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**The Occultural Orpheus:
Exploring Creative Seekership through
Analytic Autoethnography**

**Volume 2.
An Occultural Memoir**

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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March 2024

**Volume 2:
An Occultural Memoir**

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Introduction

A Note on Methods and Conventions

This text comprises of a series of reflections chiefly on the subject of how occulture and esotericism have influenced my thoughts and actions: particularly with regard to music-making and composition. The story of how I came to situate esoteric thinking at the heart of my musical practice – as with many things we do in later life – has its roots in my childhood, so the narrative necessarily begins by addressing my juvenile thinking on imaginative and supernatural subjects.

The reader will notice that there are two unique conventions occurring in this document, both of which are rooted in the methodological ‘groundedness’ outlined in the second chapter of the core thesis. Firstly, there are superscript date stamps, which indicate when a particular passage has been added to the text. Secondly, any theoretical ideas or insights that arise during the composition of the memoir, or on subsequent re-readings, are memoed via footnotes. Each paragraph is also numbered for ease of reference within the analytical section of the thesis.

This document covers a twenty-eight-year period. Database bibliographies and filmographies have been employed to help structure my reminiscences up to the age of sixteen. From sixteen onward, I had internet access from home and college, and left a wide-ranging, publicly-accessible digital footprint on Usenet/email discussion groups, and elsewhere on the web through personal websites (which have been stored by archive.org). These have been drawn upon extensively to produce summary of my late teens supported by documentary evidence. Finally, I have backups of my computer files going back to 2002, as well as my own archive of recordings, interviews and other media. This archive supports the more comprehensive analyses found elsewhere in the thesis, but were also employed here to inform the structure of the text, as well as providing a series of *aides memoires*.

The second section of this work also functions as a biographically-structured *catalogue raisonné*, attempting to situate my written and recorded works in their original contexts: connecting my creative output to wider autobiographical themes to provide an insightful emic reconstruction, as well as connecting them to discursive themes, both of which are explored in the analytic sections of my thesis.

A Note on Ethics & Anonymity

The autobiographical statement which follows constituted an important data source for the research presented in the first volume of this thesis. As a document which draws from both autobiographical reflection and online fora (such as newsgroups and mailing lists), boundaries between the public and private often become messy – particularly where third parties are involved in the historical narrative. The ethics of autoethnographic research have been examined by a number of practitioners (Wall 2008, 2016; Manning 2015; Edwards 2021). While Wall (2016) has made the suggestion that ‘ethical permissions in the traditional sense are not required’ (:4), she does however emphasise that rich description of the experiences of other persons may breach personal privacy, and the researcher should also carefully consider the safe limits of their own personal disclosure (:4-5). The chief ethical contention within autoethnographic research is that of relational ethics and the consideration of those implicated in any autoethnographic account (Manning 2015: 207-9; Edwards 2021). Practices drawn from ethnography are often applied in this respect, such as the use of pseudonyms, fictionalising experience, creating composite characters, or combining narratives (Manning 2015: 207). Edwards (2021) further cites the need for accountability and care to be situated at the centre of responsible autoethnographic research, while also recognising that humans are relational beings and that the self is inextricably situated in porous relationships with others (ibid.).

The consideration of the relational aspect of autoethnography is complicated by the social and technological background to the research: in which many interactions with others were carried out in public or semi-public fora, such as online discussion groups and mailing lists, or via performances and the release of musical media. I have, therefore, adopted a ‘realist’ approach to relational ethics in the spirit of Fuchs’ critical-realist ethic for social media research (2018), one key aspect of which is the anonymisation of those who do not maintain public identities.

In the context of a realist relational ethic employed here and a consideration of a duty to care and accountability, private individuals mentioned in this narrative have been anonymised by the assignation of letters in place of their names to prevent identification. Any sensitive information presented in the narrative which may also further identify such individuals has also been redacted. This consideration also extends to musical artists and bands mentioned in the narrative who have not collaborated with me, or who no longer have a public profile. All anonymised names

appear in the text in bold. Following a realist ethic, there is a small group of other individuals and groups which do have public profiles (either self-maintained through their own identities as artists or musicians, or through writings about them in the press and scholarly fora), and whose relation to me as creative collaborators or correspondents can easily be demonstrated through web-searches and online discographies – connections which would realistically also be drawn by any other scholars studying the occultural and musical milieus in question. I do not quote from any personal correspondence, and once again redact any elements of the narrative which may be considered sensitive or irrelevant to the analyses presented in volume 1.

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Fuchs, Christian. 2018. "'Dear Mr. Neo-Nazi, Can You Please Give Me Your Informed Consent So That I Can Quote Your Fascist Tweet?': Questions of Social Media Research Ethics in Online Ideology Critique', *The Routledge Companion to Media and Activism* (ed. Graham Meikle). London: Routledge.

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Part One: Juvenilia

[28/06/18] *Children often have a natural familiarity with the simple principles of magic even if they lack the persistence or encouragement to make them work.*

– Peter Carroll, *Liber KKK* (1992: 163)¹

1.1. Primary School: Werewolves, Satanists & Dream Warriors

1.1.1.

[25/06/18] I suppose that I should start by reflecting on my youth. I was born in 1980, and spent my childhood and teens in Harrogate, a fairly affluent town in North Yorkshire. My father was an antique dealer. My mother was a supply teacher, before leaving work when I was born, and resuming as a school secretary and bursar when I finished primary school.

1.1.2.

Thinking back to my time in the primary school playground when I was seven or eight, I vividly remember a friend of mine, **A**, talking about a *Nightmare on Elm Street* film she had seen – or at least said she had seen. I was, perhaps, dimly aware of the terrifying figure of Freddy Krueger, but **A**'s description of how he could harm one through dreams – and how he could also be defeated in dreams both intrigued and scared me. What felt revolutionary was that this presented dreams as another reality: something that didn't just passively 'happen' as you slept, but something that could be taken control of, and which had some relation to both natural/waking and supernatural worlds.² Being an ardent fan of He-Man at the time, I began to try and control my own dreams at night. I would lie in bed, eyes closed and imagine that I was travelling to the kingdom of Eternia. I remember that, as I lay in bed, I would feel as if I was moving – almost as though

¹ 28/06/18 – Memo – There is a discourse of re-enchantment in many forms of post-modern occultism. Ideas akin to those of Weber seem to make an intuitive sort of sense to many practitioners: chaos magick in particular often draws parallels between magical consciousness and childhood – Carroll continues 'The adult magician is seeking to regain that childlike sense of imagination, fluidity and wishful thinking, and turn it into something of real power' (1992: 163). There may be an objection to the suggestion that this infantilises magic and the pre-Enlightenment episteme.

² 25/06/18 – Memo – consider the role of 1980s occulture in informing my early beliefs.
26/06/18 – Memo – There is definitely a strong ancillary research theme here about how those of the 'xennial' generation became aware of esoteric ideas – perhaps something to follow up later in research?)

I was on a rollercoaster. I would begin to visualise actually being on a rollercoaster travelling through the lands of Eternia, toward Prince Adam's castle. I am sure that I fell asleep before I got there, but the sensation of swooping and rising movement and flashing images of tracks and countryside rising around me stays with me.³

1.1.3.

The influence of Michael Jackson's *Thriller* was also somewhat profound. I remember going to a friend's party during which we watched the famous 13-minute John Landis-directed music video. It was quite terrifying – I'd never seen an actual 'horror' film before, and had only second-hand playground accounts of such films from friends with older brothers. I was particularly entranced by the idea of lycanthropy, and my close friends and I talked about how we could become werewolves. This led me to more half-waking experiments: lying in bed at night, imagining transforming into a wolf, leaping out of the window and stalking the streets under the light of a full moon. During one school assembly, my best friend, **B**, found a thick hair – probably horsehair stuffing from some old piece of PE equipment that had been used in the hall the day before – although when he asked me if it was in fact one of my wolf hairs, I could hardly deny it!

1.1.4.

B and I were both fascinated with the supernatural and ghoulish. I remember going to his house after school – he had an older brother who told us a story – what we would now call an urban legend – with the 'don't look behind you!' motif about a woman in a car, whose boyfriend was killed by an escaped killer. The story ended with the woman ignoring police advice, and turning round to see the killer bashing her husband's decapitated head on the roof of the car. **B**'s family lived in a large old flat set across two floors of a Victorian terrace near my home, just him, his mother, older brother, and a toddler. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The flat was alleged to have been

³ 25/06/18 – Memo – I regularly have such feelings still. Are they common? Why do they occur? The 'rollercoaster' imagery undoubtedly arose from the cognition of 'swooping' and 'diving' feelings – does this have any relation to the apprehension of out of body experience?
26/06/18 – Memo - Also, 80s kids culture in general possibly has a strong occultural edge – as did the media of the 70s before that. Obviously popularisation of beliefs through counter culture has an influence – was this a renewal of the fascination with the occult and macabre evinced in pre-WWII pulp fiction: the tail-end of Gothic Romanticism, killed off for a period by the trauma of the Nazis' national romanticism? (- to echo the narrative of Adorno's anti-occult polemics)

haunted by an artist who hung him- or her-self, and I remember that once we were alone in the flat while his mother went to the shop. For some reason we climbed the stairs to explore the spare room. We started to open the door and then became convinced we could hear heavy breathing behind it, and both bolted down the stairs as fast as we could. Possibly it was **B**'s older brother playing a prank, but we were convinced that we had experienced a genuine supernatural event. ^[5/07/18] I should add that the 'Bloody Mary' urban myth also circulated at our school, wherein if you repeat the name 'Bloody Mary' three times in a mirror, a ghost will scratch your face. This made me uneasy around mirrors – and I even went through a period of fear that even accidentally mentally repeating her name might bring conjure some great calamity.⁴

1.1.5.

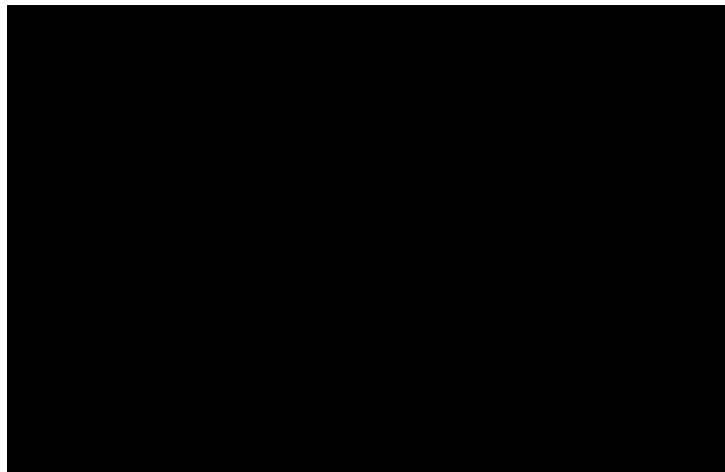
^[25/06/18] A couple of years later, aged 8 or 9, my mother bought me the book *Barmy Jeffers and the Quasimodo Walk*, by J. H. Brennan. I did not know at the time, but Brennan was himself an initiate of an occult society called the Servants of the Light, formed by Dion Fortune and W. E. Butler. The story is fairly lighthearted, about a boy who doesn't fit in (hence the 'Barmy'), and who likes to scare his sister by doing what he called the Quasimodo walk. However, it transpires that there are gateways to other dimensions, which only monsters can use – and, in imitating such a creature, Barmy inadvertently passes through into a medieval fantasy world, where he meets, amongst others, the cleric Lancelot Bong, and the magician The Amazing Presto. At one point Barmy is given a lesson in magic by Presto, which involved visualisation and chanting the phrase 'hubb-ya'. This quite impressed me, since magic was usually depicted in the media I was familiar with as some mysterious power that could simply be invoked at will. However, here was a sketch of how magic *could* work: through the focusing of concentration and the use of the imagination. Of course, I tried it many times in my room – and although I never called forth a fireball or elemental, I did feel *different*: whether due to shortness of breath, or something more. It also felt exciting.

1.1.6.

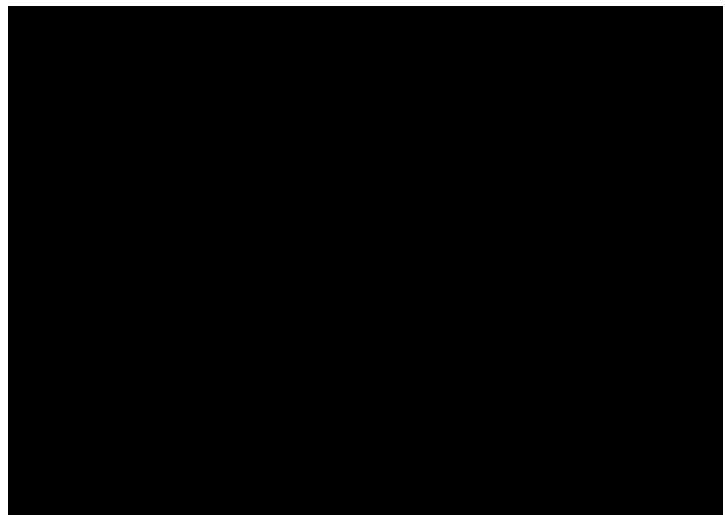
^[26/06/18] Another important book around this time was the Usborne *World of the*

⁴ 5/07/18 – Memo – Urban legends as conduits for occulture. How does this differ from pre-Enlightenment beliefs in ghosts and spirits? Is it a question of the dominant episteme? - To echo Hanegraaff's idea of esotericism and related thought as polemically constructed.

Unknown volume about Ghosts. Originally released in 1979 and in print throughout the 80s and even 90s, this book is fondly remembered by many.⁵ I particularly remember being terrified by the picture of the ‘back seat ghost’ – which allegedly depicted the spirit of the sitter’s mother-in-law, and the passage concerning the ‘graveyard guardian’: suggesting that the first corpse interred in a graveyard would become its protector.⁶ The page with an image of ‘Black Shuck’, the phantom dog, also fascinated me – despite feeling the illustration, with its cyclopean eye was fairly cheesy.



‘The Graveyard Guardian’, from Maynard, All About Ghosts and Hauntings (Usborne Books, 1977)



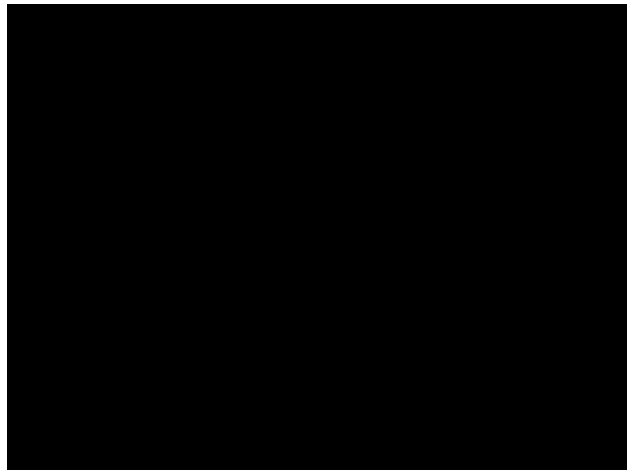
‘Black Shuck’, from Maynard, All About Ghosts and Hauntings (Usborne Books, 1977)

⁵ For example - <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2019/jun/12/ghosts-shaped-my-life-out-of-print-childrens-classic-to-be-resurrected>

⁶ 26/06/18 – Memo – An early instance of my imagination being captured why what I would later recognize as ‘tutelary spirits’? 14/01/20 – MEMO – Consider the discursive use of narratives about childhood. Why is childhood often posited as important in esoteric biographies?

1.1.7.

I was always fascinated by the macabre – I remember that my father was an avid reader and collector of crime novels, and during one after-school play session with a friend we sought out all the most grisly covers and proudly displayed them on the bookshelves. In the early 90s, aged ten, my parents would occasionally record the Hammer horror films that were on Channel 4, as well as *Mystery Train* (1991): a series of B-movie double bills on BBC2 introduced by Richard O'Brien. At this time the Satanic ritual abuse scare had descended on Rochdale, and I remember hearing snippets about it on the Radio 4 news. The world then seemed quite a sinister place – haunted the real possibility of Satanic cultists at every turn. Across the road from my primary school was a house with net curtains and what appeared to be a red light in its front room: my friend C and I would gaze across at it during our lunchtimes, speculating on what sinister things might be happening therein.⁷ As a devoted crime-addict, my father also watched various TV dramas, such as *Morse* and *Taggart*, and I remember being quite impressed by the 1993 *Inspector Morse* story 'The Day of the Devil', which featured a group of would-be Satanists being attacked in a flaming circle by a goat-headed killer.



From Inspector Morse: The Day of the Devil (broadcast by ITV, 13 January 1993)

1.1.8.

My father also introduced me to the work of H.P. Lovecraft, via two large yellow Gollancz editions of his works. Although I was rather too young to fully grasp

⁷ 26/06/18 – Memo – The naïve encounter between social workers and media, with American Evangelical hysteria evidently created a significant 'occultural' moment, esp. with regard to what Partridge, Asprey & Granholm called the 'elasticity of plausibility structures' (e.g. Asprey & Granholm 2013a: 135). The relationship between media occulture and my own plausibility structures is possibly something to look at more closely.

Lovecraft's florid style, my father's recollections of the stories fascinated me – as did the mention of the Necronomicon. At some point, Jean-Paul Ouellette's 1988 adaptation of Lovecraft's *The Unnameable* was broadcast on television, which my parents recorded for me. I was fascinated by the film's depiction of the Necronomicon, and created an envelope full of coffee-stained 'manuscript' pages as my own Necronomicon.⁸

1.1.9.

I should note that alongside these juvenile fascinations with the occult I was also extremely interested in computers. I had persuaded my parents to buy a second-hand ZX Spectrum, and had begun to do some rudimentary BASIC programming from a series of Usborne books. By 1989 the Spectrum had been retired, and we bought an Amiga – my interest in programming continued: for Christmas 1990 my parents bought me a copy of the AMOS programming language, and also in my stocking was an audiobook of Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, read by Nicol Williamson. The music on this recording particularly enamoured me, effectively evoking Tolkien's world of medieval fantasy. I was later to learn that this music was by R. J. 'Bob' Stewart, and was taken from his LP *The Unique Sound of the Psalter* (Argo, 1975). Like J. H. Brennan, Stewart was also – unbeknownst to me – a practicing occultist, with a particular interest in music, ceremonial magic and Celtic myth. I frequently put on these tapes at bed time and – as seems to have become a sort of habit – would lie back, close my eyes and attempt to visualise the story in vivid detail as it was recounted.⁹ [27/06/18] The gift of *The Hobbit* was likely due to my interest in fantasy at the time: I had been keen on the Dungeons and Dragons cartoon series when younger, and had taken an interest in the actual game, my parents buying me the red boxed basic set. My friend C was also interested in role playing, chiefly due to his elder brother who had rulebooks for the Palladium series of games – initially *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* roleplaying game, and, later that year, *Rifts*: playing the former of these was my first introduction to role playing.

⁸ 26/06/18 – Memo – The influence of Lovecraft and the Necronomicon will be a recurrent theme, and one that has a significant role in 1980s occulture, particularly with regard to Kenneth Grant's interpretation of Lovecraft as an unwitting occultist, receiving revelations through his dreams.

⁹ 26/06/18 – Memo – These intuitive uses of imagination, beginning when I was seven years old seems to have inclined me toward various creative practices later in life, and also made the transition to more serious esoteric practices easy. I had already developed capacity for what Noll might call 'mental imagery cultivation'.

1.1.10.

[26/06/18] Toward the end of primary school, my aunt and uncle took my cousin and I out to walk on Wharfedale. We ended up at Troller's Gill, a desolate area, which – according to my father – was haunted by a Hellhound. Near Troller's Gill is also the entrance to an abandoned lead mine – the dark mouth of the mine, with its twisted gates caught my imagination, as did a small stunted tree clinging to the side of the valley (- what I later discovered was a hawthorn). I thought of this place for years afterward – particularly the tree, which seemed splendid in its wind-blasted isolation.¹⁰ Later, at home, I wrote a story about a man encountering the black dog at Troller's Gill – my father read it and seemed impressed. I can't remember the ending, but I recall him suggesting an alternative conclusion, in which the dog leaps at the protagonist who protects himself with a prayer: the dog passes through him and he finds himself alone in the Gill. Although I had been obsessively creating comics and books out of off-cut paper given to me by my uncle, who ran a printing business, this was the moment when I felt sure that I wanted to spend my adult life writing.



Hawthorn at Troller's Gill, a photograph taken when I returned there in 2004 (author's work).

1.2. Secondary School: Dungeons, Dragons, Heavy Metal and Hypnotism

1.2.1.

[27/06/18] Following primary school I had become quite a shy and introverted twelve year-old, mainly interested in computer games, programming, and fantasy role-

¹⁰ 26/06/18 – Memo – Theoretical idea: 'pragmatic re-enchantment' – we enchant what is around us to add meaning to our lives.

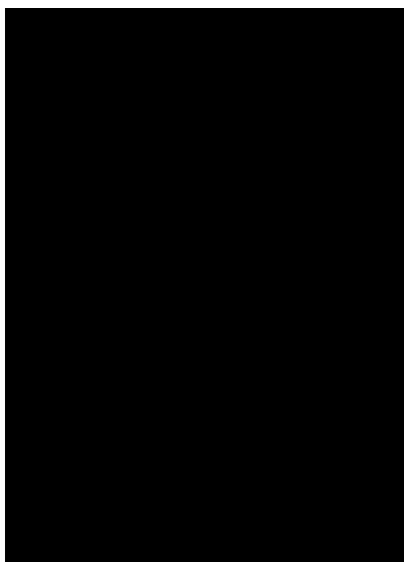
playing. A geek, but not of the high-achieving, chess club polymath sort: I found school work a chore, homework more so – the exceptions being English Language and Literature.

1.2.2.

As with most teenagers, music also began to play a significant part in my life. In my second year, I had become friends with a boy called **D**, who [REDACTED] [REDACTED] religiously read Kerrang! magazine. **D** began giving me tapes, and it was Megadeth's *Countdown to Extinction* (1992) that really drew me in. Although my fascination with the possibilities of the occult had faded away – magic safely confined to the imaginative worlds of role playing – I still enjoyed listening closed-eyed to music and tapes and either trying to create imagery, or attempting to explore the flow of emergent images. The Megadeth album was a particular favourite, conjuring apocalyptic road-warrior and bio-horror style imagery.

1.2.3.

[28/06/18] During this year (1994) I also took a trip to York where I visited Forbidden Planet, and, intrigued by the free gift on the front, bought an issue of Fortean Times. While some of the content appealed to my earlier interest in ghosts and the supernatural, I was stunned that it also contained a review of a book called *The Pseudonomicon*, by Phil Hine, which seemed to be about *actual* magical work with Lovecraft's 'Cthulhu mythos' entities. At the time I had no chequebook, and was apprehensive about asking my parents for the book – although I thought about it on occasion. When I was able to get a copy, four years later, it would prove to be a profound inspiration.



Cover of Fortean Times, no. 75 (June-July 1994)

1.2.4.

[27/06/18] Most of my programming interests concentrated on what would now be called 'procedural generation': setting up a multitude of algorithms which would interact to create unpredictable situations, or a new game-world each time the program was run. Yet I also remember attempting to leverage my aptitude for mental imagery by making a program that would hypnotise the viewer and then (using rudimentary voice-synthesis) guide them through a story. I was unaware that what I had been doing was in this experiment was what psychotherapists might call guided imagery, or what chaos magick – which I was to discover later in my teens – called 'pathworking'. However, both guided imagery and pathworking are usually employed to some end, rather than simply for the pure enjoyment of imagery.

1.3. College: Magic, Meditation & Counter-Cultural Fascinations

1.3.1.

A significant blight on my school days was the culture of bullying at the school – while writing this I discovered that a pupil in the year below was, in 1999, was paid £6,000 in legal settlement after taking the school to court over its handling of bullying. For my own part, I was sick of the culture at the school, so decided to go to college to study a GNVQ in Computing instead. During this time, I excelled in programming – writing various games and chat applications that exploited the college network.

1.3.2.

Toward the end of my final year of secondary school (1996), Britpop was the musical vogue, although I remember seeing an advert in an issue of Q magazine for *The Best of Gong*, which caught my attention, since the track titles were unbelievably absurd: 'Wet Cheese Delirium', 'Squeezing Sponges Over Policemen's Heads', 'The Octave Doctors And The Crystal Machine', 'The Pot Head Pixies' and so on. It was on a trip to London with my parents, aunt, uncle and cousin that I managed to pick up a copy in one of the big music stores. At first I was not sure what to make of the music and its jazz-rock leanings, but I was entranced by the electronic sounds of Hi T Moonweed, and Gilli Smyth's 'space whisper' poems. Eventually I became a hard-core fan of the group, collecting all their classic LPs, and reading all that I could about them: even going so far as to join the Gong Appreciation Society, which operated out of – where else? – Glastonbury.

1.3.3.

The encounter with Gong is a nexus from which a number of autobiographical threads emerge. The band – or at least their most prominent members, Daevid Allen and Gilli Smyth – were unashamedly pagan and feminist, although Gilli often embodied a sort of wild, sensual nature which challenged me, being rather inexperienced and prudish at that time. In particular, the group's relationship to neopaganism encouraged me to visit local bookshops in search of books on paganism – I came back with Vivienne Crowley's *Principles of Paganism* (Thorsons, 1996). I seem to remember being fairly underwhelmed by it – there was not much practical information, and it seemed too prescriptive in terms of setting out the tenets and beliefs of paganism: a far cry from the spiritual anarchy of Gong.

1.3.4.

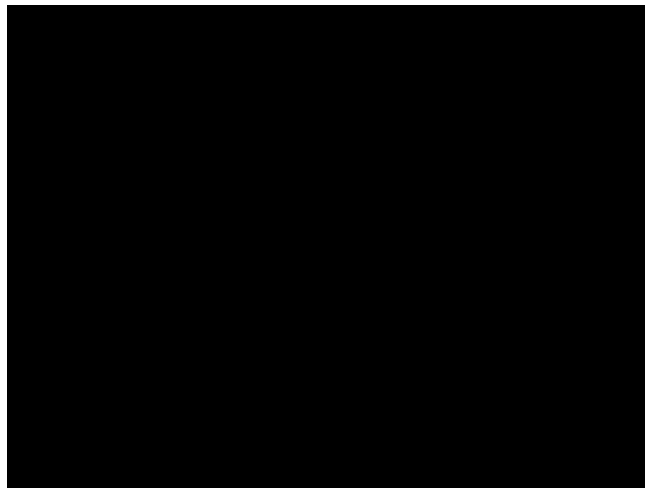
I had read in one of the Gong Appreciation Society newsletters that there was something called 'telepot contact': at 9pm GMT fans of the band were asked to meditate in order to commune with one another and – who knows? – perhaps pick up a transmission from the enigmatic green planet Gong, a key part of the band's sprawling, stoned and proto-New Age mythology.¹¹ Inspired by this, I

¹¹ See: <http://www.planetgong.co.uk/cosmo/source.shtml> - apparently this technique has some relation to 'Dartington Solar Quest', a spiritual organization headed by William Elmhirst,

would often sit, cross-legged, meditating to their music – particularly the long-form pieces on their album, *You* (1974), notably the ‘Isle of Everywhere’ track on side B. Oftentimes I was swept away on a sea of emergent images – and I remember one particular instance when the shifting images cleared and I saw a brightly illuminated scene: the colours were vivid, and it appeared to be a sunny day. Daevid, Gilli, and their small children were standing on a pier and the air glowed around them. Something about the glowing quality and extreme lucidity of this image, in contrast to the more phantasmagorical involuntary images, has stuck with me.¹²

1.3.5.

My awareness of alternative spiritualities was also stimulated by Pete McCarthy’s series *Desperately Seeking Something* (1995-98) which aired its second series in 1996 during the post-GCSE summer holidays. I encountered the first episode – concerning wicca – by chance, although I began tuning in every week afterward. It was the fourth, and final, episode in the series, in which McCarthy visits a group of chaos magicians in Maidstone, which left the strongest impression as the group danced wildly, invoked Cernunnos, and took the presenter through a pathworking: all around a fire, raised in a forest clearing and decorated with animal skulls. It seemed liberating, earthy and exciting in a way that neopaganism was not.



McCarthy’s chaos magicians (*Desperately Seeking Something*, Channel 4, broadcast 16 December 1996).

who ran the Dartington Hall Trust (an artists community notable for its long engagement with world and contemporary music).

¹² Memo – 27/06/18 - I suspect there are distinct qualitative differences in involuntary images, which can be used to distinguish ‘phantasy’ from ‘true imagination’ – they possess a sublime glow, or otherwise a spectral terror, of their own, which lodges them in the mind.

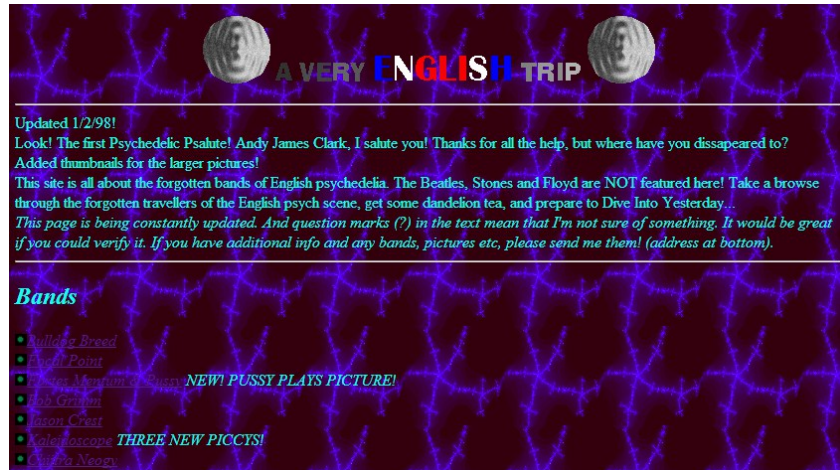
1.3.6.

[28/06/18] Around this time, my mother was getting back into folk music – having been a member of the local folk club in the 1970s. She joined a local folk music session and – I think to try and persuade me to join in – bought me a tin whistle and a teach-yourself tune book. I mastered the scales and fingering quite quickly, but wasn't see interested in learning the jigs and reels. Whenever I played, or rather improvised, I was transported by the timbre of the instrument and its suggestions of another, less modern world. I remember using the programme Cool Edit to record the sounds into my computer, after which I added some echo or reverb: I found the result enthralling, evoking the strong mental image of a mountainous, mist-shrouded, fjord-like landscape, the sound echoing across the rocks and water.¹³ I also began experimenting with Cool Edit in order to manipulate and montage sound, inspired by the tape collage works of Daevid Allen which often appeared as interludes on the Gong albums.

1.3.7.

Aside from introducing me to meditation and goddess spirituality, Gong also stimulated an interest in psychedelic music. I became particularly enamoured with the more obscure end of late 1960s British psychedelia, and on 1st June 1997 published my first website, *A Very English Trip*, where I collected together all the scraps of information I could find about bands like Bulldog Breed, Jason Crest, and Kaleidoscope. Quite often members of the bands I wrote about would get in touch, and I also enjoyed correspondence with other psych fans who had just joined the Internet – I also began scouring charity shops for paisley and floral shirts (at that time distinctly unfashionable) and attempting to dress in my own retro style.

¹³ Memo – 28/06/18 – At this point I think my imaginative/visual response to certain forms of music was firmly cemented. The images evoked by both playing and listening would become vital parts of my practice, and also strongly connected to esoteric thought, some years later. Are there any theories for this? In religionist esotericism perhaps Versluis' *hieroeideticacy* and be used to describe the entrance into a world of 'sacred' symbols, although the sacrality of these in Versluis' sense depends rather on a religionist/Neoplatonic outlook and places the 'symbols' in loftier climes than the landscape spirits with which I was chiefly concerned.



A Very English Trip (originally hosted at <http://www.btinternet.com:80/~legard/trip/> , author's work)

1.3.8.

In the spring of 1997, my mother and I went on a shopping trip to Leeds, and visited the cluster of independent shops in the 'dark arches' beneath the train station. From the cluttered second-hand bookshop I bought a copy of David Conway's *Magic: An Occult Primer* (Aquarian Press, 1988). I was also fascinated by the goth clothing shop Morgana, and their 'poet shirts', which were reminiscent of the antique-style blouses that many of my psychedelic idols wore.

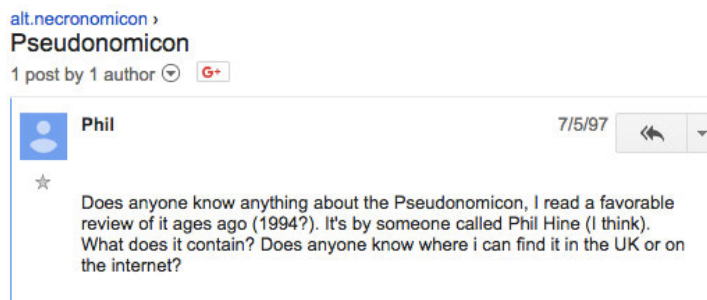
1.3.9.

The Conway book certainly marked a point of becoming more interested in magic and its practice. The book introduced a number of fundamental concepts such as the Tree of Life as a way to organise the magical universe, and also had a chapter on visualisation, which began with a relaxation exercise called 'moon breathing' (:71), which led onto a series of visualisation exercises and an explanation of the simple Golden Dawn banishing ritual of the Cabalistic Cross, involving the visualisation of 'astral light' emanating from the body (:73-75). I began to practice this ritual, alongside Conway's instructions on astral projection (:152-169).¹⁴ I was hooked, and began regularly doing a circuit of Harrogate's second-hand bookshops to pick up whatever occult tomes I could find, amongst them Fred Gettings' *Dictionary of Occult, Hermetic and Alchemical Symbols* (Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1981) and Aleister Crowley's *Magick In Theory and Practice* (Weiser, 1987).

¹⁴ Memo – 03/07/18 – This marks my first practice *knowingly* within the context of Western occultism (as opposed to within the context of general occultural influence).

1.3.10.

[2/07/18] Just prior to purchasing the Conway book, I had begun posting on Usenet discussion groups, particularly alt.necronomicon, where fans of Lovecraft gathered to discuss the magical book that he used in some of his 'weird tales'.¹⁵ And although approaching the Necronomicon still as something of a Lovecraft fan, rather than as a practicing occultist, I continued to be intrigued about Phil Hine's *Pseudonomicon*, even asking about it on a post on the 5th of July 1997.¹⁶



A post I made about Phil Hine's *Pseudonomicon* to alt.necronomicon in 1997 (archived by Google Groups)

1.3.11.

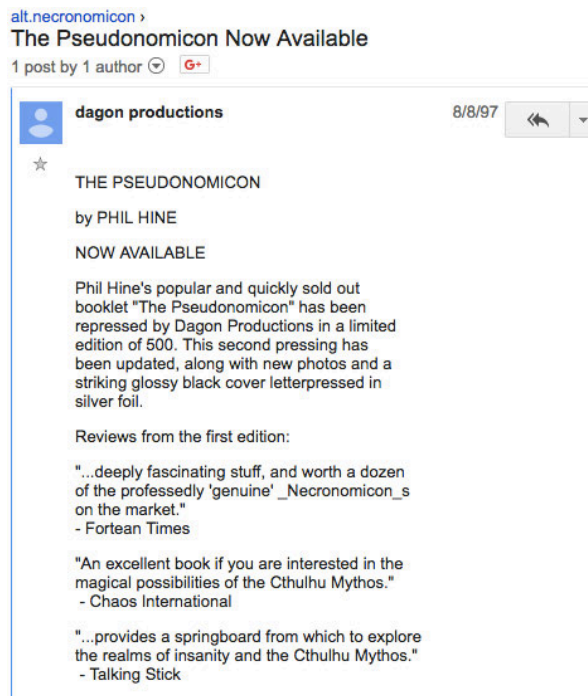
Later that year, I was to finally get my own copy of this sought-after book, when Dagon Productions posted on the 8th August 1997 that they had produced a second edition.¹⁷

¹⁵ Memo – 02/07/18 – Many aspects of this autobiography illustrate that the Internet, which I had first logged onto in 1996, was a pivotal source for information and community interactions.

¹⁶ Online at:

<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!searchin/alt.necronomicon/pseudonomicon%7Csort:date/alt.necronomicon/dm4wO1FDAPo/KtNgOG4H7W0J> [Accessed 20/07/18]

¹⁷ Memo – 2/7/18 – Theoretical idea: Seekership operates through various 'discursive drifts' and 'discursive leaps'. E.g. my appreciation for nature begins with Gong's pagan hippiedom, is carried through into Lovecraftiana, becomes subdued during my heavy Renaissance phase, but forcefully erupts again from 2001.



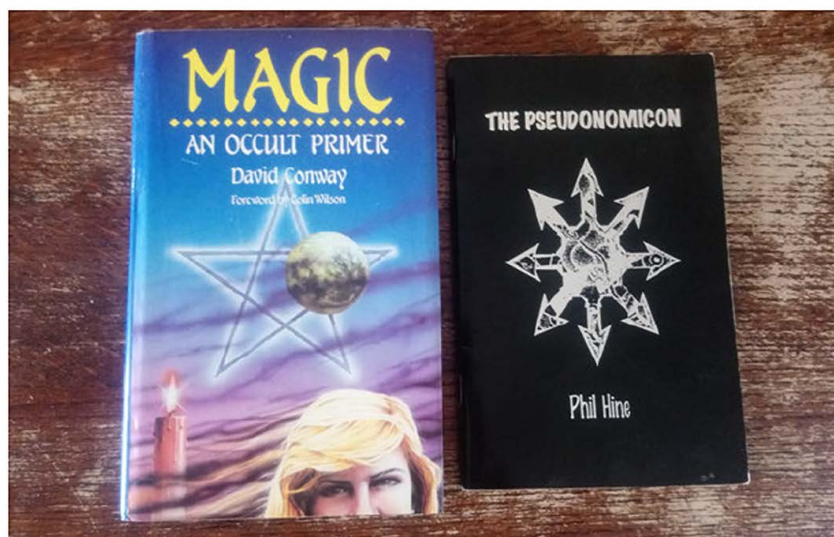
1997 notice of second printing of Phil Hine's *Pseudonomicon* (archived by Google Groups).

1.3.12.

[3/07/18] When, late in 1997, I got my copy of *The Pseudonomicon*, it was not exactly what I expected. Written by a 'chaos magician', the approach was very free-form, rather than providing any specific instructions or syllabus. It intrigued me, though, and introduced me to ideas like the Lovecraft's Great Old Ones as indifferent forces of nature, and suggested a variety of ritual techniques such as invocation (calling an entity into oneself, akin to possession), and pathworking. The pathworking is a form of visualisation exercise in which a group is led through an imaginative description of a place and – in chaos magick – there is usually some magical intent behind the working. In Hine's *Pseudonomicon* pathworking, he describes the participants as standing on a beach, before transforming into amphibious 'Deep Ones' and swimming to the sunken city of R'Lyeh beneath the waves. The participants are instructed to make a 'sigil' – a pictographic representation of their magical will – and to visualise it moving away from them and exploding against the titanic structures of the alien city.¹⁸ What the *Pseudonomicon* emphasised was that the generation of different forms of

¹⁸ Memo - 3/7/18 – Theoretical idea: Consider also the concept of 'occulturation' – the discursive drift from hegemonic to esoteric discourses through mediated representations of occulture. Partridge (2004: 152) has used the term, but not theoretically developed it. How might it differ from Luhrmann's 'interpretive drift'? As a prelude, perhaps, and descriptor of how occulture's effect on 'plausibility structures' supports the passage between occulture-as-entertainment and occulture-as-seekership.

'gnosis' (e.g. altered states of consciousness) was fundamental to the practice of magic, and that belief was something that supported the focus of magical will and the way into 'gnosis'. Via Usenet groups, I had also discovered the writing of Ryan Parker, who wrote a series of texts on the practice of 'Cthulhu magick' circa 1994.¹⁹ Collectively, these sources gave me license to pursue my own magical workings within Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos, and also encouraged me to explore the practices associated with Chaos Magick, the chief dictum of which was 'Nothing is true; everything is permitted'.²⁰



Books by Conway & Hine – Core texts for the would-be teenage magus (author's photo).

1.3.13.

Developing on my experiments with astral projection, and dedicatedly reading Lovecraft's corpus, I decided that the first thing I would do in a Lovecraftian context would be to explore the 'Dreamlands'. Lovecraft's *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath* describes the protagonist, Randolph Carter, as entering the dream lands as follows:

1.3.13.1

In light slumber he descended the seventy steps to the cavern of flame

¹⁹ For example, *Mythic Archetypes and Lovecraft*, posted on alt.necronomicon circa April 1994 – archived online at: <http://www.luckymojo.com/esoteric/occultism/magic/books/necronomicon/9406.nconhpl.pr> [Visited 3/07/18]; *Cthulhu Magick*, posted on alt.magick also in April 1994 – archived online at <http://www.luckymojo.com/esoteric/occultism/magic/books/necronomicon/9410.cthlmqk.pr> [Visited 3/07/18].

²⁰ Memo – 3/7/18 – Explore Justin Woodman's work on ethnography of Lovecraftian magick as part of analysis if necessary.

*and talked of this design to the bearded priests Nasht and Kaman-Thah. [...]So asking a farewell blessing of the priests and thinking shrewdly on his course, he boldly descended the seven hundred steps to the Gate of Deeper Slumber and set out through the enchanted wood.*²¹

1.3.14.

The first time I attempted this, I began with a relaxation exercise, borrowed from Conway's book, and began to imagine myself descending a stone spiral staircase. I descended slowly, gradually building up a lucid representation of the space in my mind, and feeling a change of mental state – a loosening of pressure in the head – as I descended further. Eventually I came to the 'Temple of Flame', and – finding it empty – began to descend the 'Seven hundred steps'. Again, I imagined a spiral staircase, but as I descended, the descent seemed to become faster and faster. Suddenly a yellow, half-formed face with a bulbous nose loomed out of the darkness and seemed to hang before me, before opening its mouth in what seemed a look of surprise or astonishment. The lucidity and unexpected nature of this image rather quickly brought me back to my waking state. However, I felt that something quite significant had happened: a fleeting encounter with a denizen of dream.

1.3.15.

I continued to practice this descent into the dream lands, along with attempts at astral projection. I found the imaginative descents more effective, although I had begun to attempt astral travel as an 'ascent' – imagining that I was climbing a rope in order to pull my astral body away from my physical one. As with descending the staircase, my ascent up the rope often began to accelerate. There was only one time that I felt I had successfully projected, though – there was a sudden sense of translocation, and I seemed to be floating a few feet above, and to the right of my bed. The room was fairly dark, and, as I attempted to move, I began to be swept to my left as though by a powerful wind, which took me through the wall of my bedroom and across the garden before I 'snapped' back into my own body. This was also a powerful experience, but I was unable to really go much further, and subsequent attempts were unsuccessful.

²¹ Lovecraft, H. P. 1927 (1943). *The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath*. Available online at: <http://www.hplovecraft.com/writings/texts/fiction/dq.aspx> [Visited 3/07/18]

1.3.16.

Most of my free time, when not spent with my girlfriend **E**, was spent attempting to develop magical and occult practices, particularly in the Lovecraftian/Cthulhu vein. On alt.necronomicon, I had discovered the idea that the Necronomicon in fact existed on what Theosophists called the astral or akashic planes and that it could be 'read' in some way by entering those planes. In an earlier discussion, in October 1997, I had my ideas dismissed by one of the less magically-sympathetic members of the group, so attributed my attempts to contact the astral Necronomicon to 'a friend' when reporting on them to the group.²² Again, this was an imaginative approach relying on relaxation and visualisation exercises, but also involved the composition of a sigil – a monographic design made from the letters in the statement of intent: 'I will contact the astral necronomicon'. This form of 'sigilisation' was common practice in the chaos magick literature with which I was becoming familiar, primarily through the acquisition of a 1997 ebook publication, Phil Hine's *Oven-Ready Chaos*, which was distributed online freely. In chaos magick practice, sigils were often 'fired' in some way at the peak of a ritual (most often, and notoriously, as part of a solitary 'sex magic' act, although other ways were possible – as mentioned above when discussing Phil Hine's pathworking). However, in this instance, the sigil became an object of mental contemplation, held in the mind while relaxing and mentally repeating a mantra based on re-ordering the letters of the statement of intent. In December, I had several apprehensions of a huge book in front of me, and excitedly posted these to alt.necronomicon:²³

²² Post on alt.necronomicon, 19/10/97 -

[https://groups.google.com/forum/#!searchin/alt.necronomicon/astral\\$20necronomicon|sort:date/alt.necronomicon/YE9mY0I2LXY/d0zjyLN_KkAJ](https://groups.google.com/forum/#!searchin/alt.necronomicon/astral$20necronomicon|sort:date/alt.necronomicon/YE9mY0I2LXY/d0zjyLN_KkAJ) [Accessed 3/07/18]

²³ Post in alt.necronomicon, 5/12/97. Available online at:


[https://groups.google.com/forum/#!searchin/alt.necronomicon/astral\\$20necronomicon|sort:date/alt.necronomicon/wa6sPFjsG3o/baausX8ug2wJ](https://groups.google.com/forum/#!searchin/alt.necronomicon/astral$20necronomicon|sort:date/alt.necronomicon/wa6sPFjsG3o/baausX8ug2wJ) [Accessed 03/07/18]

Memo – 3/7/18 – Although my attempts are crude and juvenile, the appeal of the book as a signifier of spiritual mysteries has a long history – as do attempts to 'ground' un-earthly books, as in the work of John Dee & Edward Kelly, or early 17th century astrologer Simon Forman's dreams of 'strange bockes brought me written in Karactes'.

alt.necronomicon >

The Astral edition (sorry, no ISBN!)

1 post by 1 author

 **Phil Legard** 12/5/97

☆

First glimpse of the Akashic Nec'

Well, about a month ago I mentioned that a friend was trying to come into contact with the so called "Astral Nec". His first result came last night.....

'I was floating about the book, it was all that I could see - as if the world had gone two dimensional. The pages were bathed in blue, with fading black writing. On the first page, the writing was in English, but written in a strange hand so that the letters appeared to be growing out of one another. The second page had a downward pointing triangle of faces in the middle of the second page and very faded writing...'

Well it's not much, but it's a start. While he says that he could read the text when he was there, he cannot remember it. He drew me an example of how the letters appeared, I'll try to scan them and put it on the 'net somewhere...


This interests me greatly, as it is a personal vision of the book on a very deep level, on a subconscious level. The fact that it isn't (or is!) the real Necronomicon doesn't really interest me as far as this is concerned.

Phil

Post to alt.necronomicon about my experience of the 'Astral Necronomicon' (archived by Google Groups)

1.3.17.

[17/07/18] In November 1997, I made a post to alt.necronomicon based on the idea that the unspeakable tomes that play such an important role in Lovecraft's work could be used ritually as in a form of magical bibliomancy: ²⁴

 **Phil Legard** 10/19/97

☆

I've just had a thought about the Necronomicon & magickal application....

I was thinking abstractly about magickal tomes and started reasoning that maybe the text content was irrelevant and what mattered was an indefinable 'power' that the book had - after all in magick some people choose to create talismans which store power, so why couldn't a book be used as a talisman? Some people create sigils to focus on, so why not give them a magickal binding?

Perhaps if a mage created a tome which was high on style and low on content, it could be used as a magickal fetish or an energy container. The 'Necronomicon' would basically be a book of sigils, pictures, diagrams and mantras concerning the Old Ones. You could even add scrawled pseudo-writing to heighten the sense of mystery. A possible use would be the mage using the book by picking out something at random to contemplate or focus on something in the book during a ritual. Selecting something at random would add spontaneity and a sense of the unexpected to a ritual.

IMHO the idea of a tome-fetish is well suited to Lovecraftian magick and the mythos obsession with blasphemous tomes. A Lovecraftian mage could keep several tomes for different applications, for example The Necronomicon could be a good all rounder, Cthaat Aquadingen could be mainly concerned with water beings, and so on.

Comments, etc?

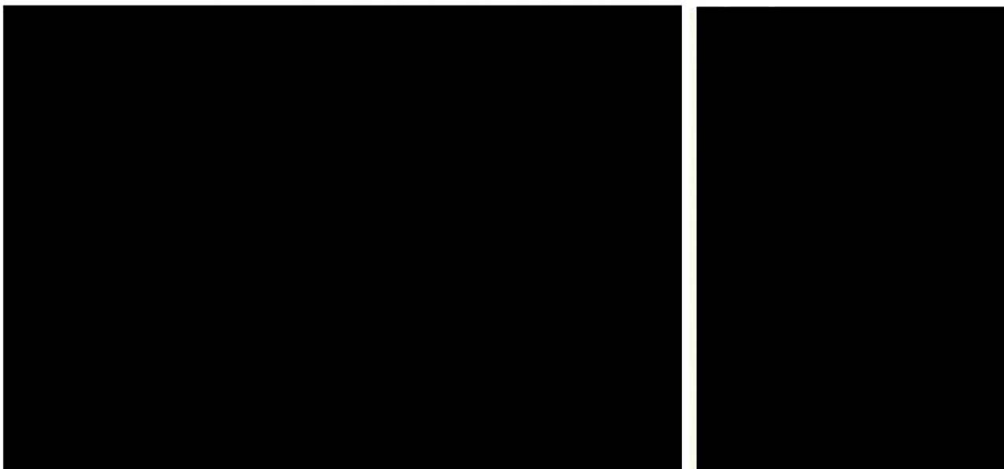
Phil

Speculations on Lovecraftian magic posted to alt.necronomicon (archived by Google Groups).

²⁴ Post in alt.necronomicon, 19/10/97. Online at:
<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!msg/alt.necronomicon/YE9mY0l2LXY/tjN3bGb8EzkJ>
[Accessed 17/07/18]

1.3.18.

The idea that posited in the above image the text itself didn't 'matter' per se, but that it could be used in some ritual manner – as 'asemic writing' that was open to a sort of prophetic interpretation was evidently drawn from my own 'glimpse' of the astral Necronomicon and an acquaintance with various Necronomicon-related texts, particularly the 'Necronomicons' of French artist Philippe Druillet (published in the October 1979 edition of *Heavy Metal*, scans of which were circulating online during the mid-late 90s) and the Owlswick Press *Necronomicon* (1973) – both of which involved similar asemic scripts. The Voynich Manuscript had also been connected with the *Necronomicon* by some writers of 'Cthulhu mythos' tales, and the impenetrable script, as well as the multitude of 'solutions' imposed upon it, also suggested that purposely impenetrable texts could prompt many interpretations.



Double-page spread from the Necronomicon of Philippe Druillet (Heavy Metal magazine, 1979), and a page from the Owlswick Press Necronomicon (1973).

1.3.19.

[18/07/18] In a subsequent reply in the thread – to a commentator who called my statement 'disturbingly megalomaniacal (sic) and profoundly silly', I made explicit reference to chaos magick principles (such as ritual action serving as a focus for magical intent) and cited Phil Hine, although this was in terms of a critique:

1.3.19.1

The use of a book connected to the Old Ones would add to the romance of Mythos Magick - where Phil Hine says that Mythos Magick is raw and wild thus should not have heavy use of sigils and images (I would find a

*quote, but I'm not writing this from home), I would disagree and say that symbols and strange images are part of the Lovecraftian tone.*²⁵

1.3.20.

At the foot of my reply, I also included the following text:

MWI/PA/CH S* W++ N+ POT++ Dd Dr A- a+ C@ G QH+ 666(-- Y++

1.3.21.

This was the 'magick code' developed by Shawn C. Knight in 1997 to enable the occultists of Usenet to concisely identify their interests and practices.²⁶ The opening identifies me as a Wiccan/Pagan/Chaos Magician (MWI/PA/CH) – which may seem a rather confused identity, but it in terms of the wider occult milieu is not unusual: on one hand, chaos magick provided just the 'basics' for doing magical work, so could be integrated into other beliefs; on the other hand, the common creed chaos magick declared that 'nothing is true, everything is permitted', so why not believe in a moon goddess... and even try to conjure the Lovecraftian Old Ones as well?²⁷ Other parts of my magick code were filled in with varying degrees of seriousness:

Code	Meaning (from Knight, 1997)	Observation
S*	Secret order membership: I can neither confirm nor deny any vows of secrecy which I may have made	I did not belong to any secret order, but I enjoyed the mystique associated with this statement.

²⁵ Post in alt.necronomicon. Online at:

<https://groups.google.com/d/msg/alt.necronomicon/YE9mY0l2LXY/fxDAPlqaMLcJ> [Visited 18/07/18]. 18/07/18 - Memo - Phil Hine describes the Old Ones in terms of impersonal natural forces, drawing upon an awareness of the natural world and a confidence to surrender to uncertainties and 'madness' that I was yet to develop myself. However, the book as a fetishistic and esoteric object has a long pedigree: from the Revelation of St. John, through to the attempts of Humphrey Gilbert, John Dee and Simon Forman to glimpse and manifest books through encounters with spirits and angels, to contemporary 'talismanic publishing'.

²⁶ A copy of this Knight's document is archived online at: <http://www.arcane-archive.org/occultism/magic/magick-identifier-codes-1.php> [Accessed 18/07/18]

²⁷ 18/07/18 – Memo – In the early stages of their 'quest', seekers explore, entertain and synthesise a wide range of beliefs and ideas – likely developing more coherence later. It would seem that the search for meaning – or the production of meaning – is an aspect of seekership, although what 'meaning' is to an individual is an ontological and epistemological question: for example – a Traditional position may be that the presence of a higher divine power and moral order give life meaning; alternatively the post-modern chaos magick position that 'nothing is true, everything is permitted' puts the production of meaning in the hands of the individual. 24/10/18 – Memo – Consider assessing a variety of occultural points of entry into esotericism: role-playing games, the legacy of H.P. Lovecraft, etc.

W++	White and black magick: Do what you will, only an it harm none.	I was generally quite a peaceful, hippyish character at this time – another contradiction with my interest in Lovecraftian magick.
N+	Netmage quotient: I've checked out alt.magick a few times and have Divination Web's address stashed somewhere.	Possibly an understatement, although I was not as heavily involved in the magickal web as I was to become.
POT++	Pantheon - other: I worship a handful of entities (2-8).	Nothing on Knight's list really fit with the sense of paganism that I had received from Gong and my readings in neopaganism. I could, or perhaps should perhaps have chosen PCM (Cthulhu mythos)!
Dd	Dietary discipline: May not eat certain specific types of food (meat is too general) (e.g. keeping kosher or halal, eating sattvic foods, etc.).	I was a vegetarian at the time, having been a pretty fussy eater as a child. I did bend the rules here, so as to include it as part of my occultural identity.
Dr	Ritual discipline: Must perform some small ritual not more than four times daily (e.g. praying before bed/at rise, saying rosary, Liber Resh, etc.) and/or before meals (e.g. Grace, Will).	The simple ritual of the Cabalistic Cross, as found in Conway's book on magic, had become a staple – usually performed before bed as a prelude to imaginative work.
A-	Alchemy: I know it involves metals and the elixir of life and something called a philosopher's stone, but that's it.	
a+	Astrology: I know my sun, moon, and ascendant signs, and know roughly the virtues of the planets.	
C@	Chaos magick: too variable to really be categorized.	I think I was having fun with the code here – deliberately classifying my interest in chaos as in flux.
G	Goetic magick: I'm vaguely aware of the art of conjuring/evoking demons, but I've never bothered with it.	The idea of conjuring spirits interested me, although I had no idea – until later discovering <i>Aleister Crowley's Illustrated Goetia</i> – how this was undertaken.

QH+	Hermetic qabalah: The Hebrews and Greeks were probably onto something. Interesting study.	I was to later become more interested in aspects of qabalah, but at this point it seemed over-complicated and abstract.
666(--)	Aleister Crowley: I've read The Book of the Law. / I don't see what all the hype's about. He didn't say much of value.	I was obviously aware of Crowley, but – again – his work lacked the directness of chaos magick.
Y++	Yoga: I have no problem holding asana for 30 minutes and I do pranayama frequently.	Inspired by Gong, I had begun to meditate fairly regularly, doing breathing exercises (pranayama), cross-legged, often in conjunction with listening to their music.

1.3.22.

[16/07/18] As the year wore on, I would often go to the folk session at a nearby pub on Tuesdays, where my mother had started playing concertina. At the session, I would often meet my other group of friends, who were a little older and who I had met through one of the usenet group alt.music.folk, when one of them (**F**) posted to ask if there were any young people interested in folk music in Harrogate. This group of friends were mainly involved in computer programming and were around ten years older than me. They were all quite hippy-ish and we would often go back to one of their flats afterward to drink coffee, and listen to psychedelic and electronic music.

1.3.23.

Owing to the influence of Phil Hine's *Pseudonomicon* and *Oven-Ready Chaos*, I had become most deeply focused on chaos magick.²⁸ A vital online resource

²⁸ 13/07/18 – Memo – Consider the discursive composition of each interest, and also how these can co-exist. Lovecraftianism is nihilistic; Gong were moon, earth and goddess-focused. Also – if I look at the 'magic code' for how I presented myself during that period, it seems as though I could hold several competing or contradictory discursive positions at once, e.g. doing Lovecraftian magic, while identifying as a pagan. However, Lovecraft's friend August Derleth developed a more Manichean take on the mythos with good 'Elder Gods' against 'The Old Ones'). There is no monolithic discursive composition even for the niche pursuit of 'Lovecraftian Magick', but it can span a continuum from extreme nihilism to a belief that there is, at least, some sort of spiritual protectorship for humanity, giving the magician at least some assurance that they can engage with the Old Ones with some sort of safety net. In the wider occult and magical world, discourses are often entwined together in messy ways in individuals. Consider also the nature of the anti-psychological approach to occultism, which I was also to undertake. In someone like Joseph Lisewski this is interesting: he rails against technology... but also proudly claims to be a quantum physicist. Often there are no need to certain appeals (e.g. scientising) – and this attitude also relates to seekership: the way to

during the mid-late 90s was Fenwick Rysen's *Chaos Matrix*,²⁹ and it was exploring this site that led me to the online chaos magick group known as Z(Cluster), administered by chaos mage and jeweller Mark Defrates, alias Marik. Members declared themselves as a node of the Z(Cluster), and were added to the group's mailing list. I declared my node Psorceree(Z) in the spring of 1998, and began reading and contributing to the group's mailing list.

1.3.24.

I had begun to build up a reasonable number of books – amongst them Aleister Crowley's *Magick in Theory and Practice*, and *Aleister Crowley's Illustrated Goetia* (a book on demon-summoning, with little to do with Crowley, being written by the contemporary magician Lon Milo DuQuette, who attempts to provide workable version of the original 17th century grimoire within a Thelemic ritual framework). One of the friends I met on Tuesday evenings lent me Idries Shah's *The Secret Lore of Magic* (1957), which compiled a number of important primary texts. One of the texts collected by Shah, *the Book of Power* attributed to 'Apolcater' particularly caught my imagination, being a work on conjuring djinn: it was the closest thing I had to a work of Arabic magic and, thus, the closest thing I had to the legendary *Al Azif* (alias *The Necronomicon*) written about by Lovecraft.

1.3.25.

[20/07/18] I had also picked up a copy of Shah's *Oriental Magic* (1956), in which Shah mentions tales of El-Arab, who apparently was able to seal lightning in flasks. I was captivated by this idea, and – in the spirit of chaos magick – used the idea as the basis of a free-form ritual to create a 'servitor' (chaos magick argot for a magical servant, usually tasked with a specific function). It was an afternoon and I had just returned from college, the sky dark with a brewing storm. I remember hearing the rumbles of thunder and being inspired to harness

practice magic has been lost / the true names and signs have been lost, isomorphically related to the idea of the perennial philosophy being lost (vide 16C hermetism) or the 'true' tuning of instruments being lost (vide Fabre d'Olivet). Perhaps an observation re: Granholm's work on the order of the Dragon Rouge is that the discursive composition of the 'Order' actually reflect only the general trends of the membership at the time. 14/07/18 – Memo – Kyriakides says that in terms of anthropology's 'ontological turn', belief is often seen as irrelevant since it is culturally relative (e.g. native peoples possess ontology rather than beliefs). In terms of work situated in the contemporary, given that the ontological assumptions of the enlightenment are so pervasive, belief as a cultural relativism is a way to discuss 'what I believed'.

²⁹ This website is still maintained online, at www.chaosmatrix.org.

this natural event to some purpose. Taking an empty jam jar from the kitchen cupboard, I ran to my room. I sat on the floor and 'centered' myself (a method of ritual opening I had borrowed from reading around neopagan/wiccan practice online). I decorated the jar spontaneously with a sigil for the servitor – although I cannot recall what its purpose was. While the storm rumbled around me, I sat cross-legged with the jar in front of me, left index finger pointing into its mouth. I began to imagine drops of 'electric semen' gathering around the finger-tip and dropping into the jar, forming the spiritual body of the servitor. I could also feel my own consciousness changing – the familiar sense of pressure changing in my head, shifting into a 'deeper' state as I imagined each drop falling into the jar.³⁰ Eventually, when I felt I had reached a certain plateau, I placed the jar on the window-ledge to soak up the atmosphere, before replacing the lid, and hiding it in a box under the bed where I had begun to keep various magical ephemera. The idea was that the servitor was now contained in the jar, and could be sent on tasks by giving it a verbal order before opening the jar. Of course, in chaos magick theory servitors need to be 'fed' with further ritual actions in order to become more powerful. I posted this routine to the Z(Cluster) mailing list – my first practical contribution – under my magical nom de plume Kaymog (- a corruption of Kamog, the coven name of wizard Ephraim Waite in H.P. Lovecraft's *The Thing on the Doorstep*). The ritual I posted was in the somewhat slapdash, irreverent style of many online chaos magick texts (especially those produced outside of the more 'serious' orders like the Illuminates of Thanateros). The description of the ritual referenced both the Frankenstein movies (- the post being entitled 'IT'S ALIVE!!! MWAHAHAHA!!!' -) and the Rocky Horror Picture Show (ritual step 10 being formulated as 'Now time for "that spark, that is the breath of life". Put the jar outside or on the window-ledge and sit before it intoning the servitor's name').³¹

³⁰ This ritual seems rather outlandish, but reflecting upon it from the present perspective, is evidently relates in some way to my readings around chaos magick. The artist-occultist Austin Osman Spare had a practice of placing a sigilised design relating to his intent, along with his semen in an artificial womb, or 'earthenware virgin', which was then buried in order to bring about his magical will. As has been mentioned in the main narrative, this form of sigil/sex magick became a core chaos magick technique – although Kenneth Grant (the chief promoter of Spare's work in the 1970s) claimed that Spare learned it from a witch called Mrs. Paterson [e.g. Kenneth Grant, *The Magical Revival*: 180-198].

³¹ I would later add this ritual to my dedicated occult website, which I launched in October 1998. It can be found in full at: <https://web.archive.org/web/19991004203533/http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com:80/writing/ls.html> [Accessed 20/07/18]

1.3.26.

Having finished my college degree in the spring, the long summer holiday before university (where I was due to continue computing at Staffordshire) stretched before me. During this period I was often fairly happy on my own during the day: scouring second-hand bookshops for new occult books, or else making my own magical experiments. I would go out about two or three evenings a week: on weekends I'd often go to the pub with my friend C, and then on to the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] – a rock club on the outskirts of town that stayed open til 2am. I also remained a regular at the Tuesday folk session.

1.3.27.

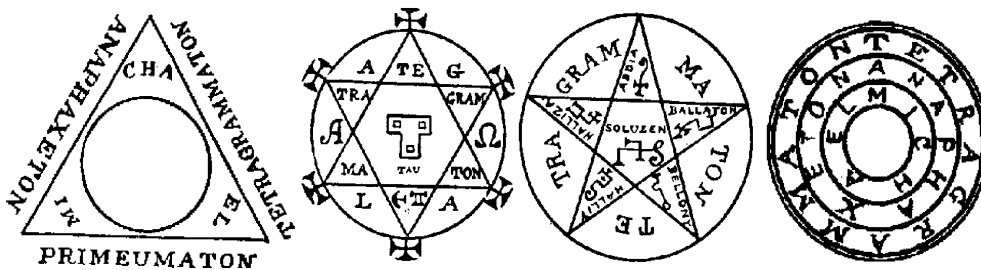
I seemed to get through a lot over those summer months and days left to my own devices, particularly an engagement in more formal types of magical experimentation. I was interested in exploring the material on conjuring spirits in *Aleister Crowley's Illustrated Goetia*. The chief author, Lon Milo Duquette upheld a psychological view of the 72 'Goetic' demons as mental 'circuits' relating to the acquisition of various psychic and material effects. This made the work seem less metaphysically daunting, although I still wondered 'what if' spirits actually existed. At this time I had also begun to feel that I was under some sort of attack by malevolent forces being drawn to me owing to my interest in this form of magic – hence continuing regular 'banishing' rituals before bed (using the Cabalistic Cross formula mentioned above) – in fact, I began to feel that one of the 'entities' who manifested via a change of atmosphere in my room at night was the discarnate spirit of Aleister Crowley himself!³²

1.3.28.

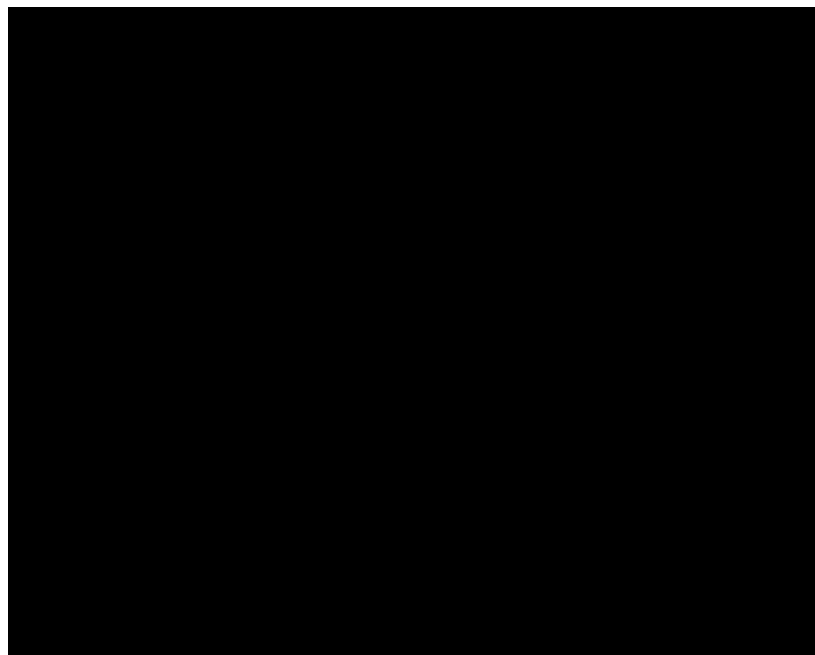
[17/09/18] During the spring and early summer I made two attempts to use the Goetic ritual as expounded by Duquette and co. The chief pieces of ritual equipment required for this operation are the 'triangle of the art', the magic circle, and the sigil of the spirit. The circle is there the 'operator' is situated, beyond which the triangle is set, with the sigil of the spirit placed within. The purpose of

³² 20/07/18 – Memo – Perhaps a good example of Luhrmann's interpretive drift here: chaos magick reduced everything to individualistic belief – even spirits and gods were patterns of belief given power by human minds. The early modern paradigm for goetic magic seemed different – the spirits being autonomous agents who have to be called and subdued by the magician. This idea that the world was potentially teeming with intelligent and discarnate entities, as well as the edicts on metaphysical hygiene and the dangers of 'astral larvae' found in the work of Elphias Levi, which I had picked up second hand (although generally found impenetrable), initiated another new way of seeing and interpreting the world.

the circle is disputed, but is often said to protect the operator, as well as provide a focus for divine energies to assist their work. The triangle, possibly a symbol of the trinity, serves to constrain the spirit until the operator gives it the 'license to depart'. There are other materials, such as the Pentagram of Solomon (traditionally made of gold and silver, a talisman worn by the operator, with a copy of the spirit's seal on the back), the 'ring' of Solomon (used to constrain the spirit and protect the operator), and the Hexagram of Solomon (a sort of badge of authority, traditionally made of parchment and worn on the operator's clothing). The more exotic tools – the ceremonial sword and lion-skin girdle – I dispensed with.



Triangle, Hexagram, Pentagram and Ring of Solomon, as depicted in Mathers & Crowley's edition of the Goetia (1904).

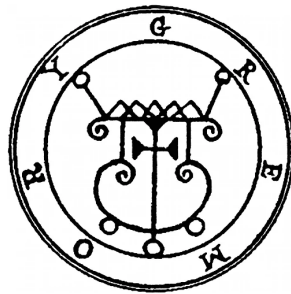


Magic circle of the Goetia, in English (from Sloane MS. 2731)

1.3.29.

At this time, I had become very insecure in my relationship with E, [REDACTED]

However, being chronically lacking in inter-personal skills and confidence I decided to turn to the spirits in an attempt to cement our relationship – or perhaps to at least allay my fears and help me cope with the situation in a better manner. I elected to call the spirit Gremory, alias Gomory, to bind her affections to me.



Seal of Gremory/Gomory, from Mathers & Crowley's edition of the Goetia (1904).

1.3.30.

I constructed the triangle from extremely thick black cardboard, decorated with gold paint, and used handmade paper for the other items. In the spare room of my parent's house, which had exposed, black-stained floorboards, I set out a circle using masking tape, upon which I wrote the divine names associated with the ten Cabalistic Sephiroth – a simplified version of the circle given in the manuscripts of the Goetia. The curtains were closed – the still let some light through from outside, being fairly thin and neutrally coloured.

1.3.31.

To perform the ritual, I entered the room dressed in a long white jalabiya (Egyptian cotton robe), with black embroidery, which I had found in a charity shop. I lit incense and performed the Cabalistic Cross, followed by the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (detailed in both Conway's book and DuQuette's Goetia book). Having done this, I repeated 'The Headless Invocation' from Betz' Greek Magical Papyri. This is an invocation to the Gnostic 'headless' power, which Crowley drew upon for his own 'Bornless Invocation', prepended to his own edition of the Goetia, and used by him to conjure his Guardian Angel. The Headless Invocation (Betz 1986: 103) begins with a calling ('I summon you, Headless One...') and ends with the speaker identifying – or invoking – the

power themselves ('I am the headless daimon with sight in my feet...'). This seemed like a good way to assume the sort of 'divine authority' believed necessary to conjure the spirits, and by the time I had finished its recitation I felt distinctly light-headed, yet empowered – my hands in particular 'buzzing' with warmth or energy – reminiscent of the feeling of coming in from the freezing cold to sit beside a warm fire.³³

1.3.32.

I repeated the first conjuration of the Goetia several times, which uses holy names to beseech the spirit to appear in the triangle, alongside some more free-form variations on the rubrics. Eventually I began to feel that the atmosphere had changed somewhat, which I took as a sign that the spirit was near. As I strained my eyes in the dim light, I began to feel that I could see something moving on the surface of the triangle. Of course, this could be due to a number of physiological and cognitive factors: the dim light, the grain on the cardboard used for the triangle, as well as the design of the seal placed therein, acting as a surface to project pareidolic interpretations upon (akin to seeing faces in clouds or interpreting ink-blots), or an entoptic phenomenon (such as the blue field phenomenon of seeing one's retinal capillaries when looking at a clear blue sky). However, within the somewhat altered state produced by the ritual atmosphere, the readings of long texts, and the desire to see a spirit, these phenomena took on a different interpretation. I began to interpret the shifting forms apprehended on the triangle as the body of the spirit – giving form to the shapes, until they seemed to cohere into the torso of a woman, sitting upon a camel. I wrote in my account of this act that:

1.3.32.1.

The spirit was coerced to appear in the triangle and after a few minutes I could perceive a steady, ghostly form in the triangle. The spirit seemed to move spasmodically, thrusting out it's limbs in various strange ways. I delivered my charge to the spirit and gave it a deadline, promising to incorporate it's sigil into artwork as a reward. The spirit was given its licence to depart and left quickly. Another LBRP was performed and the rite closed. The charge was

³³ 21/09/18 – Memo – This physical feeling signified to me that the Headless Invocation had been efficacious. Consider how such physiological and cognitive cues function to contribute to the constructions of magical efficacy.

*completed quickly – almost immediately, and the spirit rewarded accordingly.*³⁴



My drawing of Gremory/Gomory after the ritual (author's work).

1.3.33.

Was the ritual successful? Well, **E** would put up with me for a couple more months, so I chalked that up to a success. I was still not fully convinced that I had 'really' encountered a spirit at this point, and in retrospect this act of magic looks like a particularly florid sort of 'coping mechanism' for my own insecurities at the time. These insecurities associated with moving into the more adult world of relationships and interpersonal conflict were to be the underlying motivator for my next ritual, too – although it would have an unexpected consequence that would confirm a belief in the reality of spirits to me at the time.

1.3.34.

[17/09/18] One evening, one of the bouncers at the [REDACTED] stopped me as I was going down to the basement club, having seen the chaos-star pendant I was wearing (a cheap pewter production by Alchemy Gothic). He asked me about it, and I said it was the star of chaos, a symbol of the eight-rays of magick (as propounded in the works of seminal chaos magician Peter Carroll). He told me it was the symbol of the goddess Pandaemonium, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I argued with him that Pandaemonium wasn't a goddess, but was a term that means 'all the demons'. The bouncer had already been aggressively attempting to assert his dominance by breaching my personal space to examine the jewellery, and then became more aggressive, arguing that I knew nothing about occultism or magic. Being a

³⁴ Legard, Phil. 1998. 'Examples of Evocation', *The Picatrix*. Online at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000529164314/http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com:80/gotia/evo.html> [Accessed 21/09/18]

fairly shy person, who naturally avoided conflict, I left the altercation somewhat shaken at the bouncer's attempt to assert his authority over me. I brooded on this for the days that followed, eventually deciding that I would engage in my second Goetic ritual in an attempt to have the spirits 'teach him a lesson', as well as further employing the spirit to keep me protected (both from the bouncer and from malevolent astral beings).³⁵

1.3.35.

[21/09/18] The spirit selected for the second Goetic ritual was Havres – said to appear like a leopard – his office is, amongst other things, being to 'destroy and burn up those who be the Enemies of the Exorcist should he so desire it; also he will not suffer him to be tempted by any other Spirit or otherwise'.



Seal of Havres, from Mathers & Crowley's Goetia (1904).

1.3.36.

The performance of this ritual was very similar, although this time I made the spirit's seal out of clay, and spoke a prayer of consecration over it – naming it Havres and stating my intent that it would be effective in calling the spirit. I also replaced the Headless Invocation with one of my own composition called the Invocation of Makroseiris, inspired by a tale concerning the discovery of a giant coffin related by the ancient anthologist Phlegon of Tralles (whose *Book of Wonders* was also reviewed alongside Phil Hine's *Pseudonomicon* in the issue

³⁵ 18/09/18 – Memo – Having read LeGreco & Tracy's paper on Discourse Tracing, it occurs to me that 'ruptures' (points that affect discourse or practice) could be vital to the concept of seekership. Here is one event which might be a possible rupture which had several effects: it convinced me at the time that there is something inexplicable in magic that is independent of the human mind, thus making it possible for the literal belief in spirits to become part of my *weltanschauung*, as well as having a practical analogue in turning more toward ritual magic than the improvised and idiosyncratic workings of chaos magick (cf. the discourses of 'old system magick' [Joseph Lisiewski] or 'traditional magick' [Aaron Leitch]). Analytically, such ruptures provide focal points for micro-meso-macro analyses of discourse and practice (LeGreco & Tracy 2009: 1524). 21/09/18 – Memo – The rupture that initiates a more concrete belief in spirits may have been foreshadowed by the earlier apprehension of malign 'astral forces' which Havres was – in part – conjured to defend me against.

of Fortean Times I bought some years prior, and which I had chanced upon in a second-hand book shop a few weeks before the ritual under discussion). The manifestation of the spirit occurred in a similar way, and I described it as follows:

1.3.36.1

I was half way through the first conjuration when I felt the spirit. This time the atmosphere felt quite oppressive and dangerous. The spirit was responsive to my calls for it to manifest and appeared as a giant cat like thing, which was enveloped in an “octarine” mist. (Legard 1998)³⁶



My drawing of Havres after the ritual (author's work).

1.3.37.

After completing my ritual, with the appropriate banishings, I put all the items involved inside a leather box (an old Quran case), which my father had given me as a gift. Later **E** came round to stay the night, and it was in the early hours of the morning that she woke up in a panicked state – she said that the atmosphere in the room was evil and oppressive... that there was something at the foot of the bed. I could feel something too, and it immediately dawned upon me what was wrong: when I put the artefacts in the box, the seal of the spirit had been sandwiched between the pentagram, hexagram and ring of Solomon designs, which, as tools of authority used to bind the spirit, I believed were agitating it – keeping it bound to the area and preventing it fulfilling its duty. I leapt out of bed and separated the seal from the rest of the tools, before repeating the Cabalistic Cross and visualising white light filling the room. The atmosphere seemed to change, and we were able to get some sleep, although for several nights running

³⁶ 21/09/18 – Memo – The mention of ‘octarine’ is interesting. I had got the term from Z(Cluster) correspondence where it was used to refer to either an undefinable colour of magic, or to one’s own personal colour used to visualize magical forces. It entered chaos magick parlance through the writings of Peter Carroll, who mentions it in his 1992 book *Liber Kaos*. The term likely originated in Terry Pratchett’s fantasy novel *The Colour of Magic* (1983) – another instance of the occultural transference between fiction and practice/theory.

I would also awake with the sense that something was lurking in the shadows. I did not, however, have any more encounters with the bouncer, and also no more intrusive 'astral larvae': I believed that the presence of Havres had been enough to scare them away.

1.3.38.

[24/10/18] Toward the end of my time at college, I began to experiment with trying to write and record some of my own songs. I had bought an acoustic guitar and had begun playing some sort of primitive, psychedelic music inspired by early Pink Floyd and Syd Barrett, my musical hero of the time, as well as by a local band called **The Paisley Masque**, who I had seen perform at an all-day music event the previous summer. My recordings were extremely raw, and awkwardly executed: I would record the guitar or vocals straight into the line-in of my computer soundcard using an extremely cheap condenser mic (which was meant for recording conferences and was not hi-fi!), or alternatively I would record to a portable cassette recorder and then record the result into the computer. To make the music more 'psychedelic', I would process the files through free software like Cool Edit or Audiomulch to add phase, tremolo or flanging effects. The tracks were collected on a tape labelled 'Aldous Animmal' (in part-homage to Aldous Huxley's *Doors of Perception*). The songs were fairly whimsical and throw-away, with titles like 'Crystal City'.

1.3.39.

[17/09/18] **E** and I split up in late June: I had persisted in being very jealous [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I deeply feared abandonment, and felt the only way she could reassure me that she would not leave me was if we had sex - and this ultimately poisoned our relationship. I felt utterly ashamed at how I had treated her. This guilt deeply affected me over the coming years, but was also to provide a key motivation for becoming more seriously involved in music-making over the year that followed.³⁷ After splitting up, I had begun to drift more into a gothic style –

³⁷ 21/09/18 – MEMO – It may be useful to create an initial plan for micro-analysis that highlights ruptures (and their related discourses) under a variety of headings, such as: Esoteric Discourses; Esoteric Practices; Musical Discourses; Musical Practices. For example, at this stage in development:

Esoteric Discourse: 'DIY Grimoiricism' (still vestigially influenced by Chaos, insofar as not 'going by the book', as opposed to 'traditional'/reconstructionist/ 'old system' approaches; but moving toward a 'demonic ontology' or experiential epistemology, and away from the scientising tendencies of much contemporary occult discourse – e.g. using psychology to

wearing black 'poet shirts', black jeans and eyeliner, and over the rest of the summer began to concentrate more on trying to make music – in part as a therapeutic measure.

1.3.40.

The tentative experiments with Goetic spirits had shifted my magical interests away from Lovecraft and Chaos Magick, and toward ritual magic and the grimoires (handbooks of spirit conjuration). I had begun to collect more of this style of work, including a copy of Aleister Crowley's *Magick in Theory and Practice*, which had an appendix based on Crowley's *Liber 777* (a systematic description of magical correspondences between spiritual forces [the sephiroth], planets, the zodiac, and so on). I used this as the basis for my next magical ritual – to produce a talisman consecrated to Venus, which I hoped to use at an event I was going to attend in order to make new friends (and hopefully a new girlfriend). The talisman was constructed using copper-coloured metallic card, and etched onto the surface with a soft pencil, leaving indentations. It was a seven-pointed star, with a variety of god names at each corner, (derived from *Liber 777*) and magical sigils in the centre, surrounding the 7x7 magical square of Venus.

justify and legitimise the use of spirits as 'parts of the brain', as in DuQuette's work; beginning to develop a traditional, Hermetically-influenced correspondence-based view of reality.)

Esoteric Practices: Ritual magic (for a time, imaginative techniques such as dreams, meditation, visualisation and so on have taken a back-seat, although the last of these perhaps has an analogue in the way the triangle was employed in the Goetic work).

Musical Discourses: Psychedelia (hippyish discourses from this musical style very influential – a soft/pop-socialism/utopianism of peace, love and self-expression coloured my outlook (although my magical actions usually were in conflict with these ideals); but most important of these ideals from the summer of love were the ideas of mind-expansion and spiritual experimentation.

Musical Practices: At this time I hadn't really made much music aside from a few early experiments with sound-processing and the tin whistle. The few songs I had tried to record reflected my musical, rather than esoteric, interests as heavily indebted to British psychedelic pop.

Additional Observations: Rituals often driven by adolescent insecurities around relationships and conflict – whereas previously they had generally been about interior, imaginative exploration or accrual of imaginal 'knowledge'. Splitting up with girlfriend a rupture in terms of a turning of magical intent.

15/11/18 – MEMO – In retrospect, the artificial split between esoteric and musical discourses may need to be evaluated. On one hand, peaceful, utopian ideals, for example, are not 'musical' per se, but, while definitely coming into my awareness through music of the psychedelic counter-culture, may have also had esoteric implications for some thinkers (e.g. Plato's *Republic* and its influence on people like Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) and the 17th century Rosicrucian writers.). However, at that time my esoteric interests were not politicised or orientated to any wider implications than helping myself, so ultimately the appellation 'esoteric' or 'musical' relates not to the discursive theme per se, but from its point of origin to become a part of the discursive complex informing my own lifeworld.

1.3.41.

[19/10/18] The music party of 1998 was actually the second that I had been to, having attended with my friends **C** and **H** in 1997. The first music party had been an exciting foretaste of the local music scene, and I had been particularly impressed by a solo act known as **Migraine**: the power electronics/noise project of **I**. **Migraine** had been booked to play before a teenage indie rock band, whose fans were aggravated by **I**'s shrieking feedback, churning tape collages, and screamed vocals. They kept shouting for their favoured band, while **I** faced off against them with his sonic barrage. I'd never heard anything like it. I had also encountered the music of the **Paisley Masque**, a local psychedelic rock group [REDACTED] who clicked with my love of classic psychedelia.

1.3.42.

Returning to the music party in 1998, I was pleased to see **Migraine** on the line-up again: although playing on the main stage, rather than the cramped bar where I had first seen him. Once again, he was the highlight of the day. I also had my talisman, which I had split into four pieces and, as I mingled, gave to people I thought seemed like potentially interesting friends. I gave one quarter to **Paisley Masque** singer, which initiated a chat about magic, which continued on-and-off throughout the day. I had also given a square to a girl [REDACTED] [REDACTED] we kissed toward the end of the evening... another success that I could chalk up to magical assistance.

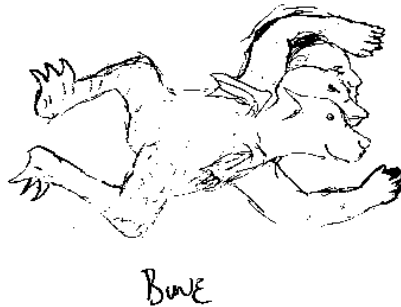
1.3.43.

My final magical act of the summer came via the impetus of the Z(Cluster) mailing list. One member, [REDACTED] had messaged the list asking for help finding a job, since she was in financial trouble. I'd developed a bit of an online crush on her, and suggested that I might try and help by calling on the assistance of a Goetic spirit, and she agreed. The ritual – in the DIY spirit of chaos magick – was semi-improvised: to the extent of using a lava-lamp as a vessel for the spirit to manifest in:

1.3.43.1

I decided an appropriate spirit to evoke would be Bune. Also, on the spur of the moment, I decided to put a lava-lamp inside the triangle, on top of the spirit's seal. Charms and consecrations were chanted while the lava-

lamp heated up. Then the LBRP and invocation of Markeoseiris. Simple conjurations were then read. As if by magic (so to speak), three large spheres of wax rose up into the centre of the lamp, where they stayed. Seemingly superimposed over the spheres were the faces of Bune – a dog, a cockatrice and a human. Bune was given the charge of finding my contact a job and was then dismissed. Turning around after the conjuration I caught sight of Bune leaving. He seemed to have a scaly humanoid body, three heads and was crawling of pulling himself across the floor. It seems as though the contact found a job, although if this was down to Bune or the other magical energies being directed toward her I cannot fully say, although she did later say that she evoked Bune in one of the best conjurations she had ever attempted. (Legard 1998)



Drawing of Bune, made following a ritual conjuration (author's work).

1.4. University

1.4.1.

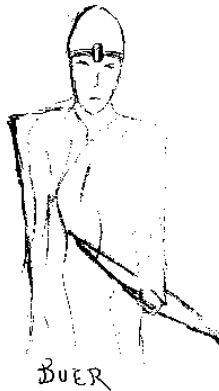
[24/10/18] As September rolled round, it was time to start university – a course in Computing at [REDACTED]. I found life as an undergraduate rather isolating, being based in halls on a campus a few miles out of the city centre. I was also woefully ill-prepared for independent life, having no knowledge of cooking, in particular. I did get on well with one particular fellow student, though, called L, who was interested in avant-garde music. He introduced me to some of the classics of the underground such as Suicide and Velvet Underground, as well as more contemporary electronica like Aphex Twin and Add N to (X). Although I left [REDACTED] after a month – transferring to the Computing degree at Leeds Metropolitan University – I was able to work a small piece of magic in my dorm room.

1.4.2.

The student who lived across the hall from me was ill and feverish, and given that I had brought my magical 'box of tricks' with me, I decided to carry out an impromptu Goetic conjuration, of the spirit Buer:

1.4.2.1

The room which the conjuration took place in was rather cramped, the circle measured about three feet wide and the triangle only one foot. The form of the act was similar to the above, LBRP, invocation and simple conjurations. Suddenly, the image of Buer formed within my mind. The Goetia describes him simply as an archer. I perceived a tall figure dressed in white robes with some kind of helmet on his head. The helmet was set with a jewel and he had a bow in his hand. I gave him the charge to cure my friend and told him of his reward (to have his seal engraved on some jewellery and also put on several posters I was designing).³⁸ His image disappeared from my mind and the rite was ended. During that night I woke up several times to actually see Buer in my room. By the afternoon of the next day my friend had made a full recovery and later told me that he kept having mild hallucinations that someone was in the room during the night. (Legard 1998)



Drawing of Buer, following a ritual (author's work).

1.4.3.

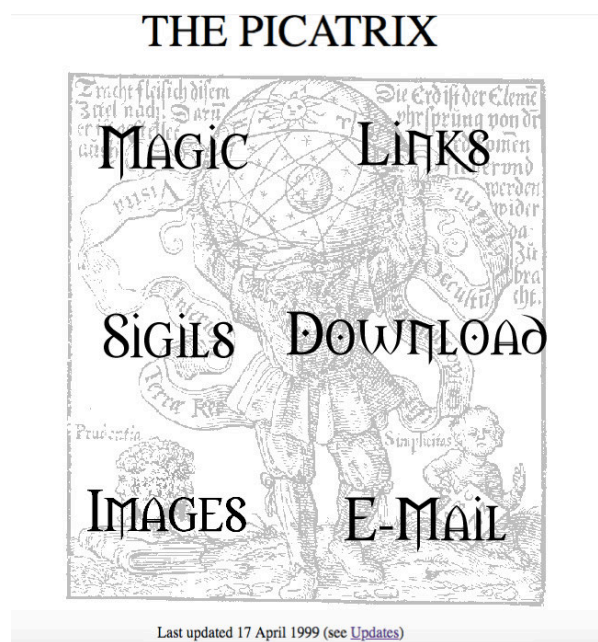
In early October, I left [REDACTED] and returned to Harrogate, to live with my parents, transferring to Leeds Metropolitan University and commuting to

³⁸ The posters were for a music society that L and I wanted to start for 'weird' music, after we found the rock and metal club too conservative for our tastes.

Leeds. My studies were fairly straightforward, so my magical – and nascent musical – interests were able to continue fairly unabated.

1.4.4.

In October I launched my website, called *The Picatrix* after a notable Arabic grimoire which seemed to be the closest real-world example of a book like Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*: although I could not glean much of its actual contents, given that it had not – at that time – been translated into English (although scholarly editions of the medieval Latin translation and original Arabic version were available). The idea was, however, that like *The Picatrix* itself, my website would be a compendium of diverse magical materials. Initially I began by posting some of my chaos magick and Lovecraftian rituals, including *The Book of the Key*, which was a presentation of my formative experiences of imaginative exploration of the 'Vaults of Zin' carried out shortly after my first encounter with the 'denizen of dream' (A1.3.14).³⁹



Landing page for the Picatrix website (author's work).

1.4.5.

On Hallowe'en I posted my essay *Goetia Made Easy*, which summarised my approach to working with the Goetic spirits. This, alongside the *Examples of*

³⁹ The website is no longer online, but is archived here:
<https://web.archive.org/web/19991003164247/http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com:80/>
[Accessed 24/10/18]

Evocation (quoted above, and posted to my website in December 1998), provide insight into the way my conception of spirits had been changing and illustrates how I had adopted DuQuette's approach to the Goetia to my own practice. [15/11/18] In many respects I was wavering at this point between the psychological interpretation of magick (favoured by influential Golden Dawn member Israel Regardie, and also by DuQuette) and a more literal belief in spirits, for example, in one section I mention both unwanted forces or energies (a metaphysical concept) alongside 'magical consciousness', which can arguably be divinised (for example in the way Agrippa and Robert Fludd discuss the magical exaltation of the 'mens' or mind of man toward the divine real), but which also betrays the lineage from chaos magick and the knowing induction of 'gnosis' states (altered/magical consciousness) as key component to 'working magick':

1.4.5.1.

Now we shall discuss the procedure of the operation. Firstly, make sure the phone's unplugged and the dishes have been washed up - we want no disturbances or distractions during the operation. Start by putting the seal in the triangle (if applicable), and then enter the circle. You should now banish, so that there are no forces interfering with the operation or possibly masquerading as the desired spirit. This step is optional, but most people prefer to banish and banishing also acts as a ritual intensifier - to put it vulgarly it puts the magician 'in the mood'. Any means of banishing may be used, I usually use the standard LBRP ritual. All steps of whatever ritual you choose should be visualised and performed to the best of your ability (some may like to ground or meditate a while before banishing, to help attain 'magical consciousness').⁴⁰

1.4.6.

I return to this debate on the reality of magick in the final paragraph of the piece:

1.4.6.1.

Some people have observed that the Goetic spirits are to some extent parts of our own subconscious. Someone, possibly Poke Runyon, said

⁴⁰ Legard, Phil. 1998b. 'Goetia Made Easy!', *The Picatrix* Online at: <https://web.archive.org/web/19991003220226/http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com:80/goetia/easy.html>

"Like it or not, we all come with twelve six-packs of Goetic spirits wired into our brains." I have found this to be true, to some extent. For example, I have found that forgetting the particulars of the charge which you delivered to the spirit is to some extent important. Thinking too much about the orders you have given may lead to one becoming unsure if it's what one really wants, also resulting in failure. However, many people who have studied magic have probably spent long hours trying to explain why certain things happen, only for something else to happen and throw their theories into the dustbin. I think it is naïve to say that the spirits of The Goetia and the actions they produce are solely products of one's mind. But it is similarly naïve to say that the spirits are really independent entities who, with their legions, run about making things happen. I have come to the conclusion that the truth lies somewhere in between the two, but should not try to be explained - basically, Goetia works. In many ways and on many levels.

1.4.7.

In some ways, my conclusion was similar to the position of magickal agnosticism postulated by Aleister Crowley in his introduction to *Magick in Theory and Practice*, which I had also bought around that time:

1.4.22.1

*In this book it is spoken of the Sephiroth and the Paths; of Spirits and Conjurations; of Gods, Spheres, Planes, and many other things which may or may not exist. It is immaterial whether these exist or not. **By doing certain things certain results will follow; students are most earnestly warned against attributing objective reality or philosophic validity to any of them.*** [bold text added for emphasis]

1.4.8.

1997-1998 seemed a rather exciting year to be interested in grimoires and magical work with spirits: in 1997, Penn State University began publishing their Magic in History series of academic texts, including Richard Kieckhefer's *Forbidden Rites* – a commentary and transcription of a late 15th-century manuscript on conjuration. Meanwhile, Joseph Peterson had begun adding largely unpublished and explicitly magical works to his Twilit Grotto/Esoteric Archives website, beginning with a transcription of the 16th-century *Arbatel of*

Magick in late in 1997, and the 13th-century *Liber Juratus* in July 1998. The former of these works would fascinate me for many years, and it had a distinct appeal to my interest in working with spirits. Part of the text details the powers of the seven 'Olympic' princes, which rule over the seven classical planets. Interestingly, the *Arbatel* is a heavily Protestant work, and so does away with almost all the suspiciously Catholic trappings of ritual magic, relying instead on a mixture of piety and faith. In November 1998, I posted my own re-working of the *Arbatel*'s Olympic Spirit section, essentially reducing the work to the inscribing of a spirit's sigil, the use of an opening or banishing ritual, and then a prayer delivered to the spirit, with the following observation:

1.4.8.1.

I usually try to face a window and watch for any signs that the spirit may have manifested, such as an animal appearing or a sudden sound. The reading of the first prayer may be used as the opening to meditation on one of the spirit's powers, for example teaching alchemy. Through this meditation one may come into contact with the spirit and even be able to enter into conversation. However, the Arbatel warns that you should not keep the spirit more than one hour or it may become 'familiarily addicted to thee'.

1.4.8.2.

Once the working has finished and the charge delivered, then the second prayer is read in order to discharge the spirit. The paper with the sigil and prayers on may then be stored in a safe place, or carried about your person as a talisman.⁴¹

1.4.9.

I recall rehearsing similar rituals several times – although to what ends I have forgotten. I recall being struck that, following a recitation of my prayer to Phul, I looked out of the window the ground-floor room that I was in, to see a bird land on a large stone vase on a pedestal which was in the garden only three or four

⁴¹ Legard, Phil. 1998c. 'The Operation of the Arbatel of Magick', *The Picatrix*. Online at: <https://web.archive.org/web/19991003181911/http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com:80/arbatel.html> [Accessed 24/10/18]

feet away from me. I took this as a sign that my prayer had been acknowledged.⁴²

1.4.10.

I had not altogether forsaken my interest in Lovecraftiana, and for the rest of the year my practice was a very idiosyncratic combination of utilitarian chaos magick workings, *Arbatel* prayers, and Lovecraftian explorations. One of the final pieces of Lovecraftian writing I added to *The Picatrix* was 'Primordial Earthwalk' – a ritual which was meant to introduce an open-ended imaginative journeying 'to the primordial earth as the Old Ones ruled it before the creation of man'.⁴³ This is in a similar vein to my imaginative work that sought to explore Lovecraft's Dreamlands and Vaults of Zin – and a direct line can perhaps be drawn between these, and my childhood attempts to engage with 'dream-worlds'. I provided a brief account of some of my experiences with the rite:

1.4.10.1.

The first performance was pretty much a failure. The opening of the rite went fine, but there was an extremely oppressive and alien atmosphere surrounding the temple [alias bedroom]. I had experienced this kind of atmosphere before in the work, but having taken a break from it for several months I was not prepared for it to be this intense. I felt as though (sic) I was hanging in alien space. Then I felt something brushing by me and had a mental image of a black, spindly creature. I leapt up and performed several Qabalistic banishings and cursings on the entity. The first successful attempt was a couple of days later. I attained full astral projection and experienced the primordial world. The first thing I noticed was that the atmosphere was different, there were huge grey clouds on a red tinted sky, while everything around me was tinted with an orange-yellow light. Huge structures dwarfed nearby mountains, they were made of stone and crowned with gigantic twisted towers. I was above a forest (perhaps I was somewhere like the Amazon?), and I could see black monoliths among the trees as well as

⁴² 15/11/18 – MEMO – I should explore whether interpreting omens in nature as a result of a prayer or magical action becomes a motif in my work. A number of instances of this may be discernable in my later writings?

⁴³ Legard 1998d, *Primordial Earthwalk*. Online at: <https://web.archive.org/web/19991004111158/http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com:80/writing/earthwalk.html> [Accessed 15/11/18]

various ill defined creatures with many mouths, eyes and 'limbs'. I moved toward the nearest stone building and flew through a huge circular window into a chamber with huge stones covered in runes and sigils. From this chamber I followed a huge passage which was bathed in turquoise light. On either side were gigantic statues of creatures mainly humanoid in form, and strange circular lights danced around the ceiling. I felt that something was watching me and did not hesitate in shooting up through a circular skylight. From here I could see the ocean and a Cyclops eyed creature reminiscent of a sea serpent was thrashing around in it. Turning I saw what had been watching me. There were three creatures like dragonflies hovering behind me. They dived for me. I felt they were trying to destroy or plant some kind of seed of larvae in to my soul. I made the Elder sign and pulled myself back into my body, ending the rite.

1.4.10.2.

Since this performance there have been many other successful employments of the rite, which have yielded much information which I have found useful. The primordial world is also flowing with what can best be called "raw energy", which I have found to be powerful and chaotic. Planting sigils in energy spots and creating a physical representation of the sigil can create some talismans which are seemingly quite powerful.

1.4.11.

The idea of planting a 'sigil' (a graphical design of something you desire to happen) in an imaginative space was likely cribbed from one of Phil Hine's rituals in the *Pseudonomicon*, in which he describes a pathworking to a sunken city, at which point participants are invited to visualise their sigils emanating from their bodies and being absorbed by a cyclopean obelisk.

1.4.12.

I also wrote my own version of Lovecraft's 'Necronomicon' entitled *Grimoirium Imperium*, which presents a text supposed to have been written by John Dee, and based on an earlier work by Lovecraft's notorious sorcerer Abdul Alhazred.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Legard 1998e. *Grimoirium Imperium*. Online at: <https://web.archive.org/web/19991004000645/http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com:80/grimoire/grimoire.html> [Accessed 15/11/18]

I wrote most of the text in 1997 to amuse myself while suffering from a flu for a week or so during my last weeks of college, but I decided to include it as part of *The Picatrix*, and began adding additional chapters toward the end of 1998. Of my Lovecraftian works, *Grimoirium Imperium* and *The Book of the Key* would go on to influence a variety of Lovecraftian magicians, inspiring Asenath Mason's *Exploring the Unnamable* (2007), which describes similar Dreamland/Zin pathworkings conducted by Lodge Magan, a Polish faction of the Order of Dragon Rouge, between 2003-2007. *The Book of the Key* is cited, and an illustration reproduced, in the section 'The Gate of the Silver Key' (Mason 2007: 11-12), which also suggests a 'descending' visualisation very similar to the one I originally used to attempt to enter the dream-lands in my earliest experiments with Hine's *Pseudonomicon*. The *Grimoirium Imperium* itself has subsequently been translated into Russian,⁴⁵ and pirated in a variety of mediums,⁴⁶ and still occasionally prompts discussion on occult message boards.⁴⁷

1.4.13.

[27/03/19] In spring 1998 I decided to camp overnight at Crimble Valley, an area which was near my college, and which I had occasionally explored during free periods, initially to re-visit the disused viaduct, which I recall being taken to by my parents as a child. I romantically imagined the idea of finding a mandrake there, and employing magic to safely remove it from the ground. The place seemed more wild and unmanaged than the other woodlands, and I decided that this would be a good place to conduct a Lovecraftian magical retirement.⁴⁸ I carried a sleeping bag and mat up there, as well as some food, and spent an uncomfortable night attempting to sleep rough in the wood, attempting to become 'close' (if that is the word) to Lovecraft's Shub-Niggurath, or the Black Goat of the Woods, who dwells on the planet of Yaddith and who represented primal, natural forces. I made my way back in the early twilight hours, having been sleepless - primarily meditating and listening for voices in the dark while

⁴⁵ E.g. http://svitk.ru/004_book_book/12b/2746_grimuar_imperium.php

⁴⁶ E.g. <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/9126229-grimoirium-imperium> and <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Necronomicon-Grimoirium-Imperium-Doctor-John/dp/1312634197> and <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/grimoirium-imperium-john-dee/1128422079>

⁴⁷ <https://danharms.wordpress.com/2008/05/14/great-internet-juxtapositions-the-grimorium-imperium/>

⁴⁸ 8/04/19 – MEMO – Having been party to interviews with a number of Leeds magicians of the 1980s via the work of my partner, Layla, I was struck by how they also used local woodland as analogues for wild pagan places. Possible theme to explore in analysis: geography (obviously geography and psychogeography become important themes in my own work later in this document).

the temperature dropped and the dampness of the earth saturated my clothing... yet I did not feel that it was a failure, but rather that I had encountered some aspect of nature that was in some way beyond human.

1.4.14.

[15/02/19] During the late 1990s, a large amount of primary source material that was entering the occult community through the work of a new generation of American scholars of ritual magic (Frank Klaassen, Richard Kieckhefer and Claire Fanger, primarily) and the efforts of Joseph Peterson, a Zoroastrian convert fascinated also by Western ritual and magic, who had begun transcribing the works of Giordano Bruno, as well as older magical manuscripts such as the 13th century *Liber Juratus*: a lengthy treatise describing a ritual to behold the heavenly city and – having attained the vision – to be able to command angels. Amongst the text were a plethora of new spirit names, sigils and so on, and approaches to magic which seemed more ‘authentic’ than the ritual magic of the Golden Dawn and OTO, with its heavy Masonic and Egyptological influences. By virtue of their lesser-known nature, they also seemed to possess a more innate ‘power’, and I began to take more seriously a worldview that saw the spirits as autonomous intelligent entities, rather than ‘thoughtforms’ projected by the mind of the magician.⁴⁹

1.4.15.

In my spare time, I had been experimenting with tape recorders and some fairly primitive sequencing software on my PC. I was still quite enthralled by the psychedelic music of the 1960s, and had continued recording acoustic guitar songs. I had also become quite fascinated by ‘generative music’ after discovering a demo of SSEYO’s Koan software in 1996, which I occasionally used to create tracks, sometimes overlaid with soundscapes made from BBC Sound Effects CDs that I had borrowed from the local library. Having recorded under the cloyingly twee name Aldous Animal (1996-7) I would later change to The Ian Crowley Suicide Experience (1998).

⁴⁹ Memo: 15/02/19 – Chaos magick had itself developed as a reaction to the magic of the Golden Dawn et al, and particularly to their lineage claims. This, now, was my own reaction to both Golden Dawn style magick and to chaos magick. This conception of a world, haunted by invisible intelligences, would – I think – be integral to the development of my later music.

1.4.16.

By early 1999 I had become a bit more serious about making music: I bought an electric guitar from my neighbour, and a cheap Peavey practice amp, augmented by an even cheaper Zoom multi-fx unit. Discovering that the guitar would feedback easily, I began to make more abstract noise, somewhat under the influence of **Migraine**'s provocative performance... I was still haunted by the way I had treated **E** and – perhaps driven by the Christian morality which was deemed necessary to practice the types of magick I had become interested in (e.g. the *Arbatel*, the grimoires) – continued to be angry at myself and the way my own sexual drive had twisted our relationship. With this in mind, I named the project Penis Amputee. In retrospect, I note that the issue of Fortean Times which had also kicked off my magical interests also included an article about John Wayne Bobbitt, who had made headlines in 1993 when he wife, Lorena, severed his penis following years of abuse from her partner.

1.4.17.

[27/03/19] Despite the provocative name, I came to appreciate making music as Penis Amputee as a form of therapy. Making noise is a cathartic experience, but I also began to become fascinated once again by the way certain drones and textures evoked imaginative imagery – the type of imaginative listening that I had developed in my childhood and teens became central to the process particularly of naming tracks. I had begun to upload my various noise experiments onto a website called mp3.com, which was an early social networking site for musicians, and also allowed you users to sell their work on CDs which would be burned, printed and dispatched by the company itself. It was through mp3.com that I was able to secure my first 'official' release, after being approached by a prolific noise artist called Jason Campbell to contribute to a split tape on his Hermetic Museum Recordings, which was released in the autumn of 1999.

1.4.18.

[10/04/19] Aside from Joe Peterson's Esoteric Archives, the other major online resource for pre-19th century esotericism was Adam McLean's Alchemy Website. Exploring this – and its confusing mass of Hermetic, chemical, Christian and Cabalistic imagery – inspired me, as did the discourse of 'spiritual' alchemy, in which the soul of the alchemist is potentially transmuted through either pursuing the chemical work, or engaging with mystical practices such as meditation and the contemplation of the emblematic figures of the 'art'.

1.4.19.

[07/06/19] Early in 1999, the chaos magician Tzimon Yliaster, who had become deeply involved in devotional tantric practice, suggested that the 'serious' magicians on Z(Cluster) may like to join him on a mailing list called TheWork. Membership of TheWork was dependent on sharing a magical diary with the rest of the group each week. The membership was diverse, including chaos magicians, tantric practitioners and a sabbatic witch and herbalist. I saw the opportunity to join TheWork as one which might help to push my practice further, so joined up with the intention of using the weekly submission to engage in an imaginative exploration of alchemical imagery, potentially fused with chaos and ritual magick. I decided that this project required a particularly dramatic start, so decided that I would attempt a more intense ritual evocation than I had with the Goetic spirits. I elected to attempt to conjure the archangel Raphael, described in the 16th century grimoire *Heptameron* (attributed to Peter d'Abano) as the ruler of the planet Mercury, and to be called on Wednesday. The ritual preparations, involving abstaining "with great and thorough continence during the space of nine days from sensual pleasures and from vain and foolish conversation" began on Monday the 15th of February.⁵⁰ I observed on the Thursday that: "Even after a short time of abstinence and purity I have started to notice certain things about modern society. Until today I hadn't noticed how much we are constantly exposed to images of sex and violence. It seems that one of the only possible ways to stay pure as possible will be (to) have as little contact with the outside world as I can manage. The TV, computer and radio have all been unplugged and my plans for the next week have been put on hold."⁵¹

1.4.20.

My entry for Sunday reads:

1.4.20.1.

There are three days left until the ritual of evocation. The Heptameron says that in the final three days the magician must be purified by fasting

⁵⁰ Archived online at: <http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com/writing/hept.html> [Accessed 07/06/19]

⁵¹ Memo: 07/06/19 – Antimodernism, a critique of moral decay etc are common tropes of conservative/Traditionalist esoteric outlooks, and are also discursively related to notions of purity in magical texts. Perhaps this complex of motifs can also be related to my drive for self-mortification in my musical outlook of the time (e.g. Penis Amputee).

and abstaining from luxury--once more, this is advice recycled from the Greater Key of Solomon. It seems quite unreasonable to go without any food until after the conjuration, Francis Barrett author of what may be called the last grimoire of the classical tradition says that when fasting the magician should only drink pure, running water and have no food or wine until the Sun has set. I have decided to adhere to this approach to fasting.

1.4.20.2.

*On this day I observed a period of electrical interference and at 3:58pm my stereo automatically began playing-- it seems that this is something that many magicians have observed...*⁵²

1.4.20.3.

Banished the temple in preparation for Wednesday's conjuration. I performed the LBRP, vibrating names with appropriate force etc. in the practical style laid down in Crowley's Liber O (ch III.4). When the LBRP had been completed I cast performed the Asperges, sprinkling the water used to bless the Pentacle around the temple.

1.4.20.4.

Whether down to the effort put into the performance of the banishing, the effects of the observances or Holy intervention, after the rite banishing I felt extremely weak at the knees and rather light headed. Also, the parts of my body that the water had come into contact with (mainly the fingers of my right hand and patches on my legs where the water would seem to have 'burned' through my robe) felt like they were 'burning' - a rather uncomfortable feeling which lasted for around three quarters of an hour.

1.4.21.

Due to the fasting, I had become to feel rather weak and disconnected from reality, with bouts of faintness. I recall that I was still attending tutorials at university, and almost fainted outside the refectory on the Tuesday:

⁵² Memo: 07/06/19 – Electricity seems to be viewed with suspicion by many modern magicians who seek a return to 'authentic' grimoire magic. Steve Savedow (*Goetic Evocation*, 1996, Eschaton Books) mentions power surges, gusts of wind and drops in temperature (:148), which are all tropes associated with wider paranormal activity narratives. Joseph C Lisewski, proponent of 'Old System Magick' often uses electrical metaphors, and insists on the magician working on bare ground, so as to be properly 'earthed'. Of course, all of this relates to a wider electrical imaginary, encompassing Gothic Horror, galvanic medicine and so on. In this instance, I suspect that I had left my CD player on pause and it automatically un-paused after some time in order to prevent damage to the mechanism.

1.4.21.1.

Lack of a substantial amount of food and sleep is making things seem rather strange. In the morning I had trouble calculating perspective and throughout the day I have had occasional mild auditory hallucinations. Many of these sound like what some call "the astral bell", which to me sounds like a brief crash - like someone dropping a box of crockery. Other hallucinations were brief snatches of music, like one occasionally hears when drifting off to sleep.

1.4.22.

By the day of the ritual – which was performed at noon – I was experiencing a variety of ocular disturbances, chiefly owing to the fasting, but interpreted through an esoteric lens as part of the ritual:

1.4.22.1

I entered the circle and once more blessed it with water and the asperges. Turning east I began to call the angels of the four parts of the world, holding my sword in my right hand and the book of conjurations in the left - all the angelic names were vibrated as above. I turned to the south-west and began reading the conjuration of Wednesday. I was feeling a little light-headed by the first reading.

1.4.22.2

The first reading of the conjuration seemed to have little effect. I waited for about three minutes and then tried again. I heard/hallucinated a sound like a storm or someone running their knuckles over a washboard and saw a couple of strange geometric shapes in the darkness. I repeated the conjuration for the third time and for a brief second during the repetition I saw an orange disc (probably about two feet across) before the circle, the disc appeared quickly and faded, half blinding me (like when one catches a glimpse of the sun).

1.4.22.3

I waited for any sign that Raphael had been summoned (by this time I guessed that I was in contact with Mercurial powers - symbolised by the disc etc). There was no sign, but there were a couple of sounds which I cannot describe. I began the exorcism.

1.4.22.4

Having read the exorcism I began to chant the closing words of the exorcism 'Hau Hau Hau Vau Vau Vau Vau'. After about ten minutes of this the darkness to the south-west of the circle appeared to be full of forms, mainly abstract, such as lines and discs. I did not feel any intelligent entity in the room, rather something like a computer or machine.

1.4.22.5

[...] Finally, after around an hour of conjuring and threatening the shapes began to take form and a the (sic) ghostly outline of a figure was standing before the circle. The figure seemed human, but there was the suggestion that it had a single 'Cyclops' eye. I decided not to threaten the spirit to visible appearance (something they do not seem to like), so I began questioning the spirit.

1.4.22.6

I first asked "O spirit, what is thy name and what planet rules thee?" (note: some people think it embarrassing to use 'olde worlde' language in such rituals, but to me it seems natural at the time and further helps to set the evocation apart from mundane reality). There was no reply, but the spectral figure stayed constant. I threatened to use the Pentacle again if it did not answer and I hear a low, quiet and cracked voice say "I am Raphael, ruled by Mercury". My next question was "And do you have the powers which the book Heptameron ascribes to you?" The reply came as a simple "Yes."

1.4.22.7

It was now time to ask it to undertake the task I had called it for. "I have called you here that you may bind any spirits that would cause me harm during my work, including any spirits that dwell in this place, in my home, or anywhere I go. I ask this of you, great angel, Raphael."

1.4.22.8

A simple and angered reply followed - "NO!" I was suddenly caught off balance and collapsed to my knees in the middle of the circle, my head spinning. I picked up the pentacle once more and thrust it out in the spirits direction, commanding him to obey and telling him to carry out his task perfectly. The cracked voice spoke "Then it shall be done."

1.4.22.9

I then spoke "I have also brought you here that you may provide

*information in any way you choose during the time I work the Art of
*****. Will you also do this?" The voice said "I shall."*

1.4.22.10

I spoke the license to depart and waited for the images to disappear and for myself to come 'back to reality'. The equipment was once more wrapped in its silk coverings and the temple left empty. By the time I had finished it was 1:47pm, so the ritual had lasted around an hour and forty five minutes.

1.4.22.11

Some observations - the lack of a triangle or other item to focus on seemed to make the process of conjuration require a lot more effort - at times I felt like something had manifested behind me.⁵³

1.4.22.12

[...] The evocation had left me feeling tired and drained. Around 4pm I ate some lunch and got around to having a decent sleep. I had a dream in which a beautiful woman came up to me and said she was Raphael. She touched me and my skin began to peel off, turning into black shapes which flew away, leaving a new skin behind. There was another image which I recall of the same woman in a lush, walled garden, flying around a golden orb.

1.4.23.

The 'art' in question which I wanted assistance with was my exploration of alchemical symbolism, through a variety of imaginative or magical means. I wrote a number of entries on this subject for TheWork, although they have since been lost, and I began to lose interest in the project itself after a few months, although it served a purpose in familiarising me with a wide range of alchemical and emblematic imagery. One ritual from this period does survive, archived online and performed on 14 April 1999, to mark the start of the works and my symbolic 'death' in preparation for purification.⁵⁴

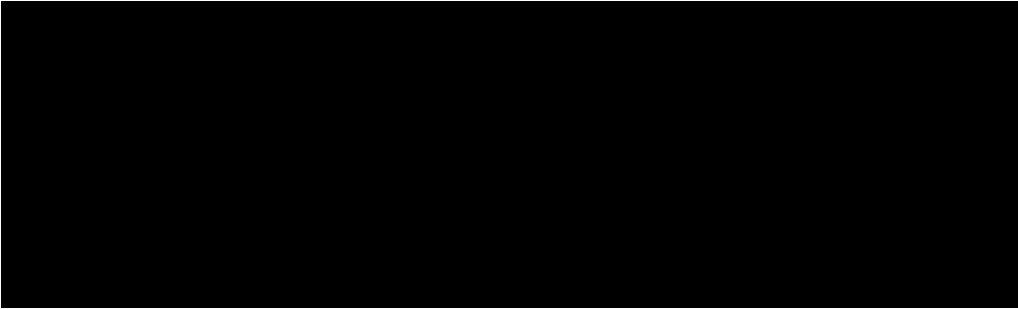
⁵³ Memo: 07/06/19 – The feeling of a manifestation behind the subject is a common feature in many paranormal experiences. Michael Persinger (1992) invoked it in his discussions of his electromagnetic 'god helmet', and I came to associate it with the presence of my guardian angel. Cheyne (2001) has associated it with the triggering of low-level cognitive mechanisms relating to threat detection, further stimulated by the dark environment.

⁵⁴ Archived at:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20030412084533fw/http://www16.brinkster.com/xenis/alchrit.htm> [Accessed 07/06/19]

1.4.24.

[27/03/19] It was also around this time that I chanced to encounter a man called **M**. I had gone to the local pub [REDACTED], and arrived before my usual set of friends. The pub already being quite crowded, I sat opposite an older, bearded man and we got to talking, and he told me he had just come back from a period of doing voluntary work [REDACTED]. I believe I was dressed in a rather outrageously gothic style – a black poet shirt with lace trims from Morgana (a shop in beneath the dark arches of Leeds train station), and a home-made Cthulhu pendant, made of clay painted gold and silver. Naturally the conversation turned to Lovecraft and his most famous creation, the *Necronomicon*. He asked if I had ever read the edition of the *Necronomicon* written by Robert Turner and George Hay – of course I had! Despite it being a modern construction, I had found it highly inspirational during my period of Lovecraftian magickal dabbling. It turned out that this man, **M**, was a friend of Robert Turner and a member of his magickal group the Order of the Cubic Stone (OCS). The Order had been founded in the late 1960s, but had become dormant in the early 1990s after Turner had been seriously assaulted at a bus stop in Wolverhampton. However, he told me that Turner was still directing the researches of several members of the order, and had been working on an edition of a grimoire attributed to John Dee, called the *Book of the Black Venus*. Furthermore, **M** told me that he and his friend, **N**, had been tasked by Turner to work through and document the ritual conjurations of the six spirits detailed in the book. He described how they had hired a secluded cottage in the Yorkshire Dales to undertake their first working with the system, which also involved forging the various tools necessary for the conjuration: the book of spirits (*liber spirituum*), the pentacle (made from engraved copper), the horn of Venus (made from an engraved bull's horn, washed in copper sulphate in order to tint the engraved sigils), the magical circle, and the seals of the six spirits made from wax, blackened with soot. The pair then meditated on the seals of the spirit they were going to conjure – [REDACTED]. **M** told me that he had a vision of stepping stones, and it was taken as a sign of synchronicity that – upon going for a walk to clear their heads after a day of magical toil – they discovered that their intended ritual site was bordered by a stream. He described the conjuration as a success, evoking the presence of a diminutive creature which he described as looking like a 'little William Hague', who had instructed the pair to purchase a two small quartz crystals which they could use to scry in order to obtain betting advice: the aim of the ritual described in the *Book of the Black Venus* is to

‘discover hidden treasure’, so this seemed like an inventive modern twist on the idea!



Ritual paraphernalia from the Book of the Black Venus (Warburg MS. FHB 510)

1.4.25.

Following this chance-meeting, **M** and I would become close friends, and I would regularly visit the house [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. Our meetings, often conducted over cheap boxes of wine, ran the gamut of occult theory and practice, and I also often brought music I had been working on, or listening to, to provide the sonic backdrop to our chats.

1.4.26.

At this point, my music had begun to develop its own style, mainly focused on the manipulation of feedback to generate tones, which were then processed through a variety of effects pedals. The music was not particularly harsh for the most part, but rather tried to express imaginative and cosmic moods. I had also begun a side project called Fields of Dharma, based on ambient sound loops, with spoken word (mainly culled from texts available on Joe Peterson’s Esoteric Archives website).

1.4.27.

The rest of my social life, usually revolved around a selection of pubs in town – often going to either the [REDACTED] (a spit and sawdust rock pub generally frequented by the older set), or [REDACTED] (a cellar bar, usually frequented by people around my age or a year or two younger). Most Fridays and Saturdays I would also end up at [REDACTED], a pub on the outskirts of town, which ran a rock club til 2am and usually provided a free minibus to pick up rockers from the town centre.

1.4.28.

[09/04/19] Although I disengaged from Z(Cluster) on 5 December 1999, I did remain there in a 'lurking' capacity, while the summer and autumnal months of the year were quite active. The 'zees' led astral attacks on Serbian warlord Arkan, and also on the Church of Scientology in November. Some of these actions were facilitated by an online MUSH (Multi-User Shared Hallucination) called Damascus.⁵⁵ Damascus was an online environment in the style of a MUD (Multi-User Dungeon) navigated by text commands, in which users could congregated and interact in real-time. They could also build new environments: I myself had begun to build a 'temple', visualised as a multi-story wooden structure, vaguely based on the Cabalistic Tree of Life, incorporating a variety of ritual 'cells', decorated with appropriate symbolic objects. Interacting with Damascus also emphasised visualisation: I attempted to visualise in detail all the environments I constructed, so that they could also be accessed as 'astral' temples – e.g. offline, through meditative states. The creators of Damascus – three members of Z(Cluster) – had even created a magical servitor called Netgymit, whose sigil and mantra were used as a method of mentally connecting to the MUSH.

current projects @ damascus

This page contains details on ongoing projects taking place in Damascus. Please select a project from the list below.

NETGYMIT Servitor	Status: Running
A servitor allowing users to access Damascus offline, from a state of gnosis or in dreams. Click here to go to NETGYMIT's project page.	
Discussion Sessions	Status: More logs uploaded 31-8-99
Regular discussions on many areas of magick are held on the MUSH. Click here to go to the Discussion Sessions project page, where you can find their logs.	
Impromptu servitor creation	Status: Done and dusted - about five minutes after it was announced!
Of course, there's no need to actually <i>plan</i> anything if you don't want to. Case in point, here .	

[Home](#) | [What the FAQ?!](#) | [Latest News](#) | [How to Connect](#) | [Command Help](#) | [Links](#) | [Current Projects](#)

Excerpt from the Damascus MUSH homepage, via Archive.org

⁵⁵ Archived at:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20000919222855/http://amber.org.uk/~damascus/home.html>

[Accessed 9/04/19]

9 April 2019 – MEMO – Consider the various networking environments used, online and off. The online world contrasts w/ the offline (cp. The Leeds magical scene gathered around the Sorcerer's Apprentice in the 1980s), but both still constituted fairly small, interconnected 'scenes'.

Date: Sun, 16 Jan 2000 01:00:26 -0500
From: [REDACTED]
Subject: [zee-list] Arkan Shot Dead.

I just heard Serbian paramilitary leader Arkan was shot and killed this past Saturday. Just thought it may be of interest, I believe there were some amount of magic missiles directed his way a while back by zeas. Said he was shot in the head three times by 'automatic weapons' (snickernicker, hollow term) while sitting in the lobby of an hotel.

What goes around, comes around, I guess.

[REDACTED]

A post from the zee-list noting the assassination of Arkan.

1.4.29.

Although I had briefly been out with a couple of girls since my relationship with E ended, [REDACTED], it was not until early 2000 that I met my next significant partner, P. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] We met at a pub [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and we got talking and ultimately walked home together.

1.4.30.

P lived [REDACTED], and we saw each other a few days a week, which also enabled me to continue my musical explorations fairly freely. I worked on my final Penis Amputee recording, *El-ov-Eh*.⁵⁶ Most of the track titles were elicited from mental images, which came up during the recording/improvisation process. For example, 'Solar Plasma' (descending high-pitched feedback drones), 'Menwith Hill is Listening' (sounds suggesting morse code or computer code), 'Surface of Yuggoth' (low guttural distortion, as if alien presences were speaking across the surface of a desolate planet), 'Waterways to Venus' (filtering effects gave the impression of moving into confined spaces, like following a canal or gondola through tunnels and beneath overpasses).

⁵⁶ Memo: The name suggests a sort of post-industrial wordplay, of the sort favoured by the Temple ov Psychick Youth. El and Eh are both divine names in the Cabala, as well as suggesting the word 'love'. TOPY had also used the convention 'l-ov-e', although I was only really aware of the TOPY argot via its influence on the online Z(Cluster) and chaos magick communities.



El-ov-Eh, cassette cover and CDr (2000, author's work)

1.4.31.

I decided that I had outgrown Penis Amputee as a moniker, so – under the influence of Jeff Noone's experimental poetry book *Cobralingus* – corrupted the name into Xenis Emputae. I'm not sure where I found out about *Cobralingus*, but the idea fascinated me: that text could be manipulated in the same way as electronic music by sending fragments through processes like 'decay', 'purify', 'mix' and so on.

1.4.32.

Over the spring I put together a new recording, and had started spending time on various noise message boards (such as *I Hate Noise*), making contact with a small group of American noise musicians who were trading CDRs as Praying Gods and D-503. I recorded a new CDr, called *East of Israel* in which the track titles had generally moved more toward overtly esoteric references, for example, as well as autobiographical elements ('I Do, I Undo, I Redo' was named after the Louise Bourgeois sculpture which I had seen in the main hall of the Tate Modern when visiting London [REDACTED]):

Alien of Angelic?
 Ark of Jah
 Cassiopeian Interpreter
 Heart of Zagreus
 I Do, I Undo, I Redo
 Psepherinus
 Zephyrium

1.4.33.

'Cassiopeian Interpreter' betrayed a particular developing obsession with the stars, which had come from reading Cornelius Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, which had been published in a comprehensively annotated and easily-obtainable edition by Donald Tyson, published by Llewellyn in 1998. The final piece of work I posted to Z(Cluster) was entitled *Libellus Coelum Stellarum Fixarum*, and summarised everything I was able to discover at that time about fifteen notable stars which are discussed by Agrippa. I used the pen-name Zosimos Poté Z – attempting to give a Greek rendering of the magical name I had assumed (Zosimos) who was 'once [poté] (a) Zee'.



Liber Coelum Stellarum Fixarum

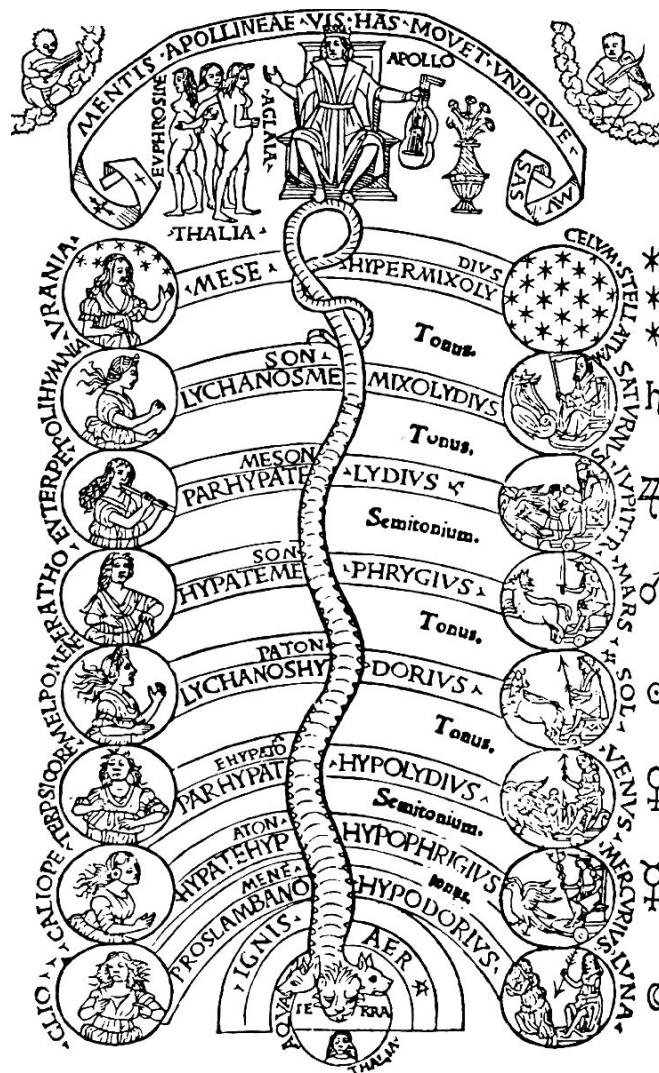
A discourse on the fifteen stars

by Ζοσιμος Ποτε Ζ (Phil Legard)
legard@btinternet.com

Header for Liber Coelum Stellarum Fixarum (author's work).

1.4.34.

[19/06/19] My study of Agrippa led to me adopting the cosmological conception of 'three worlds': a divine world of angelic orders and ideal forms, which flows downward, finding expression in the stars and planets. Ultimately these stars exert an influence on the earth, which is not just a mechanical process, but is also said to be mediated by various spirits or intelligences set over the planets and stars. They influence humankind by dint of the astrological conditions surrounding their birth, and they also imprint their powers sympathetically upon other entities, creating a system by which celestial (ultimately divine) power may be concentrated in talismans constructed from sympathetic materials. Such talismans may also contain imagery drawn from star lore, or from mathematical concepts: pure number being considered an expression of the divine mind.



A musical expression of the three-fold world, from Gafurius' *Practica Musice* (1496). Here the divine mind of Apollo (*Mentis Apollineae*) animates the graces and muses. Below the transcendent world, the spheres of the celestial world span an octave, each also with an associated muse and musical mode. Finally the divine powers flow into the terrestrial, 'sublunar' world of the elements.

1.4.35.

The three-fold cosmology significantly altered the way I experienced the world. While I had been aware of correspondences between numbers, planets, herbs, gods and so on – and had used them to make talismans before – the three-fold view imparted a sense of immanence to all things. To look up at the stars in the night was to see the middle-ground between earth and the unimaginable divine realm. I could almost sense the chain of being between a talisman I held in my hand, the stars, and the manifestation of an all-permeating divine power.

1.4.36.

Over the summer and into autumn, my music took on a more overtly occult

aesthetic. I recorded a noise album called *Aeonic Trespassing* (2000), whose cover incorporated designs from the Greco-Magical Papyri, derived from the work of Betz, whose sourcebook of ancient spells I had purchased in the first year of university. The tracks were entitled 'Algol' (the name of what was reputed to be the most astrologically malign star), 'Aeonic Trespassing' (based on the idea that aeons could be articulated before their time, which I had perhaps acquired from reading negative reviews of Kenneth Grant's work online), 'Psychonaut' (a neologism originally coined by Ernst Junger's description of an LSD experience, but one which I had come to via chaos magick, being the title of one of Peter Carroll's works), and 'Panzerfaust' (a very noisy track, named after the German anti-tank missile for little reason other than the vague influence of power electronics music).

xenis emputae [aeonic trespassing](#) (cdr from [white star riser](#))

we have a really nicely packaged cd here, looking like the washed-out cover of an old book, complete with cryptic symbols and an orobouros, and the sounds are suitably obscure to match. it opens with 'algol', buzzy synthesized tones and chattering unintelligible background vocals informing you of your insanity, intermittent synth notes with the decay turned to eleven descending though everything. the title track opens with delayed, muffled sounds that might be from a guitar, or maybe animal sounds, i can't tell. soon it doesn't matter, though, as this track gets rather noisy with high frequency feedback noises, with a mysterious bed of background noises and good layering of nasty sounds. there seems to be some interesting filtering going on also, with certain sounds shifting from muffled to more clear (and piercing) every so often. this track goes a bit over seven minutes, although it seems much shorter. the third track, 'psychonaut' is more atmospheric, quiet pulsing and other sounds suggesting a bleak alien forest, with erratic, chattering static overtop, probably the most interesting track of the disc. 'panzerfaust', the final track, jumps on the listener with chaotic, distorted psuedo-musical tones and feedback, maybe some screams and/or sample manipulation (since this recording is dedicated to frater lashtal/graham bond maybe there are some samples of his recordings in here? not having heard anything by him i can't really say). in any case, as a whole this is a really complex release and seems to have a lot of layering going on... and after checking i realize that all of the four songs on here are over seven minutes, although only the last track feels like it. definitely worth checking out.

Review of Aeonic Trespassing, by D-503.⁵⁷

1.4.37.

Toward the end of summer I also recorded *Ananak* (2000), which took its title and the name of another track ('Sustasis to Helios') from the Greco-Egyptian magical papyri. The opening two tracks betrayed the influence of H.P. Lovecraft: 'Saint Toad' referring to Lovecraft's sonnet cycle 'The Fungi from Yuggoth', and 'Hall of KThVL' a reference to his creation Cthulhu, who slept beneath the waves in his sunken city of R'Lyeh. The final track ('Nigredo') developed on some processed recordings of crows, which I had used to imaginatively explore alchemical symbolism as part of my previously mentioned alchemical death

⁵⁷ Archived at: <http://www.angelfire.com/music/d503/reviews/xenis1.html> [Accessed 19/06/09]

rite.⁵⁸ I described the setting for this rite – performed in 1999 after my *Heptameron* working – as follows:

1.4.37.1

*The ritual was executed at 9:30pm. I walked to a clearing in a forest a couple of miles from my house and made a small fire, performing the oration to salamanders as I did it. I had, about a year ago, camped out here as part of ritual work with Lovecraftian fertility gods and goddesses. I began the ritual music (recorded in mono onto a minidisc). I banished by clapping and sat down. I centred and performed the invocation. Meditated and visualised the sigil of *****. After about quarter of an hour of visualisation and reflection on the sigil, I stood up and began the main 'conjunction' [...]*

1.4.37.2

The ritual continued with the use of the mantric phrase 'INGRA' and dancing like a fire. At times I degenerated into glossolalia, before finally collapsing, exhausted. I saw the fire 'turn into the shape of a bird' and kept repeating the mantra. I must have eventually slipped into a deep trance and I had a 'vision'. My skin flaked off into ravens wings. I flew with these ravens into a deep forest full of wild beasts and twisting paths. The ravens sent the wild beasts fleeing deeper into the forest. The vision faded and I was lying beneath the stars. I felt ill for the rest of the night. [There was probably more to this vision, but I have difficulty recalling it all...]

1.4.38.

On my website, I categorised *Ananak* as ritual music, defining this genre as:

1.4.38.1

*Music that alters perception - to be used as part of a magical ritual, [...]
Music with a 'magical will' encoded into it or making an element of the track.⁵⁹*

⁵⁸ Archived at:

https://web.archive.org/web/20030412084533fw_/http://www16.brinkster.com/xenis/alchrit.htm [Accessed 19/06/09]

⁵⁹ 19/06/19 – MEMO – The composition of this music for ritual and imaginative purposes seems to pre-figure much of what would come after. Part of my analysis should probably concentrate on the concept of constructing a musical-esoteric practice, which employs

xenis emputae ananak (cdr from white star riser)

seeing as this release has only four tracks on it i don't think it'd be too much trouble to go song by song on the review, so here goes: 'saint toad' starts off the disc with slow bells, joined at times with more natural sounding bells and a buzzy flange sweep, a pretty low-key way to start the disc. the next track, 'hall of ****' (where the third word is written in hebrew, which i cannot understand) is more busy, with what sounds like distorted metal friction and feedback layered over atmospheric sounds (wind, maybe birds and some more bells). nice juxtaposition between natural (sounding) and more traditional noise type sounds, very grey and bleak. the theme continues with 'sustasis to helios', which sounds like water and rain at the start and then layers on a sort of melody with a synthesizer(?) and somewhat muffled chirping, buzzing metallic noise. the final track, 'nigredo', opens with a deep reverberated sound and animal sounds (which seem to be actually human in origin) and adds in sparse white noise and feedback. as a whole this album is pretty atmospheric, even the noisier bits are not too loud, and the whole thing is actually sort of depressing to listen to. don't take that as a negative comment on it, i enjoyed this album a lot and it seemed very planned out and well put together. highly recommended.

Review of Ananak, by D-503.⁶⁰

1.4.39.

Between the autumn of 2000 to 2001, I worked as a technical support officer at [REDACTED] for the work-experience component of my sandwich degree. A lot of the job involved waiting for calls, or maintaining computers (usually by wiping and re-installing their software) as well as work upgrading machines or fixing hardware faults. The helpdesk also had to be staffed in evenings to provide support for night classes. The job had quiet periods (particularly in evenings) which I often used to develop my musical and esoteric ideas.

1.4.40.

The fascination with the stars – Agrippa's intermediary realm – continued, and I began to consider whether astronomical data could be interpreted musically. These thoughts yielded an album that was untitled – although I knew it as *Star Synthesis* – which mapped astronomical data about the fixed stars into primitive synthesised tones. I wrote about the process of mapping star data to tones on my website, and considered the disc and interesting experiment in representing data, rather than considering it magical or talismanic in any way.⁶¹

processes of kataphatic imagination as well as improvisation and composition. I had already been introduced to the idea of encoding will in musical sigils via Z(Cluster), and had posted a small idea about drumming sigils on my magical website: <https://web.archive.org/web/20000524191711/http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com/drum.html> [Accessed 19/06/09]

And also noted musical mappings from the revised edition of Regardie's Middle Pillar here, with regard to a project which was proposed, but never significantly progressed: <https://web.archive.org/web/20021121175556fw/http://www16.brinkster.com/xenis/ycp.htm>

⁶⁰ <http://www.angelfire.com/music/d503/reviews/xenis3.html> [Accessed 19/06/09]

⁶¹ See; <https://web.archive.org/web/20020918065602fw/http://www16.brinkster.com/xenis/astro1.htm> [Accessed 19/06/09]

<https://web.archive.org/web/20030412092731fw/http://www16.brinkster.com/xenis/starsyn.htm> [Accessed 19/06/09]

1.4.41.

I became rather interested in Cabala, having acquired a full copy of Crowley's *Liber 777 & Sepher Sephiroth*. The latter is a numerological dictionary. I often spent weekends exploring the various numerological correspondences between different Hebrew names and words, attempting to extrapolate interesting magical correspondences, and inspired in part by the strange Cabalistic exegeses of Kenneth Grant, whose books I had occasionally been lent on visits to see M. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1.4.42.

I was, still, rather preoccupied with Lovecraftiana – although not practicing any more. As a form of practice, I wrote a short piece of Cabalistic exploration on the name S'ngac, who was described in Lovecraft's *Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath* as "an intelligent violet gas in an area of space where form does not exist", who "knows terrible things about Nyarlathotep and Azathoth".⁶²

1.4.43.

In my conclusion to the piece, I wrote:

1.4.43.1

The idea of S'ngac as a vaporous and intelligent thing without form could suggest a link to something like the Akashic Realm (or Library). Basically, the Akashic Realm has absorbed everything that has happened in the universe(s). Some people have described the Akashic Realm as an actual library, but most people describe it as an abstract space. To me the Akashic Realm presents itself as a vast area of swirling mists in which visions appear and gates open - very much like the S'ngac of Lovecraft's quote. The Akashic Realm can also be likened to the Universal Consciousness. Therefore, S'ngac speaks a universal

⁶² Archived at:
<https://web.archive.org/web/20000525100230/http://psorcereezee.future.easyspace.com/writing/sngac.html> [Accessed 19/06/09]

*language using images and suggestions of sound - although it may be cryptic at times. S'ngac can therefore be seen as either an intelligent, living aspect of the Akashic Realm with an affinity for the Cthulhu Mythos, or a Mythos representation of the Akashic Realm - or perhaps a bit of both!*⁶³

1.4.44.

I didn't really produce much additional material over this period – **P** and I would often go to local gigs on Friday and Saturday, usually involving a night at the [REDACTED]. I would often go for walks on my own around local woods, or book shopping – continuing to build up my library with the help of local second-hand book dealers.

⁶³ 21/06/19 – MEMO - The idea that an entity 'speaks' in a universal language of image and sound will be a recurrent motif in this narrative. I had likely developed it from my Goetic and *Heptameron* experiments. The development of this motif is one that may be useful to consider from an analytic perspective.

Part Two: Xenis Emputae Travelling Band, Psychogeography, and the Genii Locorum

2.1. Full Moon June (2001)

2.1.1.

[21/06/19] In the June of 2001, while still working at the college, I encountered a pivotal experience in my creative life. We had been taken by **P**'s parents to stay in Newlyn, Cornwall. I found a book of Cornish walks on the shelves of the cottage and was fascinated by the walk across Penwith Moor, taking in Men-an-Tol, Nine Maidens (Boskednan), Bodrifty Settlement, and Mulfra Quoit. I persuaded **P** and her brother to do this walk, and then to press onward to Penzance for tea. We were dropped at the Men-an-Tol Studio, and walked across a short stretch of moor to the Men-an-Tol standing stones.



First visit to Men-an-Tol, 2001 (author's photograph).

2.1.2.

At the stones we joked around a bit, and I read the passage from the guidebook, which alluded to the use of the holed stone in 'gypsy' baptism rites. We teased one another to crawl through the stone. I went through, head first, and stood, surveying the countryside: the undulating, brush-strewn landscape, with the austere, imposing ruined engine house of an old mine in the distance. I was elated, I felt an intense inner-glow, and a connection with the landscape and my surroundings. An ecstatic feeling, which deepened as we set off across the moor.

2.1.3.

In retrospect, this experience was an ontological shift. I had been deeply involved in a very intellectual world: calculating Cabalistic numerology, speculating on astrological influences and the imagery of the heavens.⁶⁴ Being in a natural scene, encircled by the horizon was a profound shock. I had never been particularly interested in 'earth energies' or stone circles, but I became convinced that 'something' had happened here.

2.1.4.

I revisited the moor the next day, with a handheld Dictaphone and minidisc recorder, to make musical recordings. However, I found that revisiting the places and trying to engage with them musically did not yield the same, overwhelming 'extrovertive' mystical experience. What it did yield, however, was something more imaginatively involved: an inner-meeting with the landscape and its presences. The recordings would be self-released a few weeks after I returned, under the new moniker *Xenis Emputae Travelling Band*. Two particular tracks on the resultant album, *Full Moon June* (2001) are emblematic of this newfound imaginative way of responding to my environment:

2.1.5.

I remember crouching in the remains of the tomb at Mulfra Quoit and recording the 'seed' track for this piece. I let the broken accordion open and close without much conscious thought. With my back to one of the interior walls, I could see

⁶⁴ 21/06/19 – MEMO – In my historical re-tellings of this story, I have often described it in terms of an unexpected experience. However, I may well have been 'priming' myself for it through my other studies: my study of the stars was not just intellectual, but had involved contemplating the actual night sky and interpreting it in cosmological (and mystical) terms.

the sky and fragments of landscape through the various openings in the other walls, but essentially my vision of the wider landscape was occluded. While playing, I began to feel that a presence was gathering nearby. As I let the accordion wheeze and crack, the presence seemed to grow, and immediately vanish when the 'spell' was broken as I knocked over my recording device. The apprehension of 'sensed presences' is identified by many as a component of mystical or magical encounter, and would be a recurrent theme in subsequent music-making.⁶⁵ While developing the track further, at home, the wheezing of the accordion evoked images of the inhabitant of the tomb, who would probably have been cremated, becoming deified as his ashes rose to the heavens – hence the track title, 'Ultratelluric Respiring God'.

2.1.6.

Moving from sensed presences to interior images, 'The Feast of Bwcca-Du' developed from walks along the coast at Newlyn. I had found a book on folklore at the cottage, which mentioned 'Bucca-Dhu' (of Buggaboo, a form of Pooka, Boggle, or Hobgoblin). Although I am unable to find the exact book at present, a recent website outlines the story:

2.1.6.1

The term Bucca refers in Cornwall to several things. First of all it was common for the fisher folk of Newlyn, Moueshole and Penzance to set aside three fish from their catch to placate the Sea hobgoblin Bucca Dhu who was said to be the herald and originator of storms, particularly violent storms. In Newlyn their (sic) were a number of sites that were associated with this spirits veneration including the Tolcarne, which was said to have where the devil or Bucca foretold the Spanish Raid on Mount's Bay in 1595. Another place was the Park an Growse or field of the cross which was situated east of the now large Council estate Gwavas. The Rev Lach-Szyrma of St Peters Newlyn considered the

⁶⁵ One of the most popular connections between sensed presences ('haunt experiences') and mystical experience is in the work of Michael Persinger, who suggested that transcranial magnetic stimulation ('the god helmet') could induce such experiences. Grantqvist (2006) concludes that the device has little effect, but such experiences are more prevalent in those with 'suggestible' traits, predicated on the use of his New Age Orientation Scale (Grantqvist & Hagekull, 2001) and Persinger's exit questionnaire (see Persinger 2013 for summary of the associated inventory of experiences).

*Bucca to be the remnant of ancient Cornish sea god a view shared by other antiquarians associated with the Cornish revival.*⁶⁶

2.1.7.

With a newfound enthusiasm for the haunted nature of the sublunar world, the idea of an ancient sea god inspired me. It caused me to recall my father reading me H.P. Lovecraft stories as a child – the return to the sea god being a theme of Lovecraft's *Shadow over Innsmouth*, which prompted me to make a Lovecraft reference on the back cover of the CD, quoting the lines "Gorgo, Mormo, Thousand-Faced Moon". Sitting on the beach at Newlyn in the late evening, I found myself drawn into an imagining of a ritual: a fire festival, in which offerings were carried by the village into the sea for Bucca Dhu. The resultant track was a primitive attempt to evoke this imagined space musically, using Dictaphone recordings from the beach, overdubbed with hand-drum (djembe) recordings made later at home. Despite the primitive nature of the musical production, re-listening to the music vividly recalls the imaginative scene: I can see the faces of the fishermen and villagers in the orange light of their torches; the sound of sand and shingles; the hubbub of voices; and the playing of drums to summon the Bucca Dhu...

2.1.8.

[25/06/19] The materials recoded in Cornwall were overdubbed and edited over the summer. I'd been to a car-boot sale, and picked up some old Casiotone keyboards, which I also overdubbed onto the recordings, through a variety of effects pedals. Various wailing vocals were also added – partly in homage to the 'spacewhisper' singing of Gong's Gilli Smyth, which seemed to suggest a powerful feminine force associated with both the earth and heavens. The cover of the album also alluded to two Japanese bands that I had become interested in: Flower Travellin Band (formed 1967) and Acid Mother's Temple (formed 1995), whose albums I had begun to buy from Delerium, a record label and mailorder company specialising in psychedelic music.

⁶⁶ Cornish Culture Association. t.d. 'The Bucca', *Cornish Culture*. Online at: <https://cornishculture.co.uk/portfolio/the-bucca/> [Accessed 19/06/19]



Debut album by Acid Mother's Temple (1997), and my own Full Moon June (2001, author's work).

The cover shows an image Boskednan circle.

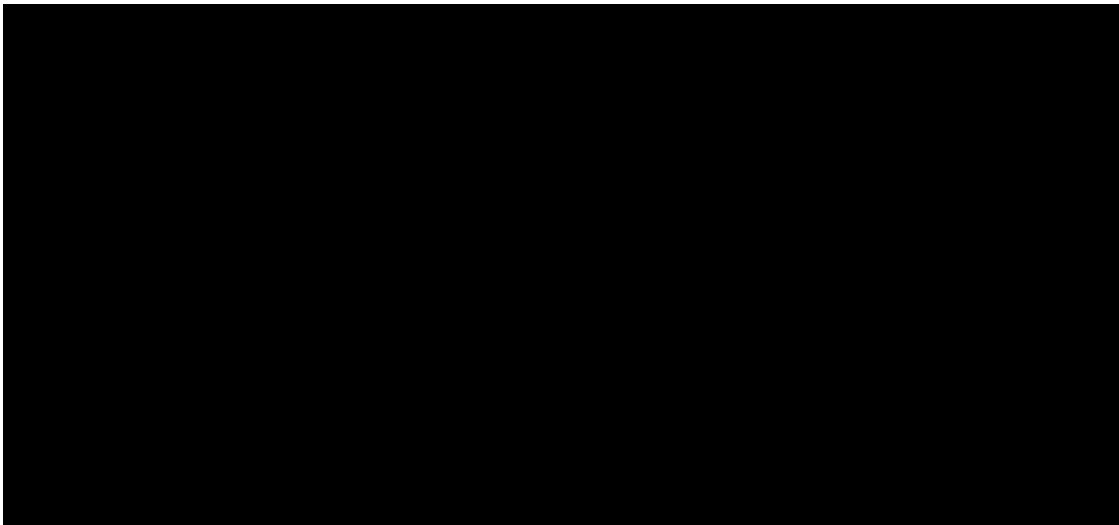
2.1.9.

I also recorded a – now lost – album called *Black Brotherhood*, which used the Casiotones and fx pedals alongside recordings of a couple of 1960s occultists called John Pope and David Farrant. Both Pope and Farrant had – along with Sean Manchester – been involved in the notorious Highgate Vampire incidents, which saw Farrant sentenced for four years for desecrating graves. Since then, Manchester had attempted to put distance between himself and Farrant by adopting the persona of a wandering Catholic bishop and descendent of Lord Byron. He had created an exhaustive website about the Highgate Vampire – much of which was dedicated to drawing attention to the satanic activities of Pope and Farrant – which also included audio recordings of the pair, which I overdubbed onto the music.

2.1.10.

For some time I had also been fascinated by Dodo Resurrection, a band invented by journalist Andy Davis at Record Collector Magazine. Profiles on the band occasionally appeared as April fools jokes, describing a 1960s hard rock outfit who fatally dabbled with the occult. The idea that there were possibly records out there of this ilk, or that they could be realised by myself was powerful, and I recorded a couple of 'Dodo Resurrection' tracks, very much inspired by the bucolic side of Pink Floyd in the immediate wake of Syd Barrett's departure.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ 25/06/2019 – MEMO – Occult knowledge was often sought in the form of imaginary books (amongst other forms of revelation). Simon Forman dreamed of "strang bockes brought me



Andy Davis' original Dodo Resurrection article (Record Collector, no. 164, April 1993)

2.1.11.

[05/04/20] Of course, a major event toward the end of my employment at [REDACTED] was the events on the 9th of September 2001. The first I was aware of it was when messages from the Z(Cluster) spiked, with warning that 'this was it' – the eschaton was thoroughly 'imminentized'. One of the [REDACTED] staff came into our office, convinced that this would trigger a chain of reactions which would start a nuclear war with the middle east. Thankfully this was not to be, although lying in bed that night, such premonitions felt terrifyingly close.⁶⁸

written in Karactes", while John Dee and Humphrey Gilbert sought visions and transcriptions of books from the spirits (while Joseph Smith founded Mormonism on alleged transcriptions from such a spiritual book). Gilbert's workings were explicitly necromantic, seeking new works from King Solomon, Roger Bacon and Agrippa. In this respect not so far removed from the likes of spiritualists who have channelled music and literature from long-passed artists. In my own biography there were attempts to 'channel' the Necronomicon, and later I will use the idea of an imaginary record shop as a creative way to engage with what was assumed to be my unconscious. There is much here to consider about seekership at large (- ever looking for that 'one' book or piece of music which has 'the' answer -) and the iconography of media in the imagination. Dodo Resurrection continues to be fondly remembered amongst record collectors and psychedelic music enthusiasts – and a label called Shack in the Barley recently released their own take on the idea, with four long psychedelic instrumentals attributed to Dodo Resurrection II: <https://thegoldengonk.wordpress.com/2018/09/30/five-new-cassettes-out-now-jamie-azzopardi-pigeons-from-christ-split-dodo-resurrection-ii-new-album-the-golden-gonk-new-album-and-reissue-and-sky-sacrifice-new-double-album/> [Accessed 25/06/19]

As a joke, I listed Dodo Resurrection's *Nostradamus* amongst my top 100 albums in 2006, and still continue to receive enquiries about whether I actually own a copy. See: <http://www.larkfall.co.uk/top100.htm> [Accessed 25/06/19]

⁶⁸ 05/04/20 - MEMO – Did I become more involved in the archaic worlds of my music to avoid an engagement with modern issues? As either an escapism, or a rejection of certain aspects of modernity (possibly both sides of the same coin)? Consider discursive relationship of my work with Traditionalism(s).

2.2. Under a Soular Moon (2001-2)

2.2.1.

P and I moved to Leeds late in the September of 2001, to a damp basement flat near [REDACTED]. In town I was a regular visitor to the CD Centre, which was a ground floor unit in the Merrion Centre, run by two friends, [REDACTED]. It had an incredible selection of strange music, such as obscure European progressive rock and a large offering of post-industrial and experimental music. I began visiting whenever possible, and began to expand my CD collection. I had also subscribed to the mailing list of the Termite Club, who ran noise, jazz and experimental music gigs in the area.

2.2.2.

It was within a couple of weeks of moving to Leeds that I was mugged as I waited for a train back from [REDACTED]. I remember that I had a Walkman and was listening to 'Dead Side of the Moon' by David Tibet and Steven Stapleton, when someone approached me and began to threaten to stab me if I didn't hand over my phone (which I did not have on me). I handed him my Walkman and while he looked at it, a train began pulling into the opposite platform, which I ran to – eventually being interviewed by British Transport Police at the city station.

2.2.3.

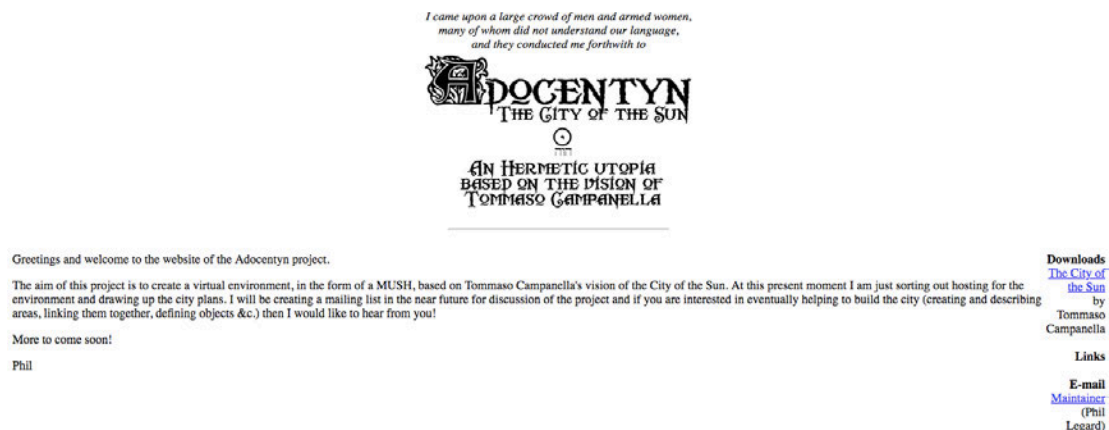
The mugging was extremely disquieting. I no longer felt confident walking on my own through Leeds, and was constantly nervous about anyone who might be hanging around in the street outside our flat. **P** and I began to take Tae Kwon Do lessons so that we had some confidence that we might protect ourselves if anything else happened. I recall a dark, autumn night, returning back to our flat from a session and being struck with awe at the luminous crescent of the moon in the dark sky as we rounded a street corner. My anxieties lifted for a moment, and it made me think of the sigils found in the work of Kenneth Grant (who derived them from Aleister Crowley), which he associated with the 'demonic' intelligences of the Tunnels of Set. I immediately set about recording a piece of music called 'Qulielif's Moon', which had quite a dark ambient atmosphere, prefiguring the music I would release on *Under a Soular Moon* (2001/2).



Moon-like sigils from Crowley's Liber CCXXXI (1912): Zamradial, Qulielfi, Raflifu

2.2.4.

[25/06/19] This final academic year really saw me 'knuckling down' to a more serious approach to my studies, rather than just coasting by and achieving 2:1s with fairly minimal effort. However, I was keen to bring my academic work and my musical and occult interests together somehow. My initial idea was to create some sort of virtual environment based on Campanella's City of the Sun, which I had called Adocentyn, based on a description of a very similar Hermetic utopia in the *Picatrix*, which I had discovered in the course of reading Frances Yates' *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition*.



A provisional website for Adocentyn (2001, author's work).

2.2.5.

However, I eventually decided that I would explore the area of algorithmic music and synthesis for my final project, and began working on a system called Isys, which would improvise music based on a number of algorithms and then play it via a series of user-defined synth patches. The system was written in Java using a Jsyn plugin for sound synthesis.

2.2.6.

While obscure music was still relatively hard to find on the web, file sharing platforms began to make seeking out all-but-forgotten sounds much easier. Although Napster was the most high profile, Soulseek found – and continues to foster – a strong community of users interested in underground music. Soulseek helped me discover a wide range of bands of folkish, mystical and occult persuasions beyond those whose CDs I could find in the CD Centre or via Delirium Records. My newfound revelations about the countryside, stone circles and so on dovetailed with my interests in underground music when I joined the Head to Head forums, which were part of Julian Cope's website. The forums had three distinct areas, dedicated respectively to megalithic sites, underground music, and politics. I had little interest in the politics forum, however, considering my interests truly apolitical at the time.

2.2.7.

Reading the Modern Antiquarian forum on Head Heritage, I began to discover more about the local area, particularly concerning the ancient remains on Ilkley Moor. This forum led me to the work of Gyrus, who had published a booklet entitled 'Verbeia: The Goddess of Wharfedale', and he had uploaded a related article to the website of his journal, *Dreamflesh*, entitled 'The Goddess in Wharfedale'.⁶⁹ The idea that the River Wharfe may be identified with a Romano-Celtic goddess, and that Ilkley moor was a sacred landscape fired my imagination.

2.2.8.

I had discovered the term 'psychogeography' after picking up *The Séance at Hob's Lane* by Mount Vernon Arts Lab at the CD Centre, and had been introduced as a consequence to the concept of the '*dérive*', or undirected wandering. I made several trips to the moor – during day and night and, in the spirit of the *dérive*, I didn't really have much of an idea where I was going, save that – once the higher ground had been attained, the moor seemed wild and enchanted to me, with something archaic to discover at every turn.

2.2.9.

I would wander east and west across the moor, occasionally recording with a tin

⁶⁹ Gyrus. 1997. 'The Goddess in Wharfedale', *Dreamflesh*. Online at: <https://dreamflesh.com/essay/goddess-wharfedale/> [Accessed 19/06/19]

whistle, a small zither, or my newly-acquired singing-bowl, and making recordings with my Minidisc recorder – however, the gain on the condenser microphone which I had bought (- the cheapest Sony conference recording microphone -) was very low since it lacked a preamp. The sound quality is fairly ‘close’ and lacking in high frequencies as a consequence of this: the noise floor resulting from boosting the signal needed filtering out in the production process. I also procured a rather eccentric theremin, hand-built by an engineer called Tony Bassett, who also built more esoteric devices like radionics boxes. The package even came with a photocopy of a picture of his hand, with instruction to lay one’s own palm upon the picture to receive healing energy! I did not know at the time, that Bassett was an acquaintance of Coil, who had experimented with his ‘Lhakovsky Multi-Wave Oscillator’ to apparently yield out-of-body experiences.⁷⁰

2.2.10.

Many of the track titles are inspired by aesthetic and sensory phenomena which I encountered during my wanderings: the moonlight on boggy waterlogged moorland, for example (‘The Moon Bog’ – the title also a Lovecraft reference), as well as an affective sense of the numinosity of earth, water, and the moon (‘Black Moon Mother’, ‘Verbeia’; ‘Black Moon Mother’ ends with a whispered version of ‘Gorgo, Mormo, Thousand-Faced Moon’ – another Lovecraft reference). There are also references to paganism in titles such as ‘The Spiral Path’, and to other esoteric readings such as ‘*Adocentyn*’. However, the more engaged imaginative tableaux and internal navigations are generally not the focus, so much as reacting to environmental stimulus and the development of an aesthetic were. It was also the start of a wider process of seeking a form of belonging in the local landscape through a process of dwelling and ritual re-visiting (e.g. to draw closer to the landscape or its gods/daemons).⁷¹ Other tracks refer to folkloric themes: ‘Hand of Glory’ and ‘*Whirl Dub*’, the latter of which was the name of a pool where the murderer Long Lankin allegedly drowned while fleeing from the law.

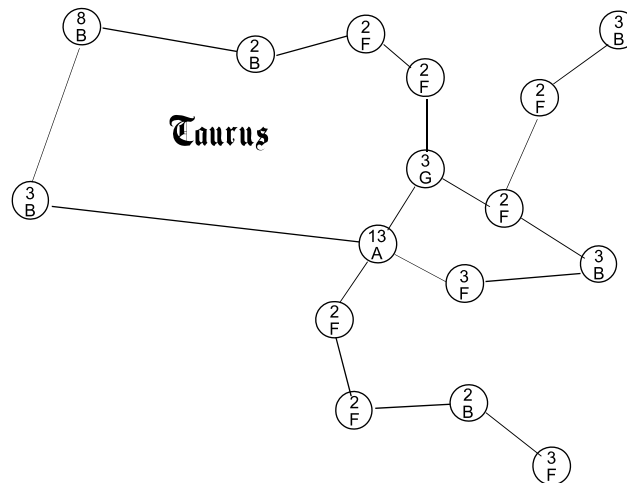
2.2.11.

Other tracks also explore compositional and technical ideas. ‘*Adocentyn*’, for

⁷⁰ See Matthew Levi Stevens, ‘Mad Professor Geff...’ in *Furfur* (Strange Attractor Press, 2016).

⁷¹ 25/06/19 – MEMO – For the analysis of practice, consider a variety of threads: imaginative tableaux/active imagination, embodiment and cognition, technical/compositional.

example, is introduced by sounds from my undergraduate project in generative synthesis, while 'Whirl Dub' uses a constellation map in which notes are associated with the magnitude of the stars therein, and the possible relationships between tones are described by the lines of the constellation.



Tone map for 'Whirl Dub' (author's work).

2.2.12.

I had come into contact with a small label called TM-Industries, run by Nick Davey, which was interested in releasing my work. I completed *Under a Soular Moon* late in 2001, and negotiated the release with Nick, who asked a graphic designer called Sean Keeble to create the cover. I had mentioned to Nick that I had been listening to Coil – who had a number of songs about the 'black sun', a complex symbol, and in their instance an alchemical one, somewhat (but perhaps not wholly) divorced from the associations with the Nazi's Wewelsburg *sonnenrad*. Sean paid tribute to that influence through the employment of black sun imagery, traced from 17th century alchemist Johann Mylius' *Philosophia Reformata*. The album was released early in 2002.



An engraving from Mylius' 1622 work; the cover of *Under a Soular Moon* (author's copyright).

2.2.13.

[26/06/19] While living in the basement flat there was little space to conduct any form of elaborate magical practice, so I began to revisit the types of imaginative journeying and astral projection which I had pursued in earlier years. There were two distinct experiences which still remain. The first was a revisiting of Lovecraftian practice – which, as evidenced by *Under a Soular Moon* – I had never been able to fully consign to juvenilia. The aesthetics of 'Sabbatic Witchcraft' – a type of witchcraft instigated by the artist-occultist Andrew Chumbley had captured my imagination, as had the scant selection of writings available at that time online. Although I was not inclined to become seriously involved with his labyrinthine metaphysics, Chumbley's work and my new-found connection with the landscape did incline me to consider how I might further explore the darker roads of witchcraft, and Lovecraft's 'black goat of the woods', Shub Niggurath, who I had previously sought out in 1998. Inspired by accounts of the witches' sabbat, I began attempting to induct a trance late at night, and imaging myself being transformed into an animal form by which I would be able to travel to the 'astral sabbath'. I very soon had quite an intense experience that warned me off continuing further. In 2007 I would attempt to expand and write up my work with Shub-Niggurath in an unpublished book called *The Black Fleece* – here is the account which I included therein:

2.2.13.1

Full Moon in Al Han'ah:

Using the formula of Nee-Gur-At, I began to imagine my subtle body transforming into a bestial shape in which I could travel to the sabbat. In vivid detail my astral vehicle gradually metamorphosed into the form of a

wolf. I moved through the house in my new form, then climbed out of the window. In the dark street I began my night travel to the site of the sabbat.

2.2.13.2.

Upon arriving at the sabbat I resumed my shape. Many of the participants were dancing dervish whirls or talking to one another. A vast, dark area peopled by ancient crones, pale men and women wearing ancient lunar insignia, wolf headed creatures in robes, and misty succubi and incubi who tugged at my body. I knew who I was looking for – the Master of the Rite. I was seeking initiation into the witch-cult.

2.2.13.3.

There were long wooden tables laid out, naked men and women feasting on the foods thereon. A hag offers me the head of a baby and I recoil.

2.2.13.4.

After drifting through the throng of misshapen creatures – some of whom I am positive were also the spiritual emanations of other human beings – I spied the Black Man. I wove my way toward him and by the time I was standing before him, the feeling of shamanic drumming was deafening to my inner ears. Somehow I explained that I wished to be initiated. He turned and began walking. I followed him to a place away from the orgy. We climbed to the top of a hill where there a ramshackle building squatted. Inside the building was a black, empty space. Floating before me was an open book full of red calligraphic lettering. There was also a silver blade and a black quill. I knew what to do. Taking the blade I opened up a wound on my arm, before writing my name in blood inside the book.

2.2.13.5.

Then I was somewhere else. Far underground in a vast torchlit chamber. I was standing before some steps, at the top of which stood the Black Man. Behind me were massed the attendants of the sabbat. Watching. The Black Man outstretched his arms and a wind began to blow from inside the folds of his cloak. Slowly something began to appear from inside the cloak. A huge, shiny black wing, at the end of which was a vast pointed hoof. The hoof began to blindly scrape at the floor in front of me, feeling for me. I moved backward, only to feel myself pushed forward by my audience. After evading the claw, the wing finally retracted back inside the cowed figure.

2.2.13.6.

*I awoke with the words “Vide Merkur” running through my mind.*⁷²

2.2.14.

After this experience I elected to put dabblings with the darker side of witchcraft on indefinite hold. Another experience was while lying down and attempting to totally clear my mind, before resuming my old astral projection practice of ‘pulling’ myself out of my body, as if climbing a rope. I recall a feeling of floating, high in the atmosphere, looking down on the earth, and feeling my ‘body’ expanding to encompass it, before swooping across chaotic cityscapes (evocative of major Indian cities). Coming closer to the ground, I was spied by a large crowd of children, who began shouting and chasing me joyfully. Despite the rather cheesy imagery, I remember being very moved, and coming out of my reverie with tears on my cheeks, and a feeling of great happiness.

2.2.15.

In December I was contacted by Andy Sharp, who was recording and releasing a variety of pseudonymous albums on his Queasy Listening label. He had been interested in the *Black Brotherhood* release, and we began trading our CDs. He sent me five albums which arrived early in January 2002. I was particularly enthusiastic about *Recovered Memories are Made of This*, which looked like a Val Doonican album, and began with his titular hit, before moving to a spoken-word narrative concerning memory and magic. In the spirit of Dodo Resurrection, there was also *The Dunwich Tapes*: an album attributed to an ill-fated band, who spent a period recording music and dabbling in black magic at a cottage in Dunwich.

2.2.16.

We bonded over an interest in Kenneth Grant's work, and began to trade CDs of occult music that we had discovered. Naturally we also began to embark on some collaborations – and decided to use the practice of active imagination to

⁷² 26/06/19 – MEMO – Kocku von Stuckrad describes esotericism as functioning by way of secrecy and revelation. Although he is describing how secrets are traded in or hinted at as a way to accrue social capital, I would also suggest that in practice the generation of secrets and hints at revelation are part of a phenomena that drive seekers onward: the revelation of clues to a larger puzzle and gnomonic formulae haunt the annals of scrying, conjuration, mysticism and so on. The phrase ‘vide merkur’ still comes to mind whenever I unexpectedly encounter something concerning Mercury: I still feel an urge to try solve the mystery of these words.

develop our ideas. We began to use the idea of an imaginary record shop – with a knowing nod to the children’s cartoon Mr. Benn as well as the enchantment that still clung to the idea of ‘lost bands’ like Dodo Resurrection. The idea was that we could enter and browse, looking for interesting titles to materialise ourselves. I would often sit in a chair, and practice breathing exercises, while imagining myself walking down a maze of alleys until I came to the shop. Below is one of the extant records from these ‘visits’:

2.2.16.1.

1/04/02

Another visit to the shop. Once again I looked in the window. There was a display of bird cages hanging there, and it was lit with an emerald green light. In the bottom left of the display, where the Count Delos album was last time, was another album. The cover was dark and had a very 1960s looking blonde woman holding out an athame on the cover. In the top right the name TANITH was written in distorted white letters. I went inside the shop.

2.2.16.2.

Something was weird - I noticed that the walls of the shop were covered in purple silk, which was swaying gently, as if there was a breeze. The shopkeeper came out of the back room and greeted me with “Hey, man.” I returned the greeting and enquired about the walls. “Don’t you see? This place isn’t real, it’s a bubble, a wendy-house. Out there,” he indicated the walls, “is your unconscious mind, full of things too wonderful and terrible to gaze upon without a properly implemented protocol to regulate the flow. You dig?”

“Too terrible? Such as what?” I asked.

2.2.16.3.

He fumbled about under the counter and produced a record. It had a cover that looked sort of like a Jackson Pollock painting in yellow, orange and red. One word was in the corner in a white: ACTER.

2.2.16.4.

“This record,” said the shop keeper, “has driven people to suicide. It is the ultimate apocalyptic vision. The band sigilised each record, binding a spirit to each one. This spirit could impress visions and

emotions directly onto the soul of the listener in a much more powerful way than any music. Want to give it a spin?"

I hesitated. "No, I think you'd better put it away," I replied.

"Very wise. You probably couldn't afford it anyway..."

2.2.16.5.

He put the record back under the counter. There was a moment of silence between us, then he burst into laughter and offered me a toke on the hookah. I took a drag or two, then he said "Do you want to know something that'll blow your mind?"

I nodded. "Follow me," he said.

2.2.16.6.

We went upstairs to the attic room and he opened the little door. "This leads to the macrocosmic mind. It's a hole in your head, man. You already know that we have agents who endeavour to bring certain records and cds into your hands. Well, these agents are also retroactive - you unconsciously created Jacula, don't you know?"⁷³

2.2.16.7.

I was shocked and didn't know what to say. In the end I managed to squeeze out the words "I think I need another toke..."

2.2.16.8.

We went back downstairs and I took a drag on the hookah. "Hey, I don't suppose you've got any business cards have you?" I asked.

"Sure," the shopkeeper said, producing a stack of cards, "take one."

2.2.16.9.

I took one. I couldn't work out the name of the shop, but there was a seal on it which I recognised. It was that of the 'Heliopolis Company of Gods', a half-daydreamed mystery theatre group.

⁷³ 26/06/19 – MEMO – The idea that the past can be altered by our wills in the present – in this case my desire to find occult music – alludes to Peter Carroll's work, with which I was familiar, particularly his concept of 'retroactive enchantment', which suggests that since only the present exists – and the past is 'imagined' based only on observations of probabilistic phenomena at that time – we can manipulate the present by changing our perceptions of the past.

2.2.16.10.

I started to look through the records. I pulled out one in a clear plastic sleeve. A surreal picture-disc - a picture of a desert, like the cover of Gong's Shamal or TONTO's TONTO Rides Again. 'I wonder what this is like?' I thought to myself. I began to feel myself being pulled into the grooves. Soothing music began - deep synthesiser tones, tinkling bells, a woman laughing and chanting – "Allat! Allat! Zabbat Allat!" An early electronic album on the theme of Middle Eastern pre-Islamic goddess worship. Surreal images of dark, cold deserts, fire dancers, hyenas, drumming, lunar energy shredding through clouds, jinn appearing, and things from beneath the earth coming to join the congregation in the worship of the lunar goddess.

2.2.16.11.

Notes:

I've been thinking that perhaps Tanith is a succubus who recorded a record through an earthly vessels. Another connection with Moon music perhaps - e.g. the connection between Lilith as mother of demons (particularly those which are harmful to children or of a succubal nature), and the genius of the 'dark moon' - e.g. the moon during a lunar eclipse (some astrologers refer to Lilith as a hypothetical planet only visible at this time). Testament of Solomon also discusses the full moon's relation to succubi - in particular Onosekelis. The description of men of dark skin who 'openly worship my star' seems to connect her to a pagan moon goddess [... extracts from Testament of Solomon omitted for brevity ...]

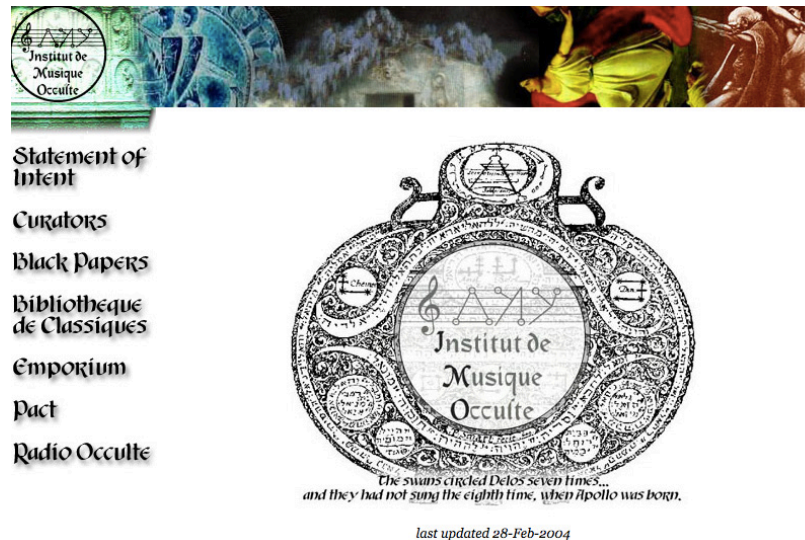
In the last moon music piece in my visit, the name "Allat" is used. She was the female counterpart of Allah in less patriarchal, pre-Islamic days.

ACTER - Possible match with Steganographic spirit Acterar?⁷⁴

⁷⁴ 26/06/19 – MEMO – Another aspect of seekership, secrets and revelation is the use of earlier texts to 'confirm' or deepen one's findings: experience/revelation finding recourse and confirmation in tradition. There are many under-acknowledged overlaps between historical esoteric workings and more contemporary manifestations such as Andrew Collins' 'psychic questing' which might be worthy of exploration.

2.2.17.

We began to realise our various ‘discoveries’ in the ‘astral record shop’, calling ourselves the Institut de Musique Occulte, and adding recordings, imagery and writings to a shared website, active between 2002 and 2004, assuming the alternative identities of Julius Darkdaye (myself) and [REDACTED]



Title page of the Institut de Musique Occulte website (from author's digital archive).

3. The Suffolk Workings

2.3.1.

Having made my final university presentations, **P** and I left the flat in early June to go on holiday with her parents and brother. This time we went to Suffolk, to stay in Southwold.

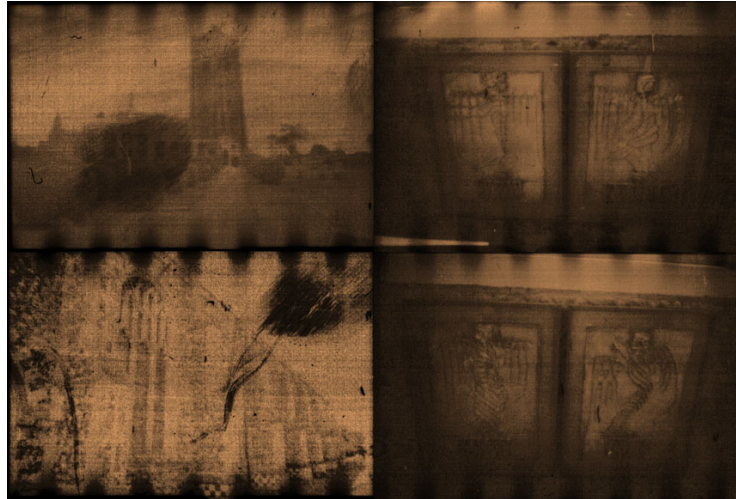
2.3.2.

While en-route, we stopped at the church at Blythburgh, since I had read that it was once visited by a phantom black dog during a storm, and black dog lore had fascinated me since my early trip to Troller's Gill. I explored the church – and discovered some very strange modern depictions of the Four Evangelists, and also tracked down the scorch-marks on the door, said to have been left by the hell-hound.

2.3.3.

I took time to sit in the graveyard and improvise some music – which later

became the final track, 'Abre Grinstet', named after a witch of nearby Dunwich, whose name was recorded in the gazetteer appended to Margaret Murray's *Witch Cult in Western Europe*.



Images from Blythburgh, scanned from negatives in 2006 (author's work).

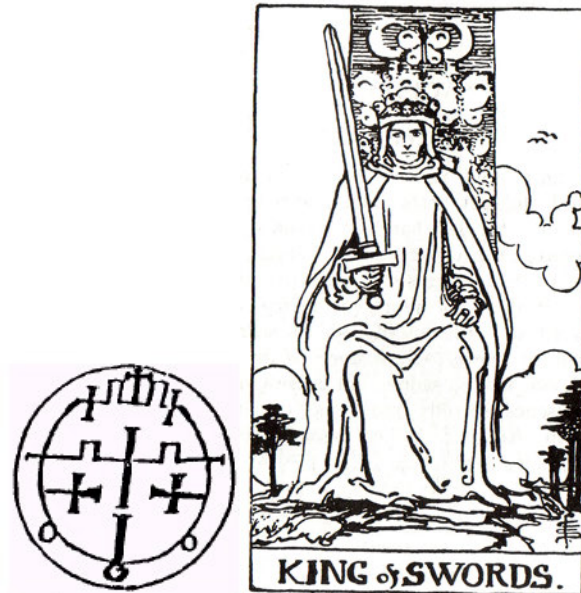
2.3.4.

A couple of days later I was alone in the bedroom we were sharing at the holiday cottage, and a storm began to roll in from the sea. I began to improvise using the few instruments I had immediately to hand (a Tibetan singing bowl, and various wind instruments). During this improvisation, I began to have a strong impression of the elemental beings within the storm: that the air was composed partly of benign spirits, and also of malign ones (- e.g. those that cause storms). This insight resonates with some of the medieval and early modern ideas about storms: that they were demonic aerial spirits, who might also be repelled by church bells. My imagined scene developed, to describe a flying boat, captained by a king of the benevolent aerial spirits, and beset by the tumultuous storm spirits.

2.3.5.

This idea of the air as the domain of both good and bad spirits is also found in Johannes Trithemius' *Steganographia* (ca. 1500), which I had bought in English translation a couple of years earlier. Trithemius tells us that the air is full of spirits 'some good, some bad', and provides an exhaustive series of demonic names for the various classical winds and the multitudes of demons aligned with them. **P** had bought me a tarot deck for my birthday the previous year, and I had become interested in trying to harmonise Trithemius' demonology with the tarot.

Later, as I dwelt on what had just happened I began to associate the captain of the ethereal ship with the King of Swords: the swords being the tarot suite associated with air in a number of modern correspondence systems, and the west – the direction from which the storm seemed to be coming. I also associated the King of Swords with Trithemius' spirit Amenadiel in my scheme:



Seal of Amenadiel (from Theurgia Goetia, a magical work derivative of Steganographia), and King of Swords card from the Rider-Waite Tarot (1910).

2.3.6.

A narrative was written, and later overdubbed as spoken word, based on the imagery arising during the improvisation, which was later titled 'Last Voyage for the King of Swords', and described the king, queen, page and knight aboard a flying ship, which threatens to be broken by the storm:

*The sun is setting in the west.
Sailing to the eastern moonrise
Is the ship of Swords.*

*The King, Queen, Knight and Page,
accompanied by fifty lords
drift into the dreaming world.*

*The dragon-headed prow cuts
Through the ocean of clouds*

as they navigate the stormy skies.

The bolts of Thor and Dianic hounds

Rattle the boards of the hull

But still the course is set.

Their cargo is higher thought,

Their destination is the soul of

Any man who'll ask and listen.

City steeples, high rise blocks,

Play the part of reefs and rocks,

And wreck the ship of Swords.

2.3.7.

According to *The Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, a magical manuscript that began to circulate in the early 18th century and with which I was familiar in the modern translation, an oratory or terrace is set up to receive spirits. The eastern window of the room seemed to be transfigured after the storm, and began to become the focus for imaginatively 'calling things forth' during improvisation: to use music to enter a receptive state, gazing out to sea across the town, to see what would manifest on the western wind. During one improvisation, I had a sense of encountering one of the King of Swords' inferiors – a prince, associated in my scheme with the spirit Malgaras. The recording made during this session became the track 'A Prince Occidental'.



Malgaras and Amenadiel linocuts (produced in 2007, author's work) .



Seal of Malgaras, and Knight of Swords from the Rider-Waite tarot (1910).

2.3.8.

Other material was recorded on the beach at Dunwich, where a once-thriving town had fallen into the sea. I had visited as a child, and remember that the graveyard was still crumbling into the sea, and human bones could be found beneath the cliffs. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This time, there were no bones, but I sat on the shingles by the sea, improvising with my accordion, haunted by the waves: the visible manifestation of the aerial spirits moving about me.

2.3.9.

In between reveries concerning aerial spirits, **P** and I took a trip to [REDACTED] to visit Andy. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This was the first of many trips – I would subsequently go down on my own and stay at his over the next seven years, travelling to, and recording at, significant places as part of our collaborative works and, latterly, as part of his English Heretic project.

2.3.10.

After returning from holiday, I continued to work on *The Suffolk Workings*, still using the same primitive recording techniques as on my previous albums: I used

a piece of software called Soundforge, which didn't have any multi-tracking capability. I would record a new track into a new file while playing the current mix on a different application. I would then 'mix paste' the two files together. This meant that – as the piece developed – there was no method of undoing earlier decisions.

2.3.11.

[03/09/19] Having finished university, I was now unemployed. I hadn't really made any plans beyond graduation – I'd decided that I didn't really want a career in computing. My attraction to the landscape and magic was encompassing. I'd even been to a graduate recruiting event for IBM, and, when asked in an interview 'Where do you see yourself in five years' time?', I had to tell the truth by replying 'Not working in Information Technology.'

2.3.12.

I began keeping a diary on 29th June 2002, in which I had decided to record my dreams and magical experiments. I had begun to become more seriously invested in the *Arbatel of Magick* (1575). The *Arbatel* was a devoutly Christian text, but one which is unusually in the Protestant tradition and – generally – relies on divine inspiration rather than magical tools and signs as its method of operating.⁷⁵ I had, during my time writing the *Picatrix* website, written a small document called *An Approach To The Operation Of The Arbatel Of Magic*, and had practiced some of the prayers to the 'Olympic Spirits' for which the book is most famous. However, reading beyond the section on the Olympic Spirits, I was most drawn to the other operations which the *Arbatel* details: the encounter with the magician's personal genius or guardian angel, and the revelation of the 'seal of secrets', which describes a map of the provinces of the world as distributed to 112 tutelary spirits.

2.3.13.

An extract from the first entry in the diary, following a record of a dream concerning some mixed up drinks in a pub, reads as follows, and provides an overview of what my beliefs were at that time:

⁷⁵ 4/09/19 – MEMO – One thread of both discourse and practice to explore relates to 'revelation'. This not only borders on von Stuckrad's 'secrecy and revelation' dialectic, but also connects prayer, 'Romantic' imagination, *ars notoria* and so on, which potentially connect several major discursive and practical threads.

2.3.13.1

Today was quite stressful – packing books etc. to prepare for moving on Monday. I also revisited the Servants of Light website – still looking for an occult school which does not have a bias to the Theosophic/Golden Dawn models. At this moment, following the prayer system of Arbatel and seeking revelation first hand is the best path open to me – perhaps the best path in toto?

After Monday I WILL find a job. I WILL do more music. I WILL glorify Him and do my best to live to the Muses.⁷⁶

2.3.13.2

In the work of Arbatel there are three key stages:

- i) The granting of a holy spirit (HGA?)*
- ii) Revelation of the names of the Olympians and their signs – not just for planets, but stars also.*
- iii) Revelation of the princes and attendants of the world.*

2.3.13.3

I would believe that these can be done in any order, but it would be easiest if (i) the spiritus familiaris were attained first so that revelation can be done through that, rather than dreams and other methods of revelation – provided the spirit is wholly good and not a deceiver. How are things revealed? According to the author of the Arbatel:

- i) Seek ye the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.*
- ii) See that you hearts be not burdened with surfeiting, drunkenness and the cares of this life.*
- iii) Commit your cares unto the Lord, and he will do it.*

⁷⁶ This marks a period of becoming quite 'pious' as I attempted to follow the system of the *Arbatel*. The mention of Muses is a reference to one of the early aphorisms in the *Arbatel*: "Live to thy self, and the Muses: avoid the friendship of the Multitude: be thou covetous of time, beneficial to all men. Use thy Gifts, be vigilant in thy Calling; and let the Word of God never depart from thy mouth." 14/02/20 – MEMO – Adopting a 'pious' stance, particularly for an esoteric end, can be seen as one of a number of milestones in a narrative of seekership. Consider attempting to chart these out in some way.

2.3.13.4

I believe this to be good magical instruction aimed at keeping the soul (heart) pure and focused rather than erring to and fro due to inebriation and excessive worry. I am most guilty of worrying. The trauma of being mugged and worrying about crime is really eating me. It's not as bad as it once was, but is still a worrying neurosis. But for some reason it is also perversely comforting – sacrificing this care is frightening, but it must be done.

iv) Also, I the Lord thy God do teach thee what things are profitable for thee in the way wherein thou walkest.

v) And I will give thee understanding, and will teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go, and I will guide thee (wherein thou walkest) with my eye.

vi) Also if you which are evil, know how to give good things to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give his holy spirit to thee that ask him?

2.3.13.5

Already in this work I had my first 'revelation' by as strong impression on my soul that I should give up a certain vice, which I have done and surrendered to love given perfectly.⁷⁷

vii) If you will do the will of my Father which is in heaven, ye are truly my disciples, and we will come unto you and make our abode with you.

2.3.13.6

I presume this is an angelic or Olympic voice. Like attracts like – the elevated soul will draw elevated powers to it. Perhaps here lies the

⁷⁷ 3/09/19 – MEMO – This is obviously a reference to the 'sin' of masturbation. The sex lives of occultists, as recorded in their diaries in various notations is an interesting minor point. John Dee recorded his wife's periods, and notated coitus with the symbol +{. Compare also with the magical diary of Leah Hirsig, alias Alostrael, a follower of Aleister Crowley and one of his 'scarlet women', who uses 'mstbn' and 'msbtd' in many entries – sometimes for magical or reverential means, or alternatively for 'physical relief'.

danger in a spirit who is not ordained to the magician becoming 'familiarily addicted' to him?

Take not thy holy Spirit from me; and strengthen me with thy free Spirit; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: I beseech thee, O heavenly Father, do not give power to any lying Spirit, as thou didst over Ahab that he perished; but keep me in thy truth. Amen.

2.3.14.

On the 1st of July, **P** and I moved in with her friend **R** and partner **S**, who was a labourer and guitarist in a black metal band called **Rite of Desecration**. Our new flat [REDACTED] [REDACTED] overlooked Back Burley Lodge Road: an address which was notorious in my imagination, given that it was home to The Sorcerer's Apprentice, an influential occult shop between the late 70s and mid-1980s, whose proprietor, Chris Bray, published many of the early and influential texts of chaos magick. The Sorcerer's Apprentice had ceased to trade publicly, but still ran mailorder from a blackened, shuttered building on the corner. Further up Woodsley Road, at Hilltop Place, a red brick wall had the words 'CTHULHU RISING' spraypainted in large, rounded letters. Given the fondness of chaos magicians for Lovecraft, this added to the mystique of the area.

2.3.15.

As noted in the above diary entry, my worries about crime were very much present, and this was aggravated by the move into an area which was a major thoroughfare with the noise and anti-social behaviour that goes with it, and backed on to a housing estate which I assumed had similar problems. Entries over the first few days of living there outline the situation:

2.3.15.1.

1/Jul/02

[...] It was 8:30pm by the time we had got everything moved in. **[S]**, **[R]**'s boyfriend, came round [REDACTED] [REDACTED] **[R]** and **[S]** took her brother, who had helped them unpack, to the bus stop where a bunch of kids taunted them and threw stones. I feel compassion for people who have had horrible and

disadvantaged lives, but there is no excuse for evil thuggery, especially as it impinges on one of our most sacred gifts – free will. Finding myself a little worse for wear, I did not think it proper to pray, although I wished to and felt regret that I could not [...] I almost forgot to mention that while laying (sic) on the bed, slipping in and out of a detached, 'stoned' liminal state I suddenly got the words 'MY GOD CHILDREN' announced urgently in my mind. Straight after this, all manner of shouting and sounds of tyres screeching broke out on the street below.

2.3.15.2.

2/Jul/02

I am writing this to the sound of a police helicopter, no doubt looking for the joyriders I heard skidding around and yelling like a pack of wolves, not fifteen minutes ago. I noticed that Grant says boredom is a qliphothic concept, associated with the 31st path of the inverse tree (Fire/Ash). Judging from the violence that arises and hollow – shell-like attitudes of the perpetrators, I'd agree. I feel like Dr. Alain Champagne...!⁷⁸

[...] Since the phone wasn't connected, I didn't phone the Jobshop- I didn't want to use the pay phones for fear of getting mugged or anything – how pathetic I am, letting these fears limit my potential. I must offer them to the care of God! Else I'll be held back in this crippling, neurotic mire for years. Prayed.

2.3.16.

'Prayed' is how many of my diary entries end – which is to say that I prayed – in the spirit of the *Arbatel* – for a divine guide that day, usually before retiring to bed. The 2nd of July was also the day on which I seriously read John Dee's *Hieroglyphic Monad* (1564) – in the rather poor translation by J.W. Hamilton Jones, popularly available via Weiser Books. Perhaps it was the exhortation 'vide merkur' which still haunted me (see A2.2.13.6), and which I interpreted as a command to 'see, or seek out Mercury' which led me to Dee's small volume becoming an overarching obsession during my time at [REDACTED]. I noted

⁷⁸ Dr. Alain Champagne was a creation of Andy's for the Musique Occulte project – a sort of mixture of Ian Sinclair or Will Self, and Kenneth Grant. 4/09/19 – MEMO – Note also the use of Grant as a way to legitimate a moral outlook.

that 'There is much that is oblique, but hopefully it will be revealed in full at the right time.'⁷⁹

2.3.17.

Eventually my 'prayer' became more formalised, and by 29th July incorporated a meditation that I had roughly translated from Giordano Bruno's *Magia Mathematica* as:

God flows into the angels; the angels into the heavenly bodies; the heavenly bodies into the elements; the elements into the mixed; the mixed into feelings; the feelings into the mind; the mind into the animal.

God climbs up through the animal; into feelings; through feelings into the mixed; through the mixed into the elements; through the elements into the heavens; through the heavens and through the daemons – or angels – into God.

2.3.18.

This illustration of the golden thread between the divine and human profoundly moved me – perhaps recapturing something of my experience of a benevolent divine unity at work in the world that I had experienced the year before in Cornwall.⁸⁰ I wrote on the 29th July that:

I feel the prayer is developing – soon I shall try and set it on paper. Toward the end of my prayer, P began snoring (she has a cold). I prayed that her nose be clear. The image of a silver hand covering her face came into my mind and her breathing became clearer.

2.3.19.

And the 4th August:

⁷⁹ 03/09/19 – MEMO – For the esotericist, the understanding derived from reading or study (or creative work) can be perceived as being dependent on revelation by higher forces. Relevant to ideas of perceptual drift?

⁸⁰ 03/09/19 – MEMO – Pay attention to various attempts to recapture an experience (e.g. Cornish 'revelation') through another means (e.g. imaginative meditation).

and elemental spirits that were in government during Crowley's lifetime and stands as proof that this kind of revelation is still possible in the 20th and 21st centuries. I hope that through revelation I may discover the names of the Olympic Princes and Rulers of Earth."

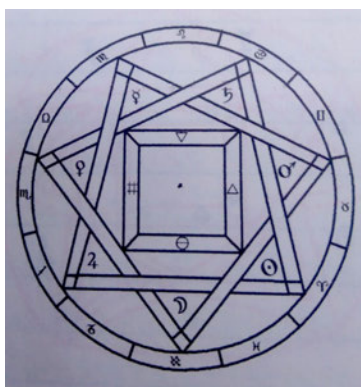
2.3.22.

I also made a note about dew – which was to become a major symbol in my work:

In alchemy, the months April-May (e.g. [Taurus] + [Aries]) are when the dew is collected. The dew, also called manna in the Bible, would seem to represent a manifestation of divine energy on earth – e.g. the Philosopher's Stone. It is also the content of the Cup – the Monad, or Crater – that Hermes mentions. I would hazard a guess that the process of 'collecting the dew' – when considered internally – is something along the lines of letting God fill the inner crater with his divine matter. The matter, descending from God is therefore completely good and encapsulated Unity – which is why Dee suggests a specific astrological configuration, which in the symbolism of the Monad represents $\alpha+\omega$. It has just struck me that $\alpha+\omega$ resembles the word ATO(h) – Hebrew for 'Thine'. Note that dew in Latin = ros. This was punned with rosa – rose by the Rosicrucians. Rose/dew symbolism would be something interesting to look into, as would any Rosicrucian technique related to gathering dew.

2.3.23.

[09/09/19] In my desire to resume working with the spirits again, I also considered beginning scrying again – I had bought a crystal ball around the time of my first year of university, and unsuccessfully tried to develop crystal-gazing skills with Frater Achad's *Crystal Vision Through Crystal Gazing* (1923). I considered a system in which I would wear my own 'lamen' and place the crystal on the lamén, or seal, corresponding to the spirit. The lamén I designed was based on the cosmological scheme I had taken from Giordano Bruno's work, and which was part of my nightly meditations. It comprised of a circle (God), in which was a seven pointed star (angels, planets, the celestial world), a square (elemental world) and a point (microcosmic world).



My lamen, as illustrated in a computer printout pasted into my diary (author's work).

2.3.24.

On 18th August, some of my prayer work yielded the result I sought:

Last night I received my first [spirit] name. I prayed and asked to know the names of the spirits that preside over the directions. Initially, a figure appeared it was a [quartered circle] coloured yellow. In the top left was the name RIRILU and I think what appeared to be the image of a bee. After this, I experienced a rush of excitement and lost my concentration.

2.3.25.

And on 30th of August:

Did some quite interesting prayerwork last night. Began by meditating on [the Hieroglyphic Monad] until the dew – in the form of tears – manifested. I began my appellation to the Lord – asking for revelation through a spirit. An angel with a golden aura came out of the darkness and took my wrist. We began flying over a dark brown, rocky landscape. Everywhere were men and women engaging in orgies. I felt that this was the lowest sphere of man, representing animal lust and sex without procreation. Eventually we came to some sort of castle or church. In the courtyard was a huge, beautiful tree. I gathered that this place was Yesodic. Beneath the earth, the tree took life from the water-table. It seemed like a reflection of the Tree of Life – growing up, rather than down. I wanted to go to sleep. I began drifting and felt some change come over me – as if my soul were on the edge on abyss. I asked myself whether I wanted to sleep – I really believed that if I were to fall asleep in this place, I

*might not return. A scary feeling, but I feel that this abyss should be crossed – this beast be faced...*⁸²

2.3.26.

In the midst of these explorations I made some half-hearted attempts to get computing jobs, despite it being a field I had decided I was no longer interested in, before falling back on three months of temporary office work with a training company who used EU grants to provide education to migrants and the unemployed. My diary on 16th September reads:

*Today I began work. Just 3 months of general office work. At least that's what I'd hoped. They seem to think that I am some sort of database whizz and have got me bringing data from older [databases] into their new, live one. I hope I do it alright and it works out well for all involved. I feel that work stops me being me... although only to a certain extent – for my dedication to the narrow path burns within me.*⁸³

RIRILU! I desire an audience with you! O spirit, in the time I sat, calling your name in the crucible of my soul, screaming it on the breeze of the anima mundi, did you not hear me? Was I so distant, so futile? Please, my Lord, you know how I desire to know the names of your spirits! Let them reveal themselves in good humour and perfect love. I desire to know the names of the 112 tutelary spirits and 196 Olympian princes, that I may join them in the chorus, singing Holy Holy Holy to the sounds of the divine measures. I weep. I am so unworthy, yet so desirous of these great things. Am I like a child, crying for an expensive toy? Will being good and patient persuade my Father to grant my desires? I hope so, for we must make haste slowly in our Hermetic studies. Amen.

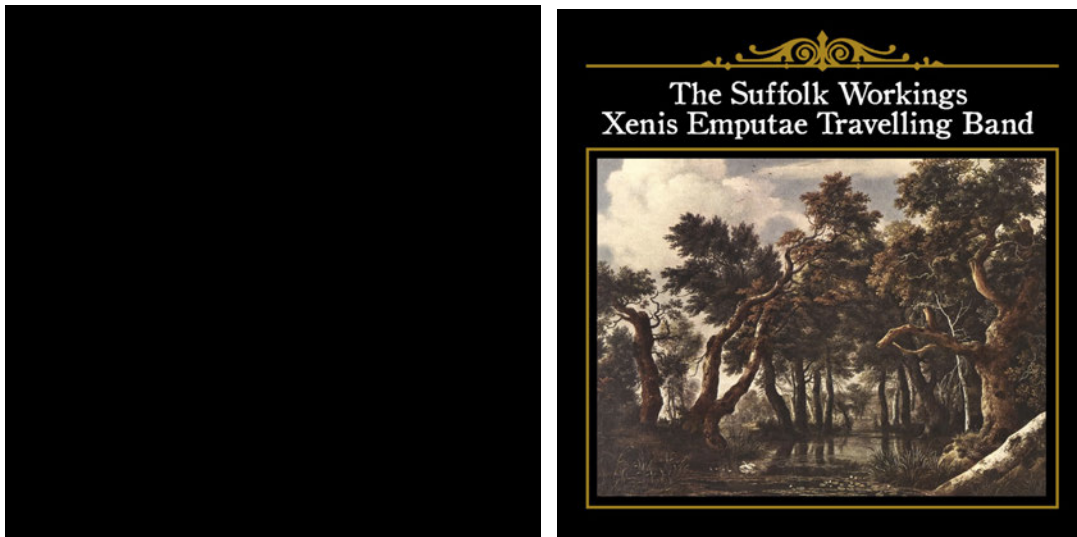
2.3.27.

Amidst this, I continued working on music. I had finished the album of music which I began working on in Suffolk, now titled *The Suffolk Workings*. Buoyed by the release of *Under a Soular Moon*, I sent a copy of *The Suffolk Workings* to

⁸² 09/09/19 – MEMO – Imagined/imaginal places and characters are obviously a major theme in my work, which needs exploring somehow in an analytic sense.

⁸³ 09/09/19 – MEMO – On one hand the line about 'being me' is laughable, on the other it points to the sort of individualism which esoteric pursuits often encourage... and perhaps also points to a shade of elitism?

Rob Hayler, who performed locally as Midwich and ran a small label called Fencing Flatworm Recordings. Rob was very much involved in the Termite Club and surrounding scene, which he would later describe as ‘the no audience underground’ (e.g. a scene in which almost everyone attending gigs was a fellow musician themselves). I was disappointed that Rob declined to release *The Suffolk Workings*, describing it as ‘too gothic’ for his tastes (and drawing a comparison to Current 93 regarding the spoken-word track *Last Voyage for the King of Swords*). However, the rejection encouraged me to begin my own label, which I called Larkfall. At the time I was chiefly listening to the more obscure side of 1970s folk-rock and psych-folk, and copied the design for the album sleeves from a 1972 album by The Druids.⁸⁴



The Druids – Pastime with Good Company (Argo, 1972) &
Xenis Emputae Travelling Band – The Suffolk Workings (Larkfall, 2002, author's work).

2.3.28.

The album was – in the spirit of the DIY scene with which I was involved – produced at home, printed sleeves cut out with a craft knife, CDs burned off one at a time. The CD Centre took some copies, and I shared the news on the Termite Club mailing & discussion email list.

⁸⁴ MEMO – 9/09/19 – The ‘discovery’ of albums like Comus’ *First Utterance* via Filesharing networks led to a very lively psych-folk subculture, with websites like Mark Coyle’s Unbroken Circle documenting many bands. Coyle would later work with Cold Spring on a release called *John Barleycorn Reborn*. Cold Spring is an industrial/neo-folk label and as such intersects with experimental music, occulture – and often political extremism. The flowering of interest in psych folk also presaged the contemporary interest in ‘folk horror’. The discursive intertwining of politics, folk/experimental music, occulture and so on – and my own part in it – would be a good area for study in the analytic section.

2.4. New Etheric Muse

2.4.1.

Almost immediately after the release of *The Suffolk Workings*, I began working on *New Etheric Muse*. The title obliquely references the *Arbatel* ("Live to thy self, and the Muses"), as well as a developing idea that what I was doing when making the music – particularly when making field recordings or playing out-of-doors – was picking up on impressions from the 'aether'.

2.4.2.

Many of the tracks on *New Etheric Muse* developed from 'sound beds' based on field recordings from Birk Crag, on the outskirts of Harrogate. The crag was a place that I had often played with my childhood friend T, who lived nearby, and had also occasionally visited at night in my late teens, since it was close to the [REDACTED]. It also became notorious after two boys – under the influence of a local drug-dealer and self-professed Satanist – attempted to murder one of their friends there.⁸⁵

2.4.3.

I used these sounds as sources through which I could re-engage with the place in a musical and imaginative context.⁸⁶ As in *Under a Soular Moon*, the general feeling was one of 'drawing closer' to a place through remembering, re-listening and developing a musical response to it.



New Etheric Muse (recorded 2002, released 2003, author's work)

⁸⁵ BBC News. 1999. 'Boys' Murder Attempt After Horror Film', *BBC News* [website]. Online at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/413754.stm> [Accessed 09/09/19].

⁸⁶ 09/09/19 – MEMO – The idea of 'pathetic triggers' (Salome Voeglin) may be analytically useful to discuss the role of field recordings in my work.

2.4.4.

One pertinent example was *Astrophel the Rustic Lasses Love*, which developed from a recording of a summer storm above Birk Crag. I could already vividly imagine myself standing on a large boulder above the crag, looking across the farmlands in the twilight. As I began to explore the possibilities of the field recording, I realized that passing it through a granular synthesizer made the individual 'grains' of the thunder sound like gunshots. Having been reading about Elizabethan poet Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, I came to imagine the gunshots as being connected with his biography: Sidney died of gangrene following a gunshot sustained in the battle of Zutphen. The contrast between the bucolic and the bellicose appealed to me, and I began to imagine the corpse of a wounded soldier in one of the fields below (an image akin to the folk song *Three Ravens/Twa Corbies*, in which a raven describes the body of a dead knight 'down in yonder greeny field'). As the track developed, it became a meditation on a journey to pay respects to the dead knight: I vividly imagined sliding down the rough sides of the boulder, following dirt paths into the woods, and down into the heart of the crag, before emerging - the storm moving over - into a golden field, where the soldier lies.⁸⁷ Similar ideas, named after the mental imagery that the piece evoked, included *Amongst the Grasses and the Dews* (- my first use of dew imagery -), *High Above the Pastures*, and *Fire in the Water (Phoenix Takes Flight)* (- also alluding to alchemy). The opening track, *Under the Earth, Deep in the Soil* takes its title from a dream P had as a child - words spoken by a threatening crocodile-like creature in the darkness. Finally, *A Lyke Wake Dirge* was a version of a traditional folk song, which I had discovered in my listening to 1970s folk albums. The song, first collected in the 17th century by John Aubrey, describes the journey of a soul in the afterlife, for example:

When thou from hence away art past
 Every nighte and alle
To Whinny-muir thou com'st at last
 And Christe receive thy saule

⁸⁷ 09/09/19 – MEMO – This attention to the 'sound pictures' evoked by music became a key part of my *modus operandi*. There are antecedents, and these would be worth exploring analytically – from ETA Hoffman's famed review of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, to musical pathworkings and the imagery of New Age relaxation/meditation CDs.

If ever thou gavest *hosen* and *shoen*

Every nighte and alle

Sit thee down and put them on

And Christe receive thy saule

If *hosen* and *shoen* thou ne'er gav'st nane

Every nighte and alle

The *whinnes* sall prick thee to the bare *bane*

And Christe receive thy saule

2.4.5.

The song captured my imagination, since it seemed to describe an otherworld geography – not heaven, nor hell, but something in between, wherein a soul is tested against its conduct in the world of the living – almost an English Book of the Dead!

2.4.6.

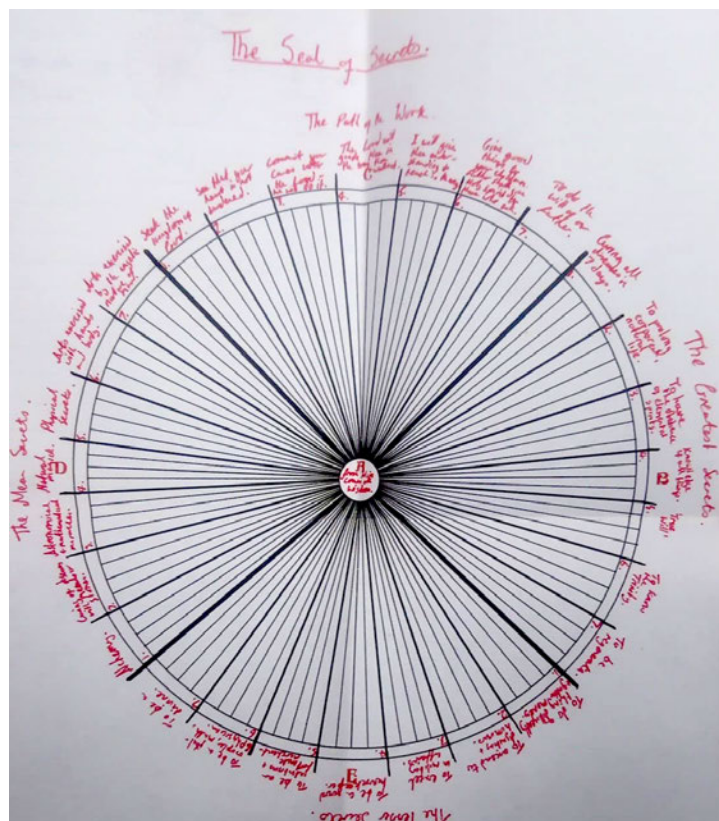
Technically, this was a fairly successful album, which cements many of the key aesthetic areas that would be explored in future releases, particularly the mix of field recordings and the use of folk instruments (guitar, whistles, accordion) that evoke a tradition, and electronic instruments and processes (Theremin, granular synthesis) which evoke an 'otherness'. I'd also moved over to Cubase, a multi-track digital audio workstation, which made recording, overdubbing, editing and mixing a more precise affair. As in *Full Moon June*, I used pitch-shifted vocals, inspired by Gilli Smyth's 'space whisper', and which I associated with feminine forces. The combination of what might appear 'pagan' against my rather pious pursuits in the study of the *Arbatel* may seem to be at odds with one another – and although my more God-fearing days would soon be behind me, the fusion of the pagan and Christian, would remain an undercurrent in my work, feeling as I did, that it represented something of a more complete aesthetic reflection of the spiritual heritage of the British Isles.

2.4.7.

As the year wore on, I began to concentrate on the *Arbatel*'s 'Seal of Secrets', which is a diagram comprising of a circle divided into 112 sections, each signifying a particular tutelary spirit associated with the directions of the compass. The reasons this appealed to me were manifold: my imagination had

been captured earlier by Trithemius' *Steganographia* (and its re-working as a grimoire known as *Theurgia Goetia*), which describes the spirits of the winds. The Seal of Secrets had a similar feel. The idea also that the spirits were tutelary ("Some are the watch-men over Kingdoms; others the keepers of private persons") was also appealing, and related to my developing interest in psychogeography. To each quarter of the earth, a different group of seven secrets is distributed in the *Arbatel*. On my entry 2nd November 2002, I attached an image of the Seal, and also made a note on the spirit Ririlu:

Note that in the vision of RIRILU's name, the name appeared in the North-West of the circle (18/08/02). In this quadrant is the secret of controlling man's angelical nature. The yellow colour ties it in with air (west). I also sleep with my head in this direction (it seems to me that this suggests that the orientation of the magician's body is important when communicating with spirits). However, I am still unsure whether Ririlu is a prince or noble of his domain.



The Seal of Secrets, as illustrated in my diary (author's work).

2.4.8.

I was still working with Andy, and he released a CD entitled *The Senoi Sound Archive*, vol. 1, which included some collaborative tracks we had worked on during my time in the basement flat, and inspired by each other's dreams and from the visits to the 'astral record shop'. I had dreamed of a rock group called Carnesiel Conduit, for which Andy recorded a track, while I attempted to realise a track by a group of Gallic Satanists called IO, whose mythos we had fleshed out in our *Institut de Musique Occulte* project. I also recorded a track based on a dream in which Andy had found an acetate of a lecture by Austin Osman Spare. The brief 'lecture' that I wrote was heavily indebted to Kenneth Grant's interpretations of Spare's work.

2.5. The Neon Death Slittes, Cerebral Paisley & Collaborative Work

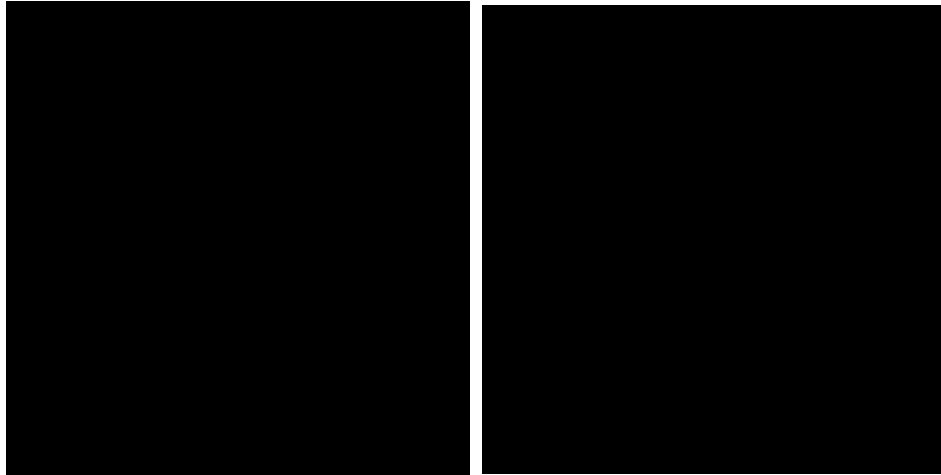
2.5.1.

[16/09/19] The new, busier and more markedly inner-city environment that I found myself in also inspired a side project, called *The Neon Death Slittes*. The name derived from an incident while visiting our parents in Harrogate. P and I went to the Blues Bar for their open mic night, where one participant had put up posters advertising it as his own gig (playing under the name **Doomed Women**). When **Doomed Women** took the stage, it was one man, playing a beaten-up guitar, and spouting some of the most aggressive stream-of-consciousness lyrics I'd ever heard. 'Neon death slits' was one that stuck in my memory.

2.5.2.

The impetus to actually start recording as Neon Death Slittes came in the autumn, when I happened to be in a supermarket on the outskirts of Leeds. Owing to the proximity of my new flat to the Sorcerer's Apprentice I'd been thinking a lot about the idea of urban magic, and my eye was caught by a rack of CDs for sale, one of which included The Clash's *London Calling*, which was sitting on the rack on its side, having been placed 90 degrees clockwise. The word LONDON, now appeared to read as 'Zodzor'. At that point, I a vivid image came into my mind of a dog-like creature (reminiscent of the dog in *Zoltan: Hound of Dracula* (1978)) sat on a throne, in an abandoned London Underground tunnel: the image of the tutelary spirit of London. The mental image seemed absurd: the obvious interplay between 'Zodzor' and 'Zoltan', and the setting of the scene in the Underground, which seemed to reference *Quatermass*

and the Pit (1967), but also compelling in the way it seemed to capture something about the dark, psychogeographical spaces of the capital. It was decided that Neon Death Slittes would become a vehicle for exploring the urban side of psychogeography in my own work.



The Clash's London Calling, becomes Zodzor; Still from Zoltan: Hound of Dracula (EMI Films, 1978).

2.5.3.

I began writing lyrics using stream of consciousness, cut-up techniques and references to Surrealism, which I felt were inappropriate for my other work – but which seemed necessary for a project which pursued a response to the man-made environment, rather than attempting to recapture a sense of transcendent revelation. Eventually a writing system also evolved out of this work, in which words or sentences were written in a single column, and then translated 90 degrees and read from left to right to reveal the hidden names of the urban genii. Leeds, for example would become: unDMMr. These strange names seemed to resonate with me and evoke a parallel with the strange, consonant-heavy names that come from the work of John Dee and Edward Kelly, such as 'Rbznh' and 'Gmdnm'.⁸⁸ In my own 'loftier' studies, I had also become attracted to the magical squares, also known as kameas, which – as mathematical objects – were associated with the angelic and intellectual realm of Agrippa's threefold cosmology (e.g. the sublunar, or elemental, world; the astral, or celestial, world; the divine, or intelligent, world). I had discovered that certain middle eastern traditions drew the name BDWH (Biduh) from the even numbers of the 3x3 magic square (attributed to Saturn), and had speculated that perhaps I could use the alphabetical associations related to the even numbers of the square of

⁸⁸ E.g. Robert Turner, *Elizabethan Magic* (1989): 68-69.

Venus (associated with compulsion and attraction) to compel the Western spirits of the seal of secrets, which yielded the invocation:

Dee ee-oo-kebem-bemecheeb loo-ee-checkdoo leb yed lech-bech-kech-ledmemoo.

2.5.4.

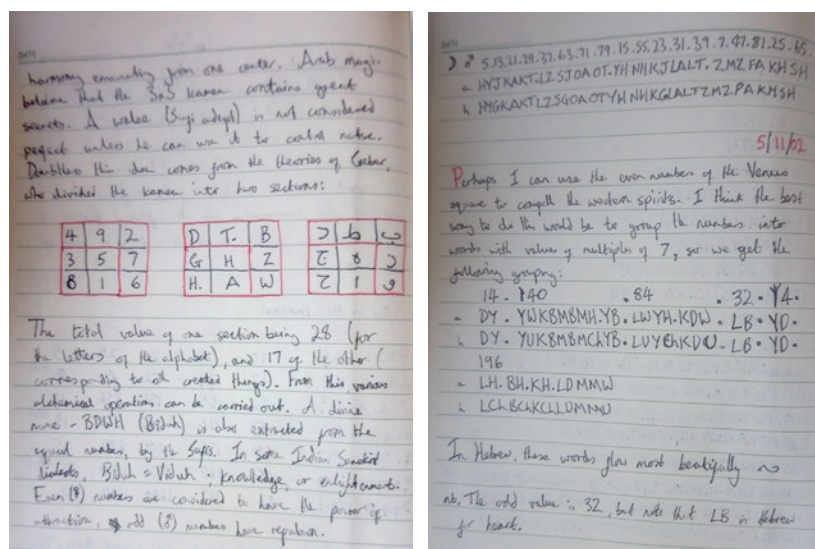
I later (1/12/03) observed that the ideas I had been having were perhaps being ‘impressed’ upon me by the spirits that I was seeking to contact:

Looking back over previous entries, I feel that the spirits have been working on me... almost imperceptibly, but they have been drawn into my sphere – particularly the first three spirits of the north, to whom I extend my thanks. I have just noticed that perhaps the above entry [one which I had written about the nature of the guardian spirit, according for Francesco Giorgi] may fall under the influence of the fourth northern spirit, who proclaims that: The Lord will guide thee in the way thou walkest.⁸⁹

A	Λ	D	Q	Q	rO
B	B	W	R	R	JU
C	C	n	S	S	un
D	D	D	T	T	-I
E	E	M	U	U	C
F	F	TI	V	V	C
G	G	Q	W	W	E
H	H	I	X	X	X
I	I	H	Y	Y	-C
J	J	Y	Z	Z	N
K	K	X			
L	L	r			
M	M	S			
N	N	Z			
O	O	O			
P	P	-O			

The ‘Zodzoric’ cipher (author’s work).

⁸⁹ 16/09/19 – MEMO – The idea that spirits imperceptibly impress ideas upon the open mind becomes extremely important to me, and later (e.g. 2007’s *Psychogeographia Ruralis*, and elsewhere) I find quotes from Agrippa and others to support my idea. Of course, this replaces my own agency and creativity with those of an invisible party, and opens up many interesting analytic angles (such as a latent discourse on the dissolution – or at least renegotiation – of the bounds of the self being central to esoteric practices which are not necessarily focused on this dissolution as an end in itself).



Speculations on the magic squares, from my diary. Pages from 3/11/02 & 5/11/02 (author's work).

2.5.5.

The sound of Neon Death Slittes would also be 'heavy', inspired by the sludgy, distorted drone of bands like Sunn 0))) and Earth, and with a distinctly gloomy, apocalyptic slant in its lyrics – somewhat at odds with my more pious esoteric pursuits with the *Arbatel*, but also perhaps serving as a way to channel the angst and unease that I continued to feel in the urban environment.⁹⁰ I released both *New Etheric Muse* and the first Neon Death Slittes album (*One Madness More has Been Given Unto Man*) early in 2003.

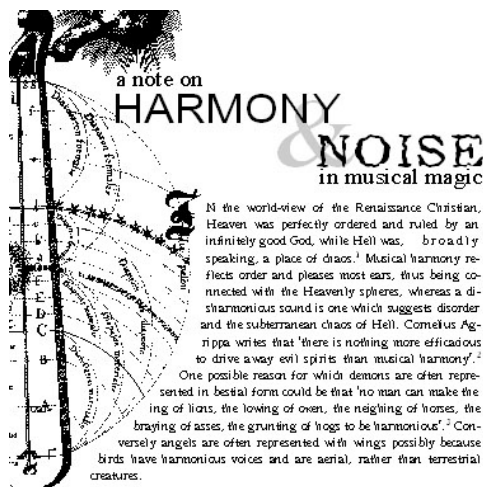
2.5.6.

By June 2003 we had moved back to P's childhood home in Harrogate – in part to keep P's mother company, and in part to save on rent. I was commuting to and from Leeds for work, and, twice a day, would pay particular attention to the leg of the journey which crossed the Wharfe via Harewood Bridge. I would often feel a vertiginous lurch as the bus crossed the river, which I associated with the pull of Verbeia, the alleged goddess of the Wharfe. I would also look out to Almscliff Crag on the horizon – a peculiar gritstone outcrop, which seemed to dominate the landscape and call out for me to explore it.

⁹⁰ 15/09/19 – MEMO – An interesting aspect here is how I can partition various aspects of my life using projects. Such partitioning must also play an important role in the biographies of other esotericists, who often led outwardly respectable lives alongside significantly stranger private and inner-lives.

2.5.7.

In July I published a small run of a zine called *Cerebral Paisley*, which covered my interest in experimental music, as well as containing quite a lot of esoteric content. In this regard, the first issue contained a short piece called 'A Note on Harmony and Noise in Musical Magic', which compared 'noise' to animal sounds (associated with the base, animalistic and demonic) and harmony with celestial music and upward movement (I used Stockhausen's text score 'Set Sail for the Sun' to illustrate this, which I had read about in Joscelyn Godwin's book *Harmonies of Heaven and Earth* (1987)).



In 1968, Stockhausen spent seven days shut away in meditation and emerged with a play and fifteen brief sets of instructions for 'intuitive' music.⁴ Some of these instructions are rather mysterious and would seem to require the musician to be in a reflective, intuitive (Lunar) state-of-mind. The piece entitled "Upwards" seems like a transcendental exercise in using music to unite the microcosm and the macrocosm, with it's instruction to "Play a vibration in the rhythm of your smallest particles" followed by "play a vibration in the rhythm of the universe". Of interest to us in regards to harmony is "Set Sail for the Sun", reproduced below.

1. Although just a child, Dante and Aristotle got to have made it somewhat easier than the divine maker!
2. Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, Book II, Chapter XXXIII
3. Cornelius Agrippa, *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*, Book II, Chapter XXXV
4. For much more of some of these, see John Burt Foster, *The Music of Stockhausen*. The play seems to concern the interaction between an angelic woman (with "class" instrument) and a terrestrial man (with "pop" instrument).

SETZ DIE SEGEL ZUR SONNE (for ensemble)

play a tone for so long
until you hear its individual vibrations

hold the tone
and listen to the tones of the others
- to all of them together, not to individual ones -
and slowly move your tone
until you arrive at complete harmony
and the whole sound turns to gold
to pure, gently shimmering fire

The harmony is portrayed as gold, a Heavenly, Solar colour. In reaching the complete harmony, the musicians are in fact creating an environment conducive to celestial energies. That is to say, they create a harmony, rather than a cacophony. Note that in the cosmologies laid out by the Neoplatonists, the Sun sits in the exact centre of the hypothetical monochord that runs from Heaven, through the planetary and elemental spheres, to earth. The sun was considered symbol of the "Rational Soul", partaking in both the divine/intellectual and physical worlds. It is interesting that sound is also in the midst of these two worlds - audible, intelligible, yet non-physical, ungraspable. Like the thoughts in a mind it can be "earthed" only through notation, which is almost always an imperfect reflection of the thing in question. FL 2003



CD-R, Pampleton Sonic Landscaping, PSL1002

This 6 track EP by Soniclandscaper Mark Ellis is a very pleasant surprise. Six songs on acoustic guitar about something, which

is close to all of our hearts - ducks! There's a lot of strong stuff going on here and the whole production is pleasantly lo-fi and eccentric. *Duck Off Duckhead* is a good opener, it seems to be the story of a travelling duck who gets his wallet nicked. The strummy chords really suit it. *Sophi's Duckfarm* is the catchiest, most accessible song of the set, it's stuck in my mind since I saw him perform it at the Shells Bar - a sort of happy go lucky little song. It's a cliché, but dare I namedrop Syd Barrett's jauntier material as possible comparison? The slow *Mother Ducky's Eggs* might

'A Note on Harmony and Noise' (*Cerebral Paisley* 1: 9-10, author's work).

2.5.8.

The second issue featured a lengthy article on early 70s psychedelic folk band Comus, which also quoted Cornelius Agrippa (after Marsilio Ficino) describing the mystical frenzies attributed to possession by the god Dionysus. A short piece by 'The Temple of Appalachian Voodoo' (a former Z(Cluster) member whose work I had rediscovered online) was also featured, as well as an urban psychgeographic piece based on my 'Zodzoric' work, and attributed to Alain Champagne, and a review of a 7-inch single by Hexentanz: a collaboration

between the band The Soil Bleeds Black (who I had corresponded with via email and traded music with) and Satanist/musician Michael W. Ford.⁹¹

The Black Stone Manifested in LS3

THE sun is setting as a prostitute pythoness stands at the edge of Hyde Park, her eyes ever-rolling abysses, her body profoundly unhuman. She is of the dead: a cthonic priestess in robes of Elzeas. Look into her black eyes - twin magic mirrors in which inner phantasies - all the principles of the *ardor mortuus* - can be perceived bubbling to the fore, with wrath and weeping she divers in the dying sun. Turning from this owl-faced, lamia-tuéd nightingale we begin to walk down Hyde Park Road. The paving is cracked and uneven, disturbed by what lies beneath our feet - that is to say, both the natural and supernatural powers of the *mundus subterraneus*. You will see, on our left, a rather utilitarian Methodist church, and beyond that a Martial mosque of concrete and steel - both of them curiously uninspiring facades for the mysteries of the divine. But this is not what we're here for. From the church, look to your right and perhaps you will spy it's aquatic tues through the bushes...

Cross the road, climb the wall and take a look. 'CTHULHU RISING' proclaims the graffiti in turquoise and green. Behind the graffiti an abandoned building, it's smashed windows like the dead eyes of our pythoness - an arcane crypt where the despairing can await the loss of sleep amidst a tawdry bacchanal of meads and smack - a dazily-splendid world, such as Zoroaster warns us of.

Looking across to the church and mosque it may be seen that, on this road, we walk between belief and blasphemy - we may walk on the side of the houses of God, or on that of the house of Cthulhu - a potent modern glyph of apocalyptic atavisms and psychic ruin.

Walking to the end of Hyde Park Road we see a vagrant on a bench, bringing to mind Giordano Bruno's talismanic image of the first lunar mansion:

An Ethiopian seated on a iron bench, wearing a rope girdle and holding a dart. Except in this manifestation the dart has been replaced by a bottle of cheap cider. We now cross the street, and head toward the neon-lit takeaways that crowd Woodley Road. If we walk up the hill, the mosque to our left, and take the first right, and right again, we find ourselves on the back streets - the dark, occult place behind the glowing frontages of the takeaways. The church house is a mass of rotting meat drift heavily on the breeze. Walking down this street, observe the scattered chicken bones - the remains of some unconscious divinatory act. What omens can be read from their configuration?

Turning right at the bottom of the street and back onto the main road, we may see in the distance a black, boarded up shop-front squatting on a corner, reminiscent of the Saturnian-Terrestrial cube of Kluener. This is the Sorcerers Apprentice - once hailed as an occult Mecca, is has now withdrawn into itself, it's dark exterior suggesting it to be a glyph of the Black Stone of TEXAAR, whose number is LS333.

The basilisk spirals.

(Note: This journal takes us through area codes LS2 and LS6, considered collectively; we may interpret this as signifying either three times (666) six times (222-222) or 10 (6-6-6)

⁹¹ Extracted from *The Nightbirds Guide to West Yorkshire*, Chapter II of Dr. Alain Champagne's 'Hidden England: A Guide for Qliphothic Explorers', Argonautique Press.

stylus in his mouth, creating feedback and then processing it, digging the needle into the grooves and keeping it in place creating storms of noise and distortion. Phew!

Their awesome set ends with Oktopus and Still creating a gorgeously brutal meltdown of near power-electronics strength noise. The crowd cry for an encore but they don't get one. Probably just as well I mean, how do you top that? But I have a sneaking suspicion that Dalek probably could've.

- JS



Heavenstarz
The Sabbath Comes Softly
Fossil Dungeon, FD008

Heavenstarz is the collaboration between Dead Can Dance's gothic revivalists The Soil Bleeds Black and darker-than-dark ritual musicians and chaos magi Psychonaut75. Together they deliver an excellent EP of sonic witchcraft. After opening with processed choral wailing and a hoarsely (even comically occult) invocation to Hecate, the first side largely is dedicated to pounding martial drums and braying flute - fabulously evoking the whirling, hysterical tortur-litan dances of a witches sabbath. The second, shorter track is more the laid back Charivari which has an almost

"tutor-indian" feel to it with a droning star and bombastic flute playing. Yes, were deep in gothic country here.

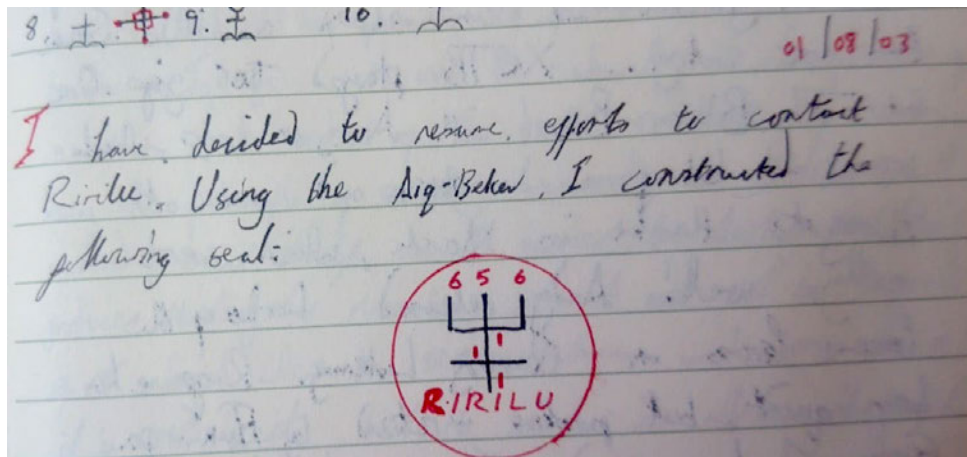
Side B opens with what I feel is more Psychonaut75 work than a collaboration, being a pitch shifted Latin invocation with droning synths, electronic noise and a snippet seemingly from a documentary on the witchcraft hysteria that swept the world from the late medieval times onward. The second track, Asmodeus Rise is super spooky - deep bassy thud and the sound of footsteps in an ancient tunnel, bottles being filled in preparation for some blasphemous rite, before ushering the listener into the midst of the coven for a return to the wild flute/drum combo. However, the track is somewhat marred for me by the American accent, which grates a little. It's a shame the album is so short - the first side is definitely of great quality and I'd love to see this kind of thing expanded into a whole album. The ambience is definitely heavily gothic, but on the first side at least it is genuinely dark and disturbing, even if the final track does have a bit of a cheese factor. As a full length album this could be an exhilarating and hypnotic journey through a world of pagan ritual. As an EP it's definitely great quality and a joy to listen to - the bands are certainly also good musicians. Recommended, although I hope they collaborate on a more substantial project in the near future. PL

Extracts from Cerebral Paisley II (August 2003): 9, 12 (author's work).

2.5.9.

From this point, my dedication to the prayer practices of the *Arbatel* seemed to wane somewhat, although my diary entry for 01/08/03 notes that it has been almost a year since my fleeting contact with Ririlu, and describes a sigil I have constructed for the spirit, as well as a note on the numerology of its name (adding up to 656). This was my last entry until Christmas day, when I noted 'after a hiatus from things magical, I hear the 112 [spirits of the seal of secrets] calling me back...'

⁹¹ 16/09/19 – MEMO – This article – and a jokey review of Argos jewellery in the first issue – both point to a sort of elitism, which is also worth study in broader terms (e.g. Z(Cluster) demonstrated a significant othering in the way some participants described non-occultists as 'sheeple', and so on).



Extract from a diary passage concerning Ririlu, 01/08/03 (author's work).

2.5.10.

The months between August and December 2003 were – aside from working – generally given over to creative pursuits. I went to Suffolk to visit Andy toward the end of summer and we improvised in the churchyard at Brundish, which was mentioned in Kenneth Grant's novel *Against the Light* as the resting place of his ancestors from the Wyard family, who were connected to witchcraft and strange goings on in Rendlesham Forest. These trips were generally full of improvised psychogeographical punning and humour. While *en route* to Brundish church, for example, we passed an old Austin-Morris Marina, which we took as an omen (- Austin Spare being a major influence on Grant's work, alongside Crowley -), ultimately calling the resulting EP, which we released just before Christmas, *The Rhyme of the Ancient Marina*.



A talisman for Margaret Wyard, brought to Brundish in 2003 (author's photograph).
Awryd, linocut 2007 (author's work).

2.6. Lords of the Green Grass

2.6.1.

[17/09/19] In terms of my own music, the next album – *Lords of the Green Grass* – was more explicitly ‘pagan’ in many respects, an undercurrent of occult Christianity was still discernible: during my regular visits to Harrogate’s second-hand bookshops I had discovered a translation of the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, with parallel transcription of the medieval Welsh text. The poems contained within the ‘Black Book’ were attributed to Myrddin Wyllt, who has been suggested the antecedent of the Arthurian Merlin. Myrddin witnessed the defeat of his Lord in battle, and retreated to the woods to live as a hermit and prophesy. I found his poems to be austere and haunting – and the romantic idea of hermitage also appealed to me in my solitary wanderings. Much of this album was made at Birk Crag, re-named The Crag of Cernunnos on the album sleeve. While recording my earlier album, *New Etheric Muse*, a memory of the view from the top of the crags had powerfully surfaced in my imagination while recording the track ‘High Above the Pastures’, so it seemed natural to visit the place and explore it further.



A view from the top of the ‘Crag of Cernunnos’ (author’s photograph).

2.6.2.

I wrote a series of notes on the album, which were published in the newsletter of Queasy Listening, Andy's label, who released the album in February 2004:

Lords of the Green Grass presents the latest researches into the field of etheric folk music conducted by the Xenis Emputae Travelling Band. The paradigm of etheric folk consists of the intuiting of suggestions from the spiritus mundi both at locations of significance and through the free interpretation of astrological events occurring at the time of recordings.⁹² There is no specific 'system' behind the music, save the personal 'shamanic' exploration of the environment by light of folklore and custom.⁹³ Please note that rather than being an advocate of the current neopagan trend, I consider myself as a neoplatonist in the mould of the Renaissance magi (Agrippa and Ficino being profound influences), with a deep interest in local custom and tradition.

Lords of the Green Grass was largely recorded at a location that had a long-term personal significance; a noted Yorkshire beauty spot. A place somewhat tainted in recent years by the attempted sacrifice of a boy by two schoolmates who seem to have fallen under the questionable influence of an alleged drug dealer and dabbler in black magic. It has also been the sight of many a youthful meeting with the forces of nature. Many a mind has been expanded on the mushrooms that grow in the same area, while several rocky outcrops show evidence of youthful pagan practices, and many a reveller has reported lights, 'little people' and large cats!⁹⁴

⁹² 17/09/19 – MEMO – I use here the term *spiritus mundi* – indicating the pervading spirit of the world, or aether, which Agrippa claimed transmitted celestial influences, dreams, even thoughts. I had not yet become fully involved in theorizing the idea of the *genius loci*, but perhaps saw myself more as a receiver for data in the aether. There is certainly a theme here to be explored concerning how inspired/occult/supernatural creativity shifts the creative act from the artist and toward other causes. In some ways there was also, perhaps, a deliberate reticence to 'own' my own work due to a lack of confidence in my own abilities at the time.

⁹³ 17/09/19 – MEMO – Constructions of (neo-)shamanism are also an element of my work. I considered working in the field, and the use of musical instruments as tools for expanding consciousness, to be 'shamanic' in nature, as opposed to the 'high magic' of Arbatel – although evidently this could still be squared with being ostensibly a 'Neoplatonist' in the spirit of the Renaissance magi. Fluid identities – alongside fluid beliefs – are another possible area for analytic discussion.

⁹⁴ A small sheltered outcrop at the Crag was often adorned with 'God's Eye' votives. The reference of little people and large cats came from my own experiences of walking in the nearby Harlow woods late at night, en route to the [REDACTED] – during which I would often 'feel' the presence of other entities in the woods.

Shine Abroad Brightly

This track was recorded on August 12th 2003 at the time of Mars' close passage to Earth. At the time, the red planet appeared very close to the moon. The title of the first track was cribbed from the work of a seventh century Greek alchemist named Stephanos. The alchemist describes magnesia as a "moon clad in white and vehemently shining abroad whiteness."

Holly King

Recorded at the first scent of Autumn, during the apex of midsummer, the imagery for this track was that of the funeral procession for the Oak King, ruler of Summer, and the coming reign of the Holly King, ruler of the Winter. The legend of the Oak King and the Holly King seems to be a fairly modern invention, so far as I can tell its likely source is the work of Robert Graves – nevertheless it is an extremely potent image.

Thoughts of Maytime

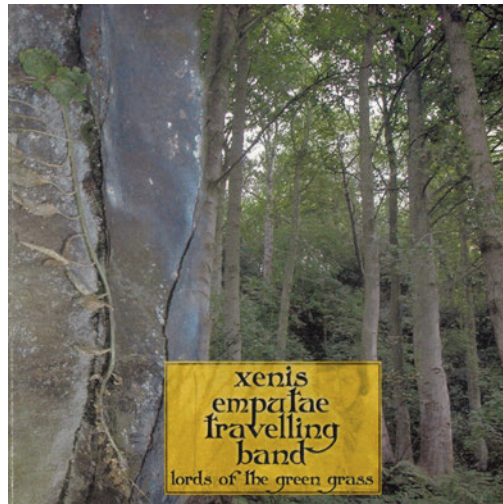
This was recorded sitting by a stream, during which time I felt isolated and alone in the wood – at that moment I felt a kinship with the early Welsh poet Myrddin. According to the autobiographical poetry of the Black Book of Camarthen, after losing his mind in battle Myrddin became a hermit in the Caledonian Forest, seeking truth and sanity, and making prophecies. The poems preserved in the Black Book are some of the most beautiful and inspiring works I have read, with an amazing, profound Christian spirituality. I was moved to ad-lib part of one of my favorite poems, Maytime Thoughts.

Silverhand Stream

An obsession of mine has been with Romano-Celtic deities, such as Nodens, Belatucadnos and Verbeia. This is another piece that was recorded during the close proximity of Mars and was recorded at the same stream as the preceding track. The deity Mars was associated with Nodens by the Romans, while he is also believed to be cognate with Lludd Llaw Ereint (Silver Hand) of the Mabinogion.

Bare Bones

“We all go to bones, we all go to bones/they shine bright in this Dullur country” are the first two lines of an invocation of Bunjil, a powerful spirit of the Australian Wurunjerri tribe. The invocation question is one of healing, calling Bunjil into the heart to fend off death. The invocation occurs in C.M. Bowra’s “Primitive Song”, and inspired this simple cyclical song.



Lords of the Green Grass cover, a digital montage of images taken at Birk Cragg and adjacent Pine Woods. The lower half of the image also incorporates a drawing of an otherworldly minstrel by Virgil Finlay (from a book of pulp magazine art found at a book fair in Harrogate), and a photograph of a woman in some woods burning a hex doll from a pictorial book on witchcraft and magic. (Author's work.)

2.6.3.

The album was positively reviewed by the long-running post-industrial/neo-folk websites Compulsion and FluxEuropa:

Xenis Emputae Travelling Band are pursuing a rather striking personal vision but these low-key releases of experimental folk may appeal to those with an interest in the home made sounds of Vibracathedral Orchestra, Stone Breath, and the like. (Compulsion Online)

This shamanic dreamtrip is a worthy English counterpart to Italian ritual projects like Marco Francini's and the offerings from Portugal's Reaping Horde label. (FluxEuropa)

2.6.4.

The album also warranted a review in the mainstream 'extreme music' magazine

Terrorizer, whose writer attempts to contextualise it within the mainstream culture of the Spice Girls and Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* films:

Refreshingly, 'Lords of The Green Grass' deserves a title like 'neo-pagan folk' and wins it without ever sounding ludicrous, made-up or historically uninformed (the bummer side of joyously revisionist), as opposed to quite a few continental and Scandinavian acts. These Xenis freaks manage to create utterly convincing ritual music for some parallel dimension druidism in limbo. A tribe suspended on the fuzzy border between historical reality and archetypal imagination. Rekindling those times in the 80s when industrial went full circle and re-emerged as mystical, organic, romantic/decadent neo-paganism. To the extent that the Criminal Justice Bill and the Spice Girls drove the fairy forest being out England (my last sighting dates to 1998). I find myself almost able to hear the breathing of the sleeping dragon, riding on etheric winds blowing from Twyford Down. The conclusion of the 'Lord of the Rings' trilogy opens space for spiritual anticipation that makes releases like this possible again.

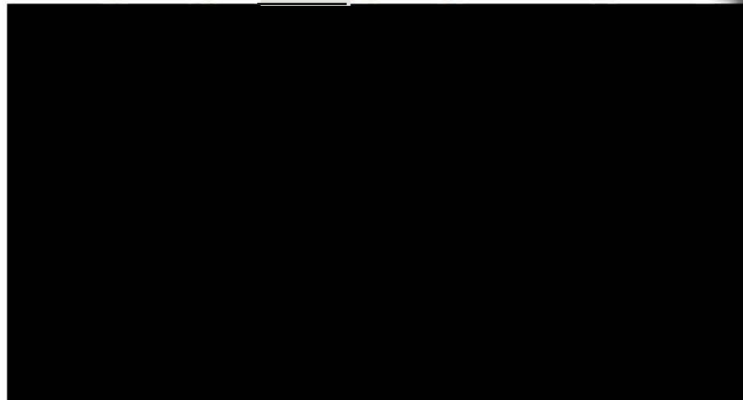
2.6.5.

In autumn of 2003, I had also begun an MSc in Creative Technologies at Leeds Metropolitan University, using funds saved from living with **P** and her mother to pay the initial tuition fees. Despite still not being interested in pursuing a computing career, I was interested in developing my music programming further, and wished to use the course as a potential way to develop a responsive, generative music engine.⁹⁵ As this project developed over the coming year, I would decide to call it *Spacious Mind* – inspired by a quote by Austin Osman Spare.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ 17/09/19 – MEMO – The relationship between the esoteric and technology (music technology in my case) is a potential avenue for analysis. There were many esoteric technologists, from Athanasius Kircher's love of both the archaic and the novel, to Edison's experiments to talk to the dead, to the experiments with virtual ritual spaces in Z(Cluster). Technology and occult practice can create a form of cybernetic esotericism – in my own practice I would later talk about the creation of pieces as imaginative alchemy, aided by the ability to re-listen to music and field recordings on my digital audio workstation, and to re-engage and re-explore the music and imagery it evoked. Like Kircher, I also began to believe that certain scales or modes had esoteric significances, so that a computer programme improvising around them may be used to create appropriate ambient music for ritual or meditative purposes.

⁹⁶ 17/09/19 – MEMO – Esoteric aspirations here being seen to drive work even in a more 'mundane' sphere.

I have decided to call the system Spacious Mind, since this morning I saw an automatic drawing entitled "The Ophidian Mind" by the cult artist Austin Osman Spare. In the bottom corner, Spare has written "Harmony, Melody & Rhythm is the language of the Spacious Mind." This quote seems appropriate to my aims. I reproduce the image below (from *Nightside of Eden* by Kenneth Grant)



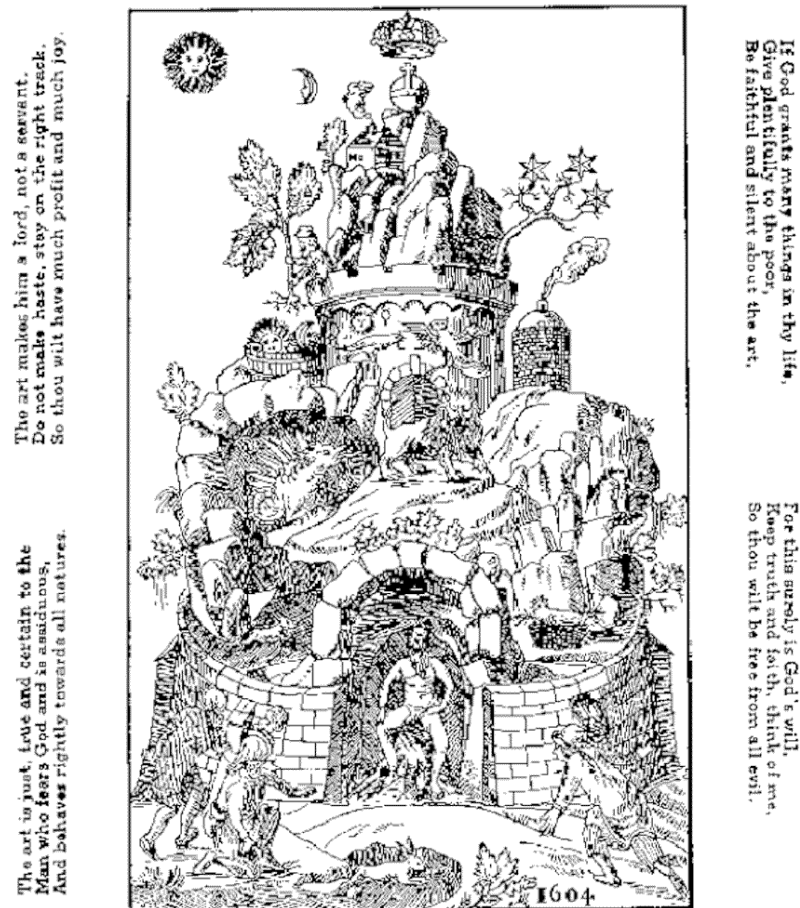
Extract from my university learning log (11/07/04)
(Author's work - element by Austin Osman Spare redacted).

2.6.6.

[4/10/19] January also marked the live debut of Xenis Emputae Travelling Band. I had been sending my releases to **AI**, the music writer in the local press. In the late 90s and early 2000s, **AI** and his friend **U** had published a local music zine, and continued to promote gigs under its banner. They had decided to host an event called [REDACTED] and wanted me to perform. Andy came up, and we worked out a fairly primitive set, consisting of 'Hand of Glory', 'A Dunwich Dirge' and a more improvisatory, collaborative track.

2.6.7.

[17/09/19] I had been contacted by an Irish musician called Gavin Prior, who had received a flyer I had made when he had bought or traded music with [REDACTED] label. Gavin ran a label called Deserted Village, which released music by many of the musicians in his local scene, and in particular acted as a platform for his own band, United Bible Studies. After trading some music between ourselves, Gavin asked if I would be interested in recording something for release on Deserted Village. I began working on an album called *Hieroglyphic Mountain*. The title is an allusion to Dee's Hieroglyphic Monad, and uses an alchemical pun on *Monas* (one) and *Mons* (mountain). The pun was inspired by an oft-reproduced alchemical engraving of the *mons philosophorum* from an anonymous century 18th book *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer*.



The mons philosophorum as depicted in the Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer (1785).

2.7. The Hieroglyphic Mountain

2.7.1.

By the spring of 2004, **P** and I had also moved with her mother to a smaller semi-detached house in [REDACTED], a suburb of High Harrogate. I was still commuting to Leeds, and also working on the new album. The symbol of dew, found in the *Hieroglyphic Monad*, had become incredibly important to me, and I recall one morning stepping outside to bring in the cat and seeing the grass completely covered with dew, and the sun at such an angle that each drop refracted rainbow light at me. It gave me a deep feeling of something beyond... as Wordsworth may have said 'something more subtly interfused.'

2.7.2.

[04/10/19] Toward the end of March, I played a second gig – solo this time – at [REDACTED], as part of the annual Music Party event. The set consisted of material that never appeared in recorded form, and opened with 'I Deny the

Existence of that Which Exists' – a phrase cribbed from the 1970s TV series *Children of the Stones*, which had been re-released on DVD on 2002. There were also two covers – The Yardbird's 'Turn to Earth' (owing to the line 'The morning dew, turns into rain'), and Death in June's 'Runes and Men'. I was obviously aware of the band's use of fascist imagery, which was in many ways not so controversial within the aesthetics of the post-industrial noise scene that had coalesced around the Termite Club in Leeds, so considered it acceptable to alter the lyrics, turning away from the fetishisation of the Teutonic, and toward the English: notably I changed the line 'Then my loneliness closes in, so I drink a German wine' to 'Then my loneliness closes in, so I quaff an English ale'.⁹⁷

2.7.3.

[24/09/19] On my MSc, I had met a student interested in slow-scan TV, a form of DIY broadcasting which uses ham radio to send static images. I experimented with encoding some images from John Dee's work into slow-scan signals using a piece of software called MMSSTV. The resulting electronic chirps of transmission can be heard on the track *Dew Transmitter*.

2.7.4.

The tracks on *The Hieroglyphic Mountain* are variously inspired by visits to the North Yorkshire coast, and Wheeldale Moor and incorporate field recordings from them (e.g. *Blue Man in the Moss*, *Chapel of Infinite Echo*). *Chapel of Infinite Echo* developed further the idea that some of the pieces of music I was working on evoked 'images', which could be explored and fortified through the recording and music production process: it made me imagine Caedmon, playing flute and commending prayers to the sea from the clifftops where Whitby Abbey stands. Like Myrddyn, Caedmon was a poet – and their combination of austere simplicity, and respectively solitary and cloistered existences appealed to me: my pious inclinations now being subsumed into the rural aesthetic, haunted by the lingering ghosts of not just paganism, but Celtic Christianity. The album closes with recordings of waves recorded at a cove near Whitby.

2.7.5.

The album also expresses a growing awareness of other local prehistoric sites beyond those found on Ilkley Moor. Thornborough Henge in particular would

⁹⁷ 04/10/19 – MEMO – Nationalism, and the presence of fascist aesthetics (and fascism itself) in the underground music scene presents itself as an area for further analysis.

become a focal point for several pieces, including *New Light at Thornborough*, which features on the album. I discovered the long-running Earth Mysteries zine *Northern Earth*, which had covered the resurgence of interest in the three henges and their endangered state from possible extension of a neighbouring quarry owned by Tarmac Northern. I hadn't, at that point, visited Thornborough, although the romantic image of the grey hours leading up to a glorious sunrise at the henges coalesced in my imagination while improvising, precipitating an urge to visit the place at the earliest opportunity. The album was released in autumn of the year by Gavin Prior's Deserted Village label. The cover that I had designed paid homage to a half-remembered cover of a folk LP by Martin Carthy in my parent's collection, *Landfall* (1971), which had also in-part inspired the name of my own record label, *Larkfall*.



The Hieroglyphic Mountain (2004, author's work), Martin Carthy: *Landfall* (Philips Records Ltd, 1971).

2.8. A Selenographic Lens & Toadsman's Bell

2.8.1.

^[4/10/19] It was while living with P and her mother that I began my regular visits to Wharfedale. I would regularly take the bus to Skipton, and then on to Appletreewick, a small village, chiefly consisting of a single street with a pub at either end. A steep walk up through the hamlet of Skyreholme would take you onto the top of the moor and eventually to the edge of Troller's Gill, the place that had captured my imagination as a child. There were a number of places which I was drawn to, and which would become regularly referenced on many

subsequent recordings. In the spirit of 'psychogeography', I didn't depend on a map, but generally let myself discover the landscape organically.

2.8.2.

A stagnant pool on the top of the moor became a regular visiting point, as did 'my' hawthorn, clinging to the side of the valley. The twisted forms of trees, growing from the exposed rock on the sides of the valley, and the presence of disused mines and pits, all seemed to lend the place a sense of wildness and enchantment: as did the name, Troller's Gill, hinting at forgotten folklore – as well as being associated with the legend of the spectral hound.



Looking out across Appletreewick Pasture from the roadside (author's work).



The 'dead pool' on Appletreewick moor (author's work).



View across Skyreholme Beck, toward Troller's Gill (author's work).

2.8.3.

I would generally take with me a Minidisc recorder and small condenser mic, with whatever instruments I could physically carry or put in a backpack. The first recordings from the location would appear on 'Bogle Burn', which opens with the sound of jackdaws nesting at Troller's Gill (also known locally as Jackdaw Nick). 'Bogle Burn' takes its title from the name of a pool in which, according to folklore, the murderer Long Lankin was said to have drowned in. I had mentally transposed the legend from Northumbria to the stagnant pools of Appletreewick Moor. 'Bogle Burn' opens with short banjo tune, played alongside the jackdaws, which I had originally written some lyrics for, which imagined Long Lankin and his murderous accomplice, the False Nurse, fleeing from the scene of their crime, only to meet a supernatural demise at the hands of the spirit of Bogle Burn:

I'm going down to visit Bogle Burn
I hope you hear me when I say I won't return.
For what we did was so bad that you can't deny
If the Lord he caught us, we would surely die.

So go down to the river and wash your skirt
You're looking like a soldier stained by blood and dirt.

I'll go to the forest and there I'll poach some prey
And we'll sleep in the bushes till the break of day.

I was woken that night by a baby's cry
A lady by the burn was singing hush-a-bye.
And as I approached her with my bodkin for to draw
Her veil slipped away - her face was bloody raw.

*Imagine my Lord's face when he saw my corpse,
I saw his heart break as you fled across the gorse.
A man like you deserves to drown in Hell's deep mire,
And with that false nurse set nearby upon a fire.*

2.8.4.

After this simple banjo tune, the track becomes more drone-inspired. Often, while recording, I had imagined that I was drifting out of my body while I played my instruments – and this idea of using instrumental performance as a form of 'shamanic' travel, would become an important concept as my music developed. For the majority of 'Bogle Burn' I was attempting to explore this idea: imagining the banjo player, cross legged, their hands active, but their mind *elsewhere*. The music ends with a return to the jackdaws – and this 'arch form' of departure and return becomes a recurrent idea in my music-making.⁹⁸

2.8.5.

My diary contains an entry from May 2004, in which – unusually given that most of the discussion therein pertains to the *Hieroglyphic Monad* – I make some somewhat mystical observations about myth, geography and temporality:

2.8.5.1.

A thought on the relationship of local mythologies and psychogeography: A sense of local history is important – however, it should not be used as an excuse for 'us + them' ideologies or preaching racial purity. Regardless of

⁹⁸ 04/10/19 – MEMO – As part of analysis, perhaps trace development of this form of music-making in which a piece comes to embody a narrative of an out-of-body journey. Obviously early experiences with the music of Gong, meditation and so on are precursors to this. Note also that there are linear journeys later in my catalogue (e.g. *Abital*). Also, although I tended to think of it as a music arch form (ABA, ABCBA etc), it could also be seen as a circular form – or revolution on a wheel – emically suggesting Campbell's construct of the Hero's Journey.

colour or belief, learning about our environments and their history both expands the appreciation of these place and the consciousness of the individual. Indeed, the 'reality' of the dimension of time becomes much more apparent when you can look back, and in looking back, look forwards. Also, the emotional landscape enables the individual to be as one with the environment.

2.8.6.

During the summer, **P**'s brother, **AM**, [REDACTED] moved into the house with **P**, her mother, and I. A talented bass guitar player, he joined me to play [REDACTED] event in July, at the Blues Bar. The set included a piece called 'Troller's Gill', which made use of my recordings from Wharfedale, and also opened with 'Verbeia' – although this was different from the track of the same name on *Under a Soular Moon*, and was – once again – inspired by my contact with the Wharfedale countryside (- Verbeia being the name associated with the goddess of the Wharfe).

2.8.7.

In September, **P** returned to Leeds to study [REDACTED], finding a terrace in [REDACTED], which she shared with her brother. I moved back with my parents: I had decided to quit my job, owing to what I saw as gross mismanagement. One lunchtime, I decided to take a walk and apply for the first job I saw – which happened to be a notice in the window of Lush Cosmetics, [REDACTED] [REDACTED]. I applied, got the job, and quit my post [REDACTED] [REDACTED], much to the bemusement of my colleagues.

2.8.9.

Working a part-time shift, I was able to concentrate on programming the system for my MSc project, as well as making my own music during this time. I released one final EP that year – *A Selenographic Lens* – which featured 'Bogle Burn' alongside a new soundtrack I had recorded for Sven Jankmajer's film *Kostnice (The Ossuary)*, which I had been using as test footage for my soundtrack generating MSc project.

2.8.10.

On the morning of October 31st, I carried out a small, spontaneous ritual in my room, which I dedicated to a figure I called 'The Landless Lord', who had come into my mind earlier in the year, while improvising music at 'my' hawthorn, near Troller's Gill. I reflected on this 'meeting' in 2007's *Psychogeographia Ruralis*:

2.8.10.1.

After collecting my thoughts and stilling my mind I began to play. I let the notes come of their own accord until a musical framework had established itself. Such frameworks may be, for example, a common thematic melody, a tonality, drone or set of pitches to use, the notion of certain 'home' notes or tonic centres (akin to the use of modes in medieval chant), and so forth.

Once these patterns had established themselves – found their way 'under the fingers' so that they could continue with no conscious effort – I was free to mentally wander and see what images the genius loci wished to present to me. While my hands responded of their own intuition, slowly I 'saw' something drawing near within the mind's eye – yet more profoundly vivid than as if it were a casual daydream. A man in a black cloak, mounted upon a brown horse 'was' in the valley below. He held a burning torch. I mentally descended to meet him. He stared at me – he possessed a fearsome and otherworldly countenance. He stretched out his arm and opened a gloved hand. In his palm was a snowflake. He let it fall before turning and riding away.

Some days later I found myself listening to music and the following riddle in the lyrics struck a chord:

White bird featherless
Flew from Paradise,
pitched on the castle wall.

Along came Lord Landless,
Took it up handless,
And rode away horseless to the King's white hall.

It had not occurred to me before that the 'white bird featherless' was, of course, a snowflake! I came to call the character I had encountered "The Landless Lord" in reference to the above verse. Interestingly, it seems that, in my

personal mythos, he is a portentous figure whose appearance often indicates an upheaval in my personal life.

2.8.11.

The 'fire rite' (so called because I lit multiple candles!) was an attempt to re-engage with this imagery. And – with a tambourine as my 'shamanic' instrument – I began to elaborate on the meeting with Lord Landless. The account above is actually a composite of both an initial fleeting impression while recording in Wharfedale, augmented with a more lucid vision as part of the 'fire rite'.⁹⁹

2.8.12.

Although I spent the afternoon working at Lush (dressed as a pirate for Hallowe'en, of course), during the evening I happened to visit the Arts Council webpages, where I saw a job being advertised for a composer's assistant [REDACTED]. I called the number the next morning spoke to **AJ**, an independent composer who worked heavily with computer-generated notation.

2.8.13.

Writing a reflective entry in my diary on 24/01/05, I noted 'My own XETB music has been going from strength-to-strength. In fact, I think that the performance of the "Fire Rite for the Landless Lord" on the Samhain morning precipitated the meeting with **AJ**...'100

[25/10/19]

A2.8.14.

'Fire Rite for the Landless Lord' would appear in February 2005 on a CD entitled *Toadsman's Bell*, released by Digitalis Industries. Digitalis was a label and webzine run by musician Brad Rose, whose releases focused on the free-folk, psych-folk and drone-folk music which I had come to associate myself with, and which now formed a significant underground milieu with whom I corresponded.¹⁰¹ Rose interviewed me for his webzine, Foxy Digitalis, in the Autumn of 2004, around the time of the recording

⁹⁹ 04/10/19 – MEMO – It is with this sort of composite that Asprem's idea of event narratives become useful. Consider what cases in my autobiography would make good event narrative analyses (Experience at Men-an-Tol, Encounter with Landless Lord, Encounters with Abital and Rorasa are all possibles).

¹⁰⁰ 04/10/19 – MEMO – Note attribution of causality between events and music-making. I associated the Landless Lord with encountering **AJ** (a major life change), and later also with the birth of twins (another major change).

¹⁰¹ 25/10/19 – MEMO – Explore the occultural aspects of the free/psych/drone folk scene of the early 2000s as part of analysis.

of the 'Fire Rite'. In the interview, I mention that I am collecting material on the subject of dew for a potential book, and also end with an environmental-political message:

2.8.14.1.

One last thing that's been on my mind, indulge me if you will, is that if the wreckers of ancient civilization such as Tarmac get their way and vandalize our ancestors landscape for the sake of a few bags of gravel (as they are doing at the Thornborough henges) there may not be much to enjoy in the future. So, it's a bitter note to end on, but I'd like quote Purcell - "Fight, and record yourselves in druid song!"

2.8.15.

Toadsman's Bell reflects a number of my interests of the time. The title was inspired by reading an entry for 'sabbatic witch' Andrew Chumbley's book *ONE* in the catalogue of the esoteric bookseller [REDACTED] which described a magical ritual inspired by the folkloric practices of the 'toadsmen', or horseman, who used a magical toad-bone to control horses. The horsemen would provide an enduring fascination – as a secret professional society, with possible links to magic and witchcraft. The album also includes 'Great is the Gorse', a line cribbed from the famous Welsh poem *The Battle of the Trees* – I had been reading Welsh literature such as the *Mabinogion* to attempt to find out more about the Celtic mythos. The track 'Dai Amaeth' continues my alchemically-inspired cross-lingual punning: John Dee's magical practice involved the Sigillum Dei Aemeth (The Seal of God, or Truth). 'Dai Amaeth' is a punning on this in Welsh, the two words which I believed meant something like 'beloved' and 'shepherd' or 'husbandman'. Many of the tracks were recorded around Troller's Gill, and a trip to the area in winter, driven by my friend U provided the photograph for the inner sleeve, capturing the dew upon the mossy boulders of the Gill in the early morning sun.



Image from Troller's Gill used on the inner sleeve of Toadsman's Bell (author's work).



Cover of Toadsman's Bell, incorporating designs based on John Dee's Sigillum Dei, The Ripley Scoll (alchemical image of the toad, and phoenix at the top and bottom), a central figure from the 16th century Shephearde's Kalendar, and a high-contrast image the hawthorn at Troller's Gill at the apex of the heptagram (author's work).

2.8.16.

Unusually, *Toadsman's Bell* is bookended by two songs, with the following lyrics:

Evensong

Awaken and sing,
O ye in the dust,
Your shadow is lengthening
And drowns in the dusk.
The elm tree is crooked:

He's older than death.
Oh, but that first man,
He loved you the best.

The Wild Dance

The wild dance has again begun
I was the first sound, heard by none,
I am the last, that the last man hears,
And aye, it is true, in elder years
I was first to love and bear
Now I croak at the sun, all I wear
Is a shield of white feathers across my breast
While I peck the ground where they request
A golden snake to descend with grace,
And still I am that deep old place,
From which the Lord did scoop high hills
And in whose basin a songbird trills
With golden twigs, she wraps her chicks,
And I've flown with her sisters three-and-six
Across that moor the moon doth keep
While in winter you've heard me weep
Outside your hard and frosty door,
Oh but lover I'll rise once more,
Oh but lover I'll rise once more.

2.8.17.

The first two lines of 'Evensong' are derived from Isaiah 26:19 – 'Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead', which I had discovered while collating a document containing everything I could find on the subject of dew. The 'first man' mentioned at the end is Adam – the title, 'Evensong' being an allusion to the name Eve. 'The Wild Dance' was in part inspired by the shape-shifting myth of Taliesin, the Incredible String Band's lyrics, and folk songs like 'The Two Magicians'. 'The Wild Dance' concerns the figure of the goddess, personified by Lillith. The serpent descending with grace alludes to representations of Jesus in Gnostic texts – part of the inspiration for the song as a whole being a family of crows which I encountered one late-afternoon at Kirklington

Church, which I had visited with Andy after a trip to visit the Devil's Arrows and Thornborough Henge, and whose grounds seemed to be haunted by the palpable spectres of a pagan past. I mentioned this in my 2004 interview with Brad Rose:

2.8.17.1.

Although history and lore play a large part in the music I think a great deal of influence comes from environmental factors. For example, the church at Kirklington. I first visited it on a bitter autumn day with Andy Sharp and we recorded an as yet unreleased track on the mourner's bench. There was a real sense of something powerful in the air as the sun set over the fields. I don't think I'm the first to have a hunch that the church was built on an even older sacred site.¹⁰²



Lino-cut of Kirklington Church, 2007 (author's work).

2.9. Split with The North Sea & Pyrognomic Glass

2.9.1.

Material recorded around the same time as *Toadsman's Bell* was also released on my Larkfall label in January, as part of a split CDr with Brad Rose – the cover image, taken at Hunter's Stones, Wharfedale, as part of the same trip I had taken with U.

¹⁰² 25/10/19 – MEMO – Possibly explore the idea of churches and churchyards as places of re-enchantment. Henry Trail Simpson, whose work was later to be influential to me, saw evidence of 'druidical' religion everywhere, including at his own church in Adel, and at nearby Almscliffe Craggs, and the idea that certain churches were built on former pagan monuments is a key concept in much earth mysteries/ley hunting discourse.



Cover for the split-CD with *The North Sea* (author's work).

2.9.2.

My half of the release opened with another song – *Moly*, setting lyrics by Clark Ashton Smith, a ‘weird fiction’ writer and associate of H. P. Lovecraft. The second track, *Turning to Face the Western Oak*, used field recordings from Almscliffe Crag, which I had begun making visits to, inspired by earth mysteries researcher Paul Bennet’s writing. A piece by Bennett from 2010 reiterates the claims which inspired me:

2.9.2.1.

The centre piece of the Crag is known as the Altar Rocks. Upon its western side is carved the “figure of a large tree, which we take to be the monogram of the Celtic Jupiter,” says Grainge. This assumption is derived from an eighteenth century writer who, said Speight (1903), told that “Almnus and Alumnus are titles of Jupiter, to whom this high altar was dedicated.”¹⁰³

2.9.3.

‘Turning to Face the Western Oak’ incorporates theremin and guitar. I had often associated wailing, moaning, feminine vocalisations with the earth and feminine energies (the goddess Verbeia, perhaps), while the theremin seemed to represent other energies in the aether: perhaps atmospheric or celestial influences. This association was particularly potent when recording the track, during which I returned mentally time and time again to the altar rocks, visualising the sounds of the theremin as patterns of energy travelling across the sky.

¹⁰³ Quoted from: Megalithix (Paul Bennett). 2010. ‘Almscliffe Crag, North Rigton, North Yorkshire’, *The Northern Antiquarian*. Online at: <https://megalithix.wordpress.com/2010/04/15/almscliffe-crag/#wp-toolbar> [Accessed 25/10/19]

2.9.4.

The third track, 'British Primitive Music', borrows its title from John Fahey's description of his own music as 'American Primitive Music'. I had evidently been listening to quite a lot of American 60s acoustic guitar music, like Fahey and Sandy Bull, and had modified my guitar by attaching a bent piece of metal to the body, on the high string, just after the sound hole. This meant that the string would vibrate against the metal, in order to create a sitar-like drone.¹⁰⁴

2.9.5.

The final track is titled 'Chwyfleian and the Projection of John', and was recorded after a visit to Howden Minster with my parents – an interesting church which remains partly in a ruined state, following the collapse of the vaulted roof of the choir in the late 17th century. The atmosphere of the place – on a cold winter afternoon – stuck with me, as did the persona of St. John of Howden, who had been said to be a fine poet. The presence of local saints and hermits had become another area of fascination for me – another layer of history and enchantment to be found within the landscape. The term 'Chwyfleian' came from my readings of the Black Book of Carmarthen, where it appears as part of a Myrddin's poem *Apple-Trees*:

Chwyfleian prophesies,
she tells a tale:
spears will be cast
with the intent
born of keen courage
before exalted dragon kings. (Pennar 1989: 75)

2.9.6.

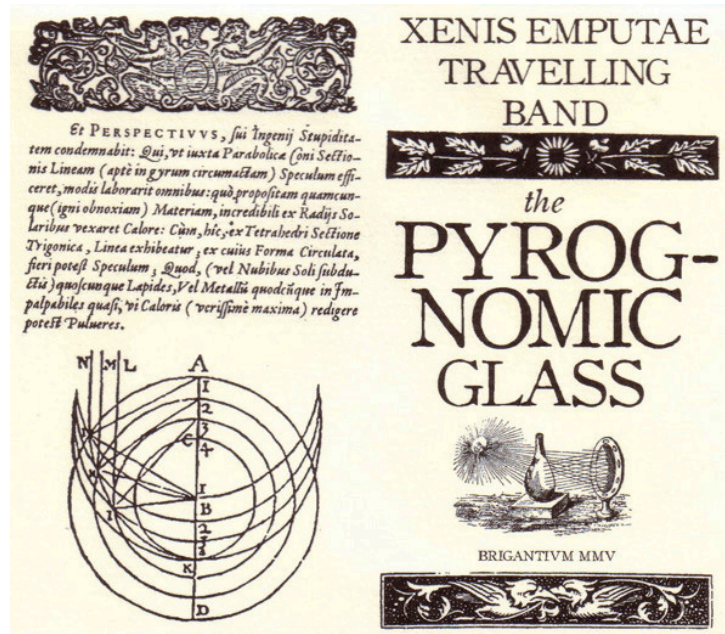
In his introduction, Pennar comments that 'in his state of exalted madness, Myrddin prophesies it seems with the aid of a certain Chwyfleian (White Phantom)' (:20). In

¹⁰⁴ MEMO – 25/10/19 - The opening of the track with bells, and strummed, resonating chords, obviously references assumptions as to what 'ritual sounds' are. Perhaps writing about sounds and their associations within my – and other music of the same milieu – would be a useful musical-analytic avenue to explore?

my mind, I connected Chwyfleian with the idea of a supernatural poetic muse, guardian angel, or personal genius – a spirit of inspiration.

2.9.7.

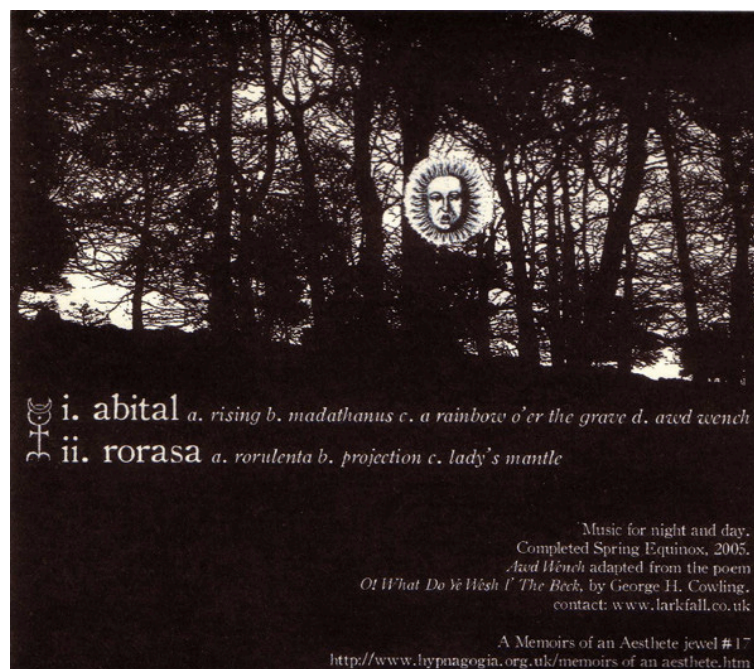
During the early months of 2005, I was working on both my MA project and also on an album consisting of two long pieces, entitled *The Pyrognomic Glass*. This was an important recording in many ways. First, it was an attempt to realise two long tracks, inspired by my gathering of materials concerning dew, and particularly its relation to alchemy, magic and witchcraft. The two tracks are called 'Abital' and 'Rorasa', which are names that I came to associate with the genii of evening and morning dew, respectively. The name Abital, I discovered in a Biblical lexicon, referring to one of King David's wife, apparently meaning 'my father is the (night) dew'. Rorasa comes from Charles Leland's *Aradia, Gospel of the Witches* (1899), where tells a tale of a girl who had fallen into a ravine and been rescued by an unearthly woman who told her to follow the Gospel of Diana. Leland comments that: 'The name Rorasa seems to indicate the Latin *ros* the dew, *rorare*, to bedew, *rorulenta*, bedewed--in fact, the goddess of the dew. Her great fall and being lifted by Diana suggest the fall of dew by night, and its rising in vapour under the influence of the moon' – although I came to associate Rorasa with the morning dew. The title of the album derived from my perennial obsession with John Dee's *Hieroglyphic Monad*, which also tied into the relationship between dew and alchemy (dew being a symbol referred to at the end of the Hieroglyphic Monad, and likely the underlying source of my own obsession). The influence of Dee's work is pronounced on the cover art of the album, which shows an extract from Dee's 'Letter to Maximilian', extolling the virtues of the sign of the *Hieroglyphic Monad* to the students of perspective and optics – declaring that there can be found in his design directions for constructing a parabolic section that can be used to create a burning mirror, which would focus the sun's rays with such intensity that all metals may be reduced to ashes. The illustration beneath this text comes from the instruction of Giambattista Porta for creating a 'burning glass', and closely resembles the upper portion of Dee's design:



Cover for The Pyrognomic Glass (2005, author's work).

2.9.8.

The reverse of the cover describes the album as 'music for night and day' and positions Dee's Monad next to the track titles, showing the track title 'Abital' next to the upper portion of the Monad (with the moon at its apex), and 'Rorasa' next to the lower portion (which shows the symbol of Aries – the cardinal fire sign – at the nadir).



Back cover of The Pyrognomic Glass (2005, author's work).

2.9.9.

Although most of the album was recorded at home, the sounds and music I was making became deeply associated with the landscapes that I had been engaging with. The opening sounds of water being stirred up would conjure vivid images in my mind of the abandoned lead mine at Troller's Gill: the idea of staying there, by a stagnant underground pool, waiting for the moon (and the dew) to rise. Experiences of walking the area around Troller's Gill, and also of wandering on Ilkley Moor became part of the developing imaginative narratives around each track. The album was released as a CDr on the Memoirs of an Aesthete, the label of Phil Todd, a long-established figure on the UK drone/experimental underground, who I had seen at various Termite gigs, and finally got talking to at a screening of a documentary about Sun Ra at The Common Place (a collectively run anarchist social centre, now known as Wharf Chambers).

2.10. Johann Wlight and The Pneumatic Consort

[11/11/19]

2.10.1.

With regard to ideas about the power of the imagination having its own 'reality', in an interview with Baart de Paepe, for an online zine called *Storing*, conducted in May of 2005, I also mentioned the magical potential of memory and the imagination after he enquired as to whether I was familiar with Frances Yates:

The magical overtones of the Hermetic Art of Memory really inspire me - the idea that a mind which is imprinted with the magical images of the universe becomes a kind of talisman and returns the soul to it's (sic) divine origin is enchanting - folly, or not!

2.10.2.

I also further discuss the link between the imagination and 'enchantment' of the landscape:

I'm very fond of the spurious histories and etymologies formulated by turn of the century folklorists and fairytale scholars - many of their ideas really lend a sense of enchantment to subjects in which the truth is more prosaic. Things that spring to mind are Robert Graves' claim that Dionysus was the god of psychedelic mushrooms, or Laura Kready's hint that Frog from the song *Frog Went A-Courting* (which actually an old English ballad, but more popular in

America) is actually Apollo! I rarely invent my own folklore, but at times I do have rather vivid imaginings - the Landless Lord, the King of Swords and his son the Prince Occidental, although almost everything else has its seed in something 'real'. At present I'm very interested in the characters of local hermits - people who were often eccentric, divine or a mixture of both.

2.10.3.

Baart's interview also asks me about a forthcoming release on my label, as split between myself (this time as The Pneumatic Consort) and Johann Wlight (alias **AN**, an experimental/ambient music-maker [REDACTED]). Johann had sent me a piece called *Thee Gold ov a Thousand Mournings* (an alchemical reference, although rendered into pseudo-TOPY-speak). My first listen to the piece was itself a 'magical' experience. **P** had moved to Leeds, to a terrace [REDACTED], which she shared with her brother, and I also came over a few nights a week. I recalled my first listening in an article I later wrote about Johann's music for a zine released by Slooow Tapes:

2.10.3.1.

It wasn't until I received *Thee Gold Ov a Thousand Mournings* that Wlight's sound-world really made sense. I remember the scene vividly. I was between houses and staying at my partner's flat on the top floor of a terrace in Leeds. It was a spring evening and sun was setting. The sky was a luminescent orange which seemed to effuse an intelligible spiritual energy. I decided to play the latest disc I'd received from Johann. It was beautifully packaged - a homemade sleeve of black card with a photocopy of what looks like one of August Stringberg's Celestographs on one side and a type-written label on the other. The sleeve also contained a handmade envelope with a black sunflower seed attached to a piece of holographic card. Perhaps the seed had a symbolic meaning - the black sun is an alchemical symbol occurring in manuscripts of famed *Splendor Solis*.

Listening to *Thee Gold Ov a Thousand Mournings* while the sun set over the golden terraces was a deeply moving experience. The music itself had a sense of profound melancholy diffused through its field recordings, lonely plucked strings and drifting spirit-choirs. Wlight wrote to me that it was "an elegy for lost love and a song of praise to... something else." Certainly as a sonification of the sadness of lost, unattainable, or perhaps even spiritual love, I felt that Wlight's recording was comparable to John Dowland's

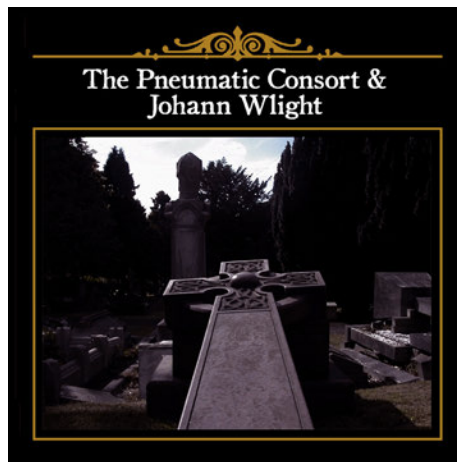
Lachrimae pavans. This was a music of such beauty and nobility that I felt I had to release it in some form, which I did, coupled with recordings I had made in spring that year as The Pneumatic Consort. At this point I hope that it's apparent that this isn't a hype-piece for my own releases, but I must stress that (along with being one of his finest recordings,) *Thee Gold* was the key to unlocking the other works that J.W. had been sending me.

2.10.4.

My parents had been away over the weekend of Beltane (1st May) that year, which had struck me as a perfect time to explore more of the relationship between place, music-making and the esoteric imagination. One particular fascination had been a ritual called 'An Experiment of the Dead', in Reginald Scot's 1584 work *The Discovery of Witchcraft* (transcribed on Joe Peterson's *Twilit Grotto* website). It describes a ritual that begins in a graveyard, at the grave of one newly buried, or else a suicide, or a man doomed to be hung who has promised to become a familiar spirit. The spirit is conjured into a crystal (appearing as a child), and then charged to fetch a fairy called Sibyllia. Once she has been contacted, the magus retires to a 'faire parlour' where he draws a magic circle and further conjures her into visible appearance, in order that she 'give me good counsell at all times, and to come by treasures hidden in the earth, and all other things that is to doo me pleasure, and to fulfill my will, without anie deceit or tarrieng.'

2.10.5.

I was enamoured by the seeming surrealism of the operation of Sibyllia. Why call on a dead spirit first? What was the relationship between fairies and magic in the 16th century? This was an area which had not, at that time, been sufficiently explored, so the spell appeared more an aberration to me than an expression of a more prevalent genre of ritual and vernacular belief. The figure of Sibyllia haunted my imagination, so I decided that I would fuse my interest in magic, music and psychogeography by creating a musical realisation of the rite, improvised with various wind instruments which I had gathered. I began on the eve of Beltane, at a graveyard near [REDACTED] [REDACTED] on the edge of Harrogate: I recalled visiting it one Sunday as a child (I had stolen some glass chips from a grave, and my brother had terrified me by telling me that angry ghosts would visit me that night!). An image from the grave I chose to begin the recording appears on the front cover of the release:



The Pneumatic Consort & Johann Wlight, split CDr (author's work).

2.10.6.

The tracks based on material recorded at the graveyard are 'I: Evening Draws In' and 'II: Away, with Bold Faith and Hearty Desire' (ending with processed church bells). The other tracks, 'III: Hazel Wand', 'IV: Conjuraton', 'V: Shee Will Shew Manie Delusions', 'VI: A Faire Parlour', 'VII: To Hir Honour and Glorie, My Blessed Virgin' were recorded at home on the day following Beltane – in the attic, wherein I had chalked out a circle to perform in over the duration of an evening. In my interview from this time, I mentioned that:

I regard the tracks done 'in the field' as the seeds of the music - perhaps, and this might sound pretentious - but they feel like a sonic reflection of the potential in the places or timings involved, which I then try to tend and cultivate as best I can.

2.10.7.

The act of re-listening to a recording can evoke the particular place in which it was recorded, and this was an important method of working, as already outlined: to listen again, and imagine new sounds, or to lose oneself in improvisation or listening, all with the intention of trying to derive a moment of imaginative rapture or revelation, which I saw as the magical act at the centre of my music-making practice.

2.10.8.

On the day of Beltane proper, **U** and I joined his friend **AO**, [REDACTED], and travelled to Thornborough for the first Beltane gathering, including a ritual led by **AO** as priestess. The gathering was fairly small – perhaps

just over a hundred people – who watched a mystery play with a pantomime horse (inspired by the discovery of horse burials at the nearby Tarmac site), listened to a poem about the Battle of the Beanfield, read by the even organiser Oliver Robinson, and participated in a ritual involving writing a wish on a post-it note and sticking it to a cardboard structure, which was then burned.

2.10.9.

I was approached [REDACTED] to play the Thornborough Free Festival in Masham: a benefit organised to raise awareness of the threatened Thornborough Henges and their allied 'Friends of...' organisation. I managed persuade my friend U to accompany me, and we had a couple of small rehearsals, before driving up to Masham with Andy. I titled the gig 'A Convocation of Saints and Hermits', reflecting my interest in people like John of Howden, and also Job Senior (the 'Hermit of Ilkley Moor') and Richard Rolle (the 'Hermit of Hampole'). The mysterious words on the flyer came from Edmund Bogg's *Two Thousand Miles in Wharfedale* (1904), and are attributed to a recluse called Immanuel Sheldon who attended feasts and fairs speaking in 'scriptural' tongues. A 2005 document entitled *The Stone Grimoire: A Reference to the Work of Xenis Emputae Travelling Band* marked an attempt to begin compiling a dictionary of my manifold inspirations – therein, I note that I attempted to translate Sheldon's words – but using which language I am unsure- and arrived at the following 'meaning' from his utterance: "Nothing is in error or failure. Pray thee to the Lord, for this world of matter is black!"



Flyer for the 2005 XETB performance at Thornborough Free Festival (author's work).

2.10.10.

I had also begun making notes in *The Stone Grimoire* about the significance of the instruments which I played, for example, the brassy sound of the bagpipe chanter made it 'a Solar instrument, to herald the dawn', while I dream I had led me to note that: 'the spirit of the flute is a black woman – the Black Venus.'

[13/11/19]

2.10.11.

I moved back to Leeds in August, to a shared house with P and several of her university friends, and finished my MSc studies the following month. We had the whole top floor of the house, one of a series of large terraces opposite [REDACTED], allowing for a bedroom and an office/music room. My diary indicates that I was still making occasional notes on Dee's *Monad* – a constant thread over the preceding two or three years. An entry from 6th November also notes the termination of my attempts to contact a guardian angel or higher genius:

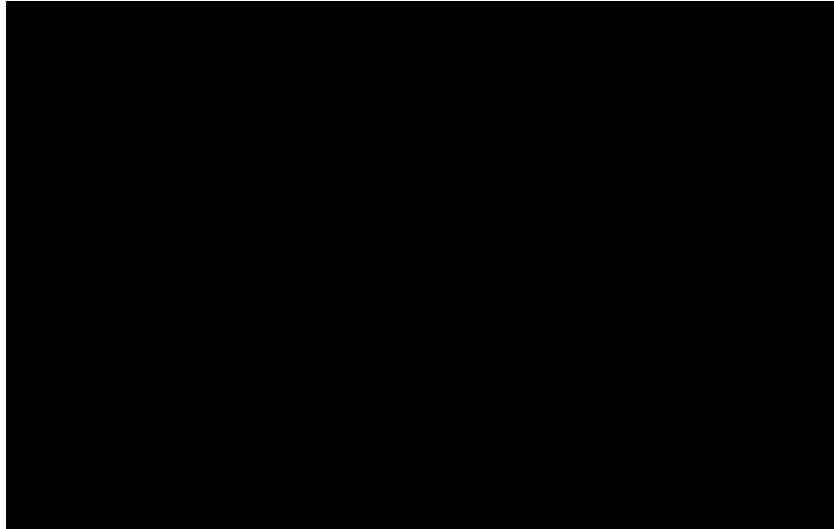
I also have decided to cease my grasping toward divinity – certainly in the manner [that] I have been pursuing it. I should bury the thought – and harvest the germ later, for I am certain that it will bloom.¹⁰⁵

"When you asked for things, I did not show them, and now that I am ready to show them, you no longer seek them" – IHS

2.10.12.

I visited Andy [REDACTED] in late autumn, and we travelled around by car, visiting various areas that he was interested in making recordings for toward his new project, *English Heretic*. The most important of these were Felixstowe beach, Sutton Hoo and Rendlesham Forest. Felixstowe beach was important due to its connection to M. R. James' classic horror story *O Whistle and I'll Come to You*. We noted a variety of 'omens', such as a house on the sea front called 'Thelema', enhancing the atmosphere of psychogeographic serendipity.

¹⁰⁵ 13/11/19 – MEMO – The idea of putting aside, but not entirely giving up on the aim echoes magical discourses on 'lust for results', but it here given added authority with a quote attributed to Jesus following it – one which also alludes to the notions of divine revelation in the *Arbatel*.



Thelema, Felixstowe (Google Street View)

2.10.13.

While the other locations we visited were atmospheric – Rendlesham Forest being the site of a famed UFO encounter, and one which Kenneth Grant had referenced in his fiction work *Against the Light* (1999), it was Felixstowe that made the biggest impression on me. Upon returning, I wrote a reflective account of the experience of making music on the beach:

2.10.13.1.

I was standing on the beach at Felixstowe, which was visited as part of a recording project with an acquaintance. This site was chosen due to its connection with the M.R. James story *Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad*, in which a holidaying professor finds a cursed whistle buried in the ruined foundations of an ancient structure on the beach.

After exploring the site and making some preliminary recordings we walk out as far as the tide permits. Both tide and sun are low and I was able to make out some stones a short way out to sea. These are the remains of the ancient Roman sea-fort of Walton Castle, upon which, along with the rumours of a similarly submerged Benedictine Priory. James based his Templar preceptory [on this location], where his protagonist discovers the whistle.

I stood, looking out to the ruin. After collecting my thoughts and stilling my mind I began to play my flute. I let the notes come as they will until a musical framework has established itself – this may be, for example, a common

thematic melody, a tonality or set of pitches to use, the notion of certain 'home' notes, and so forth.

Once these patterns have established themselves I am free to mentally wander. As I played my mind was drawn out to sea. I followed the wall of the fort until completely submerged, whereupon I sensed the genius loci in the heavy salt-water darkness. I beheld also – at an indeterminate range, sometimes near and sometimes far – the sunken ruins of the ancient priory, as if it were a beacon in the darkness. Seaweed thrived amongst the fallen stones and the place. As the waves crashed a procession of images rapidly came to mind, amongst them: the priory – a disappointingly small structure, beheld the landscape at sunset from a first-floor window. Four figures there were reading, eight were visible outside engaged in some kind of agricultural work; the fort - there is a raven on the beach. A member of the Roman army watches it while polishing a ring he wears – the gem is inscribed with the bull-head of Mithras. A whistle hangs about his neck – it looks unwieldy by modern standards, but must have admirably cut-through the din of battle.¹⁰⁶

2.10.14.

The inspiration for this approach, akin to a form of mental 'time travel' was a reference Andy made in our correspondence to Robert Graves' 'analeptic' method of research, which Graves described as "the intuitive recovery of forgotten events by a deliberate suspension of time."



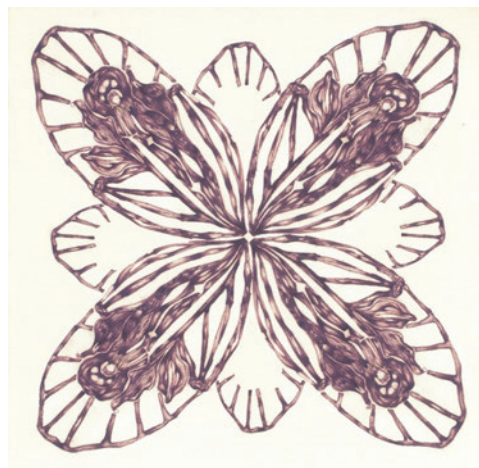
Improvising at Sutton Hoo, 2005 (author's photograph).

¹⁰⁶ 13/11/19 – MEMO – Locate other accounts of my music-making and use them as event narrative analyses.

2.11. Goat Willow & A Prism for Annwn

2.11.1.

During the late summer, I recorded *Goat Willow*, which was took lyrical inspiration from the entry about willows in a book on the folklore of plants and trees that I had purchased while visiting the Lost Gardens of Heligan on holiday in the summer. The title itself came from an obscure Hawkwind album track, which is an uncharacteristically beautiful piece of pastoral ambient music, just over 90 seconds long, on the second side of their *Hall of the Mountain King*. The actual lyrics to the piece derive from a scrap of folklore in the aforementioned book, about the sinister nature of willow, oak and elm. *Goat Willow* was released late in December 2005, on the Barl Fire label, with cover art by [REDACTED]



Goat Willow, 2005 (Barl Fire Recordings).

2.11.2.

The intention for *Goat Willow* was to make an entirely acoustic recording, without recourse to electronic instruments. It is likely that the experience of working as a copyist for **AJ** made me turn toward small acoustic ensembles in imitation of classical ensembles such as the string quartet. Obviously, the Pneumatic Consort had been intended in a similar vein: a consort being the name for an ensemble of instruments from the same family, 'pneumatic' referring to *pneuma*, or breath. I had also begun to explore developing further music-theoretical approaches to some of my music, inspired by my work with **AJ**, and had become interested in Arvo Pärt's 'tintinnabuli' method of composition, which was to be a major influence on the album I was working on over the autumn: *A Prism for Annwn*.

[20/11/19]

2.11.3.

The most telling inspiration from Pärt on *A Prism for Annwn* is on the track 'Caer Color', which borrows the descending scale motif from Pärt's *Cantus In Memoriam Benjamin Britten* (1977) to underpin its recorder improvisations. Thematically, the album fuses together many of my objects of fascination: I declared it part of an 'optical' trilogy, comprising *A Selenographic Lens*, *The Pyrognomic Glass* and *A Prism for Annwn*. The interest in optics came from my readings of the *Hieroglyphic Monad*, particularly Dee's prefatory *Letter to Maximillian* in which he outlines the value of the Monad to all the major branches of arts and science. While living in my first flat in Leeds, circa 2002, I had also asked one of my older friendship group in Harrogate to photocopy a translation of John Dee's astronomical treatise *Propaedeumata Aphoristica* (1558), since she [REDACTED] [REDACTED] had access to the text, which I also discovered, upon reading, had an optical bent in its discussions of using lenses to more accurately focus the stellar rays when constructing magical talismans. The idea that optical devices could have some relation to occult worlds was obviously an enduring fascination for me: I had been interested in both scrying and talismanic magic, and now these interests fused with optics, although the seeds for this interest were older. In a 2006 interview, I note that:

2.11.3.1.

A Prism for Annwn comes from reading an old spiritualist book by Arthur Findlay in which there is a diagram of the electromagnetic spectrum containing within it not only visible light, x-rays and the like but also the invisible 'spirit' world. It amused me to conceive of a prism that would not only divide the spectrum of visible light, but also somehow bring an invisible, parallel reality into focus...

2.11.4.

The book being referred to is *On the Edge of the Etheric* (1932), a spiritualist work which I had found in 1997 in a bookshop at Robin Hood's Bay, during a time when I was desperate to lay my hands on anything 'occult'. The book had also introduced the term 'etheric' to me, which appears throughout much of my early work (e.g. *New Etheric Muse*; defining my music as 'psychogeographic ether-folk').

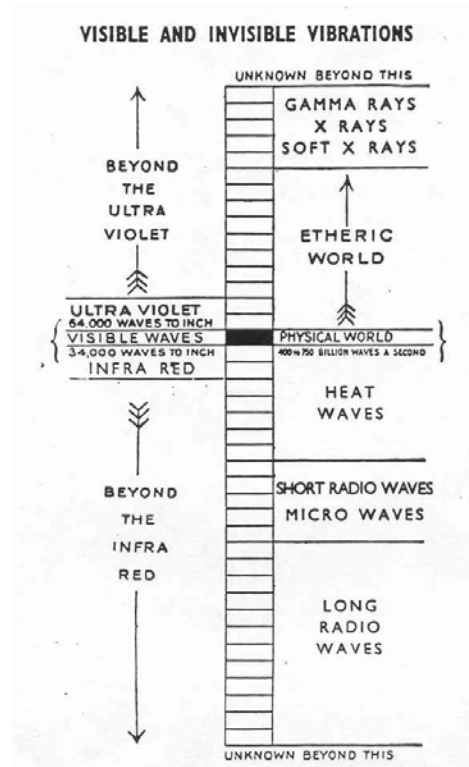


Diagram produced as a frontispiece to Findlay's *On the Edge of the Etheric* (1932).

2.11.5.

The title of the album alludes to the poetic idea that a prism might be used to reveal a domain of spiritual creatures: dwellers in Annwn, the Celtic underworld. I had read, around 2002, Emma Wilby's book *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits*, which emphasised the continuation of Anglo-Saxon and pagan ideas about the underworld even in the early modern period, primarily through folklore concerning fairies. Reading poems like *The Spoils of Annwn* (*Preiddeu Annwn*), and discovering the medieval Anglicised version of the Orpheus myth, *Sir Orfeo*, also contributed to my obsession with the fairy realm potentially beneath our feet, hidden away in caves and burial mounds. Finally, the presence of saints and hermits is also palpable on the recording: one track borrows a Welsh title from the *Preiddeu Annwn*: 'Bet Sant yn Diuant abet Allawr', which my translation was rendered as "How many saints in the void and how many on earth?" Finally, saints and hermits are also alluded to in the final track, 'Lord Jesus when I Think of Thee', which is an improvisatory interpretation of a hymn by Richard Rolle, a medieval mystic who live in Hampole (South Yorkshire). I had discovered Rolle owing to his use of musical analogies when discussing mystical experience. Geographically, the album is situated in Wharfedale and inspired by my walking around the area: 'Bet Sant' became very much identified with the cairns at the top of Simon's Seat, which I fantasised had been set over the

bones of saints, and whose toponym seemed magical owing to the observations of 19th century neo-antiquarians who associated it with Simon Magus, and thus druidry.¹⁰⁷



View from the top of Simon's Seat, ca. 2004 (author's work).

2.11.6.

Since moving back to Leeds I had also joined Phil Todd's group Ashtray Navigations. Phil had previously released *The Pyrognomic Glass*, and we had traded many of the releases on our respective labels. I joined, playing guitar and oscillator. We usually had a couple of practices in his basement before each gig – the lineup being Phil Todd, Melanie Ó Dubhslaine and myself. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The first performance with Ashtray Navigations was in the upstairs room of the Cardigan Arms, supporting with Mick Flower, a recording of

¹⁰⁷ 20/11/19 – MEMO – Key themes throughout my work are therefore likely to be: Hermeticism (Hieroglyphic Monad, alchemy, astrology); Spiritism (encounters with spirits, other worlds and underworlds [e.g. Arbatel, Sibylla, Annwn]); Mysticism and hermitude (Richard Rolle, Job Senior, John of Howden). These are also projected onto and explored through geographical situations (often referenced in the track titles). Dialectically, consider the roles of the sacred and profane, especially in terms of spiritism (encounters unmediated by spiritual authority of the church, often involving heterodox beliefs) versus mysticism and hermitude (visions occurring within religious institutions and mediated through the orthodoxies of such) – which also relate to discourses on revealed knowledge. There is also a question of aesthetic interpretations: how did I use photography and other media? And semiotics: what did the symbol of the hermit mean to me?

which was issued as *Cante Jodido Lookalike Contest* on the First Person label in 2006.

2.11.7.

In 2006 I played my first European gig, joining Ashtray Navigations to play at Instants Chavires in Paris, supporting Mick Flower and Chris Corsano, and the noise artist Fred Nipi. In February, Xenis Emputae Travelling Band played a rare gig in Leeds, supporting Larkin Grimm, and Lanterns (a local drone/improv group comprised of two local friends: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]). This version of XETB was a duo of Phil Todd and myself.



Ashtray Navigations in Paris, January 2006 (L-R: Phil Legard, Mel Ó Dubhslaine, Phil Todd; author's photograph).



Performing as XETB at Holy Trinity Church, Boar Lane, Leeds. 11 March 2006, with Phil Todd (author's photograph).

2.11.8.

Having finished *A Prism for Annwn*, which I had sent to the Belgian label Audiobot, I spent the winter recording new Pneumatic Consort material, as well as working on an album for 23 Productions, a label run by Clay Ruby, whose 'free-folk' band Davenport I had become a fan of via a Yahoo mailing list for 'outsider folk' called *Routes for War and Travel* (- Ruby would later go on to perform as the explicitly occultural Burial Hex).

2.11.9.

Around this time, I was contacted by a composer called Richard Moul, who had begun collaborating with United Bible Studies. He was very enthusiastic about my music, suggesting that we should try and find funding to build a real 'Chapel of Infinite Echo' (referencing the final track on my Deserted Village release, *The Hieroglyphic Mountain*). Shortly after receiving Richard's email, another contact messaged me to say he had also been contacted, and that I should be wary, since Moul had – under the *nom de guerre* Christos Beest – been associated with the Order of Nine Angles, an amorphous satanic group closely tied to neo-fascist organising during the 80s and 90s. I had read some of their documents, including their tracts on 'culling' (human sacrifice) and their Mass of Heresy (dedicated to Adolf Hitler) and thought their writings were pretty juvenile: not 'true' esotericism, although they were – even in the early 2000s – very easy to access online. I decided to keep Richard at a distance, and not to get involved in collaborating with him, [REDACTED]

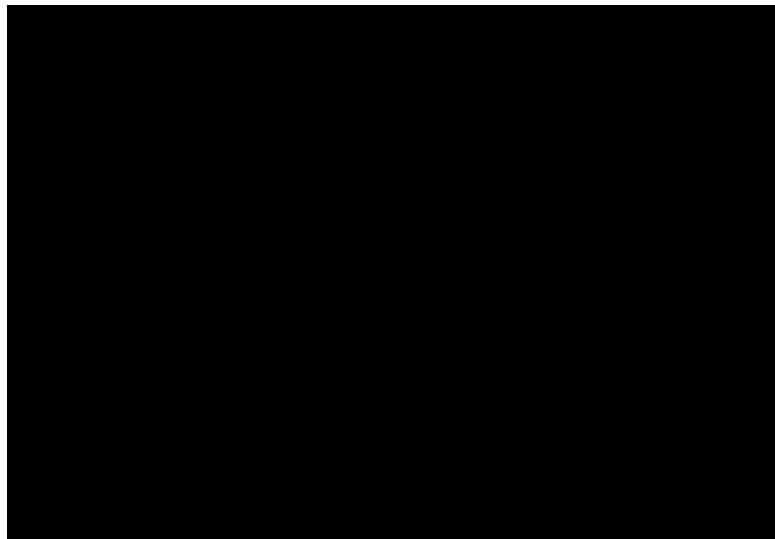
[REDACTED] I would also be contacted this year by Martin Locker, who asked me to send some CDs to an online shop called Integral Tradition Publishing, which distributed Traditionalist art and literature. Although I was ignorant at the time of the close links between Traditionalism and fascism (in the work of Julius Evola, for example), there was something which made me uneasy about the site, and I did not take up the offer.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Locker would later, 2015, become editor in chief for the rightwing publisher Arkos. 20/11/19 – MEMO – Traditionalism will become a thread in my own work, but of a 'soft' kind (to use Mark Sedgwick's distinction), through my interest in the work of Kathleen Raine, and its presence in my work should be considered a topic for discursive analysis.

2.12. Stella & Astrophel, Heard Gripe Hrusan

2.12.1.

On the 18th of April I played a show in Athens, at The Small Music Theatre, which was part of a series of concerts organised around Current 93's performance in the city in June. I had begun working on a series of montaged images, which I called 'travels': the idea being to collapse a variety of views of a place into a single, mandala-like image, and I used this idea to create a video to accompany my performance, giving the audience a sense of the landscapes which inspired the music. I also made a backing track, since my performance was solo. I spent my time in Athens looking at the ancient temples, Parthenon, Necropolis, and Hill of the Muses.



Performing at Small Music Theatre, Athens (photo: Ioanna Zacharopoulou).



'Travels' montages: Sutton Hoo & Kirklington Church (author's work).

2.12.2.

The 'travels' concept would define the visual style for many of my 2006 releases, starting with *Stella and Astrophel*, which was a specially recorded CDr for sale at the Athens show. Once again, the themes reflect alchemy: the opening track, 'Voarchadumia', borrows the title of a work on alchemy and metallurgy that inspired Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica*. 'Allogenes' refers to a character I had discovered while reading about Gnosticism, who became semi-divine and ascended to encounter the unknowable God.¹⁰⁹ The final tracks are 'Stella' and 'Astrophel', returning to reference Sidney's poetic work that had inspired tracks on *New Etheric Muse*. The first of these uses a simple chord sequence, figured in different ways, in part inspired by my studies of music theory necessitated by my work for **AJ**.



Cover of *Stella & Astrophel* (2006, author's work).

2.12.3.

Heard Gripe Hrusan was released in May, on Clay Ruby's 23 Productions label, the title meaning 'the hard grip of the earth', which was drawn from the Anglo-Saxon poem *The Ruin*. Poetry had begun to play an important part in my 'occultural' world, having discovered the work of Kathleen Raine after I had to edit a song-cycle which **AJ** had composed around some of her poems. To find that she had been a Neoplatonist made me keen to explore her work, and her idea that the purpose of art was to evoke divine power impressed me, and I saw in her poetry similar ideas to

¹⁰⁹ 21/11/19 – MEMO – The discourse of divinisation is common in Hermetic and gnostic works... although perhaps I was more interested in the 'trip' itself, and analogies between 'going out of the body' and 'losing oneself in the music'?

mine about divining something numinous within the landscape. I had evidently read her poem 'Once Upon Earth They Stood...' from the cycle *Dreams* at this point, since I announced that I would also be recording a XETB album called 'Grotto Grove and Shrine' in March 2007. Raine's poem seemed to reflect some of the strangely pagan-Christian aesthetics that I was exploring – although she used the idea of landscape allegorically here, to my mind the phrase 'gone under the hill' suggested the burial mound, a traditional entrance to the fairy kingdom, which I had begun to associate with dreams and altered states of consciousness induced through listening to, and making, music:

From grotto grove and shrine
Saints from their icons fade,
Their presences withdrawn;
Meanings from words are dead,
The springs gone under the hill.

Inviolate in dream
The mysteries still shown,
The dead are living still;
But bring them back none may
Who wakes into this day.

(Raine 1971)

2.12.4.

Heard Gripe Hrusan itself is something of a compilation of bits and pieces. The opening track, 'Oratio Prima (Calor, Dulcor, Candor)' was improvised on dulcimer with the words for the first oration of the *Liber Juratus*, which was a medieval grimoire describing a ritual for a vision of God, which also confers magical powers on the seer. *Liber Juratus* was one of the first texts published on Joe Peterson's *Esoteric Archives* website, and as such, was one I had read and puzzled over many times in the preceding seven or eight years. In 2001 I had proposed to a project called *Ye Celestyall Palace: The Psalter of Hocroel*, which would attempt to set all 75 orations to music with organ and theremin, although this was incredibly ambitious and beyond my musical ability at the time. However, I had revisited the idea while living with my parents and working on my MSc, and recorded a few tentative improvisations based on the flow of the words in the texts. 'Oratio Prima' was the first of these – complemented with the subtitle '(Calor, Dulcor, Canor)' from the work of Richard

Rolle, and which refer to heat, sweetness and melody, which he used to describe the three stages of mystical experience. Mental imagery informs a couple of the tracks, such as 'An Awakening', a 12-minute track, which breaks in its last three minutes into a guitar and violin raga, and seemed to suggest a brilliant dawning sun, or an awakening into a new life (akin to the mystical experiences of Rolle). The idea of the muse, divine or otherwise, also returns on the two tracks following 'An Awakening': 'Yellow Lady' is a small piece played on banjo, inspired by baroque guitar music, and when listening to it I was transposed back to the Beltane festival the in 2005 and the memory of a woman, around my age, dressed in yellow, walking along the banks of the monument, who I had thought to be extremely beautiful. The track which follows, 'Chambers of the East' is a gentle meditation, which borrows its title from William Blake's *To the Muses*, which, like Raine's 'Once Upon Earth They Stood...' seems to lament the passing of an inspirational, spiritual force from the world:

Whether on Ida's shady brow,
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceas'd;

Whether in Heav'n ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air,
Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea
Wand'ring in many a coral grove,
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry!

How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoy'd in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move!
The sound is forc'd, the notes are few!

[4/12/19]

2.12.5.

'Master of the Wheel' reflects my developing interest in the music of the spheres and 'speculative music', the title being inspired by medieval cosmological diagrams, showing Christ situated above the empyrean and sphere of the *primum mobile*.



Detail from National Library of France Manuscript French 14964, f. 117.

2.12.6.

Inspirations from place also feature: 'Elmias' references Almscliffe Crag, while 'Lichen Virgin' – although a jokey reference to Madonna's 'Like a Virgin' took musical inspiration from a trip to the ruined medieval church at Wharram Percy, which I drove to one afternoon with **P**'s brother. The title came from a 'travels' image I made by compositing various photographs of the location, which seemed to suggest to me the face of a green Madonna framed within the centre of the image.



Detail from the Wharram Percy 'travels' image, 2006 (author's work).

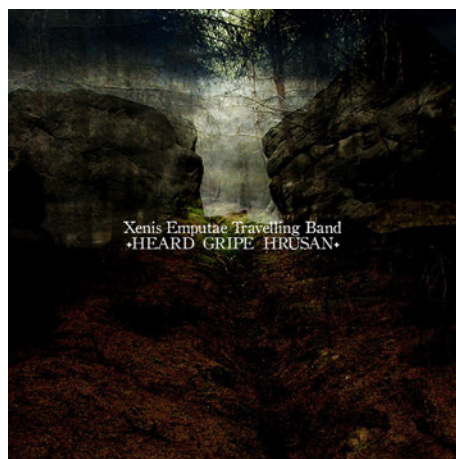


Photographs from Wharram Percy, 2005 (author's work).

2.12.7.

It was undoubtedly the correspondence between the ruined church at Wharram Percy, and the Anglo-Saxon poem 'The Ruin', which describes an abandoned Roman ruin, which inspired the use of the phrase 'Heard Gripe Hrusan' for the album title. The cover art incorporated two 'travels' images – one from Sutton Hoo on the reverse, and on the front an image composited from the journey between Almscliffe and Little Almscliffe, which I had walked with two musicians from Canada who visited me, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] They had planned a UK tour, including a Leeds gig, and had been keen to meet up, since they had written positively about my music on their own blog. In the event, I took them to both Almcliffe/Little Almscliffe and Troller's Gill over two days of walking.



Cover of Heard Gripe Hrusan (2006, author's work)

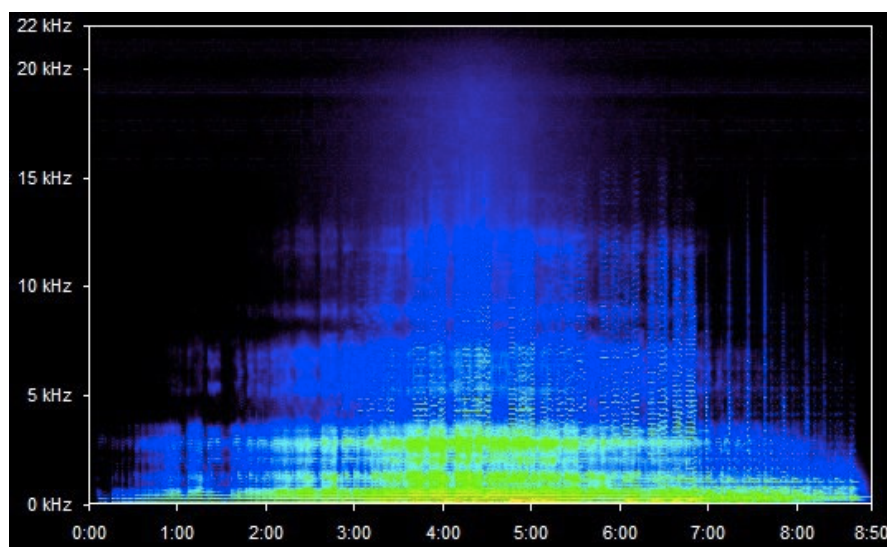
2.13. Split with Jani Hellén

2.13.1.

Over the rest of the spring, I worked on a new split release with my friend Jani Hellén. We had online met in the early 2000s via Soulseek. He had actually downloaded much of my own music, which I also had shared, and we often corresponded while logged onto the site. During 2005 I had contributed some guest vocals to his project Sonic Temple Assassins, and since then he had also been recording music under his own name, sending me 20-minute synthesiser piece called 'Paluu Vasempaan Kammloon' (Return to the Left Chamber – a mystical reference to the cardiovascular system). He told me that the piece had been inspired by a composition by the mystical minimalist composer Peter Michael Hamel, whose work I had also recently discovered by chance, owing to a copy of his *Through Music to the Self*, which I found on **AJ**'s bookshelves, and which introduced me to the concept of singing vowels as a form of musical meditation (later to play an important role in my music).

2.13.2.

For my own part, the pieces I contributed to our split release were more conceptually composed than improvised. 'Water Invocation' is based around the name of one of Trithemius' *Steganographia* spirits, Hydriel. The name is broken into its three syllables, and chanted. Overlapping and delayed instances of the chant peak half-way, creating a fountain-like image when viewed as a linear spectrograph:



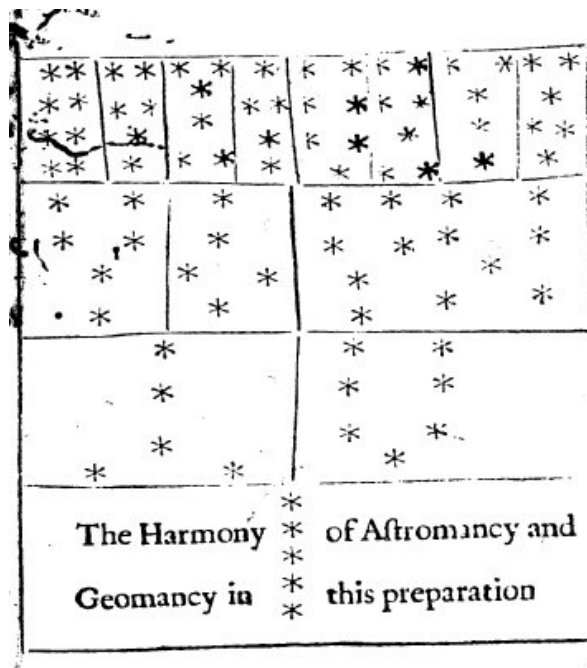
Sonogram of Water Invocation (author's work).

2.13.3.

The second piece, 'Horizon of Eternity' explicitly references a diagram from Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica*, but is itself composed from a geomantic chart, which I discovered in a book called *The Roscie Crucian Secrets of John Dee*, which transcribes a manuscript attributed to Dee (but in reality, pirated from the works of 17th century geomancer and lawyer John Heydon). I had begun to use a piece of software called Symbolic Composer, which **AJ** had helped to develop, and 'Horizon of Eternity' was to be my first successful composition and score realised with the system.

2.13.4.

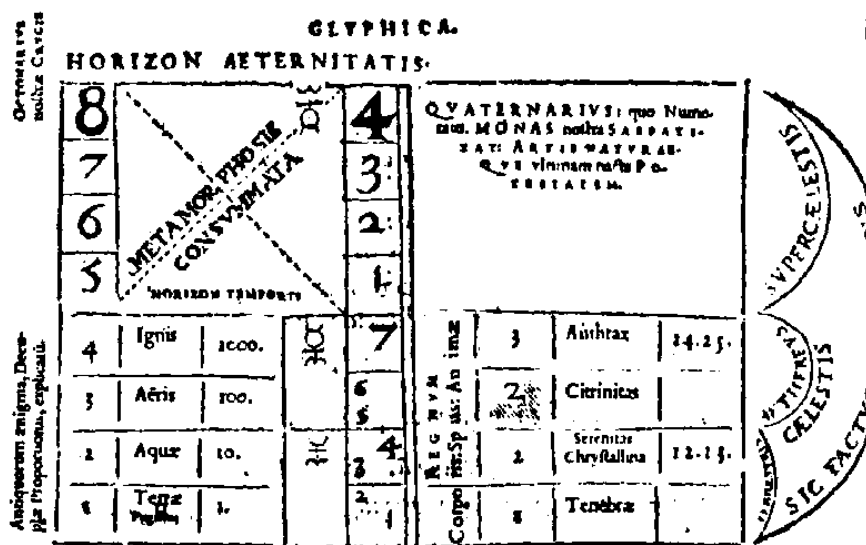
The geomantic chart found *the Rosie Crucian Secrets* is presented in Heydon's *Elhavareuna, of The English Physitians Tutor* (1665) in the following form:



Geomantic chart from Heydon's *Elhavareuna* (1665).

2.13.5.

I used Symbolic Composer to generate sixteen musical fragments, one for each geomantic figure. The fragments were then mapped onto the chart – in inverse order, so that the final figure (----) is at the top. This figure is played sixteen times, followed by the next two (=---, -==) played eight times, and so on. The result, recorded with flutes and bowed guitar, seemed to suggest a timeless or static space, as suggested by Dee's use of the phrase 'Horizon of Eternity'.



'Horizon Aeternitatis' diagram from Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica* (1564).

Horizon of Eternity

Phil Legard

for any number of instruments
tempo as slow as possible
staves can be interpreted as tenor or bass
an equal number of instruments should play each staff
use a single dynamic for each system
repeat coda as necessary

Coda

Score for Horizon of Eternity (author's work).

2.13.6.

The final track, 'Gastan' is a keyboard, accordion and flute piece, with a church-like atmosphere, and I felt it something of a companion to 'Chwylfeian and the Projection of John', evoking the same sacred space and sense of cold winter sunlight through stained glass windows. The title means 'ghost', alluding to the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁰

[15/01/20]

2.13.7.

Over the winter of 2006, I had been approached by Jeffrey Kupperman, who ran a website called Journal of the Western Mystery Tradition. He was about to publish an edition of the *Tuba Veneris* on the site, translated by an American academic called Teresa Burns, with a commentary by her and her partner, J. Allan Moore, who studied alchemy and practiced ritual magic. Given that there was little online about the book at the time, my name came up high in Google searches based on a post I had made on the subject on a Yahoo mailing list I ran called [ritual-magick]. Jeffrey invited me to develop my work into a supplementary essay, published as an appendix to Teresa and Alan's essay.¹¹¹

2.13.8.

The edition of *Tuba Veneris* was published in the Vernal Equinox edition of JWMT (March 2007). Almost immediately afterward, John Coughlin, who ran a small publisher called Waning Moon Press got in touch. He was interested in producing a fine edition of the *Tuba Veneris*, based on Teresa and Alan's work, and wished to include an extended version of my essay.

2.13.9.

Of course, I also knew that Robert Turner, of the Order of the Cubic Stone, had intended to publish his own edition. Given that **M**, a member of the Order of the Cubic Stone, had originally introduced me to the text, I felt that I should notify Turner and see if we could reach some mutual agreement, wherein our edition would not damage the chances of his version selling. **N**, who **M** had conducted the ritual with, was able to provide me with his phone number. The phone was answered by [REDACTED]

¹¹⁰ MEMO – 4/12/19 – The role of 'spiritism' in my music should be discussed. There are not only 'encounters' with spirits (such as the King of Swords, Landless Lord etc), but a changing role of the illuminating spirit: from the guardian genius I sought to contact in the early 2000s, to the idea of muses, genius loci, and Holy Spirit.

¹¹¹ Legard, Phil. 2007. 'Some Brief Thoughts on John Dee's *Tuba Veneris*', *Journal of the Western Mystery Tradition*. Online at: <http://www.jwmt.org/v2n12/appendix1.html> [Accessed 4/12/19]

2.14. Grotto Grove and Shrine

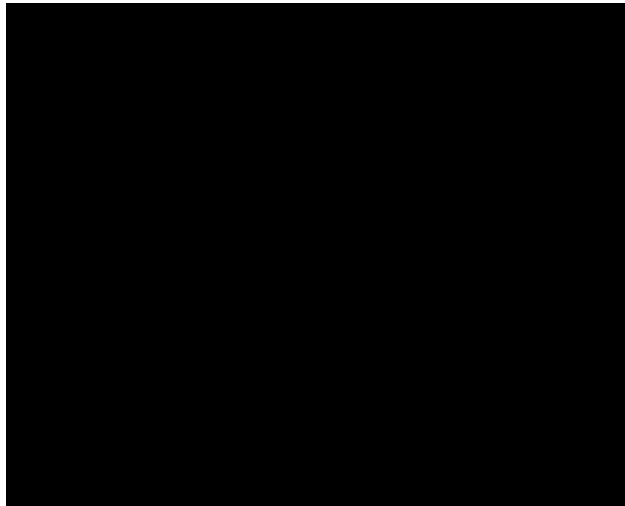
2.14.1.

Following a gig with Ashtray Navigations at the Red Rose in London, on which we shared a bill with **Migraine**, now playing under a new moniker, **P** and I moved into a new shared house. Two of our previous housemates had been unsure whether they were going to stay in Leeds, so we were late to the yearly round of house-hunting, leaving us with limited options. We ended up in a house owned by our previous landlord's brother, which was in a terrible state of disrepair. In an effort to spend as little time there as possible, I made more frequent trips to Ilkley Moor to record music, which would end up becoming the Pneumatic Consort album *Grotto Grove and Shrine*, which I worked on over the autumn and winter alongside a new XETB album called *Gamaaea*, ultimately releasing in April 2007.

2.14.2.

I wrote about some of my experiences recording this album in a recent essay for Folk Horror Revival's *Harvest Hymns* book:

I had been visiting the moor often and recording there since the winter of 2002, and had got to know the area fairly well – although I was often unnerved by the way the landscape (or it's genii) could often lead one astray to unexpected places. On this particular day, the moors were being battered by quite heavy winds and as wandered up the footpath, toward a curious wooded hill not far beyond White Wells. Entering the small wood, I beheld a large boulder, flanked by numerous smaller, but still substantial, rocks. The boulder's upper surface was covered in complex cup and ring markings. Having never actively read about the rock art of the moor – favouring the opportunities for surprise and serendipity – I felt like I was the first person to discover this place. I could imagine this place, before the wood had grown there: stark and bare, winds whistling over the boulder overlooking the fields and valleys below.



Markings on the 'altar stone' at Willy Hall's Wood, Ilkley.

I sat down on a rock at the edge of the wood, took out my recording equipment, my tin whistle and Asian flutes, set the tape running and waited. I lay my folded hands over the whistle on my lap, and started to still my thoughts. I have always felt that there is an appropriate time to begin playing, and when this came, I lifted the instrument to my lips and began to improvise. Wind instruments have always been my preference, due to the effect they have on the breath and, as a consequence, the psyche: in this case, I alternated long intakes and expulsions, as well as using over-breathing and hyperventilation in my playing. I began to feel a change of consciousness: a disassociation from the body, and a sense that my mind was somehow 'sinking': being drawn downward, or, perhaps, inward. This sense of an altered state persisted some time after I had concluded my improvisation and I decided to lie down on ground and pursue the sensation. As I did so, with eyes closed, I was seized by the strong sense that I was entering an underworld domain – descending through a passage in the earth into some ancient place. A sense of some sort of dread or sinister force shivered through me, but was almost immediately replaced by one of warmth, homecoming or comfort. While I lay in the wind-blasted copse, I felt a great sense of warmth and contentment – a communion with the underworld and the resurgence of its ancient spring of visionary mystery. To listen to the music, which became the title track of the *Grotto Grove and Shrine* album, is to once again re-experience and deepen my relationship with the event.

[...] The final track on *Grotto Grove and Shrine*, entitled *The Liminal Messenger*, was recorded at the head of one of the streams which runs down

the moor. During the process I developed a profound 'sense of presence', which grew as I played. It felt as though someone was standing behind me, and I could sense a tall, sombre figure, enfolded in what can only be described as dark, abstract scraps of material that seemed suspended around its body. The closest visual analogy that comes to mind is Jacek Malczewski's otherworldly painting *Thanatos I* (1898) [- an image I had been introduced to by English Heretic], particularly in terms of its dark serenity. As the sun set, I played for this figure, then hastened to civilization, not looking back, shaken, but invigorated by the sense of encounter.



Recording at Willy Hall's Wood, Ilkley Moor (author's photograph).

2.14.3.

The other tracks on the album reflect a variety of esoteric preoccupations. There are several harmonium-led tracks called 'Field Prayer', inspired by an Anglo-Saxon ritual to bless fields and make them fertile, which invokes the angel 'Panchiel' who seems to rule over the reproduction of seeds. There is a composition called 'Hocroel', which is named after the angel who revealed *Liber Juratus*, a book which had inspired various earlier compositions such as 'Oratio Prima' on *Heard Gripe Hrusan*. As with 'Horizon of Eternity', 'Hocroel' had a written score and was played on a variety of woodwind instruments.

Slow and spiritual. The tempi in all parts may fluctuate smoothly and independently.
Repeat the score an even number of times, ending at H

I repeat ad lib.

II From near silence, never exceeding *p*

III repeat ad lib.

8

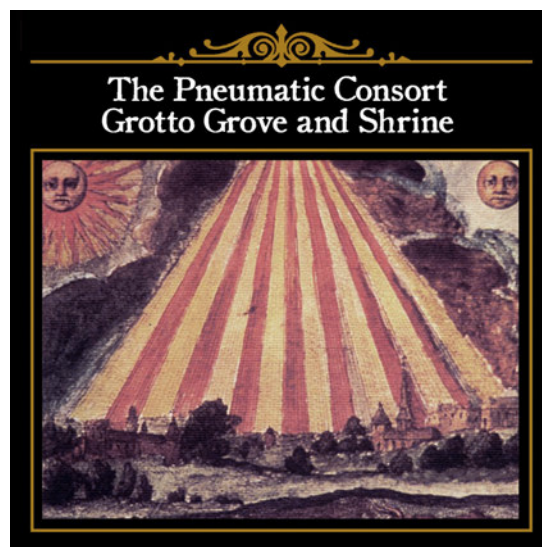
17

26

Score for 'Hocroel' (author's work).

2.14.4.

Once again, a piece was also dedicated to Sibyllia, while the track 'IAO' was a multi-tracked improvisation using vowels. Wordless singing had often played a part in my music, but encountering Peter Michael Hamel's writing on 'vowel singing' had a major influence on me – especially its aesthetic relation to the strings of vowels found in the Greco-Egyptian Magical Papyri and Gnostic spells for ascendance. The cover of the album borrows an image from the alchemical book *Mutus Liber* (The Silent Book), which depicts dew falling upon the fields.



Cover of Grotto Grove and Shrine (author's work).

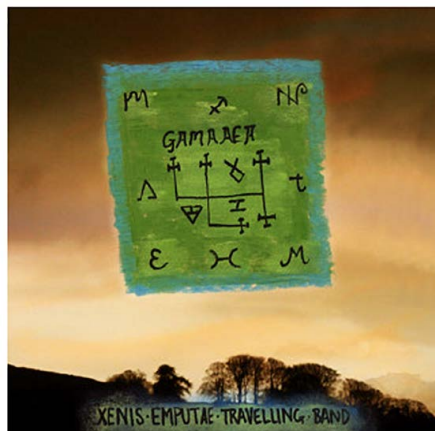
2.14.5.

My final musical commitment of 2006 was to play as part of Ashtray Navigations at the Thurston Moore-curated All Tomorrow's Parties festival at Butlins, Minehead. Unfortunately we only had accommodation for one night, after which our chalet was to be given to The Melvins, so I ended up crashing on the floor of a chalet hired by a group of friends from Leeds. Upon returning from the festival, aching and hung-over, P [REDACTED] told me that she was pregnant – with twins, it transpired.



With Phil Todd (Ashtray Navigations), All Tomorrows Parties 2007 (unknown photographer).

2.15. Gamaaea



Cover from the digital re-release of Gamaaea (2007/2012, author's work).

2.15.1.

In February 2007, *Gamaaea* was released on tape by a Denmark-based label called Beyond Repair. The title of the album comes from the letter to Maximillian II, which John Dee prefaced his *Hieroglyphic Monad*:

When this Gamaaea has (by God's will) been concluded (which word to the Parisians, I have interpreted as [Gr: *Tes gamēs aīan*], i.e. as the earth of marriage, or as the terrestrial sign of a union performed in the realm of astral influences, the monad can no longer be fed or watered on its native soil, until the fourth, great, and truly metaphysical revolution be completed. (Josten 1964a: 135-7)

2.15.2.

The word also occurred in the writings of Paracelsus, more explicitly described as a talisman. I also connected it to the word 'cameo' – as in a carved gem:

The magus can transport many meadows of heaven into a small pebble, which we call 'Gamaheu' or 'Imago', or 'Character'. For these are containers in which the magus keeps sidereal forces and virtues in a box. (Paracelsus, *Astronomia Magna oder die Gantze Philosophia Sagax*, 1603)

2.15.3.

The influence of solitary Christian mystics also hangs over the work – the opening track 'Sing Holy Song' was my attempt at a hymn, and I also sang Richard Rolle's hymn 'Blyssed be Thu Kynge' on the second side of the album. The final track 'Audime' is also a sort of prayer, based on the Latin phrase 'audie me' (hear me). One track was also entitled 'Wraecca' – an Anglo-Saxon word for a stranger or exile, no doubt reflecting something of my feelings with regard to modernity.¹¹²

2.15.4.

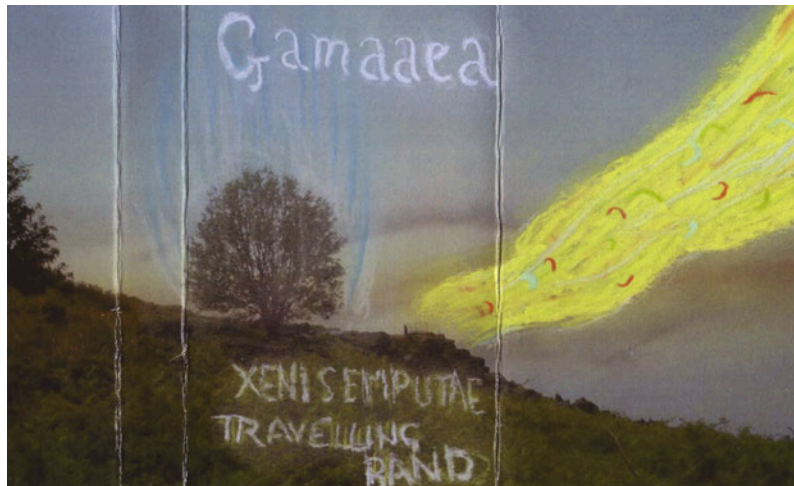
There is also a track called 'Dance of the Landless Lord', which was recorded before I knew **P** was pregnant. However, given that I had associated the Landless Lord

¹¹² MEMO – 8/1/20 – Although not a 'hard traditionalist' and critical of the racial and xenophobic implications of 'tradition', I might do well to assess discourses of elitism and 'otherness' (e.g. the occultist often feels they live in the wrong time, and magical practice also encourages separation and insularity).

previously with finding employment with **AJ** and upheavals in life, I also retrospectively associated his 'appearance' with the next life-changing event that would be having children.

2.15.5.

Gamaaea actually had several different covers – one, shown above, depicts my own conception of a talisman for Abital, the genius of the evening dew. Others used photography and pastels to depict 'energies' found in the landscape, as in this photograph taken beneath the Swastika stone on Ilkley Moor, and influenced by the clairvoyant depictions of music in C. W. Leadbeater and Annie Besant's *Thought-Forms* (1901):



One of the alternative covers for the cassette release of *Gamaaea* (2007, author's work).



The music of Mendelssohn as illustrated in Leadbeater & Besant's *Thought-Forms* (1901).

2.15.6.

I felt I was becoming a little depressed by the prospect of having children arriving later in the year, with hardly any money or suitable housing situation. Furthermore, on the 7th of March, a friend of ours, **W**, was found dead in her flat [REDACTED]. Later in the month, I travelled with Ashtray Navigations to Paris once again, to play a gig with the experimental rock band Major Stars. This was a brief period of liberation from worrying about money, housing and children. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Performing with Ashtray Navigations at Instants Chavires, Paris, 2007 (unknown photographer).

2.16. The Crooked Pool

2.16.1.

In April I began a blog called *Tintinnalogia* – a reference to a 17th century manual of bell-ringing whose existence I had discovered while reading about the work of Arvo Part, who named his own compositional style *tintinnabuli*, owing to its evocation of chiming bells. Much of the blog is dedicated to ‘speculative music’ – e.g. the

harmony of the spheres, discographies from books about spiritual music, and attempting to discover aspects of 'drone music' within the repertoire of early music, and – of course – writing about dew and alchemy. I'd also begun to produce linocuts, some of which have already been used to illustrate this text.

2.16.2.

P came with me to the Thornborough Beltane festival this year, where the 'mystery play' was about the death and resurrection of Herne at the hands of the Green Man. George Chaplin, tireless campaigner for the henges, had set up his own 'sonic henge' of speakers playing standing waves which interacted with one another to create a unique sonic environment.



A neo-shaman drumming within George Chaplin's Sonic Henge (author's photograph).



Ritual at Thornborough, 2007 (author's photograph).

2.16.3.

Early in July we moved into a new flat, which was the attic conversion of a large house. Our landlords, [REDACTED], lived on the ground and first floors. On the 15th of July, we met up inside George's sonic henge once again, which had been relocated to Limetree Farm, near Ripon. This was the site of the 2007 'Thornborough Festival', and the landowner was very sympathetic to paganism – having erected his own roundhouse, and expressed the intention to be buried in a longbarrow of his own construction. XETB had been booked to play within the sonic henge, and we did a lengthy, exploratory and improvisatory version of a medieval hymn tune called 'Edi Beo Thu Heven Quene', in a band that featured Phil Todd & Mel Ó Dubhslaine (Ashtray Navigations) and [REDACTED]. The selection of 'Edi Beo Thu' was to some extent pragmatic – it was a piece of early music which was simple and could be picked up by the whole group and elaborated on over a couple of practices.



Within the sonic henge, Thornborough Festival, Lime Tree Farm (author's photograph).

[15/1/20]

2.16.4.

Our twins, **AC** and **AD**, were born [REDACTED] on the 31st of July. They were in incubators in intensive care for a month. Despite the sleepless nights, I was still producing work, but mainly linocuts and blog posts since the opportunities to go on long walks were no longer immediately available!

2.16.5.

Toward the late autumn and winter, I re-engaged with recording, complementing tracks from earlier in the year with new pieces mainly recorded during a couple of days walking in the Wharfedale area, around my favourite locales such as Troller's

Gill and Simon's Seat. These would eventually appear on a double CD entitled *Crooked Pool*, on the Finnish label Ikuisuus in March 2008.



Crooked Pool (2008, author's work)

2.16.6.

The cover shows the stagnant pool above Troller's Gill, which had often caught my attention as I walked across the moor and down the valley toward the old lead mine en route to the Gill. The pool somehow felt like a site of sorcery, where offerings may be cast. The title of the album alludes to Andrew Chumbley's 'Crooked Path' – an evocative term by which he implied that witchcraft encompassed both white and black magic.

2.16.7.

The album came with an insert, which had notes for each track on one front, and a lino-cut of the stream near Troller's Gill on the reverse. There is the continuing influence of Kathleen Raine, after whose poem 'Paralda's Kingdom' the opening track is named. I had been stunned to discover this poem of hers, since it indicated that she was familiar with the Golden Dawn system of magic, which included Paralda as the elemental king of air. The continuing influence of Myrddin is also present in 'Engyl'nion y Beddau', or 'Stanzas of the Graves', which was inspired by the cairns atop Simon's Seat, and daydreaming that perhaps they contained the bones of saints. This is imagery which I would revisit as part of a narrative of meeting a spirit in the book *Abital*, which accompanied the 2009 re-release of *The Pyrognomic Glass*.¹¹³ The ultimate source for the imagery comes from the *Parabola of Madathanus*, an alchemical text I had discovered while researching dew, which

¹¹³ 14/01/20 – MEMO – Textually analyse *Pyrognomic Glass* looking at areas of textual re-invention, imagination/revelation, and relation to music.

included the following passage – poetically describing the circulation of vapours in an alchemical vessel, which purify the matter therein:

I observed that many vapors arose from the earth about evening, through the power of the sun, and ascended on high as if the sun itself were drawing up the water. But during the night they gathered into a lovely and fertile dew, descending very early in the morning, enriching the earth and washing the corpses of our dead, so that from day to day, the longer such bathing and washing continued, they became even whiter and more beautiful.¹¹⁴

2.16.8.

I had also discovered, through an academic article by Wouter Hanegraaff in the open-access journal *Esoterica*, the work of Lodovico Lazzarelli, who had been instructed by an itinerant Hermetic mystic on the technique of ‘generatio mentis’, or ‘mental generation’. Exactly what this mystery entailed is vague, and Hanegraaff cites earlier commentators, including D.P. Walker, whose book on astrology and magic I was familiar with, who argue that the mystery involved the actual creation of ‘daemons’. Hanegraaff concludes that the mystery in question was the attainment of a form of divine gnosis, or divinisation, which consequently would entail the power to create things mentally. D.P. Walker’s book, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic*, had intrigued me when I read it in the early 2000s (it was republished as part of Pennsylvania State University’s Magic in History series) – particularly the assertion that Ficino had ‘sung’ daemons into existence. Of course, Walker’s work was pioneering in its day, but many of his suppositions have been succeeded... but as a poetic image, the ‘singing into being’ captured my imagination.

2.16.9.

The track ‘Thalia’ returns to my developing compositional practice, and came from an idea to compose six acrostic poems for the daemons of the *Tuba Veneris*, which would then be set to music. ‘Thalia’ takes the music from the first of these, dedicated to Mogarip, which opened with the line ‘Muse of Evening’s Dying Light’. Accompanying music was then composed for guitar, and it is this which formed the basis for ‘Thalia’.

¹¹⁴ Anon. n.d. ‘The Parabola of Madathanus’, *The Alchemy Website*. Online at: <https://www.alchemywebsite.com/parabola.html> [Accessed 14/01/20]

THE discs are not intended to be listened to in sequence, but are labelled 'one' and 'two' merely for convenience. Since I don't believe in using compression as part of the mastering phase, these CDs may be significantly gruffer than many of your other discs. Since I don't often write notes for my releases – some may prefer to throw this piece of paper away.

ONE
The music on this disc is often much more static and meditative in nature, being improvised around either tone sequences derived from the 'micropsycho-geographic experiment' technique (see *Psychogeographia Ruralis*), or from a geographical application of the ancient church modes.

1. *Forlorn's Kingdom*
The title comes from a poem by one of my favourite poets, Kathleen Raine. Placational music recorded early one spring morning in 2007 at the top of the Cow and Calf rocks.
2. *Awakening Phase*
A sunrise recording for the morning phase of Venus, Spring 2007.
3. *Cama Lina*
Recorded at a 'troubled pool' above Wharfedale, Autumn 2007.
4. *Gravimetric*
A reference to the enigma of 'mental generation' discussed in Lodovico Lazzarini's *Outer Hermeneutics* (c.1922), sunset autumn 2007.
5. *Silenced Prayer*
Recorded on the deathbed of my friend A.G., March 2007.

- TWO
1. *Earth (Gaia)*
(Gaia, Gaia, Gaia, or 'Gaia') were said by Paracelsus to be engraved upon the 'matrix' into which the 'matrix' can transport every meadow of heaven. The stone of the earth is its own talisman. Recorded on Harker Fell in the depths of winter 2008.
 2. *Winter of Light*
Light material captured as dusk fell at Bristol's Temple, 18th July 2007.
 3. *Wind Ring Ser*
12 November, Hickey Moor, autumn 2007.
 4. *Engelstein's Problem*
'The Silence of the Graves', recorded near Simon's Son, winter 2008.
 5. *Thales*
Although the generally the music of country life is also depicted in the famous landscape of the 'Pastoral' (see also the 'Pastoral' as the music of earth, which in the scheme of the music of the spheres surrounding it in the 'matrix', is silent and inert. Music occurred at dusk, Appletonwick Pasture, spring 2008.
 6. *Kingdom*



THANKS to: Joni Hirston, Joni Hollis, Andy Sharp, Phil Todd, Mel Delaney, Rob Williams, James Willfield, Susan Bradley, Richard Skelton, Brian Lovell, and all those who have walked across fell and field with XETR.
Contact: www.farfall.co.uk / willfield@farfall.co.uk

Back and front sides of the insert from *The Crooked Pool* (2008, author's work).

2.17. Psychogeographia Ruralis

2.17.1.

Toward the end of 2007 I discovered an online post by a neo-shamanic artist [REDACTED] who was seeking to develop a 'Visionary Arts' group in Yorkshire. I decided that I should explore this possibility, and that perhaps I was now confident enough to work with others. As an introduction to the group, I decided to write a pamphlet, entitled *Psychogeographia Ruralis*, subtitled *Observations concerning Landscape and the Imagination*, in which I would attempt to set out my practice and ideas. I was also wary of doing this in too much of an overtly 'occult' manner, so presented my work with reference to James Hillman's archetypal psychology which, like the Jungian approach that bore it, engages with a discourse surrounding the sacralisation of psychology, or the psychologisation of the sacred, Hillman himself claiming ancient roots in the Neoplatonic tradition of Plotinus for his psychological practice. Nevertheless, I thought this more 'respectable' than presenting occult theories, and also felt myself a need to legitimate my ideas through reference to art, psychology, poetry and so on. I described 'psychegeography' as the revisiting of places as they formed in our memories, re-casting them as spaces to

explore and alluding to the idea of Memory Palaces which had become familiar with through Frances Yates' work:

In the great 'memory theatre' of our world each person has populated places with their own particular images and memories – real events now frozen in the atemporal regions of memory, for example: the Leeds street where a man threw himself off the council offices. His shade still lingers there in my mind. It is the function of the spirit of the place, the genius loci who speaks in imagery and allegory, to further populate our memory theatres with images directly from its breast; speaking soul to soul; translating our perception of a rolling hill or pile of bricks into a bountiful psychic construct.

2.17.2.

I outlined my thoughts on the genii locorum, or spirits of the place, with reference to many older authorities, and to the Traditionalist Ananda Coomaraswamy, who I had discovered through reading Kathleen Raine's literary criticism.¹¹⁵ The subsequent chapters discuss weather and the psyche, music-making as a path to encountering the genii, and an experiment with intervals and the imaginative images they conjure. The final chapter also discusses 'psychegeographs', which is how I had come to term my 'travels' images, in that they collapsed time and space into a complex form which could be used meditatively or imaginatively:

I find that when beholding images that employ these techniques successfully they trigger intensely vivid recollections of the place: the familiar elements are first to attract the eye, after which the trajectories between dimly remembered and all-but-forgotten facets stir the deeper memory and imagination.

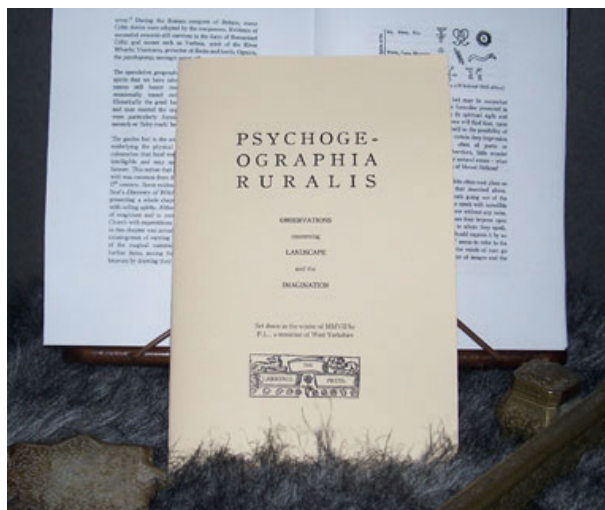
From there it is only a small step into the realms of psychegeographic reverie.

2.17.3.

The actual convocation of the Visionary Artists group was disappointing. There were too many clashing personalities, but I was intrigued by one of the attendees, an older man, who had brought a long scroll with him: he said was a musical composition describing a yearly solstice walk he carried out. This man was Simon, a musician

¹¹⁵ 15/02/20 – MEMO – There are, of course, elements of anti-modern discourse here. Worth making a further textual analysis of, perhaps as part of a chapter on written texts produced during my work.

and artist, who was also studying a Masters degree in Oral History at Huddersfield University. We decided that the visionary artists group wasn't going anywhere, but that we would keep in contact.



The first edition of Psychogeographia Ruralis (2007, author's photograph).

2.17.4.

In January 2008 I printed 50 more copies of *Psychogeographia Ruralis*, which I sold through the Larkfall website. It attracted the attention of Richard Skelton, a poet and musician who would be thanked on the *Crooked Pool* liner notes, along with Simon.

[20/1/20]

2.17. The Grim War of Chaos Magick & Abital

2.17.1.

With young twins, 2008 was, unsurprisingly, a creatively quiet year, the only released music being the aforementioned *Crooked Pool* and a three-inch CDr of my side project The Neon Death Slittes, entitled *The Grim War of Chaos Magick* – a play on *The Grimoire of Chaos Magick*, a book written by Julian Wilde and published by Sorcerer's Apprentice during a formative phase of chaos magick.¹¹⁶ Sonically, *Grim War* is a tribute to Hawkwind and Throbbing Gristle. The space rock element was influenced by the recent re-publication of Michael Bertiaux' Voodoo Gnostic Workbook, a collection of magical writings which begin as instruction on 'lucky

¹¹⁶ 22/01/20 – MEMO – Consider why places like Sorcerer's Apprentice possessed such a fascination. Discursively it could be seen as attempting to align myself with a 'tradition' (e.g. a romanticised heyday of Chaos Magick). Alternatively, it can be seen as a sort of place-making: seeking out something meaningful to me in the urban environment to foster a sense of belonging.

hoodoo', but quickly spin off into strange essays on astral television, were-spider cults, magical computer programming, and orgasm-powered space travel. Two tracks were named after Bertiaux' writings – 'Oerg8' and 'Meontology'. The first track, 'Ka'atas' was a tongue-in-cheek tribute to the spoken word of Hawkwind's Robert Calvert, the lyrics being derived from Wilde's invocation to Ka'atas. The cover art incorporated a skull/chaos-star stencil I had made as a t-shirt design, and letters from the 'Ouranian' magical alphabet used by some chaos magicians. The layout was inspired by the Psychic TV logo (and the last track used samples of a very intoxicated Genesis P-Orridge from *Celebrities at their Worst, Volume 3*).



Neon Death Slittes' Grim War of Chaos Magick (2008, author's work).

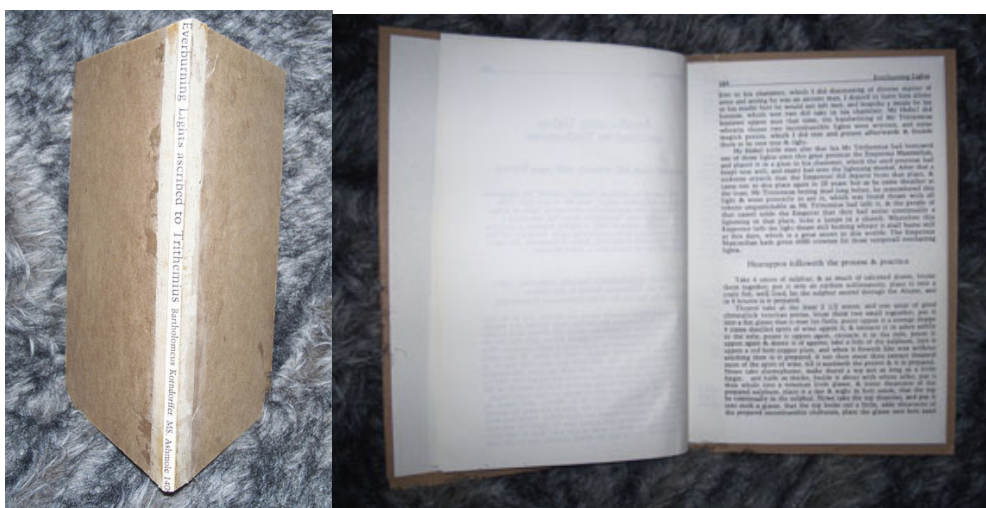
2.17.2.

In terms of writing, I published the piece about Johann Wlight in Bart de Paepe's *A Slow Magazine*, and also continued to play gigs with Ashtray Navigations and, on rare occasions, as part of English Heretic. Andy and I played a gig in London, at the Carpenter's Arms in March, which brought together material from our early Musique Occulte project, as well as combining our various esoteric obsessions into some new tracks, amongst them 'Black Venus in Furs', which saw us both reading invocations from copies of the *Tuba Veneris*' Liber Spirituum which I had created for the performance.

2.17.3.

In May I took delivery of a book from the library of the recently deceased Plymouth-based artist Robert Lenkiewicz. Lenkiewicz' personal library contained many rare volumes on the occult – including a 16th century book of conjurations which was

discovered to be the missing half of a manuscript held by the Folger Shakespeare Library. I'd become fascinated with Lenkiewicz after seeing some of his books listed for auction – and when I saw something affordable come up on the Weiser Antiquarian website I decided I had to have it. What I purchased was Lenkiewicz' own, DIY binding of an article from Adam McLean's *Hermetic Journal*, on the 'Everburning Lights ascribed to Trithemius'.



A book produced and bound by Lenkiewicz, acquired in 2008 (author's photograph).

2.17.4.

I also became fascinated with Lenkiewicz' wildly bohemian life, which seemed to stand in stark contrast to my own: he opened his studio to the homeless, immersed himself in outré literature, enjoyed a chaotic, erotic life resulting in many illegitimate children. Echoing the *Arbatel*, I described him on my blog as 'a man who seems to have *lived his life to the Muses*.'¹¹⁷ As time progressed, the shade of Lenkiewicz seemed to hang over my life, like a familiar spirit attached to the book, seemingly urging me to make a changes or act on my instincts.

2.17.5.

Since the flat we lived in only had one bedroom, July saw us moving to a ground floor flat in [REDACTED], an uninspiring modern estate [REDACTED]. However, there was, at least, a spare room which accommodated the twins' two cots.

¹¹⁷ Quoted from: Legard, Phil. 2008. 'Prospero's Books', *Tintinnalogia* [blog]. Online at: <https://ricercare.livejournal.com/12267.html> [Accessed 22/01/20]

2.17.6.

Late in 2007, Phil Todd had mentioned an interest in pressing a vinyl edition of *The Pyrognomic Glass*. I took this as an opportunity to complement the album with a text, which would explore and develop the imagery that had arisen during the recording process. Over the ensuing months, the work, which was from its inception entitled *Abital*, went through multiple iterations, as a poetic narrative, a grimoire, and, finally, as a mock-16th/17th century chapbook which played upon the contested space between magic and the natural sciences. The book even had a lofty subtitle: *Abital, or Conferences with the Genii of Nocturnal and Diurnal Dew in vii Chapters*.¹¹⁸ What is common to all the versions, however, is that they reinvent my encounters with the landscape in different ways – although almost always they concentrate on the Wharfedale countryside and the presence of meteorological phenomena that I had observed (sunrise, sunset, dew). The appendix to *Abital* also provides a series of magical experiments, carried out with lenses, mirrors, prisms and so on – harking back to my interest in Dee's *Propaedeumata Aphoristica*, and providing an experiment for each release in what I had called the 'optical trilogy' (e.g. *A Selenographic Lens, The Pyrognomic Glass, A Prism for Annwn*).

2.17.7.

Abital was finished in October 2008 – I had hoped that the LP would be released by Christmas, although due to delays at the pressing plant, it was June 2009 by the time it appeared.



A draft of Abital used for proof-reading, and the final publication (author's photographs).

¹¹⁸ MEMO – 22/01/20 – Discuss the four different versions as part of future chapter. Key influences are the *Arbatel of Magick*, Trithemius (on intermediate drafts) and Dee (on final version). Consider reading my various texts on levels of discourse, practice and milieu.

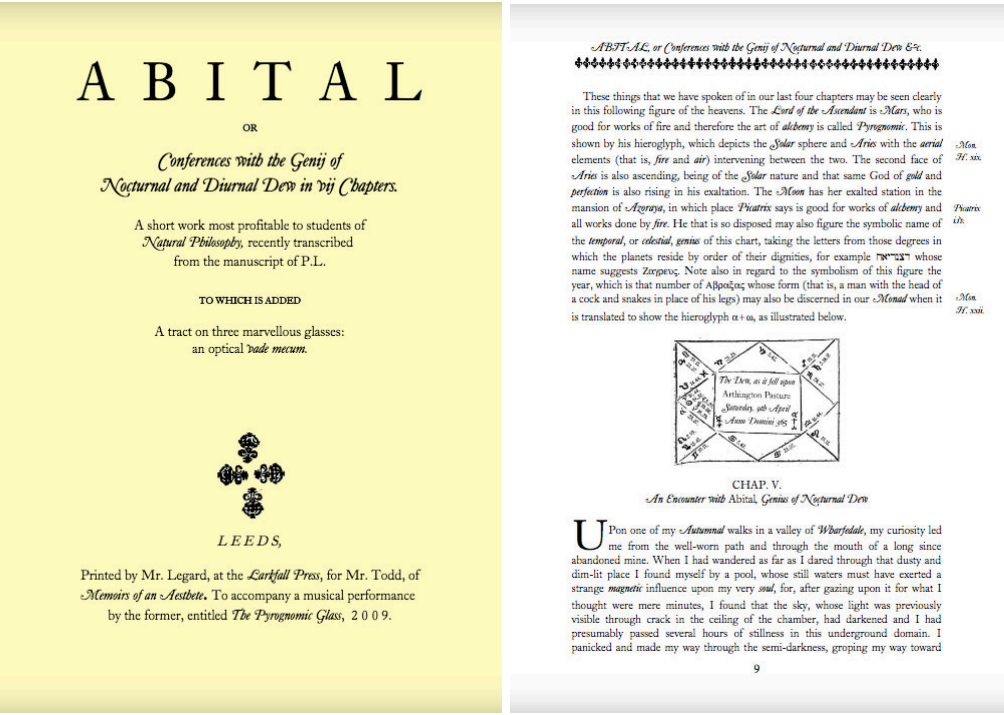
2.17.8.

Working on the *Abital* gave me an opportunity to develop the mental imagery which I had experienced while producing the original album into a fully-fledged work, drawing together a variety of strands of pre-19th century occult thought (- for this was the age which seemed most 'authentic' to myself -) to complement my 'imaginal' narratives.¹¹⁹ I use the term 'imaginal' since I beheld them to be more than 'mere' imagination – rather, they were profound visions that seemed to arise from the confluence of listening to the music and imagining the places. They seemed to me the 'voices' of the genii. In *Psychogeographia Ruralis*, I cited the work of Cornelius Agrippa who - borrowing from Psellus, in *Occ. Phil. III.xxiii* - describes the language of angels and demons as passing into the perceiver as 'an image [slides into] the eye', and Agrippa also referred to the demonic language as conveyed in a 'better manner then if they should express it by an audible voyce', which I interpreted as a multi-modal form of communication: impressing ideas, images and so on into the minds of those with whom they wished to communicate.¹²⁰

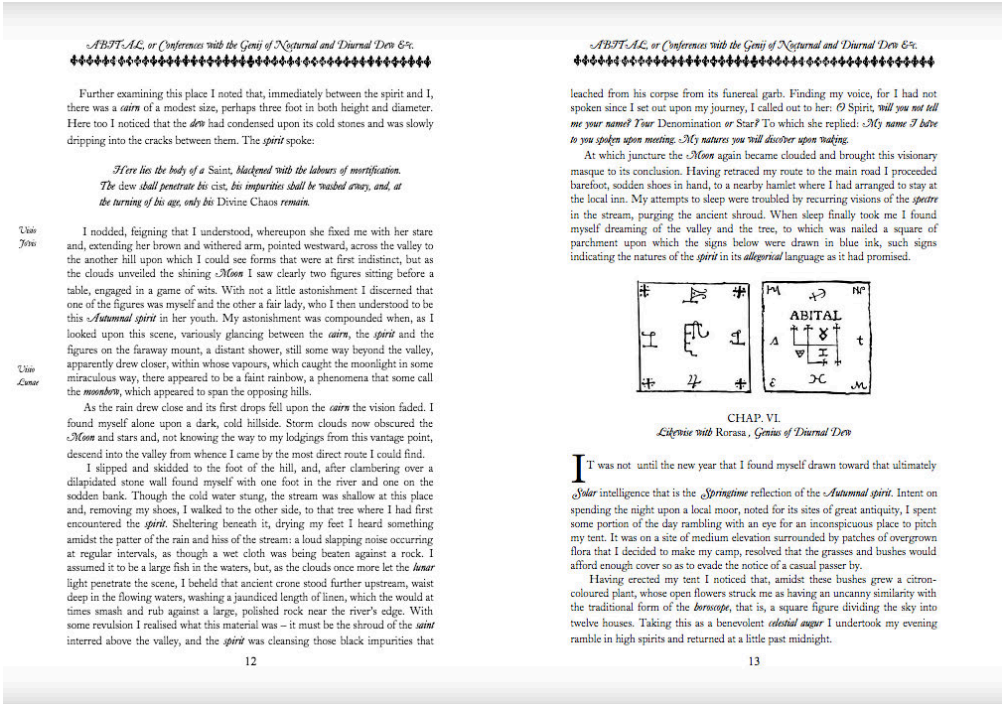
¹¹⁹ Memo – 11/11/19 – Authenticity in magic could be an interesting thread, and the dialectic of authenticity as applied to esoteric discourses has been little researched. There are, for example, approaches of 'magical reconstructionism' (cf. 'old ways' magic of Joseph C. Lisiewski; polytheistic reconstructionism [Bonewits]), which are also anti-psychological: reacting against the traditional legitimating tactic of psychologising magic, and returning to an embrace of mystery and pre-modern ontological/epistemological notions.

¹²⁰ 11/11/19 – MEMO – Parallels with scrying, in which communication with spirits often takes the form of a 'vision' rather than a straightforward dialogue (e.g. the records extant in John Dee's and Humphrey Gilbert's diaries). The distinguishing of 'true' imagination from 'fantasy' is obviously a preoccupation of the Romantics (e.g. Coleridge & Wordsworth), and the 'testing' of spirits and visions for their veracity is part of the methodology of many grimoires. In terms of discourse, this also relates to the strategy of the appeal to experience: the mental image is so 'real' and unbidden that one 'knows' it to be 'true'. One thing to note should be that the discursive strategies don't 'disprove' believer's knowledge claims, and are broadly an etic construction... however, they can also have an emic presence as part of a knowing process of re-negotiating reality and facilitating perceptual drift.

28/02/20 – MEMO – Absorption is also relevant here – my thesis in *Psychogeographia* is that when one is involved in playing, then the waking mind is distracted and we become more receptive to the emerging images which the genii wish us to behold. Similarly my intense, 'imaginal' listening as part of the production process was also a form of absorption-communication. Analytic work could be done comparing my approach to Kim Cascone's 'imaginal listening' etc.?



Title page of Abital, and page 9, describing the astrological times for gathering dew, and the imagined encounter with 'Abital', spirit of the nocturnal dew (author's work).



Pages 12 and 13 of Abital, describing the encounter with the spirit Abital, and her talisman (author's work).

[27/2/20]

2.17.9.

In the latter half of the year, I resumed correspondence with Daniel Harms, who had, in 2003, co-authored a book called *The Necronomicon Files*, which explored various

aspects of Lovecraft's enduring creation. We had corresponded about my *Grimorium Imperium* text, and had both also become interested in the work of Frederick Hockley (1809-1885), a magical enthusiast whose work stimulated the 19th century occult revival in England. From his teens Hockley had worked as an assistant to bookseller John Denley, and often created unique handwritten manuscripts – initially at Denley's behest – which became highly collectable. The publisher Teitan Press had just started publishing a series of facsimiles and transcriptions of his work, starting with *A Complete Book of Magic Science*, which we realised was closely related to a *The Secret Grimoire of Turiel*, published in 1960 by 'Marius Malchus'. The winter and early months of 2009 were generally spent researching and drafting a collaborative article – [REDACTED] we intended to submit it to Pennsylvania State University's *Magic, Ritual and Witchcraft* journal. I had, however, also found myself slipping into a depression – often when I should have been working from home, I found myself lying on the floor, weighed down with worries, paralysed by uncertainties about how I was going to support my family as they grew up, and wondering whether I had made the right life decisions... and sensing the presence of Robert Lenckiewicz' spirit, urging me to *do something*.¹²¹

2.17.10.

Beyond the re-release of *A Pyrognomic Glass* in June, 2009 was a quiet year for my main musical practice, chiefly limited to a couple of appearances on Ashtray Navigations-related projects.

2.18. Peter Cora & Elicona

2.18.1.

In terms of compositional development, I had been attempting to become more adept with Symbolic Composer. Since early 2008 I'd been experimenting with writing computer-assisted compositions on a variety of esoteric themes under the pseudonym Peter Cora (a play on 'Pitagora', or Pythagoras).¹²² The initial inspiration came from Willy Schroedter's *Rosicrucian Notebook*, which I'd read in around 2002,

¹²¹ 05/04/20 – MEMO – Once again, the abdication of making personal decisions. Leaving them to the mediation of spirits.

¹²² 05/04/20 – MEMO – The explicit reference to Pythagoras is an obvious attempt to align this music with a mystical tradition and area of practice (e.g. Pythagorean/Neoplatonic music theories). However, consider the ways in which my music uses 'tradition' in less obvious ways: folklore, folk music, and the 'traditions' of magic and occult philosophy. In what ways is my conception of the cosmos, morals and so on traditional and 'non-traditional' (or progressive)?

and which contained a variety of occult miscellanea themed around the 'Rosicrucian Sciences'. I also re-used the geomantic chart that had structured 'Horizon of Eternity', re-casting it into a LISP script for Symbolic Composer to interpret. I also drew inspiration from Arvo Part's syllabic method of setting words to create an instrumental based on word-lengths in a 15th-century Latin version of the Orphic Hymn to the Moon.¹²³ Having completed around 40-minutes of music on these themes, the album was released by the Finnish underground label Ikuisuus as *Rosicrucian Enlightenment*, with a cover-design inspired by the New Age Windham Hill records aesthetic.¹²⁴



Comparison between Peter Cora album (author's work) and a Windham Hill release.

2.18.2.

In 2008, [REDACTED] had provided me with scanned microfiche facsimiles of several manuscript codices from the British Library, one of which was Sloane 36,674, which compiled a number of magical texts from the 15th to 17th centuries. Amongst them, one caught my eye entitled 'An Excellent Booke of the Arte of Magicke', as well as a long series of conjurations and spirit lists entitled 'Regula Utilissima in Arte Magica'.

2.18.3.

Unfortunately the facsimile was rather poor quality, and the reading of secretary hand made even more challenging as a consequence. I did, however, take printouts of

¹²³ 27/02/20 – MEMO – Discussions of technology in the context of my work and seekership should not only concentrate on digital communications and computing, but also on music technology.

¹²⁴ 27/02/20 – MEMO – Consider aesthetic influences (Argo Records, Windham Hill; early modern books).

selected portions of the manuscript with me on holiday to the hamlet of Littlebeck, near Whitby, where P's father had rented a large house for the week.

2.18.4.

A semi-autobiographical account of some of my time at Littlebeck was published by Hadean Press published in 2012 as *The Mirror of Elicon*. Here, I described becoming fascinated with the spirit Elicon, whose name was mentioned in the 'Regula Utilissima' as being 'pro amore' (for love) and also friendship (in *De Nigromancia*, attributed to Roger Bacon). In the *Mirror of Elicon*, I wrote:

In the summer of 2009 and I had found myself in a depression. The limitless universe, which had once sung with the voices of infinite spiritual agencies seemed now cold and immobile. The muse that revealed the world to me, like *Cosmiel* leading *Theodidactus*, appeared to have vanished. Alone and agitated, my mind could no longer find the stillness in which the 'mysteries', of which the external world is simply the *signature*, showed themselves.¹²⁵

This was why the very name *Elicon* held such fascination: the similarity to *Helicon*, the mythical dwelling place of the muses, suggested a route back into a visionary and creative engagement with the universe. The relation to the *Elicon* to the powers of Venus, and the designation of *pro amore* suggested to me that perhaps this spirit would help me rediscover and fall in love again with the muse that I had once had in nature: a burning love of the world, in which creation would sing and transform itself from moment to moment before my eyes. It seemed as though convocation with *Elicon* may provide a way to lure the muse back into my life.

In my solitary evening circuits around the Yorkshire hamlet of Littlebeck I would search for that special place that felt appropriate to the spirit. My intuition led me to the banks of a tributary to the river Esk, where the sound of running water reflected off a steep shale cliff, creating a subtle, perhaps mind-altering, doppler effect. Yes. This seemed like *the place*.

¹²⁵ MEMO – 05/04/20 – The idea that the physical world is the façade of another world is common in occult philosophy – e.g. Agrippa's three worlds, in which the elemental world is the final manifestation of impulses from the godhead (filtered down through the divine-intellectual, celestial-spiritual, and elemental-mundane worlds). Such 'speculative' discourses occur in my music – how do these relate to the more 'spiritualistic' discourses?

[...]

As the sun set and twilight turned to amethyst I began to meditate on what I knew of *Elicona*, calling out that the spirit would guide my hand and aid me the composition of an appropriate invocation.

[05/4/20]

2.18.5.

I would visit the stream for several evenings, listening to the waters reflecting from off the cliff wall, watching the butterflies and midges, and attempting to draw into mental communication with the spirit Elicona. I began to discern distinct overtones in the reflected sound, and imagined the spirit singing her name above the valley – a descending C-minor triad: C'-G-Em-C, or E-Li-Co-Na.

2.18.6.

While letting myself sink into the surrounding soundscape, I found myself visualizing a mirror-like pool (- possibly a dew-pond). This seemed to be like a natural magic mirror. I wrote about this in *The Mirror of Elicona* in a more poetic style:

After this, the spirit led me beyond the woods, stream and external world into a metaphysical realm. Here is the gestalt of the river: an unmoving, frozen pool whose still surface behaves as a scrying mirror: reflecting images within the soul of the gazer. The mirror may be considered one of the magical tools of Venus, similar as it is to the planetary glyph, and in the divinatory folklore of the British Isles mirrors are often as a tool of love magic, notably for catching a glimpse of a future spouse.

2.18.7.

The idea of being led from the riverside to this spiritual pool became the basis for a poem, which formalizes the pathworking or guided meditation that arose from my time by the stream. In many ways these evenings provided a form of nature-therapy: a chance to reconnect with an imaginative engagement with nature and its spirits, which had been missing during a period overwhelmed with 'mundane' cares about work, money, childcare and so on. But I also resolved that I needed to make changes in my life – to find new circles of friendship and do new things. Elicona's voice joined that of the spirit of Lenckiewicz confirming what I felt: that I no longer loved **P** and

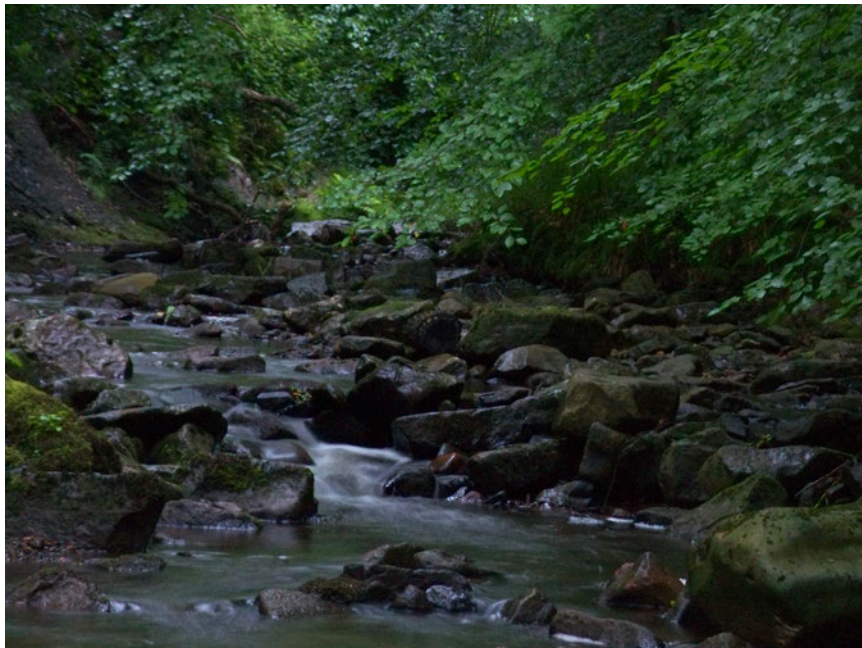
needed to move on, and that – owing to the influence of the spirits – the wheels to do this were now in motion.

2.18.8.

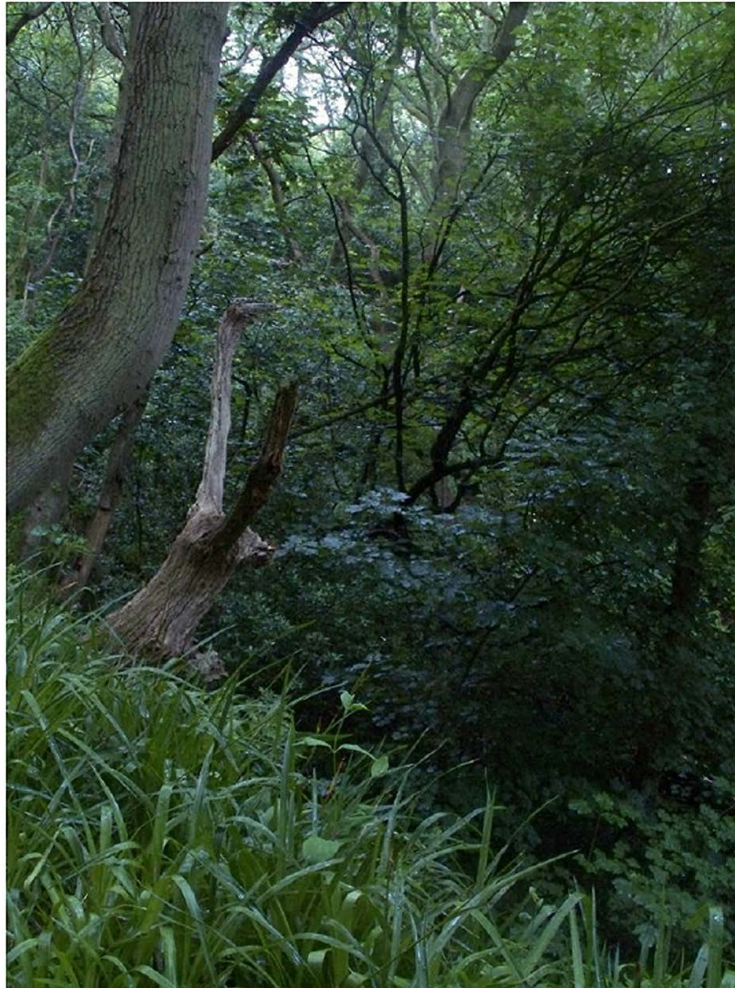
On the final evening at Littlebeck, I wrote a short poem dedicated to Elicona (and her co-spirit Almazim), which I buried on the banks of the river.

<i>Almazim</i>	<i>Elicona</i>
Joyr in the chase,	Crossway Keeper.
Come from your shores to this cool moss bank.	
To worm-rich soil where dusk-flies couple,	
And evening air conveys whitening dew.	
Here silence stirs the Genius' song,	
Who, in treasuring creation,	
Opens up His Earth	
To receive the	
Seed.	

Poem to Almazim and Elicona (as published in The Mirror of Elicona).



The stream at Littlebeck (author's photograph).

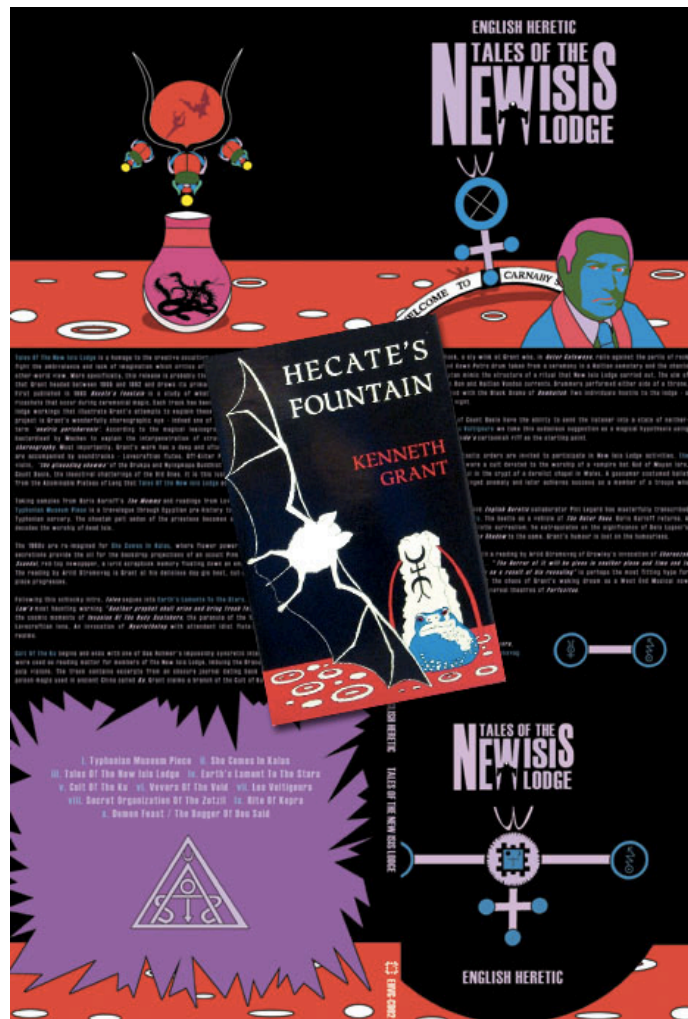


A ridge above the stream at Littlebeck – the hart-like simulacrum in the foreground tree branches seemed to suggest that the place was particularly potent (author's photograph).

[08/4/20]

2.18.9.

Returning from Littlebeck, **P** and I moved house once again, to a semi-detached property [REDACTED]. She was working [REDACTED] most evenings, so I would usually pick up the children from their childcare after I had finished working, and then put them to bed and sit in my office room, attempting to work on new projects. I contributed some vocals to English Heretic's *Tales of the New Isis Lodge*: a concept album based on the rituals described in Kenneth Grant's *Hecate's Fountain*. I also designed the cover, as a tribute to Grant's book and the art of his wife, Steffi. With his usual flair for the absurd, Andy had envisioned the album as a piece of musical theatre – hence the inset figure of a robed Aleister Crowley under the 'W', in the style imitative of the logo for Ben Elton and Queen's musical *We Will Rock You*.



Graphic designs for the cover, sleeve and CD for *Tales of the New Isis Lodge* (released on the English Heretic label, author's work).

2.19. Almas & Three Spirits

2.19.1.

In August I went out to a blues and rockabilly DJ night organized by my friends **AE** and **AF**, [REDACTED]. While **AE** was a fan of *outré* art and literature, he did not share my fascination with the occult. He came over to my table with two women – [REDACTED] and told me that they would be interested in talking about magic. This was my first meeting with Layla and her friend **AG**. I happened to have a copy of *Northern Earth* in my satchel, and was amazed to find that they knew the magazine and were also avid visitors to megalithic sites. Layla and I began to correspond at length using Facebook messenger. I admired the photos she took at the sites she had visited, and also realized that I was in love with her – although this thought terrified me: I couldn't face spending the rest of my life with **P**, but also felt

that the situation I had found myself in – with children being involved – was too complicated for me to fathom. However, I felt that the invisible hand of Elicona, Almazim and Lenkiewicz were nudging me.

2.19.2.

Over the rest of the year I continued to work on the Fred Hockley article with Dan Harms, and managed to spend a day at The John Ryland's Library examining a 19th century copy of the Key of Solomon, evidently copied from one of Hockley's MSS. I also visited London where I consulted Hockley's manuscripts at the United Grand Lodge of England, after which I met with **AH** – a member of the Order of the Cubic Stone who had conducted extensive research into the magical manuscripts held by the British Library. I also discovered that a manuscript of magic belonging to Robert Lenkiewicz had been purchased by the Folger Shakespeare Library and had been identified as being the second part of a manuscript in their possession that, notably, included a spell for conjuring Oberon. Dan Harms, Joseph Peterson and myself acquired facsimiles and began discussing the possibilities of publishing an edition.

2.19.3.

Early in 2010 I was approached by **AI**, music journalist for a local paper, to ask if I would be interested in contributing something to the Harrogate Festival Fringe. I thought that this would be an ideal opportunity to collaborate with like-minded people on something that would be special: once again, following the intuited advice of Elicona to move from my insular world into other 'circles of friendship'. Initially I asked Layla, **X** ([REDACTED]), and Simon. However, due to other commitments **X** was unable to be involved, so the project became the concern of Layla, Simon, and I.

2.19.4.

We decided to concentrate on a psychogeographical exploration of Almscliffe Crag, which I had visited to record at several times, and which had often dominated my thoughts – particularly when I sighted it on my commutes from Harrogate to Leeds a few years prior. We began visiting the site in May, as well as attempting to discover everything we could via online sources and the local history library. Texts referenced in the work included the writings of Henry Trail Simpson, an eccentric antiquarian vicar of Adel who believed that certain stones as Almscliffe were used for druidic sacrifices, and a short story by the Order of Nine Angles that described a skinhead

initiation at the site.¹²⁶ We also discovered a poem concerning a ‘fairy parlour’ beneath the crag – and there is a submerged split running through the millstone grit from which the crag is composed, which we attempted to explore with lengths of climbing rope.



The Fairy Parlour (photo: Layla Legard)

[28/4/20]

2.19.5.

The final project comprised a 124-page book of psychogeographic and historical writing, photography and oral history, along with a 45-minute soundtrack developed from recordings made by Simon, Layla and I on the crags. Approaches to creating this music included interpreting the cliff-faces as though they were graphic scores, and also singing in the various stone ‘shelters’ beneath the lower cliffs. The sung elements revisited the practice of vowel singing, including one which concentrated on the ‘primal’ vowels IAO (a magical word most associated with Gnosticism, which had also been used by Gong on their track ‘Om Riff’).

¹²⁶ This text – *A Sinister Sport* – composed in 2009 during the resurgence of the Nine Angles as an online group under the representation of Chloe Ortega. Attributed to ‘S[tephen] Brown’ (a name associated with the earlier phase of the ONA during the 1980s, and suspected *nom de plume* of David Myatt). It was likely written by either Myatt or Moulton, since it evidently drew on their knowledge of the area: Myatt lived in Leeds during the ONA’s early years, and Moulton in York.



Playing 'Aeolian flute' at Almscliffe (photo: Layla Legard)

2.19.6.

My final contribution to the *Almias* book was a 'vision' called *Omphaloskepsis* – literally 'navel-gazing', since we had come to think of Almscliffe as the omphalos of the local landscape. The process of writing this chapter was again a process of imaginatively re-visiting the site: I imagined the climb up to Almscliffe, through the small village of Huby. At Sleights Lane, rumoured to be haunted by a black dog, I imagined encountering a greyhound – the heraldic animal belonging to a distant, land-owning branch of the Legard family. The greyhound becomes my spirit-animal and guide (- the idea of a familial heraldic animal as spirit guide likely came from John and Caitlin Matthew's *The Western Way*, which I read around this time):

He is a greyhound. My own heraldic beast. My totem animal. I cautiously approach before taking his gold chain in my hand. My arm is almost jerked from its socket as the animal bolts. Intoxicated with scent it leads me in bounds to the top of the road and beyond.

Fields and trees bolt past us. This is how the boy of Egremond must have felt pursuing the trail; landscape skipping below. I thank my star that the only large body of water is far below, deep in the valley.

Within moments we have reached the perimeter of the crag. We take the less known route, past the farm and toward the natural cromlech on the south-

eastern side. Dusk drizzle spots this makeshift stone shelter, emblazoned with the ancient solar sign of Baal. We come to the foot of the black wall, where ashlar blocks weigh upon the topsoil. Each one a medal on a mossy breast, hard-won symbols of progress and destruction.

Beyond the Altar Rock I see clouds of steam rising from a small quarry, where the fires of men are tempered by the hail. Above, on High Man, a beacon burns. It is nourished by a powerful light. Inextinguishable by the waters it is as though a spark from the sun itself on the millstone peak. Ascending to the basin wherein it burns I find within it the heart-fire of the universe. α for Almas? For Abraxas? As the celestial light casts shadows on the surrounding landscape the serpentine earthworks beyond the crag dance. ω for Wharfe? For Verbeia? For Abraxas' constant companion: the serpent Ouroboros? Orm? And before them both am I. $\text{IA}\Omega$. We make the magic word.

2.19.7.

The idea that alpha represented Almas and omega represented the Wharfe seemed incredibly meaningful to me: Almas was the omphalos or centre, and the Wharfe was a boundary, the delineation of a sacred landscape.

2.19.8.

The second part of *Omphaloskepsis* was an attempt to imbue Almscliffe with some sort of creative myth, in which the surrounding landscape was created from the body of the giant Rombald (a folkloric figure associated with Rombald's Moor [Ilkley Moor] and the creation of various landscape features). The myth borrows from the Norse creation myth, associated with the slaying of the frost giant Ymir by Odin and his brothers:

Such speculations are interrupted by a significant darkening of the sky. Moon-blot, darker even than the swollen storm clouds. I know exactly what this is: the corpse of Rombald, elevated by unseen hands hangs above the crag. The fire below illuminates his face, a twisted visage caked in frost. Without warning and without difficulty the hands of God tear his limbs, as easily as one might a well-aged fowl. His blood falls in great torrents: the water of the Wharfe. It rushes down the valley, gathering up great rocks, shifting peaks and boring passages through the softer stone. Beneath the froth-spattered

surface a team of white horses course down the valley to swell the river below.

The giant's bloodless flesh is picked from his bones. It is scattered across the Ridings. Where skin drapes bone so a hill appears. Where bone pierces flesh an outcrop is made. Finally his skull is split against the crag with such force that the stone itself splits asunder. His grey teeth scatter, fixing themselves in the surrounding fields. His final toothless cry becomes the west wind, into which his brain is cast; his skull is set into the dome of the sky.

2.19.9.

The writing ends with the vision of myself taking shelter from the 'death-rage wind of a dead titan' in the fairy parlour, where I find:

A dead end. Hard, cold stone. Yet there is something beyond it – a dim buzzing noise, which seems to be the sound of distant music, being played almost with the sole purpose of frustrating me. I remember Simon saying "There's really enough here to keep you busy for a lifetime." The hidden door to the world beyond cannot be forced. This earth will yield its mysteries when both of us are ready.

2.19.10.

Our work on *Almias* concluded with a 'rural psychogeography walk' on Sunday 25th July. Simon, Layla, **P** and I drove up to Weeton station shortly before the 10am start.

[REDACTED]

2.19.11.

The event itself was successful. We met the participants, among them John Billingsley (editor of *Northern Earth*), **Y** (poet), and **Z** (archaeological GIS consultant and writer). I took the lead, in a fairly standard 'guided tour' fashion until we reached one of the fields where – hidden in a hedge – one can discern a boundary stone marking the division of the estates of the Lascelles and Fawkes families. At this point, we began a 'listening walk' up to the crag itself. This technique was adapted

from the acoustic ecology practices of R. Murray Schafer, and introduced to us by Simon. John Levack Drever has described Schafer's listening walk as follows:

'A listening walk is simply a walk with concentration on listening' no talking is allowed for the duration of the walk. The intention is that the collective mute experience raises the level of awareness to that of an attentive concert hall audience. It is practiced in single file following a leader (a quasi-mute piper), leaving a wide enough gap between the participant in front so their footsteps are out of earshot.¹²⁷



Exploring Almicliffe during Almias (Photo: Layla Legard).

2.19.12.

This was quite a sight – a procession, heads bowed, slowly walking their way in single-file to the crag. When we arrived, we discussed what we had heard on the way up, and then the three of us talked about the crag's history, folklore and main points of interest, after which we encouraged the participants to go on their own 'dérives' to explore the place, after which we would re-group above the entrance to the fairy parlour. To close the day, we walked the group to the 'wart wells' on the top of the crag, where we invited them to make small deposits as gifts to the spirit of the place.

¹²⁷ Drever, in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Experimental Music* (ed. James Saunders).

2.19.13.

The event was a success, although a bitter one, since I had fallen completely in love with Layla [REDACTED] The thought of not continuing to spend my time closely working with her greatly saddened me. We did, eventually, kiss [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] which opened up a conflicted and tumultuous few months as I tortured myself weighing up my personal happiness with Layla, against staying with P for the sake of the children. I didn't really talk to P about any of this, until I wrote her a letter saying how unhappy I was in our relationship and that I wanted to leave. During that time, I wrote many poems about my walks with Layla and romanticised our status as outcasts and furtive lovers. I later collected these together in a small book called *Cariad*, published by my Larkfall Press. Here is one example, recounting a ten-hour walk to Troller's Gill (site of 'my' hawthorn tree and one of the *Abital* narratives), via the hogsbacks in the church at Saint Wilfred's Church, Burnsall.¹²⁸ The poems were written in Welsh meters, in lower-case, and with minimal punctuation, in knowing imitation of the austere medieval style of the *Black Book of Carmarthen*, for example:

two

a kiss has come, a kiss has flown
and made the distant hills her home
what may her windblown
whispered hymns make known
now every stone
is heaven's throne

high rode the rain within her mist
she watched the wandering lovers list
wyrd-led to hogsbacks
hawthorn and world ash
ten hours pass
as one kiss

¹²⁸ MEMO – 25/05/20 – Consider the role of poetic discourses in my work and esotericism in general as part of any discursive analysis.

2.19.14.

Layla and I moved into a semi-detached house looking onto a large playing field at the top of [REDACTED]. We were helped to move by a new acquaintance, **AA**, who had transferred his job to Leeds due to an interest in experimental sonic arts. When I wrote up my reflections of the time at Littlebeck in 2012's *The Mirror of Elicon* – I would come to associate Layla, Simon and **AA** with a 'circle of friendship' brought into my life by the spirits.

2.19.15.

The early months were challenging, but happy. I had spent all my savings on the house deposit and first month's rent, since Layla was unemployed. We had no bed, but we did have plenty of books, and spent most of our free time walking around Yorkshire. Musically, this was a quiet time, although I did begin some other projects with James Banner. He was keen to see a new edition of *De Nigromancia*, one of the key texts of late medieval ritual magic. He provided me with facsimiles of a variety of manuscript exemplars, amongst which from Sloane MS. 36,674 – the source of *An Excellent Booke of the Arte of Magicke*, which had so fascinated me years before. Unfortunately, due to a number of situations such as precarity of employment (- I was lecturing part-time at university, which was hourly-paid and term-time only, and work for **AJ** sporadic -), childcare and so on, I was unable to commit to this project, as well as to the project with Daniel Harms and Joseph Peterson to produce an edition of the Folger Manuscript (later published by Llewellyn as *The Book of Oberon* [2015]). However, much more manageable in the circumstances was a transcript of *The Excellent Booke* from high-resolution black and white facsimiles provided to me by James (eventually published in collaboration with Al Cummins and Scarlet Imprint in 2020).

2.19.16.

Layla and I continued to collaborate: she provided photographs for a new edition of *Psychogeographia Ruralis* in 2011, and later that year we travelled to the Hansard Gallery at Southampton University with **AA** and his wife **AB** to perform at an event **AA** had organised [REDACTED] We performed a piece that I called 'Orphic Prayer', which followed a text score:

Orphic Prayer
for voces magicae and percussion

Phil Legard

0. Let each participant write down a secret statement of intent.
1. Remove the consonants and keep the vowels.
2. Associate one or more relevant godforms with the statement of intent.
3. Let one participant ring a bell.
4. Let each participant work through their vowels at their own pace, harmonising or falling out of harmony and rhythm with the others. Once the series of vowels have been exhausted, repeat them.
5. At intervals deemed appropriate, strike the bell. This is the signal for the rightmost participant to begin introducing the names of godforms into his/her vocalisations as desired. Each time the bell is struck, another participant may begin to vocalise their godform.
6. In private performance, keep going until you feel you have 'made it'. An audience, however, may be more restless. Make what you can of your own adrenaline/endorphins and finish with a song to please them.

Text score for Orphic Prayer (2011).

2.19.17.

The inspirations derive from the vowel singing experiments I had conducted earlier, as well as the revisiting chaos magick's sigil work, in which a 'desire' or intent is encoded into some other form for magical use. We each reduced our intentions to strings of vowels, as well as a god-name (inspired also by the mixture of vowel-sounds and divine names in Stockhausen's *Stimmung*), which we used during the performance. Layla chose Verbeia and Cocidius as her godnames, I went with Sylvanus, **AB** with Brigantia, while **AA** – in post-modern manner – went for Kal-el (e.g. Superman's birth-name on the planet Krypton).



*Vowel-sequences, god-forms, and personal sigils used in the 2011 performance of Orphic Prayer
(author's photograph).*

2.19.18.

The day after the gig, we asked **AA** – who was driving back to Leeds – to drop us at Abingdon, from whence we made our way to Oxford and then Swindon, so that we could travel to Avebury the following day. A particular highlight of the visit was trekking uphill to West Kennett Longbarrow. My only association with the place had been that Julian Cope recorded some of his songs there, so I did not really know what to expect. It was a cold, drizzly December day, and the first thing that struck me as we crossed the threshold of the barrow was the warmth. Almost instantly all the clichéd ‘new age’ associations between the barrow mound and the womb seemed to make sense. It was also a profoundly peaceful place and – once Layla had explained the function and the archaeology – we moved to the back of the chamber and took the opportunity to record our own vowel-song, which later appeared on a Bang the Bore compilation of field-recordings called *He-Re* (2012), and was further electronically processed into the opening of *Lady of the Flood* (2016), a track by Layla and I under our later moniker *Hawthonn*. The other highlight was walking back through Avebury and up to Windmill Hill. In the dusk, standing before the modest, ring-ditched barrows, it felt like we had entered some sort of liminal time: the spirits of the dead which I imagined inhabiting the barrows seeming close enough to touch.

2.19.19.

The final recording attributed to Xenis Emputae Travelling Band was 2013’s *Three Spirits*, recorded late in 2012 and released on cassette by Brave Mysteries (a label associated with neofolk band Kinit Her, and also Clay Ruby of Burial Hex who had released my earlier work on his 23 Productions label). The first two tracks – *Arc of Difference* and *Hidden Stream & Lode Ford* borrow titles from David Jones’ poem *The Tutelar of the Place*, which I had discovered through my interest in Kathleen Raine’s work. *The Great Chord* developed out of a harmonic analysis of John Dee’s *Hieroglyphic Monad*, and was recorded using harmonium, against a backdrop of sounds from our recordings at West Kennett Long Barrow. The album also includes a solo rendition of *Edi Beo Thu Heven Quene*, and finishes with a 14-minute suite called *Littlebeck Trisagion*, which is a musical interpretation of *The Mirror of Elicon*. Notably it also features Layla singing the name Elicon, and a cello contribution from Simon. The tape was printed with a map of the area around Littlebeck, while the cover shows images from a manuscript of *De Nigromancia* and drawings from my *Mirror of Elicon* overlaid over photographs I took in the area.

2.19.20.

Three Spirits marked the conclusion of the Xenis Emputae Travelling Band project. I felt that – thanks to spiritual intercessions – the days of lone wandering for the sake of musical creativity and mystical experience were over, and *Three Spirits* indicated that new ways of working beckoned. Layla and I would continue to collaborate, receiving critical success for our work as *Hawthonn* (2014 to present): although a discussion of this and other ongoing projects lies beyond the scope defined in this autobiography.¹²⁹

THE END

¹²⁹ MEMO – 25/05/20 – Although discursive and practical links between XETB and Hawthonn could be possibly explored in analysis.