells and charms, as well as recipes that included typical witch drugs such as henbane and hemlock, but these seem to be more directed at medical effects; although in many ways medicine and magic are inseparable in this period.

In this regard it is also important to remember that plants like mandrake, monkshood, cannabis, opium, belladonna, henbane, etc., besides having an association with witchcraft, also held recognized roles in medieval medicine, which itself often included spells and prayers along with medicinal recipes; thus we find such plants in Old English "Leechbooks." However, in later medieval times, the cultural and church's distinction between medical applications of such substances and their use for witchcraft became increasingly blurred:

> Up to the Renaissance period, the "wise women" or "cunning folk" – the "white witches" – were seen as helpful, if not valuable members of the community.

> Their knowledge of the healing properties of various plants and herbs was often passed down through the generations, and their role was seen as providing help for people in need. They were clearly distinguished from the "black" witches, who were described as those who practiced the secret arts in order to do physical or practical harm to others. This distinction between "white" and "black" witches, however, was lost during the hysteria of the era of witch hunts.
>
> The fear associated with witches and witchcraft rapidly increased in Europe and the Catholic Church included in its definition of witchcraft "anyone with knowledge of herbs, as those who use herbs for cures did so only through a pact with the Devil, either explicit or implicit." The penalty of death by burning was meted out to anyone in possession of such herbs, many of which had hallucinogenic effects (Brown, 2014).

The association between witches' ointments and cannabis became widely held throughout most of the 20th century. A 1965 article in the *New Scientist*, which took up the scientific explanations of Cardano, and other medieval authors of witchcraft, explained in an article "Drugs of the Devil":

> Of more immediate interest in the study of witchcraft are ... drug[s] which have been known for much longer in Europe and the East.... The Solanacease ... group of plants ... comprise 85 genera and 1800 species, a few of which are of importance to us. One is Atropa belladonna which should, on its name alone, have merited more attention. The Cannabinacea are a second important group and include the common hop and the rather more potent hemp (Barnett, 1965).

Similar claims have been notably made in Ernest Abel's *Marihuana: The First Twelve Thousand Years*, (1980) and Jack Herer's *The Emperor Wears No Clothes: The Hemp and Marijuana Conspiracy*.

> Invariably, whenever medieval artists turned to the subject of the Witches' Sabbath, they depicted a group of women, who were usually naked, compounding a mysterious drug in a large cauldron. As early as the fifteenth century, demonologists declared that one of the main constituents that the witches compounded for their heinous ceremony was hemp.
>
> ...In 1615, an Italian physician and demonologist, Giovanni De Ninault, listed hemp as the main ingredient in the ointments and unguents used by the devil's followers. Hemp, along with opium, belladonna, henbane, and hemlock, the demonologists believed, were commonly resorted to during the Witches'

> Sabbath to produce the hunger, ecstasy, intoxication, and aphrodisia responsible for the glutinous banquets, the frenzied dancing, and the orgies that characterized the celebration of the Black Mass. Hemp seed oil was also an ingredient in the ointments witches allegedly used to enable them to fly.
>
> Jean Wier, [Johann Weyer] the celebrated demonologist of the sixteenth century, was quite familiar with the exhilarating effects of hemp for sinister purposes. Hemp, he wrote, caused a loss of speech, uncontrollable laughter, and marvelous visions. Quoting Galen, he explained that it was capable of producing these effects by "virtue of affecting the brain since if one takes a large enough amount the vapors destroy the reason" (Abel, 1980).

Unfortunately Abel identifies no source for his 15th century account, and I could find no other reference for his claims about De Ninault, (who was actually French and not Italian, as listed by Abel) and any other citations I saw of this, which were numerous, seemed to all reference Abel, or be derived from him. I was also unable to obtain confirmation of Abel's reference to hemp being used in "unguents used by the devil's followers" – he cites, A. De Pasquale, (1967).[7] He also refers to Agrippa[8] but here, after extensive research, and although I did not see this particular edition of the work cited by Abel, I did see other translations, I am almost certain he is incorrect. Although Agrippa does identify other traditional witch ointment plants, there is no reference to cannabis in this context in his work that I could find. In reference to hemp seed oil being used in ointments, he cites Kemp (1935),[9] whose own estimation is likely colored by other 19th and 20th century writers, rather than sources from the time period. And as we shall see shortly with a closer look at the works of "Jean Wier" aka Johann Weyer, is not a particularly accurate account of what he wrote.

However, it should be noted that many of these works are in Latin and other tongues, and this includes grimoires as well. Moreover, the Latin used is often almost a phonetic sort in parts of some medieval works, as they are not easily translatable. So it is important to remember that, though I did not find other references to these particular sources, or was unable to obtain access to the works referenced in English, or in the original, this does not totally discount their possible existence and Abel's citation. I am certain that as more access to such material becomes available through the Internet, new translations will appear, and much new material on cannabis' history in this realm will come to light.

Jack Herer, a pivotal and foundational figure in the reinvigorated interest in industrial hemp and medical marijuana, wrote: "Saint Joan of Arc ... was accused in 1430-31 of using a variety of herbal 'witch' drugs, including

cannabis, to hear voices" (Herer 1990-95). Due to the popularity of Herer's work this has become part of modern cannabis historical lore. However, although it is suggested Joan of Arc may have spun hemp, I could find no references to support the suggestion she used it for prophetic purposes beyond Herer, although she was accused of using mandrake in her court proceedings. The Prosecutor asked, "What have you done with your mandragora?" eliciting the neater Sainted Joan's response, "I have no Mandragora and never had any. I have heard it said that near to my town there is one, but I have never seen any."[10] So, although a "witch drug" is suggested, there is no evidence for cannabis use, beyond her association with weaving hemp and wool. Although, weaving of hemp has been associated with an impish figure who was celebrated by some witches, as we shall see in Chapter 17.

Another confounding factor in understanding the actual relationship of cannabis with medieval and renaissance witchcraft, is the neo-witchcraft that has come through the *Book of Shadows* by Gerald Gardner (1884-1964), which is thought to have been put together by him in the late 40-50s. Gardner's book is still in print, and is known popularly now as *The Gardnerian Book of Shadows*, and Gardner is considered the "Father of Wicca." Gardner made numbers of references to the use of cannabis in "Wiccan magic," and gave the tantalizing warning that "Hemp is especially dangerous, because it unlocks the inner eye swiftly and easily" (Gardner, 2013). Although he claimed his book was derived from medieval sources, it is generally recognized that the majority of the text was created using the works of Aleister Crowley, from *Arcadia*, or the *Gospel of the Witches* (Leland, 1899), the 14th to 15th century grimoire, *The Key of Solomon* and also from the rituals of Freemasonry. Much of modern "Wiccan" practice has more to do with Gardner than actual medieval or renaissance era witchcraft.

Although between the accounts in the *Lacnunga*, in the 11th century, and the single reference found by Hatsis in a 15th century "Leech Book," there seems to be no reference to cannabis that connects it with witches' ointments, after this period, as we have seen, in at least two, 16th century grimoires, *Sepher Raziel: Liber Salomonis* (1564) and the *Book of magic, with instructions for invoking spirits, etc.* (ca. 1577-1583) we do find references to topical preparations of cannabis. Moreover, in both cases it is described for magical purposes, in one case, for seeing "deuills [devils] & other things" and in the other to "call spirits, & thoue shalt see them & have power to binde & to loose them." However, it should be noted, as we saw in Chapter 15, the later Ggrimoire recipes for cannabis seem to be void of many of the potent narcotic nightshades used in earlier preparations. Thus, although a later role for cannabis in magical ointments is certain, it is hard to argue with Hatsis' thorough research in regard to the lack of evidence for

cannabis in the traditional witches' flying ointment recipes.

Hatsis' collection of contemporary recipes and trial accounts is convincing, and he has done a great service, sorting myth from reality in this area of history, particularly in regard to the witches' use of drugs. Unfortunately, other eager researchers (yours truly included) have repeated some of the earlier claims, not realizing them to be incorrect until access to older documents became more readily available. And I for one am thankful for the diligent research of people like Tom Hatsis, who has made it his quest to remedy this quagmire of misinformation by going back to original Latin sources and other period documents. For the most part, Hatsis' thorough assessment of the subject and his translations of time period documents is extremely convincing.

Paul Devereux has suggested that "Medieval 'witches' sometimes rubbed themselves with goose grease, perhaps enriched with hallucinogenic herbs, as a symbolic gesture of supernatural flight: and that "the night flights were known as 'grease flights' and the night travelers themselves called 'grease birds' or 'lard wings'. All this was the vestige of archaic spirit-flight symbolism invested in the goose, as expressed in the iconography of Siberian shamans, the literature of Vedic India, and in archaeological finds of geese effigies in the graves of Inuit (Eskimo) shamans who migrated into North America from Siberia" (Devereux, 1997/2008). Christian Rätsch and Claudia Müller-Ebeling have suggested that there is a connection here to "Mother Goose" of fairy tale lore, who is often portrayed as a witch in this as well (Rätsch & Müller-Ebeling, 2006).

## *The Smoke of the Black Cauldron*

Although the focus seems to be on ointments when it comes to witches, it has also been suggested there may have been a role for fumigation as well. *In Strange Fire*, Frederick Dannaway suggests the preparations of the Witches' ointments was likely a fumigation ritual in and of itself.

> There is little discussion in the vast witchcraft literature of psychoactive incenses or fumigations as a ... mode of ingestion ... the primary attention is ... given to the role of the flying ointments. The artistic representations of witches, from the quaint German woodblocks... are repositories of actual witchcraft practices or contemporary folklore beliefs. The images are often gruesome and contain many famous witching implements such as the ever bubbling cauldron that fills the room with great clouds of smoke. Given the prominence of smoke in these images, often carrying a witch out of a chimney or erupting in fumes that fly the witch on the back of a goat, one wonders if inhalation was not really the primary mode of ingestion. The thick smoke in the pictures is not really consistent with the making of an ointment or salve, as that amount of smoke would indicate scorching and thus the alkaloids would be lessened in the residue having been released into the air.
>
> ...I speculate that the unguents and ointments found by demonologists and other persecutors consisted mainly of burnt residue from the toxic and semi-toxic substances that were incinerated and inhaled. A smoke filled room or cave, full of leering demonic faces, is a most common feature in these artistic representations and perhaps the witches spread the remains upon themselves (note: as there was already a connection with the incense in the Old Testament with the anointing oil, there may have remained magical associations for dual uses). This would be a more rapid and perhaps more powerful means of administering the alkaloids that inhibited the neurotransmitter acetylcholine and thus stimulating, en masse, the sensations of flight and similar hallucinations (Dannaway, 2010).

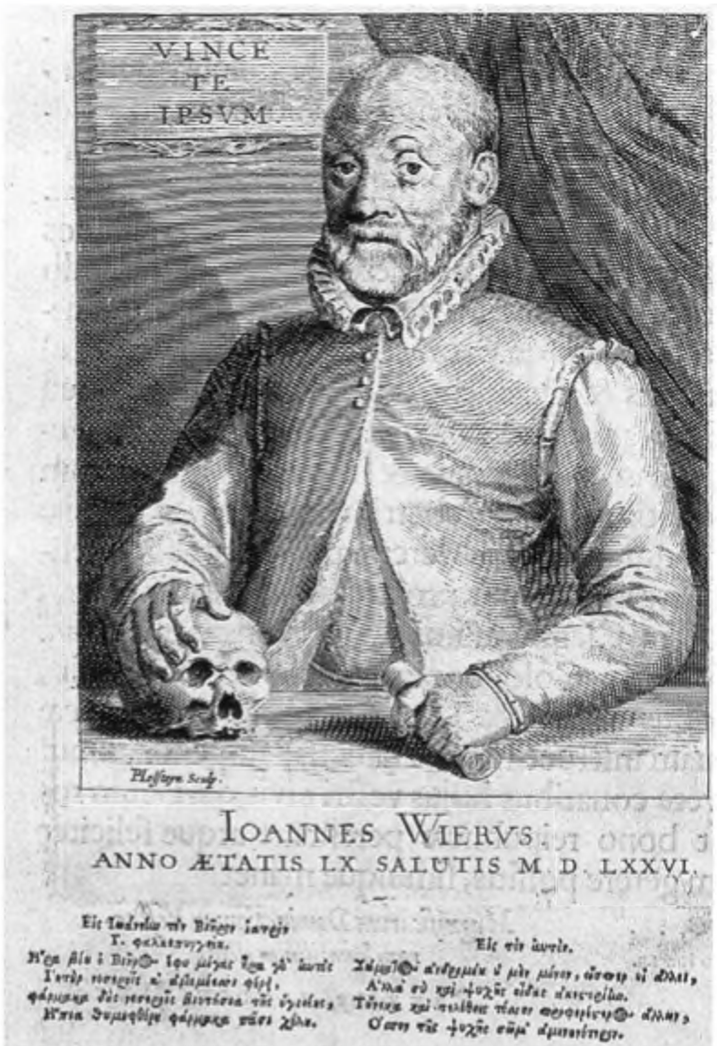
*The Witches, Hans Baldung (1510)*

In *Drugs of the Devil*, Bernard Barnett suggests black candles used in witches' circles acted as carriers of potent drugs for fumigation:

> "To hold a candle to the Devil" is an old expression and arises from the use of candles at the Sabbat. An important incidental feature confirms the presence of drugs. The candles are described as black and as burning a blue flame. This colour is most readily produced by the presence of potassium, presumably in the form of plants in the actual candle... (Barnett, 1965).

***Dr. Johann***

## *Weyer: On the Illusions of the Demons and on Spells and Poisons (1563)*




Dr. Johann Weyer (1515-1588), a Dutch physician, occultist and demonologist, also seemed to discount the use of cannabis in early medieval witchcraft. Weyer was a disciple and follower of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, who as we have seen was familiar with *The Picatrix*, and is also known to have recorded fumigation recipes that contained poppy, henbane and other psychoactive ingredients. Weyer is also among the first to publish works that were against the persecution of witches. It was in his *De Praestigiis Daemonum, Et Incantationibus ac veneficiis* (On the Illusions of the Demons and on Spells and Poisons, 1563) that Weyer first put forth the view that witchcraft could be explained with medical knowledge and required no supernatural explanation. *De praestigiis demonum* is widely seen as a rebuttal of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487) by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger. Known as the "Hammer of the Witches," *Malleus Maleficarum* was notoriously used in their persecution. Centuries later Sigmund Freud would write that Weyer's work on witchcraft was one of the ten most important works of psychiatry, for its scientific explanations of the subject of witchcraft and its humanistic approach.

Part of Weyers' explanation of witchcraft lay in his understanding of the substances contained in the ointments and potions used by witches. "Based on studies of the hallucinogenic effects of of such drugs as belladonna, cannabis indica, Thebaic opium and hysoscyamus, he came to the conclusion that so-called witches were in fact under the influence of these and other drugs contained in the salve which they rubbed on their bodies" (Srigley, 2000). However, he did not completely deny the interference of demonic forces at play.

> Weyer discusses mind-altering herbs such as opium, mandrake, cannabis and nightshade. "If I have established that a profound sleep is produced by the power of the ointment, and that such dream-images are meanwhile imprinted by the Devil, how can anyone claim the imagination is unimpaired in these cases?" ... Toxic effects cannot be attributed to the herb alone, but reacquire demonic intercession (Classen, 2014).

In regard to the plants used, Weyer certainly downplayed the use of cannabis, and also showed his lack of knowledge on both its history and effects. Referring to the Turks "use of a powder called Heiran luc" Weyer explained:

> Whoever takes about a spoonful says nothing but bursts into laughter, thinking that he is seeing marvellous sights; his gestures are such that he provokes great mirth among all the spectators. When he returns to his senses, he insists that he has been in these places or those places, and that he has seen wondrous sights. If questioned, most of these people say that the powder is derived from cannabis or hemp. But although cannabis taken in slightly larger doses, strikes the brain (according to the teachings of Galen), sending up vapours because of great heat, I would suspect rather that the powder is prepared from gelotophylis, this plant is known to the Turks. It comes from Bactria around Borysthenes, and if it is drunk with wine and myrrh, allegedly various images float before the eyes, and one cannot stop laughing unless he drinks of palm wine with the addition of pine-nut kernels and pepper and honey. Or else one might conjecture, not without reason, that the powder is made from "manic" nightshade, or nightshade furiousus. Dioscorides informs us that one dram of the root of this plant, taken in wine, elicits empty forms and images of not unpleasant kind, but he adds that a double dosage brings mental disorientation for three whole days. But since the Turks have compared the efficacy of the powder Heiran luc to cannabis, then perhaps it is made from the plant which in India is called Bangue, a plant not dissimilar to cannabis (as Garcia de Orta, the physician of the Viceroy of India attests), except that the seed of this herb is smaller than that of cannabis and not so white. Also the woody shoots, unlike cannabis, have virtually no hull. from the crushed leaves, and sometime from the seed, juice is expressed, and it is taken mixed with nutmeg or gariophillis, or with ambergris and musk, and those who have drunk of it are carried into a sort of ecstasy and freed from all care, laughing much of the time. Therefore, the great Sultan Badur used to claim that when he wished to attack

> Portugal, Brazil, Asia Minor, Arabia and Persia in his dreams, he simply too a little Bangue... [talks about the use of datura, by Indian robbers, to stupefy victims for robbery, and tobacco] Also I must not omit what people say about theangelis (which grows in Lebanon in Syria)-namely, that after swallowing it men predict the future. In my opinion, however, those who ate thereof were possibly driven insane, so that the Devil insinuated himself into these now-ready 'instruments,' and ambiguously or lying predicted the future, in his usual manner. Similarly, it is said that after drinking potamantis (which is found by the river Indus) men are driven mad by the wondrous sights hovering before their eyes (Weyer, 1563).[11]

From Weyer's description we learn that he both disavowed first-hand accounts and relied on much more ancient material in putting together his assessment. Despite local claims that "Heiran luc" was a preparation of cannabis, he completely disregards this indigenous knowledge, and then goes on to suggest a variety of plant names that came down to us through the works of Pliny (23-79 a.d.) and Democritus (c.a. 460 b.c.), terms that were highly unlikely to have even been in common use for centuries by that time.

Pliny (23-79 a.d.) quoted the following description from Democritus[12] (c.a. 460 b.c.):

> The thalassægle he speaks of as being found on the banks of the river Indus, from which circumstance it is also known as the potamaugis. Taken in drink it produces delirium, which presents to the fancy visions of a most extraordinary nature. The theangelis, he says, grows upon Mount Libanus in Syria, upon the chain of mountains called Dicte in Crete, and at Babylon and Susa in Persia. An infusion of it imparts powers of divination to the Magi. The geolotophyllis, is a plant found in Bactriana , and on the banks of the Borysthenes. Taken internally with myrhh and wine all sorts of visionary forms present themselves, excite the most immoderate laughter, which can only be put an end to by taking kernels of the pine-nut, with pepper[13] and honey, in palm wine.

Numbers of authors and translators have identified gelotophyllis as cannabis. As Dr. Ethan Russo has noted, the "gelotophyllis grows in Bactria and along the Borysthenes":

> The Borysthenes River of Pliny's narrative is identified as the Dnieper, probably in the present day Ukraine, which was part of the empire and territory of the cannabis-using Scythian tribes.... The reference to Bactria is key, as actual physical remnants of

cannabis flowers and seeds, along with opium poppies and ephedra, dating to the late third or early second millennium B.C. have been excavated in Margiana (in present-day Turkmenistan).... Excavation has yielded artifacts supporting usage of these plants ritually as Haoma-Soma hallucinogens (Russo, 2007).

## *The Unholy Wine of the Sabbath*

In regard to the sorts of cannabis-infused wines discussed in relation to Weyer, it is worth noting that Eliphas Levi also recorded a rather gruesome account of what he saw as the medieval black magic version of the Sabbath, which included a cannabis and opium-infused wine (although as with much of his writings, and his claim for the addition of cannabis in the witches' salve, he offered little as to how he came to this information):

> ...the diabolic Sabbath of the necromancers ... was a spurious imitation of that held by the magi.
>
> Horrible rites were practised at it and abominable' potions composed. Here sorcerers and sorceresses made their plans and instructed one another how to sustain mutually their repute for prophecy and divination, for diviners were generally consulted at that epoch, and exercised a lucrative calling while possessing a veritable power...
>
> The evokers of the devil must before all things belong to a religion which believes in a devil who is the rival of God. To have recourse to a power we must believe in it. A firm faith being therefore granted in the religion of Satan, here is the method of communicating with this pseudo-God :
>
> Magical Axiom.
>
> Within the circle of its action, every Logos creates what it affirms. ~
>
> Direct Consequence.
>
> He who affirms the devil creates the devil.
>
> Conditions of Success in Infernal Evocations.
>
> I. Invincible obstinacy. 2. A conscience at once hardened by crime and most subject to remorse and terror. 3. Affected or natural ignorance. 4. Blind faith in everything incredible. 5. A completely false notion of God.
>
> It is requisite afterwards: – Firstly, to profane the ceremonies of the religion one belongs to and trample its holiest symbols under foot; secondly, to make a bloody sacrifice; thirdly, to procure the magic fork. This is a branch of a single beam of hazel or almond, which must be cut at a single stroke with the new knife used in the sacrifice; the rod must terminate in a fork which must be bound with iron or with steel made from the same knife that it has been cut with. A fifteen days fast must be observed, taking only one meal without salt after sundown; this repast must be made of black bread and blood seasoned with unsalted spices, or of black beans, and milky, narcotic herbs; every five days, after sunset, one must get drunk on wine in which five heads of black poppies

and five ounces of bruised hemp have been steeped, the whole being contained in a cloth woven by a prostitute, or, strictly, the first cloth at hand may be used, if woven by a woman. The evocation may be performed either during the night between Monday and Tuesday or that between Friday and Saturday. A solitary and prohibited place must be chosen, such as a cemetery haunted by evil spirits, an avoided ruin in the country, the vault of an abandoned convent, the spot where an assassination has been perpetrated, a druidic altar, or a former temple of idols. A black robe without seams or sleeves must be provided, a leaden cap blazoned with the signs of the Moon, Venus, and Saturn, two candles of human fat set in crescent shaped candlesticks of black wood, a magic sword with a black handle, the magic fork, a copper vase holding the blood of the victim, a censer containing incense, camphor, aloes, ambergris, and storax, mixed and moistened with the blood of a goat, a mole, and a bat; four nails torn from the coffin of an executed criminal, the head of a black cat which has been fed on human flesh for five days, a bat drowned in blood, the horns of a goat cum quo puella concubuerit, and the skull of a parricide, are also indispensable. All these horrible and with difficulty collected objects being obtained, they must be arranged as follows:-

A perfect circle must be traced with the sword, an opening or way out being, however, left; in the circle a triangle must be inscribed, and the pantacle thus traced by the sword must be dyed with blood; then, at one of the angles of the triangle the three-footed chafing-dish must be placed, which should also have been mentioned among the indispensable objects; at the opposite base of the triangle three small circles must be made for the operator and his assistants, and behind the circle of the former, not with the blood of the victim but with the operator's own blood, there must be traced the sign of the labarum or the monogram of Constantine. The operator or his acolytes should have naked feet and covered heads. The skin of the immolated victim must have also been brought, and, cut up into strips, must be placed – within the circle forming an inner circle fastened at four corners with the four nails already spoken of. Near these nails, but without the circle, must be placed the cat's head, the human, or rather the inhuman skull, the goat's horns, and the bat; they must be aspersed with a branch of birch dipped in the victim's blood, then a fire of cypress and alder wood must be lighted, and the two magic candles placed on the right and left of the operator circled with vervain wreaths.

The formula of evocation found in the magical

elements of Peter d'Apono or in the Grimoires, whether printed or in manuscript, may then be recited. Those in the Great Grimoire, repeated in the common Red Dragon, have been wilfully altered in printing, and should read as follows:-

"Per Adonai Eloim, Adonai Jehova, Adonai Sabaoth, Metraton On Agla Adonai Mathon, verbum pythonicum, mysterium salamandrae, conventus sylvorum, antra gnomorum, daemonia Coeli Gad, Almousin, Gibor, Jehosua, Evam, Zariatnatmik, veni, veni, veni."

The great invocation of Agrippa consists only in these words: "DIES MIES JESCHET BOENEDOESEF DOUVEMA ENITEMAUS." We do not pretend to understand what they mean, they have possibly no meaning, and can certainly have none which is rational, since they are of efficacy in conjuring up the devil, who is supreme senselessness. Doubtless in the same opinion, Mirandola affirms that the most barbarous and absolutely unintelligible words are the best and most powerful in black magic. Ridiculous practices and imbecile evocations induce hallucination better than rites which are calculated to keep the understanding vigilant. Dupotet affirms that he has tried the power of certain signs over ecstatics, and those in his "Magic Unveiled" are analogous if not absolutely identical with the diabolical signatures found in old editions of the "Great Grimoire." The same causes will always produce the same effects, and there is nothing new under the moon of the sorcerers any more than beneath the sun of the sages. The conjurations should be repeated in a raised tone, accompanied by imprecations and menaces till the spirit responds. The spirit is usually preceded by a violent wind which seems to howl through the whole country. Domestic animals tremble at it, and seek a hiding place; the assistants feel a breath upon their faces, and their hair, damp with cold sweat, stands up on their heads...

Evocations were frequently followed by pacts, which were written on parchment of goat skin with an iron pen and blood drawn from the left arm of the victim. The memorandum was double, the demon took away one and the voluntary reprobate swallowed the other. The mutual engagement was that the devil should serve the sorcerer for a certain number of years, and that the sorcerer should belong to the devil after a definite time. The Church by her exorcisms has consecrated the belief in all these things, and it may be said that black magic with its prince of darkness is a realistic, living, and terrible creation of Roman Catholicism; that it is even its special and characteristic work, for the priests do not invent God... (Levi/Waite, 1886).[14]

*Having a drink with the Devil at the Sabbath. Note the demon on the lower left, grinding herbs into the wine, and the witch above brewing a potion. From an illustration of the Sabbath by the Protestant clergyman Johann Jakob Wick (1522-1588).*

Curiously, in reference to this same infusion of cannabis and opium into wine, A. E. Waite, who translated the Levi quote above from the French, in a later work referred to the preparation as "the drink of rare old Rabelais" (Waite, 1887). A similar recipe can also be found in *Le livre rouge, résumé du magisme, des sciences occultes*, by Hortensius Flamel, who, it has been suggested, is "probably a pseudonym of Eliphas Levi" (Faivre, 1994) (a 1911 edition of *L'Initiaiton*, also makes this connection): "Happy dreams may be given to divert his mind by images, by signs, by words or incantations, and also by preparations such as opium and seeds of cannabis, mixed in a certain proportion, or four ounces of cannabis with half an ounce of solid opium, to which mixture you will add a grain of musk and pour it all in half a pint of old wine" (Flamel, 1842). In this reference, Levi/Flamel, attributed the recipe to "Albert-le-Grand" i.e. Albertus Magnus (1200-1280), and a grimoire *Secrets tires des livers et traits d'Albert-le-Grand* attributed to him, and a title under that name is in print by 1706. This is often referred to alongside *Secrets merveilleux de la magie naturelle et cabalistique du Petit Albert*, and both these treatises deal with magic recipes and teachings about the virtues of plants, gems, or animals. I am unclear as to their true origins, as well as the alleged authorship by Albertus Magnus, which seems doubtful. Magnus was a Catholic Bishop, and was particularly regarded for his contributions as a theologian. However, after his death a number of alchemical and magical books were attributed to him. "Much of the modern confusion results from the fact that later works, particularly the alchemical work known as the *Secreta Alberti* or the *Experimenta Alberti*, were falsely attributed to Albertus by their authors to increase the prestige of the text through association" (Katz, 1978). Although I did locate a number of opium references in a mid-18th century copy of *Secrets tires des livers et traits d'Albert-le-Grand*, as well as a recipe for henbane-infused wine, along with references to

"mandragora" and "Theriac," I was unable to verify the cannabis and opium-infused wine which Levi/Flamel refers too. However, besides the challenges of the language barrier between French and English, the spelling in these old books can be different from modern spelling, so that is not to say that the recipe is not buried in there, along with other drug recipes, and there appears to be a variety of editions under this title, and upon inspection, there are variations and differences between editions, and no indication of which one Flamel/Levi was using.

*Le livre rouge* also includes references to a similar preparation in a love philtre, said to come from a grimoire attributed to the ancient Egyptian Queen Cleopatra, *Secrets tires du liver de Cleopatre, reine d'Egypte*:

To be desired by Women

> It is necessary to take the heart of a virgin pigeon and have it swallowed by a viper: the viper will die because of the emblem of virtue and innocence that is the pigeon, while it is emblem of vice and calumny; therefore the viper will die in a more or less long time; then take her head, make it dry until it has no more smell, then crush it in a mortar with the double of hemp seed and drink the powder that will come from it in a glass of wine of four years, to which you will have mixed a few drops of the opium extract, known under the name of "laudanum"; then your complexion will become radiant, your lips rosy, and all women will desire you, whatever your age (Flamel, 1842).

It should be remembered that hempseed may mean the seeded tops of cannabis, or calyx-covered seeds, which are psychoactive, in this and other references. Interestingly, there have been claims of an earlier version of this cannabis and opium-infused wine.

> Hempseed assumes a more sinister aspect when it appears in a narcotic mixture of herbs to be steeped in wine, strained through a cloth woven by a whore, and taken as part of a 17th century ritual for questioning the dead (Deacon 1968). Further work needs to be done on herbal formulae for magical purposes, in order to determine whether the chemical components of the various plants created a desirable synergistic effect. It may be, for example, cannabis in some way modifies the effect of Hyoscyamus niger (Crawford, 2002).

However, it appears Deacon's alleged 17th-century reference, which is cited by Crawford, and who wrote about it in relation to the Elizabethan magician and alchemist Edward Kelley, is purely based on Levi as well, as Deacon quotes part of Levi verbatim, so Crawford is mistaken on this date. I also wonder if Levi's original recipe

may have in part been inspired by the following recipe from an 1828 edition of *A Supplement to the Pharmacopœia and Treatise on Pharmacology in General...*? "*Common pariah arrack*. From any kind of toddy, or jaggery, rendered more intoxicating by adding hemp leaves, the juice of stramonium [datura], and poppy heads" (Gray, 1828).

Levi's account and its imagery, along with his description of the witches ointment, if not based on actual medieval past accounts of witches, certainly colored the views of the future. Unfortunately, Levi's references to cannabis in witches' ointments and the infused wines of the Black Sabbath, have to be taken with a grain of salt, and although interesting in reference to understanding the 19th-century magical scene that he was a big part of, without citations from the the medieval or renaissance periods, these references offer little in the way of documenting the activities of medieval and renaissance witches and magicians.

## *The Phallic Broom?*

Another challenging idea proposed by Hatsis, is the now common belief that the witches applied their ointments vaginally with brooms. "Charming as this idea sounds, the true story of the broom riders involves more complex forms of folk superstition, none of which include smearing a drug paste on a broomstick and masturbating with it" ( Hatsis, 2016). Hatsis suggests the whole idea is a morbid fantasy of the witch's persecutors, rather than an actual practice, although of course he is quite clear on topical preparations being used by the witches.

When I questioned Hatsis about the alleged 13th-century account of Dame Alice Outlaw Kyteler, an Anglo-Irish woman who was prosecuted for witchcraft in 1324, where the following often-quoted description from her trial is alleged to occur regarding "'her 'pipe of ointment,' wherewith she greased a staff, upon which she ambled and galloped through thick and thin,'" he responded that he went back to the original 14th century Latin documents and the trial was indeed there, as described in later accounts. But this line was not, and seems to have been included by a later 16th century translator or copier of the court document and has passed around since. However, the image of the witch riding a broom through the air, is itself, seems to go back at least until the 13th century, but interestingly, brooms, were not always used – sometimes the stalks of plants, including hemp, were ridden:

> The riding on a broom seems to be merely a variant of riding on some kind of stick. It appears to have been performed only by the members of a coven, and only for going to a Sabbath or for use in the processional dance. The sticks were stalks of the broom-plant, of ragwort, hemp, bean, or any hollow stalk; occasionally ash-branches were used, and in the Near East witches rode on palm-branches. It seems clear, then, that the act of riding, not the stick used, was the important part of the ceremony. In Europe, though the witches rode on the stems of various plants, there is little first-hand evidence of their flying through the air; the recorder has only "heard tell" of such a feat (Murray, 1933).

*Depictions like that of Albrecht Dürer's 'shrieking siren' of a witch riding backwards on a goat, c1500, and seemingly pleasuring herself with a broom, have likely contributed to the suggestion that witches used this method for vaginal application of their ointments.*

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[1] From a quote in (Hatsis, 2015).

[2] As quoted in (Murray, 1933).

[3] The Works of Francis Bacon, Vol 1, (1826).

[4] From the French (Levi, 1856).

[5] As translated by (North, 1988).

[6] From a quote in (Hatsis, 2016).

[7] A. De Pasquale, Farmocognosia della "Canape Indiana"(1967).

[8] Cornelius Agrippa, De Oculta Philosphia (n.d.), vol 43; and Pierre d'Alban, Heptameron seu Elementa Magica (1567), p. 142.

[9] Kemp, P. The Healing Ritual (1935).

[10] As quoted in (Pernoud, 1994).

[11] From – Witches, devils, and doctors in the Renaissance: Johann Weyer, De praestigiis daemonum (1991).

[12] It has long been said that the philosopher Democritus was a partaker of such potions. "There is a tradition ... that the philosopher Democritus (ca. 460 B.C.E.) drank a wine doctored with myrrh and an Indian plant called potamantis or 'mantic-drink' to induce delirium and visionary states, characterized by fits of immoderate laughter, for which reason he was known as the 'laughing philosopher.'" (Ruck, et al., 2007).

[13] Interestingly, pepper is still a recommended remedy for countering cannabis intoxication.

[14] From Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie (1856).