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GREEN WITCH- FATHER

THE AGRARIAN ASPECT OF CAIN AND HIS SIGNIFICANCE AS PATRON OF SORCERY

Daniel A.Schulke

The story of Cain and Abel is most familiar to the common mind as belonging to the Old Testament of the Bible, but there is an ancient body of lore, in many cases contemporary with the Old Testament, in which the figure of Cain appears with regularity. According to the Encyclopedia Judaica, the story of Cain and Abel is 'Obviously a very old story of which only outlines have survived'. These may be of Jewish provenance, such as Rabbinical texts (Midrash, Haggadah etc.), the Targums or the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha; or of early Christian origin, such as the collection of scriptures known as the Gnostic Gospels. Additionally, a number of early Christian writers, deriding various heresies within the Church, have in doing so provided us a valuable historical oculus to glimpse the ways in which Cain was viewed by some groups at the time, and how he and the aspect of Tubal-Cain came to be associated with Freemasonry and witchcraft.

Cain in Traditional British Witchcraft

The figure of Cain appears in various guises in modern schools of Traditional British Craft, of which one is the Clan of Tubal-Cain, associated with the late magister Robert Cochrane. [1] His accessible work survives mostly in articles he wrote for Pentagram, the journal of the Witchcraft Research Association, and in various privately circulated letters. The Clan continues to work as an initiatic body of Traditional Craft. Nigel Jackson writes: 'In the Old Rite of the Craft the first witch and sire of the witches was Qayin or Tubal-Qayin, together with his sister Naamah-Lilith, the mother of all witch-blood [who] transmitted the divine flame to mortal humans as related in the legend of the Watchers' [2].

The legend of the Watchers to which Jackson refers is found in The Book of Enoch, an Old Testament pseudepigrapha whose earliest surviving copy was penned about 200 BCE. The Book treats the subject of 'fallen angels' (The Watchers) who deliver the forbidden arts of magick to mankind. Cain also appears in the traditional lore of the Cultus Sabbati, another body of Traditional Craft now centred in Essex. Andrew Chumbley, the present magister of the Cultus (sic) writes: 'In Sabbatic lore, when the 'Fire of the Ancient One' dwelt in Adam, he became the father of Initiates and the Transmitter of the Seed of the Elder Gods through the lineage of Cain, but bereft of the 'Fire' he is mere clay and the father of the profane. [3]

Chumbley's detailed recension of traditional witch lore contains an invocation of Cain in the 'Formula of the Primal Atavism as Embodied in the Races of Man': It reads as follows:

O'Ye First-born of Witch blood. O'Ye First-born of mine own Blood, who bearest the Mark of the Wise.

O Thou Nomad and King of all the Wandering Lands, Master of the Fire and the Forge,

Unveiler and Shape-shifter of the Blood and the Stone, Lord of all Horsemen, O' thou Charmer of Bones [4]

Traditionally, the words 'Tubal-Cain' serve as the password for the third degree initiation of Master Mason into Scottish Rite Freemasonry. Jackson writes: 'The role of Tubal-Qayin in certain branches of Traditional Witchery in Britain is probably due to the adoption by the lodges of the male Cunning-Men who assimilated his archetype with that of the Horned God as the Coal-Black Smith. Indeed Robert Cochrane noted that

in certain old covens a hammer and tongs was placed upon the altar in Tubal-Qayin's honour' [5] Jackson adds that Tubalo was the blacksmith-god of the Romanies, who referred to themselves as 'the Children of Cain'.

Another strand linking Cain with traditional witchcraft is the horned god/genius Asmodai or Asmoday, derived from the Hebrew demon Asmodeus, born of the incestuous union of TubalCain, the first blacksmith in the Bible, and his sister Naamah, the first weaver. In their treatment of Asmoday, 'The Bull of the Golden Horns', Jackson and Michael Howard state: 'The gypsy influence upon witchcraft provides a clue here to the peculiar nomenclature in certain strands of pre-Gardnerian witchcraft, which identify the Bull-Horned One as Asmoday or Asmodeus during the 'ritual in transfigured time' at the Saturnalia ... This properly belongs to a body of secret lore that bridges ancestral Witchery and the high gnosis of the angelic Magia, relating to the 'Fall of the Angels'. [7]

Cain the Agrarian: Green Man and Proto-Sorcerer

Most sources of ancient material mentioning Cain are in agreement that he was a farmer or 'tiller of the soil'. This horticultural cunning is apparent from birth in at least one source, The Book of Adam and Eve, another Old Testament pseudepigrapha: 'And she bore a son and he was shining; and at once the babe rose up and ran and bore a blade of grass in his hands, and gave it to his mother and his name was Cain.' [8] Cain as a patron of sorcery may be glimpsed through his standing as a farmer, lord of green things. Josephus writes: 'Now the two brethren were pleased with different courses in life: for Abel, the younger, was a lover of righteousness; and believing that God was present in all his actions, he excelled in virtue; and his employment was that of a shepherd. But Cain was not only very wicked in other respects, but was wholly intent upon getting; and he first contrived to plough the ground.' [9]

This interpretation of Cain as agrarian implies two curious things. First it is wholly consistent with traditions of him as a farmer and ward of plants. More interesting are the negative connotations associated with farming. Not only does Yahweh consider the act of stewarding plants 'a contrivance' in comparison with sheep herding it is also seen as an aberrant, symptomatology of a person 'wholly intent upon getting'. For the Jewish or Christian moralist, these traits have naught but profane implication — greed, manipulation and avarice. For a magician or sorcerer however, a mind, heart and will 'wholly intent upon getting' is essential, whether classified as theurgy or thaumaturgy.

Andrew Chumbley defines magick thus: 'Magic is the Transmutability of the Quintessence of ALL Nature' and goes on to define sorcery as: 'the Knowledge of the Points of Universal Transmutation. Its Art is to cultivate the ability to manipulate and utilise these foci of Power in accordance with Will, Desire and Belief.' [10] In Chumbley's view, one essential difference between magick and sorcery is that the former is a raw force, an energy ever present; whereas the latter is the familiarity with, access to, and successful, creative use of this power. Will, the foundation of a person 'wholly intent upon getting', is expressed as one essential barb of the formulaic trident of sorcery. In regard to the importance of will in magick, recall Aleister Crowley's definition of magick as the 'Science and Art of causing 'change to occur in conformity with Will'. [11] When we consider that the art of the farmer or plant steward was at one time surrounded by considerable reverence and religious mystery, the rubric which encapsulates horticultural cunning and craft is not that different from that of sorcery.

In certain texts Cain's knowledge of farming was taken to be an artifice, 'forcing the ground', or going against the laws of God or nature. However, The Book of Adam and Eve bears the following passage in relation to the knowledge of farming, expressing a nearly opposite idea: 'And the Lord God sent divers seeds by Michael the archangel and gave to Adam and showed him how to work and till the ground, that they might have fruit by which they and their generations might live.' [12] This puts forward an idea common to many ancient religions; that of the divine or supernatural origin of certain crops and the skills with which to grow and employ them. [13], a theme to which we will return.

Another ancient text, this time an Armenian Adam book, bears a reference to Cain the Agrarian, which bears some relation to the art of magick and sorcery: ‘And the Lord was wroth with Cain, and as a handful of dust is carried away by the wind, so he scattered all his harvest of corn and destroyed all his riches, so that not even an ear of corn could be found.’ [14] Here Yahweh’s anger is manifest in the magical destruction of Cain’s crops. But given the vast array of punishments which this particular deity was capable of meeting out (plague, war, death, insects, destruction by fire etc.) it is striking that the ruination of crops was chosen. To a man who is a farmer, he who by his will coaxes green things from the earth, the magical smiting of his crops is a very personal act. It is possible what we are witnessing in the Adam book is a ‘war of magical wills’ between Yahweh and Cain. This wilful aspect of Cain may also be interpolated through his aspect as Tubal-Cain, the smith and artificer in metals, for a wilful mind is not only required for the shaping and crafting of metal, it has come to be intimately associated with metal in idioms such as ‘iron will’ and ‘steeling one’s resolve’.

The aspect of Cain as Agrarian has other significance besides the simple implication of a will strong enough ‘to force the ground.’ In the Traditional Craft one stream of knowledge is wortcunning, or the magical knowledge of plants. [15] This often encompasses healing, spirit-working, and highly specialised learning of the virtues of herbs. In The Book of Adam and Eve we have seen that Cain was born ‘shining’ and holding a blade of grass and that one of Cain’s avocations was tilling the soil. But in the Sarnna book we find the following passage, discussing the descendants of Cain and those of his brother Seth: ‘After Cain had gone to the land of dark soil, and his children had multiplied therein, there was one of them, whose name was Genun, son of Lamech the blind who slew Cain ... Satan also taught Genun to bring strong drink out of corn; and this Genun used to bring together companies upon companies in drink-houses; and brought into their hands all manner of fruits and flowers; and they drank together.’

Witness here a legacy of herb magick thriving in the bloodline of Cain, specifically the art of zymurgy, or fermentation to produce intoxicating alcoholic spirits. In addition Cain’s descendent, Genun, disseminated ‘all manner of fruits and flowers’ to the drinking companies. This may imply anything from all the medical knowledge of diverse plants to, perhaps more accurate in the context of inebriation, the ‘forbidden knowledge’ of the magical and visionary properties of plants. This may be compared with the ‘fallen angels’ or the Watchers from The Book of Enoch to whom we have previously referred, who ‘took wives, each choosing for himself; whom they began to approach; and with whom they cohabited; teaching them sorcery, incantations, and the dividing of roots and trees.’ [16] This ‘dividing’ of roots and trees may in fact refer to plant propagation – a stream of horticultural cunning essential to an agrarian society. It may also refer to the division of plants into magical correspondence and uses, a magical taxonomy, if you will.

Forbidden knowledge is associated with plants in a slightly different way as well. In The First Book of Adam and Eve, Cain speaks with Satan: ‘ Meanwhile Satan came to Cain in the figure of a man of the field, and said to him, “Behold Adam and Eve have taken counsel together about the marriage of you two; and they have agreed to marry Abel’s sister to you and your sister to him. But if it was not that I love you, I would not have told you of this thing. Yet if you will take my advice, and obey me, I will bring to you on your wedding day beautiful robes, gold and silver in plenty, and my relations will attend you.” Then Cain said with joy, “Where are your relations?” And Satan answered, “My relations are in a garden in the north, where I once meant to bring your father Adam; but he would not accept my offer. But you, if you will receive my words and if you will come to me after your wedding, you shall rest from the misery in which you are; and you shall rest and be better off than your father Adam.” At these words of Satan Cain opened his ears, and leaned towards his speech.’

From the standpoint of evaluating Cain’s aspect as Agrarian, this passage is remarkable in two ways. First, Satan appears to Cain as a ‘man of the field’, which might imply a hunter, but is more probably a farmer or gatherer. The appearance chosen by Satan implies that it is the form in which he is most likely to gain Cain’s trust. More important, however, is Satan’s reference to his ‘relations’ – presumably other

'fallen angels' who will serve Cain – who inhabit 'a garden in the north'. We are not given the specifics of this garden, other than the fact that Satan meant to take Adam there and the latter had refused. However, owing to the promises of wealth and attendant angels, as well as rest and improvement over the lot of Adam, we may extrapolate by implication that this garden has extraordinary qualities.

Another theme linking Cain to the powers of plants occurs in the Gnostic scripture called *The Gospel of the Egyptians*: 'And he said to the great angels, "Go and let each of you reign over his world." Each one of the twelve angels went forth. The first angel is Athoth. He is one whom the generations of men call [...] The second is Harmas, who is the eye of fire. The third is Galila. The fourth is Yobel. The fifth is Adonaios, who is called 'Sabaoth'. The sixth is Cain, whom the great generations of men call the sun. The seventh is Abel; the eighth Akiressina; the ninth Yubel. The tenth is Harmupael. The eleventh is Archir-Adonin. The twelfth is Belias. These are the ones that preside over Hades and chaos.' Here Cain is seen as the solar principle, which is essentially to the nourishment of plants.

To my knowledge this is an idea unique to the Gnostics, and this identification of Cain with the sun is repeated in the Gnostic Apocryphon of John, with the same angels in identical sequence.

Finally, it worth mentioning that Cain's aspect as exile bears some curious parallels to the pre-Islamic north African god Al-Khidir (the Green One), similar in many ways to Adonis and the European folklore figure of the Green Man, who eternally wanders the Earth, returning to the same spot every 500 years. Immortalised by 'the waters of immortality', he is the patron saint of Sufic gnosticism. In the scriptures, Cain is exiled by Yahweh to the 'Land of Nod' and there is some speculation this was a symbolic land, as the Hebrew 'nad' means 'wandering'. Nigel Jackson speculates that the cult of Al-Khidir may have been adopted into some European pagan traditions. [17]

There are many aspects of Cain relevant to Traditional Craft worth investigating, such as Blacksmith, First Murderer of Man, Master of Horses, Accursed Exile, Child of the Gnostic Serpent and Marked One. This latter aspect was studied in depth by Ruth Mellinkoff (1981). In this essay however I have chosen to focus on Cain as the patron of sorcery and magick, or 'Witch-Father, in Traditional British Witchcraft and his mythos as Agrarian or Green Lord.

Notes: [1] 'What is Traditional Craft?' by Andrew Chumbley in *The Cauldron* No. 81 (August 1996) See also 'Not of This World' by Evan John Jones in *The Cauldron* No. 82 (November 1996) [2] Jackson (1996:146) [3] Chumbley (1995:68) [4] Chumbley (1992:102) [5] Jackson (1996:143) [6] *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (110) [7] 'The Bull of the Golden Horns' by Nigel Jackson and Michael Howard in *The Cauldron* No.88 (May 1998) [8] *The Book of Adam and Eve* (xxi3) [9] Josephus continues in this vein: 'Cain brought the fruits of the earth and of his husbandry; but Abel brought milk and the first-fruits of his flocks; but God was more delighted with the latter oblation, when he was honoured with what grew naturally of its own accord, than he was with what was the invention of a covetous man, and gotten by forcing the ground ...' [10] Chumbley (1992:85) [11] Crowley (1991) [12] *The Book of Adam and Eve* (xxii:ii) [13] See E.Wallis Budge, *The Divine Origin of the Craft of the Herbalist* [14] Mellinkoff (1981: 77) [15] For example, one type of wortcunning associated with British Craft is the magical herbalism of the Welsh physicians of Myddfai. See David Conway, *The Magic of Herbs* (E.P.Dutton & Co Inc USA 1973) [16] *The Book of Enoch* (7-10) [17] Jackson (1996:120-121)

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