

CHAPTER 12

GEITR THE GOAT GOD

In ancient Sumeria and the pre-Aryan civilizations of the Indus Valley, cylinder seals—an ancient means of signing documents—have been found depicting the transformation of a man, through combat with a goat, into a half-man, half-goat creature who goes on to wrestle with a bull. This goat-god, who has a goat's legs, ears and horns and the torso and face of a man, is the god of the barren wilderness who is identical to the Egyptian Min, the Classical Pan, the Nordic goat-demon Geitr, and the Hebraic god Yahweh. During the Middle Ages and the Reformation, as the god of the witches, the Goat God was known as Satan.

THE GOAT AND THE WILDERNESS

The story of the goat-demon found on the Sumerian and Harappan cylinders of the third millennium B.C. is only known through pictures. A nude man surrounded by celestial symbols battles a goat standing on its hind legs in the first panel. In the second panel, the same man, now with a goat's legs and horns, battles a bull. The figure, though, is clearly that of the later Greek and Asian deity Pan, whose name means "all." Pan's satyrs were depicted with the lower bodies of horses as were the older satyrs, or sileni. But Pan himself was always depicted with the hind quarters of a goat. But the leap from the goat-god of the Sumerian cylinder seals to Pan is one of 1,700 years. There are intermediate steps.

In Aryan India, c. 1700 B.C., a goat-headed deity, Pashupati, sits in lotus



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Pan

position among the beasts of the wilderness, where he reclines serenely among his creations. This goat would later be considered a form of Vishnu, the Creator, and not as the hostile being found in later Near Eastern myth. God of the “right hand path,” Pashupati creates and lives in harmony with the animals. Many would consider him a fertility figure.

Similarly one must consider the Egyptian god Min, who is believed to have been brought to Egypt from the Hamitic peoples of Asia. Min is a fertility god, always portrayed in the trappings of royalty and with an erect penis. However, Min, in Egypt, became syncretized with Amun.⁵³² When Min was joined with Amun, the goat was introduced into his worship in a sinister way. Women devoted to Amun were forced to have sexual intercourse with goats during an annual festival of the god. It is here that the goat-god of fertility seems to have first taken on his negative traits.

Consistent with his association with Min-Amun and those areas of Egypt that border sub-Saharan Africa, Pan is associated in the Greek mind with black Africa; his satyrs became, in later Classical texts, creatures of the black African jungle. Originally a fertility god, his later portrayal is that of the goat-demon of the wilderness. And, just as Baal, “lord of the place,” could be equated with Seth as , “the seat” or “the place,”⁵³³ Pan could be Seth as , “the woman”. Thus, in another perversion of his original role as a fertility god, Pan became a homosexual,⁵³⁴ and was depicted chasing young boys with an erect phallus.

⁵³²As discussed above in Chapters 9 and 10.

⁵³³See n. 82, 236 and 253.

⁵³⁴As is Seth, known for his effort to rape Horus, and the nymph Cainus/Cain, who may also be Baal.

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YAHWEH-SETH AND THE WILDERNESS

Egypt knew its own god of the wilderness. Long before Egypt knew Min and Amun, in its northern delta no later than 3100 B.C., the Semites who had crawled out of the Arabian desert to populate the region later known as Goshen brought with them the worship of a god they knew as Seth. When the northern Semites were defeated by the southern Egyptian worshippers of the Indo-European sky god Horus, Seth became the Semitic god of chaos – of the forces opposed to the Indo-European order – and of the wilderness. He was known as god of the “red land,” of wild beasts, of barren deserts and of darkness.

When the Temple of Amun arose in the Twelfth Dynasty it did not embrace Seth, and there is every indication that, during the Second Intermediate Period, the two forms of worship were opposed, as Seth became equated with the serpent Apep, who overturned the rule of the Amun Temple in favor of the foreign Hyksos. When Amun again became dominant, Seth was part of the demonic and foreign substrata that the Egyptians had expelled.

Yet the spread of the worship of Amun seems to have spread with the worship of the goat. In previous chapters, we have discussed the relationship between Amun and the cult of the Great Mother, which involved several male figures, including the bull, the goat, the serpent and the resurrected god. Where one finds the worship of Dionysius, the consort of the Great Mother and the resurrected god, one finds dancing in his train Pan the goat. And, as depicted on the cylinder seals of the prior millennium, one finds a contest between the worshippers of the bull and the worshippers of the goat throughout the archaeological remains of the pre-Mycenaean Peloponnese.

Shortly after the Hyksos period, the Hebrews entered the fabled land of Goshen and adopted the culture of the Egyptian Semites, including the worship of Seth and Apep. Later, they adopted at least one of the male archetypes of the religion of the Great Mother, the god Iove. The result of the adoption of these foreign gods was the creation of a composite deity, the Old Testament's Yahweh, as lord of the Hebrews.

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THE WINE

In the Bible, in Genesis 9, when Yahweh hands down the Noahide laws to Noah, he demands of Noah the blood of anything Noah slays, saying that, while Noah may keep the flesh of beasts, the blood-soul is Yahweh's. The ritual offering of blood to the earth is part of a ritual of awakening of the dead, in which the unity of the disembodied spirit with the blood soul allows a temporary manifestation of that being upon the earth. This ritual is depicted in Homer's *Odyssey*, when Odysseus speaks to the dead heroes. Insofar as Yahweh is associated with Seth-Typhon, the demonic god bound beneath the Earth, the offering of the blood of the dead to Yahweh that occurs in kosher slaughter is part of a ritual designed to awaken the bound god and unleash him once again upon the Earth.

The worship of Dionysius went a step further. The rites of Dionysius included the *omophagia*, in which participants would tear a living thing in the manner of a beast and consume its flesh and blood in the raw. Often, they would do so while intoxicated or under the influence of wine or other drugs.

In the Indo-European tradition, there is the idea of the mead,⁵³⁵ which is the divine drink that imparts wisdom to those who consume it. This conception of the magic drink is different from that of the Dionysian tradition, which equated mead with alcohol. The Indo-European mead comes from the magic wells; in the Nordic tradition, one is the well of the goddess Urd, which contains the power of the Earth; the second is the well of the ice-cold sea; and the third is the well of "the son", the giant-smith Mimir, who guards the magic grove in which the spirits of the dead will persevere through the final battle and the destruction of the world.

These conceptions of the blood-soul, the intoxicants and the mead came together to create the motif of "wine" in the worship of the god of the wilderness. That the wine is the blood of the sacrificial victim dedicated to Yahweh or to

⁵³⁵This is discussed in great detail in Chapter 14.

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Dionysius is clear from the later, Christian, adaptation of the myth of the wine as the blood of the sacrificed Jesus. The phrase “wine” may have also been used as a cover for the true nature of the rituals associated with Dionysius and Pan – rituals that were banned by many Greek city states and generally opposed by the Indo-European rulers. Yet, as the Indo-European and pre-Indo-European religions syncretized, the “wine” just as clearly took on the Indo-European idea of the mead as a font of wisdom, while never fully integrating itself into that alien tradition.

GEIRROD - GEITR

In the Nordic tradition, the god of the wilderness is Geirrod, or Geruthus.⁵³⁶ While in Egypt, the wilderness god was associated with the barrenness of the encroaching desert, in Scandinavia, the wilderness god is often called King Sniö,⁵³⁷ the god of the barren and frozen tundra.⁵³⁸ As the god of famine or hunger he is Handwan, and during the reign of King Sniö, the lands become depopulated and cultured areas are abandoned for the wild. But Geirrod has a “brother”—his opposite—identified in Nordic myth sometimes as Agnar, a fire god identical to Scef, bringer of the harvest—but more usually as Svigdur, the “champion drinker,” or Sumbli, the god of the banquet feast, a figure Rydberg equates with Ivaldi, and which later became an epithet of Odin. This brother is also sometimes identified as Gudmundus or Mimir, the god of the mead and of the glittering plains of the underworld.⁵³⁹

Ultimately, Geirrod is slain by Thor, the thunder god whose storm-rain gave the land fertility. In the story, Thor and his companions travel to Geirrod’s

⁵³⁶From ON Geir-Rothe, “spear-storm.” Geruthus is a Latinization.

⁵³⁷King Snow in English.

⁵³⁸While the western idea of chaos is often one of disorder, the ultimate nature of chaos is undifferentiated sameness – a characteristic of the desert, the tundra and the sea – three environments where human beings cannot survive for long periods of time. Thus communism, by reducing all things to the same, is essentially a doctrine of chaos, not order.

⁵³⁹In later euhemerisms the identities of Mimir and Ivaldi converge.

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hall to seek a wife from among Geirrod's daughters. One of Geirrod's daughters tries to confront Thor at a river with magic; Thor is saved by grasping a rowan-branch, and by his power to withstand all rivers and currents. When Thor arrives, Geirrod hurls a red-hot javelin at him; Thor catches it and hurls it back, impaling Geirrod, then breaking the backs of Geirrod's three daughters.

After his death, Geirrod becomes a god of the underworld, trapped in his hall in Nifelhel—the land of punishment across the River Slid from the glittering plains of Mimir. A description of these caverns of torture has been reconstructed in part by Viktor Rydberg, relying on the accounts given by Saxo Grammaticus and Tacitus, and those given in the Eddas.

Slid is a river through which murderers and those who “swear evilly”⁵⁴⁰ must wade. In it are daggers and swords that mutilate the wading dead. Across Slid is the hall of torture, whose roof is spear points and whose walls and floors are serpents. Inside, sitting on iron benches, with lead trellis-gates above them⁵⁴¹ are the souls of other murderers and perjurers, and upon them drains the waste-water of the venom of Slid, which they piss and shit in as it flows onto those seated below them in a great gallery, until, at the lowest level, submerged, are those who seduced the wives of others.

Either guarding the entrance to this hall, or dancing above or among the doomed souls are “goat-trolls,” who toss or kick the “animal skins” of the damned among them. Through a gate in a rock the visitor can then travel from this realm of punishment to the next—to Geirrod's hall, where his three daughters, their backs broken by Thor's thunderbolts, their bodies covered in tumors, writhe eternally before the seat of Geirrod, the withered old man who hangs impaled. In another chamber, on an island in a river, Loki, the greatest of the Banings, or demon-foes of man, lies bound on three rocks by his son Fenrir.

Rydberg, in analyzing these stories, concludes that Geitir, the Nordic goat-demon who is lord over the “goat-trolls,” either is or is attendant upon

⁵⁴⁰“mein svarin” – to abuse legal process, generally by committing perjury.

⁵⁴¹The “crates” mentioned in Tacitus.

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Geirrod-Geruthus, the wilderness god conquered by Thor.⁵⁴² In Saxo, we find King Handvanus of Byzantium defending his realm in the manner of this demonic being. In the Eddas, we find a dwarf Andvari standing at the entrance of the “deep dales” of Surt, guarding the door to the entrance to the Underworld. In this relationship, we find Pan playing attendant to his master Dionysius.⁵⁴³

Thus the fertility god Pan—the goat-man god of the classic world—and his satyrs — or “goat trolls”— encountered the religion of Amun and entered the north as the gods of desolation.

DANTE, THE GOAT AND SIN

In the Fourth Circle of *Inferno*, the sin of wrath is punished. Those who murdered and died violently are left to fight and kill each other eternally while slogging through a swamp of filth. Buried in the filth of this swamp are suicides and victims of self-violence, and there is no question this punishment is just, as, at one point, Dante steps on the head of a sinner who attempts to emerge from this filth.

In Purgatory, Dante witnesses the souls of the damned in a river of fire being tormented by demons who frolic among them, tossing them among themselves with pitchforks.

And at the lowest point of the *Inferno*, frozen in a sea of ice, Dante finds Satan, frozen in his pride, directly under the center of the Earth at Jerusalem, bound for eternity, until the final battle, trapped like Geirrod in the depths of Nifelhel.

⁵⁴²I think attendancy is more correct. There are clearly two figures – the king of the realms of torture and his door guard, and the door guard is almost always identified with the goat-demon and the theme of hunger.

⁵⁴³The nature of the religion of the Great Mother, which included Dionysius, is explored in chapters 8 and 9 and elsewhere.

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THE GOD OF THE WITCHES

In Medieval and Reformation Europe, as Margaret Murray, an expert on witchcraft, detailed in her excellent book *The God of the Witches*, there was a cult that existed until at least the 17th century, which would gather in the woods and dance in a circle in the celebration of a pre-Christian religion. While this cult seems to have absorbed the pieces of a number of different pre-Christian cults, a unifying theme is that of the “black man,” whom Christians named Satan, and who is often depicted as a man who is horned and with the lower parts of a goat.⁵⁴⁴

As one witch-hunter, Pierre de Lancre, wrote:

It is always observable that at any [time] when [the devil] is about to receive anyone to make a pact with him, he presents himself always as a man, in order not to scare or terrify them; for to make a compact openly with a goat smacks more of the beast than with a reasonable creature. But the compact being made, whenever he received anyone for adoration, he usually represents himself as a goat.

The circle dancing associated with the witch cult is likely derived from the dancing around the Baal-pole or the Asherah-pole, if the tradition of the Maypole dance, which appears to be a cognate rite from the same ritual root, is any indication. The goat man, and the requirement that the rites be conducted in the wilderness, indicate a link to the worship of the goat-demon. Further, Murray has noted that the times of the witch holidays matched, not the schedule of crop-rotations, but an agricultural schedule associated with the raising of livestock, indicating a further link to Pan’s role as a shepherd god.

In England, this god survived in popular memory as Robin Hood – the

⁵⁴⁴At Poitiers in 1574 and Angers in 1593, it is recorded that the “black man,” Satan, transformed himself into a goat during the practice of the rite. At Avignon in 1581, it is said that when Satan mounts the altar to be adored, “he instantly turns himself into the form of a great black goat.”

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hero of the wilderness, always robbing the priests and nobles who had rejected his worship. And, as Geirrod is accompanied by Geitr, Robin Hood was always accompanied by his Little John. Not surprisingly, in Medieval Christian Europe, both Robin Hood⁵⁴⁵ and Janicot⁵⁴⁶ were explicitly names of the Devil.

YAHWEH AND SATAN

Both the Hebrew Yahweh and his counterpart, the Christian devil Satan, integrate into their characters the idea of the “god of the wilderness.” In Egypt, the wilderness god Seth-Apep opposed the goat-god Min-Amun. Yet, the Hebrew religion appears to have integrated these opposing aspects into one being who, like both of those Egyptian figures, opposes the Indo-European gods of Egypt, the sky-father Horus, the underworld judge Osiris, and the Sun-god Re.

Thus it is with some hypocrisy that practioners of the Christian religion can embrace the Old Testament God while opposing his “nemesis” Satan. There is every indication that, at one point in their history, Yahweh and Satan were the same being – or, if not precisely the same, two beings united by close genealogical relationship in a single form of worship – that of the Great Mother.

True Christians – those who place Christ and his New Testament above the Jews and their Old Testament – should not find this idea completely incompatible with their religion, though it requires them to accept that God the Father is perhaps not the same being as the Old Testament god. Of course, the Hebrews have never believed that their god is the father of Christ – the Hebrew Talmud teaches that Christ was a gentile and a Roman, the son of a Roman soldier, Pantera, who raped – or at least had sex out of wedlock – with the “virgin” Mary.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁵Also Robin Goodfellow.

⁵⁴⁶Little John, in Basque.

⁵⁴⁷This is still upsetting to Catholics. It probably unsettles most Christians as well. The point, though, is that one does not have to abandon the doctrines of Christ to abandon the doctrines

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of the Jews. Its time for Christians to face the fact that the teachings of the Old Testament are completely incompatible with the teachings of the New Testament, and that the adoration of the Jews that is a feature of Judaized or Judaeo-Christianity is completely counter to the nature of their religion. The politicized Christianity of the United States, of course, will find this unacceptable, as will the Zionist movement, which created it.