



pentagram

Lectorium Rosicrucianum

The struggle to correctly comprehend the difference between soul and matter, between the divine and the perishable element in the human being, is of all times. The Egyptian myths of Isis and Osiris resounded in Thracia in the cosmic religion of the goddess-mother and Dionysus, her son – the sun.

They resounded in the latter's tragic death and resurrection. And in the figure of Orpheus, singer and king-priest, master of the Dionysian spirit fire.

The theme of resurrection and rebirth is also found in original Christianity as the Bogomils in Bulgaria, Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina approached it. It proves how universal questions have been able to occupy people in every period.

Thracia was called a melting pot of Antiquity, with all ensuing tensions. There the liberating knowledge was preserved within the mysteries. Despite the fact that there is unrest in virtually every region on earth, the universal teachings of liberation are still cherished, taught and experienced in countless places.

Thracia: a turbulent melting pot
Bogomil, the voice of the oppressed
Testimonies in stone
The origin of evil
Peter Deunov and
the White Brotherhood



PENTAGRAM

SPECIAL ISSUE

STONE WITNESSES

Bogomil taught that a human being could be a Theotókos:
a human being who allows God to be born from himself

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Alongside: Cemetery with 133 steles at a necropolis near Radimilja (near Stolac), Herzegovina.

Cover: Part of a burial painting with images from the Dionysian mysteries from 250-225 BC at Muglitzh, near Kazanluk, Bulgaria. © The Thracians, A & V. Fol, 2005.

Traces of the light on the



The energy of the waves that reach the shore originates from the distant current of the sea. It originates from a place that cannot be seen by the eye of the stroller on the beach. Each wave is a manifestation of the sea, the wind, the moon and other natural influences. On the beach, the waves form irregular patterns of mussels, wood debris and shells washed ashore. When the sun rises the next day over a calm sea, the traces in the sand show the pattern of what the sea deposited during the past night. Similarly, also civilisations and impulses, one after the other, rolled along from the infinite sea of time and disappeared again. Like a child on the beach playing between the shells, we still find traces of them in our time...

At the shore of a lake in the Rila Mountains, Bulgaria.

Below: Information board in Perperikon, where the ruins of a Roman palace mark the place of the oracle, and where Orpheus was worshipped as 'healer of body and soul'.

'Tolerance is rather a social than a religious virtue,' Steven Runciman, expert in the field of the Bogomils, says.

'We might say that a tolerant attitude concerning other people's faith is undoubtedly one of the pillars of a harmonious society.' But this attitude is impossible for those who themselves have strong religious convictions. Because he who is convinced to have found the key to the most important principle of life, cannot stand by idly when his friends are blindly groping in the darkness. He thinks that they may certainly be virtuous and admirable, but unnecessarily lack an important aspect in their lives. From this point of view, it is a matter of helping them on the true path and to show them the light that illuminates this path. The ideas about the nature of the help vary: they run from being a shining example via peaceful convincing to the sword and the auto-da-fé (act of the faith preceding a verdict of the Inquisition). The author states

'that no religious person is able to leave his unbelieving brother to his own devices.'

We can add to this that when interests like power, prestige and possessions are involved, this conviction is no longer pure. Then individuals or even whole population groups are sacrificed. This results in entire regions being burned and towns being razed to the ground.

This was also the background of the drama of the Bogomils, a collective term for various, widely diverging population groups. They had one thing in common: their aversion of a centrally controlled religious system that suffocated their individual experiencing of God and destroyed their individual freedom.

With regard to the period of which we are speaking, certainly the expression 'the dark Middle Ages' may be used: through political violence and fanatical efforts, groups like the Paulicians, the Bogomils, the Patarenes and the Cathars were fought and ultimately destroyed during



ПЕРПЕРИКОН

Пътниче от далочни земи, добре дошъл на Перперикон! Тук някога бе прорицалището на Дионис, известно не по-малко от това на Аполон в Делфи.
Тук Александър Велики разбра, че ще завладее света, а римляните узнаха, че ще станат империя.
Сведи глава пред паметта на хората, обитавали 8000 години хълма пред теб.

PERPERIKON

Traveller from distant lands, welcome to Perperikon! In ancient times the temple of Dionysus was here, the fame of which is comparable to Apollo's in Delphi.
It was here that Alexander the Great received his prophecy that he would conquer the world and that Rome would become an empire. Bow your head in memory to the people who used to inhabit this holy place 8,000 years ago.

www.perperikon.bg

През месец май 2003, със съдействието на ING в България, под патронажа на Министерство на културата, Република България, бе създадена интернет страница посветена на свещения град Перперикон.

In May 2003, in co-operation with ING in Bulgaria, under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture, Republic of Bulgaria, a website was created dedicated to the Holy City of Perperikon.

the period 717-1244. In this context, it was remarkable that with every new wave of violence, the old cry 'Manichees!' resounded – the cry of fear of loss of power and influence of the coalition of church and state.

GNOSTIC WORLD CHURCH

This was already experienced earlier, even more than once. During the second century, Marcion had founded a gnostic world church that referred to the two nature orders. Thousands of small churches were razed to the ground, in an effort to erase any memory of original life. Next came the Persian apostle of Jesus, Mani. His followers had also settled in large parts of Europe, Asia, and even in China, during the period between the third and the sixth century. They were also extinguished and ever since, any heretic group was called Manichaeans.

The connection between Mani and his Light Church and the Bogomils is demonstrated by two things: the preservation, in those days, of the gnostic manuscripts and the preservation, during the latter years of the Greek-Byzantine empire, of the living traditions, which were, by the way, in disrepute with the official church. In this context, the *Messalians* emphasised initiation and pure teachings and they called themselves, in the purest gnostic tradition, 'spirit bearers' or *pneumatics*. Another tradition was preserved by Paul of Samosata's¹ followers, who have become known as the Paulicians. Paul of Samosata pointed out that all human beings share the same divine, common basis and that women and men play an equally important role in religion and society.

The patterns left behind on the shores of time are not easy to interpret. Much of what was not carved in stone is lost forever. We look with modern eyes at the turbulent interaction between peoples, who have left behind few, and hard to understand, testimonies. Our understanding of

history is determined by our modern consciousness, by our present-day norms and values, behavioural codes and taboos.

In every period, original Christianity has current teachings, a philosophy that testifies to the light and can help the seeker find the way back to the divine origin. It is remarkable that no persecution has been able to prevent them from becoming available again. In every period, they are revived: they 'originate' in the intuitive and sensitive inner being of a few people who are particularly receptive to them. This does not require any historical knowledge. The traces of the 'teachings of the light', left behind in the sand, can strengthen us, and accentuate the link with the countless ones who preceded us. Despite their sad history, it is still joyful and hopeful to see that the divine world does not leave humanity to its own devices and calls it again and again, and that gnostic brotherhoods, and many individuals, have responded to this call.

¹ Not to be confused with the apostle Paul, who wrote a number of Biblical letters.

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Ex oriente lux, the light is coming from the East

‘When will it rise,
the dawn of the day
that humanity turns to the
inner path, to the light of truth?
But let it be whenever it wants to...
I will exert myself
as if that time did already come.’

These words were spoken by Zarathustra. When we place them in the context of human history, we might say that at that moment a new light impulse penetrated creation. These light impulses cause certain periodical developments in humanity, with alternating genesis, bloom and decline.

THE PROTO-BULGARIANS

Through their efforts, the great sages of India and Egypt assisted humanity on its way to the light. In the course of time, a similar impulse was brought to Southeast Europe via Arab Asia Minor and via the Persian-Chaldaean region. The history of the Asian desert steppes, the inaccessible plateaus, criss-crossed with crevices, where India, China, the Mongolian steppes and Siberia meet, is veiled in mists, but the archaeological sites increasingly reveal their secrets.

When we follow the road to Europe that the early Bulgarian tribes – the so-called Proto-Bulgarians – travelled, we also reach Central Asia. There the Altai



Range, with its foothills in the Gobi Desert, can be found. The Gobi Desert, which is sometimes considered the spiritual heart of the world, hides many mysteries. It is said that all spiritual impulses originate there. It seems as if the people from the sphere of influence of this region have to guard a special heritage. Again and again, ancient records mention spiritually highly developed nomads, who came from the east and had an inspiring and formative effect on the nations with which they came into contact. They assisted these nations on their way to new possibilities, to enlightenment and brotherhood.

It was the time of the nomads and semi-nomads who didn't acknowledge any established borders. The Proto-Bulgarians formed a loose alliance of tribes which lived as semi-nomads. They purportedly were skilful and courageous fighters, whose territory was situated in the huge semicircle between the Asian-Siberian Altai Range and the high mountains, the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush, bordering India and China. The names of

places and tribes like Bulgar, Bougou, Bulgan or Bulkor, which are sometimes still used, refer to the Proto-Bulgarians inhabiting these regions. The meaning of the word is approximately ‘mixture’ or ‘mixed’. What was mixed here?

Ancient chronicles describe that the Bulgarian tribes first migrated to India.¹ Did the Proto-Bulgarians belong to the descendants of the Aryan semi-nomads, who migrated via the legendary Khyber Pass in the Hindu Kush from Afghanistan and the South Russian steppes to India during much earlier times² and who wanted to return to the west at the end of the sixth century? During this early period, other tribes from the steppes migrated via Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in Asia Minor to Persia, to Mesopotamia and the lower regions of the Volga (the name Volga also derives from Bulgar), to the Caucasus and further to present-day Bulgaria.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SILK ROUTE

There were certainly very ancient trade routes linking the Middle East with the Far East, all of which ran through the Asian-Siberian steppe deserts. The Proto-Bulgarians were freedom-loving people who maintained a lively trade and cultural exchange with their neighbours. They were also open to new ways of life and the new movements of their time. In many ways, they mixed with the surrounding peoples. They assimilated the heritage of the ancient races and took it along to Europe on their westbound journey. This is one of the ways in which the late classical Manichaean and gnostic impulses came to the west during the sixth



and seventh century. European thinking was to a large extent determined by it, even if it reached us via long detours.

During the subsequent centuries, the Bulgarians maintained their open contacts with other nations and they built ever more cities and established states. They were so successful that in the course of time powerful empires emerged (Caucasus, Volga estuary, Thrace). Through the mixture of Slav tribes from North Bulgaria and the Proto-Bulgarians, who migrated to the region of the Danube estuary after 679 AD, the Bulgarian nation was created. Gradually, it gave up its nomadic existence and a state was founded, and the Greek-Byzantine culture (combined with Christianity) gained ever more influence.

The culture of the steppes was longest preserved by the military aristocracy. The



Early-Bulgarian settlements between 700 BC and 700 AD and the migration of the peoples who inhabited Thrace, 'the light land of the spirit', since 2000-1000 BC. © A & V Fol, The Thracians, 2005.

talent for government and diplomacy mainly stemmed from the spiritual tolerance they possessed. All manuscripts emphasise how skilfully they integrated and used the different movements.³ This is why they attracted again and again groups of people, who were often persecuted by their own government for religious reasons, and they always remained loyal to the meaning of their name. This is the reason why also Christian communities were taken up into the empire ever since. The mixture of the dualistic Manichaean movements and the first forms of Christianity in the Balkan provided the ideal breeding ground for the development of the freedom-loving Bogomils, who were aspiring for the inner kingdom of the spirit.

SOURCES:

- ¹ Rudolf Kuntzli, *Die Bogomilen* (The Bogomils). Verlag Urachhaus, Stuttgart, 1977, p. 130.
- ² J van Rijckenborgh and Catharose de Petri, *The Brotherhood of Shamballa*. Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, 1953, p. 9 ff.
- ³ Alexander Fol, *The Bulgarians: Atlas*. TANGRA, Sofia, 2001, p. 46 ff.

A TURBULENT MELTING POT

'My celebration is the remembrance of what was the Golden Age... once, in another world!'

What do we still know today about Thrace, the land in which Orpheus tamed wild animals with the seven tones of his lyre? It is a harsh, mountainous region to the north of Greece with legendary gold and silver treasures, where Dionysus, the strange god of ecstasy and inspiration, was born. Prehistoric people worshipped this land as the holy mountain mother.¹

What do we still know today about the Dionysian mysteries, of which the singers sang: 'Be well-disposed towards us, oh exalter of the female. At the end of our efforts, we sing of you. And he who fails to remember you will never sing your holy song! And so, farewell Dionysus, the indwelling one, with your mother Semele whom people call Thyone...'

THE THRACIANS

To the ancient Greeks, Thrace was the land of wisdom, because to them, the North meant 'the direction of wisdom'. It was the region in which Dionysus, the son of the Mother Goddess, preserved the knowledge of the coherence between the nature of the cosmos, the gods and humanity. Together with Apollo, he is 'the Son'. If Apollo is the

sun being, Dionysus is the divine earth, one with the sphere of the sun.

Since approx. 4000 BC, the Thracians inhabited a region which comprises present-day Bulgaria, Romania, northern Greece and Turkey. Orpheus, the son of the sun god Apollo, one of the most important precursors of the Christian mysteries, was a son of Thrace too. Thousands of years ago, this 'singer' or messenger purportedly established a religion which already contained the comforting idea of death and rebirth. He is mentioned for the first time in the sixth century BC. He was called 'radiantly famous', which testifies to a centuries-old oral tradition. The mysteries and their customs were the direct precursors of the worship in which bread and wine symbolise *spiritual* ecstasy – enlightenment. Originally, these services intended to enable the human being to partake of the universal elements, the pure ethers of the Supernature.

There are striking similarities between the myth of Dionysus and the Egyptian myth of Osiris! Both Dionysus and Osiris were sacrificed. And just as Osiris' corpse was hidden in the Nile, the river of life, Dionysus was constantly torn apart by his own servants, and his solar spirit was dispersed 'over the hills, valleys and mountain tops', so that everything could be reborn.² After Orpheus' death, his message fell into oblivion for a long time, a state which formed the breeding ground

Right, bottom:
The twelve gilded stripes on the cheek of the 'great Mother Goddess', represent the tattoos that every Maenadic priestess wore as a sign of her link to Dionysus' fate. Approx. 400 BC. © The Thracians, A & V Fol, 2005.



Above: Rider/hero; fragment of a 23-part bridle representing the Dionysian initiation myth. Centre, bottom: Since the time of these mysteries, the hart symbolises the self-sacrifice of Dionysus, the *son of the sun*. Only the rider/king/priest is allowed to inflict suffering on the animal; this act symbolises the self-sacrifice of Dionysus, who was torn apart in order to make the earth live through his dispersed 'vital power'. Centre, top: The 'great Mother Goddess' crowns the rider/hero. © The Thracians, A & V Fol, 2005.





for future developments, which subsequently strongly influenced the mythical thinking in Greece and Persia.

In antiquity, the Dionysian mysteries were also called the Orphic mysteries, which had already spread from Crete to Thrace and from West Asia to Macedonia since 2000 BC. They were formed by ‘enthusiastic’ expressions of the masses and an ‘ecstatic’ experience of the initiates. The masses hoped to be purified by the divine exaltation and to be protected from evil. The initiates knew that they were taken up into total, spiritual ‘understanding’ and would be immortal. They therefore observed their rules of strict abstinence.³

In Persia, Zarathustra propagated the idea of the light that overcomes darkness. Dionysus returned in the Greek mysteries. In Eleusis, he combined the *mystae* with the power of the spirit.⁴ It was not without reason that Thrace was called ‘the light land of the Greeks’. Possibly, this vast region preserved in its ether spheres the remembrance of the events in the mystery schools of prehistoric times, as slumbering, magnetic effects which were waiting for a new era of manifestation.

For thousands of years, Thrace had been an important melting pot of cultures owing to its geographical location between East and West.⁵ Trade, and also the numerous big and small wars, promoted intercultural processes by which many nations – and their spiritual ideas – mixed. Persian and Chaldaean wisdom and Buddhist teachings were combined with the wisdom of Greece and Asia Minor.⁶ Even Celtic Druids reached the country and left their traces behind, after which the Greeks and finally the Romans made Thrace part of their empire.

A TRUE MELTING POT

At the beginning of the Christian era, nomads from the Asian steppes with a certain spiritual background peacefully mingled with the Thracians. During the sixth and seventh centuries, Proto-Bulgarian and Uigurian peoples coming from the region around the Volga estuary and from the Caucasus merged with the local population and not only brought governmental renewal, but also a variation of Manichaean Christianity, welcomed by different groups in society. From the north, Slav tribes came to the region and settled in Thrace as well. In this situation, the Bulgarians created a mighty empire during the seventh century. This melting pot became a state which rapidly developed into a great empire, not in the last place because a wise policy based on tolerance was pursued. A hundred years later, the Paulicians, Armenians banished from Turkey, brought along their Gnostic ideas which fell on fertile ground and could prosper in countless ways.⁷

This brief survey shows that Orphic Thrace harboured some important – though historically underexposed – elements of Europe’s spiritual development. In these people, the spiritual impulses from earlier periods lived on. Innate autonomy and a desire for freedom enabled them to fathom the depth of the Christian Gnosis much more clearly than through the image of Christ propagated by Rome. On this soul basis, the mystery of the Christ could be approached and fathomed; but this free-thinking mentality also gave rise to endless conflicts with the political and religious rulers, who were, not without reason, afraid of losing their power.

Bulgaria was influenced by Christianity, but initially certainly not by Rome or

Byzantium. These impulses rather came ‘from the ranks’, from the contact with Gnostic movements. During the ninth century, many religious writings – among which the Bible – were translated into Bulgarian, thus becoming accessible to the masses. This is even more remarkable as the ordinary people were not supposed to read the Bible, because this was the task of the priests...

When, in 864 AD, Christianity was declared the official religion, a huge discrepancy came to light between the living religion, exemplified by people who helped the population in any way possible and the paternalism in spiritual matters by the new state church. This stimulated a movement, labelled an anti-church by Rome, whose followers courageously and uncompromisingly walked a path of inner knowledge. Although this movement organised itself only very loosely, it became a brotherhood⁸ which spread all over of the Southern Balkans and far beyond. What gave these people the courage not to be influenced by the threats of the church and the restrictions by the state?

They were called Bogomils, ‘Friends of God’. What did their faith imply and why were they so dangerous for both church and state? The Bogomils recognised the fallen state of the world in which they lived, and they knew that true insight is only born from absolute inner freedom. Only this freedom can bring about unconditional love for all beings and creatures. This all-embracing love is the absolute prerequisite for Gnostic Christianity which awaits the ‘kingdom’, the original human field of life.⁹ Moreover, these people did not accept the representatives of the church as their leaders, because they exemplified a life contrary to what they preached. The ‘Friends of God’ remained independent.

Three different holy places.

Top: The entrance to the rock sanctuary Tangardik Kaya near Kurdjali. This is the cave, where the ‘Great Mother Goddess and her Son, the Sun’ were worshipped. The sanctuary was also used as an observatory and for determining the summer and winter solstices.

Centre: The chair of the oracle of Orpheus at Perperikon near the border between Bulgaria and Greece.
© Pentagram.

Bottom: Stairs, hewn in the rocks, lead to the more than three thousand years old sacrificial place near the village of Ovchevo in the Kurdjali district, where ritual baths, the precursors of the Christian baptism, took place. When the first stairs were worn out, a new one was carved next to it. Photo 1 and 3: © The Thracians, A & V Fol, 2005.

On obedience

Before mounting the ladder's first great rung, the human being must listen to the inner voice to thus find the self.

Before you can listen to your inner being, you shut out all external sounds.

And this was reason enough for Rome and Byzantium to feel threatened and to censure this vital faith as 'Bulgarian heresy'. It did not take long for persecution and extermination to begin. In the course of these events, the great Bulgarian empire weakened until it was finally conquered by the onrushing Turks and vast parts became Islamised during the fourteenth century.

The Bogomil school of thought is still vibrating in modern Bulgaria as a largely externalised tradition, of which we can still find the traces in the form of traditional customs in the countryside. The Bogomils had many painful experiences and had to live in permanent uncertainty. The path of development followed by the Bogomils got many things going in South-east Europe and not only influenced the religious and cultural development on the Balkan, but also via various 'routes' all of Europe.

In our time, there is unrest in almost any part of the world. The whole world is a melting pot. We, too, bear the experiences of many centuries and cultures with us. Depending on the aspects that are stimulated in our respiration field, the memory of the inner knowledge can break through in our inner being.

The conflicts in the present-day world – wherever they occur – contribute to this

as well. The world is becoming smaller. The world and humanity increasingly sense their unity. And many people begin to show their readiness to learn their lesson and to open themselves to new experiences.

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¹ Nikolai Rainov: *Im Land der Geister und Dämonen* (In the land of spirits and demons), translated from Bulgarian by Lotte Markowa. Sofia, Sofia Press, 1980.

² Alexander Fol et al. *Die Thraker, Das goldene Reich des Orpheus* (The Thracians – Orpheus' golden kingdom), exhibition catalogue 2004. Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz 2004, p. 177.

³ *ibid.*, p. 323.

⁴ Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling: *Philosophie der Offenbarung* (Philosophy of the Revelation). Cotta'scher Verlag 1858, 21st lecture.

⁵ Alexander Fol, Valeria Fol, *The Thracians*. Tangra TanNakRa. All Bulgarian Foundation, 2005. ISBN 954-9717-18-6.

⁶ Hermann Ament et al.: *Frühe Völker Europas* (Europe's ancient peoples). Konrad Theiss Verlag, Stuttgart 2003, p. 9.

⁷ Katja Papisov, *Christen oder Ketzler, die Bogomilen* (Christians or heretics, the Bogomils). Ogham Verlag Stuttgart, 1983, pp. 25, 42.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 19.

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 112.

¹⁰ Jordan Ivanov: *Livres et Légendes Bogomiles* (Bogomil books and legends). Paris. 1976, p. 53.



A riddle FROM THE EAST

*The serpent has seven daughters
The first one is asleep as if petrified –
she does not see anything
The second one is deeply asleep –
she sees multicoloured mists before her eyes
The third one sees dreams and images from afar
The fourth one sees everything around her
The fifth one sees the souls
The sixth one sees the gods
The seventh one sees the sun
The serpent has seven daughters*

The tree-of-life stecci at Radimlja (near Stolac) in Herzegovina. Christ says: 'I am the vine, you are the branches.' © K Papasov, Christen und Ketzler (Christians and heretics), 1983.

The sun rises in the east, and also the sun of the spirit, of which it is the symbol, approaches humanity from the east. It is said that all true spiritual leaders of humanity come from the east. The east symbolises the field of life of the divine reality, which consists of totally different elements than our world. It is eternal and perfect. The longing radiating from the centre of the human system, from the primordial atom, ascends to this field.

The West European human being is inclined to nurture a profound antipathy towards the serpent, because he knows it from the creation story in the Old Testament. Wasn't it the serpent that persuaded Eve to eat 'the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' and give Adam of it, too? But notice the symbolism of the serpent: the serpent is the soul, the consciousness living in the head *and* in the human spinal canal. Even its form resembles a serpent. Through Jesus, the universal teachings of wisdom also state: 'Be wise as serpents.' To truly understand this, we must raise ourselves above the dusty, earthly point of view. Behind the words from the Bible, both the Old and the New Testament, the true knowledge of 'the human fall' is hidden. It is unveiled for the human being who is found on the path to his original fatherland. On this path, he experiences that the symbol of the serpent can also have another meaning.

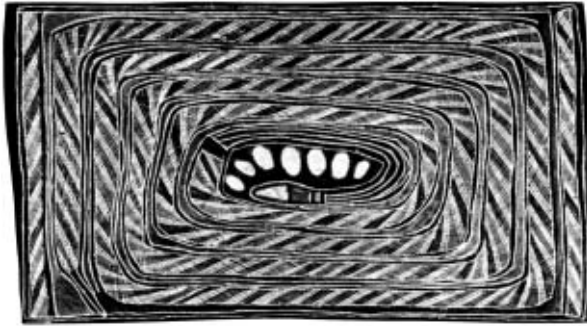
How and when were these truths, hidden in symbols, planted in our inner being? To approach this mystery, we must realise that all visible energy consists of vibrations. The primordial serpent from long before the familiar mysteries (see the image of the serpent that winds around the Tau symbol) – initially symbolising the purest energy – has degenerated to a being that binds the human being to the world of matter. When we see this before us, we also recognise the symbol of the seven-headed dragon arising from the water floods – the defiled realm of life of the soul: a many-headed monster that seems invincible and can only be defeated by a hero!

A symbol is a sign with which power im-

Through the ages, the serpent has always had a great symbolic significance. With the Australian aboriginals, we find images of serpents in rock drawings that are over 20,000 years old. They represent the 'heavenly serpent' as two intertwined serpents, with their heads turned upward, which is very similar to the Caduceus, Hermes' serpent staff. The original inhabitants believed that the serpent symbolised the God-given energy, and they called this power the serpent life power, corresponding to the Indian concept of *kundalini*. A direct link was assumed with the bird that symbolised the flight of the soul to the spirit. In his book *Voices of the First Day. Awakening in the Aboriginal Dreamtime*, Lawlor writes: 'The serpent is the rainbow of energy. This serpent is the oldest-known cosmological model of universal energy as a spectrum. The electromagnetic spectrum is a radiation field extending from gamma rays to radio waves. Only a small part of this energy is visible: the spectrum of the seven colours of daylight. All radiations have the same speed and electromagnetic nature; the sole difference is determined by frequency and wavelength. The rainbow serpent is a profound metaphor of the unity between the tangible and the invisible worlds.'

The Egyptians knew the Bennu bird, the symbol of the resurrection of the soul. An Egyptian story that was passed down orally through the ages, dealt with a famous serpent, according to the author Cyrianus in 252 AD. 'The great serpent was the guardian of the temple. How often did we not repeat that the symbol was not a personification, but a real serpent in which a god dwelt? And we declare that we, just as thousands of other visitors, saw an enormous serpent in a temple in Cairo, which had lived there for ages and which was shown much respect.'

pulses are linked. They represent truths of a higher level of vibration, which we can only surmise with our consciousness that vibrates at a lower level. The power concentrated in it reveals the path, on which the fall may be turned into a



Some Australian tribes worship the rainbow serpent Julungul as their divine creator and bringer of culture. Drawing on tree bark by Dowdi from Millinginby, Arnhemland. © Kerry Dundas, Hamlyn Picture Library.

resurrection. The wisdom of the original source of life is often represented as a serpent, as the purest energy a human being can achieve. It is one aspect of infinite divinity. This energy addresses the human consciousness as light, as insight, and also as a certain rest. This is why a human being can recognise the dormant state of the primordial atom, the divinity within him.

When a human being understands this, he receives the biggest chance of his life. Then he has the opportunity to make a new soul, formed from original powers, develop through the awakening of the primordial atom. Then a 'hero' is born! In the classical sense of the word, a hero is always 'the son of God and a human being.' If 'human being' and 'God' (the spirit-spark atom) merge, this young hero grows: the 'new man', who is pervaded of the spirit, develops in the gnostic radiation. This path of development is described in the Bogomil poem. The seven daughters of the serpent symbolise the seven different stages of the soul. The process of its awakening occurs in seven stages.

In the first stage, a deathlike sleep is described, the blind petrification. The second stage describes the soul that hears the call from the divine field of life, which announces itself as a vague notion. In the third stage, the soul is shown the path that may lead it to its true destiny, as in a dream. In the fourth stage, the soul achieves an initial form of consciousness. It experiences that it finds itself in a hardly envi-

able position: bound to blind matter and separated from the primordial source. On the fifth level, the soul sees. It is one with all and knows that unity is the true goal of all souls. On the sixth level, it enters, as reborn soul, the field of the universal brotherhood: the true realm of life of humanity. The dream world is gradually removed, until the soul ultimately wakes up on the seventh level in the light of the spirit.

In this way, this veiled poem describes not only a development and does not only reveal a path, but at the same time contains a promise, because: The seventh daughter sees the sun.

The ancient Egyptians saw the universal energy as a serpent in which a god dwelt. It was called Khepra. This serpent, the power of this serpent that represents the original divine energy, is a part of us.

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A pearl of light in the chain of the universal brotherhood



Regions lying at the crossroads of various spheres of interest and power will involuntarily 'colour' on the basis of the cultures that touch them. In this way, often a whole new culture develops that is a combination of them, with its own language and its own, unmistakable values and norms.

This is typical of the Balkan region. It is a cross-roads; it has links with Turkey and, through it, with Persia, China and India in the East and with Slovenia, Austria, Germany and France in the West. To the North it has relationships with Russia and Scandinavia and to the South with Asia Minor and Africa. The trade routes intersect in the Balkans. Thus, various impulses of civilisation and religious movements have influenced this region.

When the influence of the astrological Age of Taurus lessened, the ancient mysteries also faded. The era of trance-like or personal initiation, guided by priests or masters, had abundantly flourished, but a new phase announced itself. However, the collective psyche of the various peoples had been greatly influenced by the traditions and rituals of the castes of the priests, and they tried to maintain their position by force. There was hardly a ruler who was not dependent on them. In the Age of Aries, which was characterised by legalistic structures and regulations (the Law, the Tables of Stone), the religion of the fire developed. Aries is a fire sign. With the approach of the Age of Pisces, new religions developed that focused on the awakening thinking faculty: the human being as an individual becomes conscious of his place in the cosmos. These religions taught that God is one, and they released humanity from the energy structures of polytheism.

From approximately 600 BC, Taoism devel-

oped in China and Buddhism in India. Egypt knew the Gnosis of Hermes Trismegistus, and later, (esoteric) Christianity developed in Asia Minor. If we want to understand the radical changes of this period, we must look at it in the context of the development of the consciousness. Within the collective tribal and family structures, the development of the ego, of the individual, gradually began to take shape. The sudden realisation of 'I am', which Odysseus experienced in Homer's *Odyssey*, marks this point. The group-I, which is unable to see itself outside the context of the family or the group, gradually disappears. It is just as gradually replaced by the self-conscious ego of our time. And this is a temporary phase as well. At all levels, the blood ties became less restrictive, and the individuals, taking their own decisions, saw state and religion increasingly as institutions. For those seeking a road to religious liberation, a new possibility arose. The Gnostics taught that the individual human being has a spark of the divine consciousness within himself, which enables him to become part of the divine life field again. Each of us can only release it within himself.

The Gnostics established a new form of schools, in which the seeking human being was assisted in gaining insight into the path to the original life. This path had been described in various places in the universal wisdom, among other things in the New Testament.

Bulgaria was one gate by which the gnostic

Of distinction

Acquaint yourself with the wide road of human suffering and you will understand that suffering is born from longing.

Make it your habit to ask with every desire, thought or sensory perception: 'Is this real? What is real?' For elements of reality can be found (though far away) in everything unreal.

Always distinguish between the miserable knowledge of the mind and the light facts of the spirit, which are the fruits of acquired wisdom. Observe your thoughts carefully: do they contain the beginning of wisdom or is only the mind spreading its wings?

Picture of Matthew, the Evangelist, in a manuscript by the Bogomil Hval, currently in the museum in Bologna (Italy). © K. Papasov, Christen und Ketzer (Christians and Heretics).

Page 16: Anthropomorphous stele in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

teachings entered Europe. For some centuries, these teachings experienced a Golden Age in the Balkans. For all kinds of reasons, the collective memory of the European continent did not hold on to it very well, and only a handful of interested people have studied this matter. From the ninth through the fourteenth(!) century, the groups, known collectively as 'Bogomils', acquainted many people from all strata of the population with a different Christianity and with the liberating power of the Gnosis.

The ancient stream of the teachings of Mani's wisdom, which once extended to China in the east and as far as Spain in the west, formed the basis for the development of the various movements, among which that of the Bogomils. Originating from the soil of mediaeval Bulgaria, the Bogomil movement showed all the characteristics of its time. It does not imply following or imitating one movement, but it demonstrates to be strongly inspired by original Christianity. The various expressions of 'mediaeval Manichaeism in the Balkans' have the common aim of keeping the Christ impulse pure and free from any dogmatism. The Bogomils possessed a great sense of freedom, and rebelled against the feudal structures that exploited the people. Their spiritual insight and their way of life – which formed a great contrast with that of the authorities of church and state – had a great attraction for the ordinary people of the whole of the Balkans. Even in times of persecution, they continued their work in secret, whenever possible. At a certain moment, their leaders came into contact with the Cathars in Occitania, which at the time also comprised large parts of Northern Italy, Switzerland and Northern Spain. These movements were branches of the same gnostic tree, not identical,

but rooted in the same ground.

The torch of the Gnosis was carried ever further; its fire has been preserved throughout time. It often flared up high and at other times burned underground, when the circumstances of a certain period did not allow open fire. Many people walked the path, while others only had the mission to show the direction of the path. Their names are buried under the sand of history. But they are written indelibly in the book of the Brotherhood of the Light, the Chain of Brotherhoods which accomplishes the liberating work throughout time.

In our time, people grow ever closer both through external communication and inwardly. And many people know or suspect deep within, from an unknown source, that the world and humanity exist in a fallen state and that the path of liberation must be walked. They try to realise this liberation in their social and personal circumstances and achieve an active link with divinity.



BOGOMIL,
Bogomil, a voice of the rightless and oppressed

‘During the reign of [...] Tsar Peter (10th century), there was a pope named Bogomil who was the first one who began to propagate his heretic teachings in Bulgaria [...]’

We can read this in a treatise directed against the Bogomils. The little we know about Bogomil almost completely stems from the pens of his enemies. In an old Bulgarian document, he is the only one to be cursed two or three times; this shows that he was feared by the official church and how great the impact of his activities must have been: a whole gnostic movement was named after him. Because he was on the index of forbidden authors, he must have spread his teachings in written form. He was described as an exceptionally courageous and intelligent man who had a great influence on his fellow human beings.

He started as an orthodox priest and was close to the people. He became deeply disappointed with official Christianity. In it, pseudo-elevated rituals played an important part, which had shifted the emphasis to the form. In this way, it had become far removed from its origin: a living faith for people by which they were able to link their soul to the kingdom of heaven through all aspects of life.

Bogomil was certainly not the only one who experienced this. Nor was he the founder of the so-called ‘Dragovian church’, but we can consider him the representative of those who propagated its teachings. It is said that he adapted the Paulician teachings and included Manichaean ideas.

He summarised these teachings in their pure form. At the time, they formed the basis of the Bulgarian church or the Dragovian church. We may see them as the two main streams within an extensive network of loosely connected ‘brotherhoods’, which more or less accepted the same points of departure and tried to live according to the same principles. Bogomil can be seen as its radiant focal point.

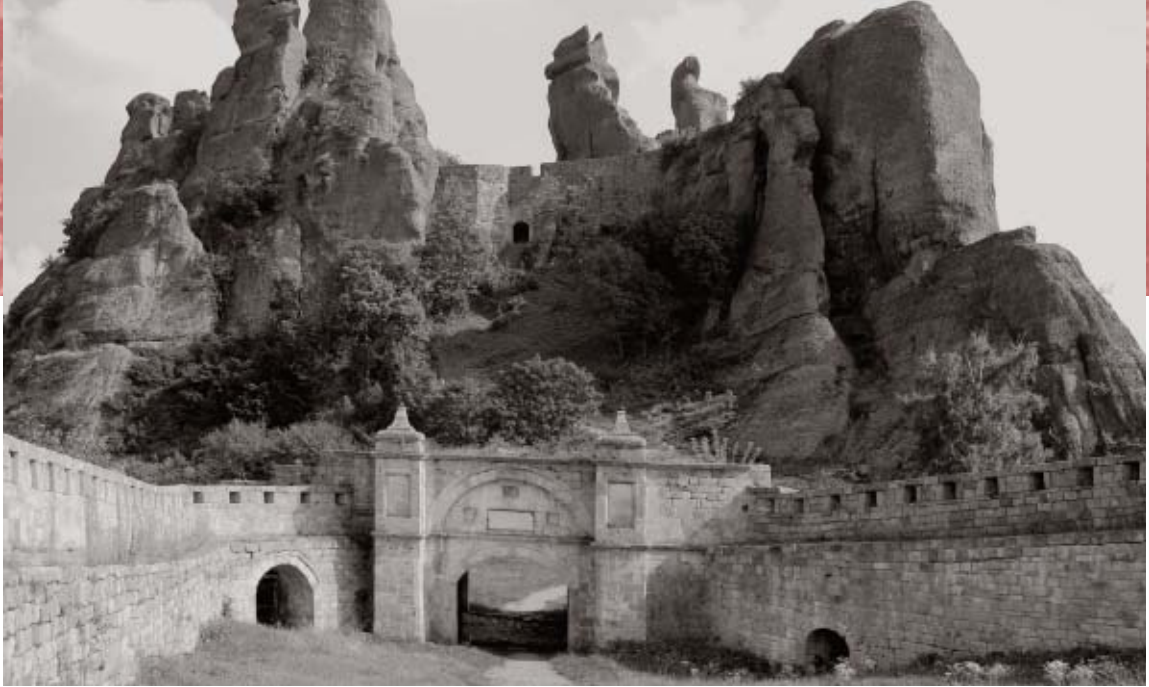
Just like many other people, Bogomil con-

demned the feudal arbitrariness and the oppression of simple people by church and state. He shared the ideas of the many gnostic groups that were active in the southern Balkans, and the insight that there are two separate life fields was an essential aspect of his teachings. He called upon his followers to become ‘theotókos’, ‘those giving birth to God’.

He expressed the right to freedom and the desire for the salvation of the soul for the rightless and oppressed who could not speak for themselves. He recorded the insight that there are two principles in a human being, an earthly and a heavenly one, and that the heavenly principle in a human being will triumph. We read in a Bogomil text:

‘The body we bear is a creation of darkness; our soul that inhabits it, however, is the first man and the seed of the light. The first man who triumphed in the land of darkness, will now also triumph in his mortal body. The living spirit that irradiated the first man is now also our comforter: the consolamentum.’

We do not know whether Bogomil fell into the hands of his persecutors or whether he was able to remain in the background or go into hiding. All written testimonies of him have apparently been destroyed. But it could not be prevented that his teachings were reflected in the literature of his time. With his help, the Bogomils succeeded in interweaving the essence of their faith as myths and legends with Bulgarian literature. Parts of their faith can be traced in fairytales, songs and poems. They caused gnostic wisdom to unfold again, not only in Bulgaria, but in many parts of Europe and Asia, and thus made it accessible again to many people. They un-



Thirteenth-century fortifications in the mountains near Belogradchik, northwest of Sofia. © Pentagram

leashed a revolution during the Middle Ages, and forced the church of that time to show its true face, the face of an institution that linked religion with power and that wrote one of its darkest pages with its reaction to the gnostic movements of those days.

THE LIGHT WILL ALWAYS TRIUMPH

Bogomil's teachings were called dualistic by the representatives of the official church. It should be considered that, in this context, dualism is nothing but cheap, heretical polemics, by which the dogmatic theologians tried to pin on the Gnostics that they were linked to a realm of darkness, which these Gnostics purportedly placed opposite the kingdom of God. However, the true message of any gnostic system that is called dualistic is the message of the victory of light over darkness.

Contrary to all accusations, Bogomil and many unnamed followers proclaimed that there is one divine, primordial principle. Dualism originated when Satanael, the most important angel, decided to cultivate his own world. Thus he went against the divine, primordial principle and created an earth, a world and a human being, and thus became the principle of evil, Satan. However, it is a temporary dualism, because Satan

will be defeated by the light and his world will be undone.

The unity of the light is broken in the dark dualism with its opposite poles. Not once, long ago, but still every day. The law of dualism drives us through life, through space and time, until we gain insight into our state of captivity and are prepared to overcome this state. Then the hidden light, in which we recognise the truth, will begin to shine in us and we remove the illusion of duality.

In an old Bogomil prayer it is said:

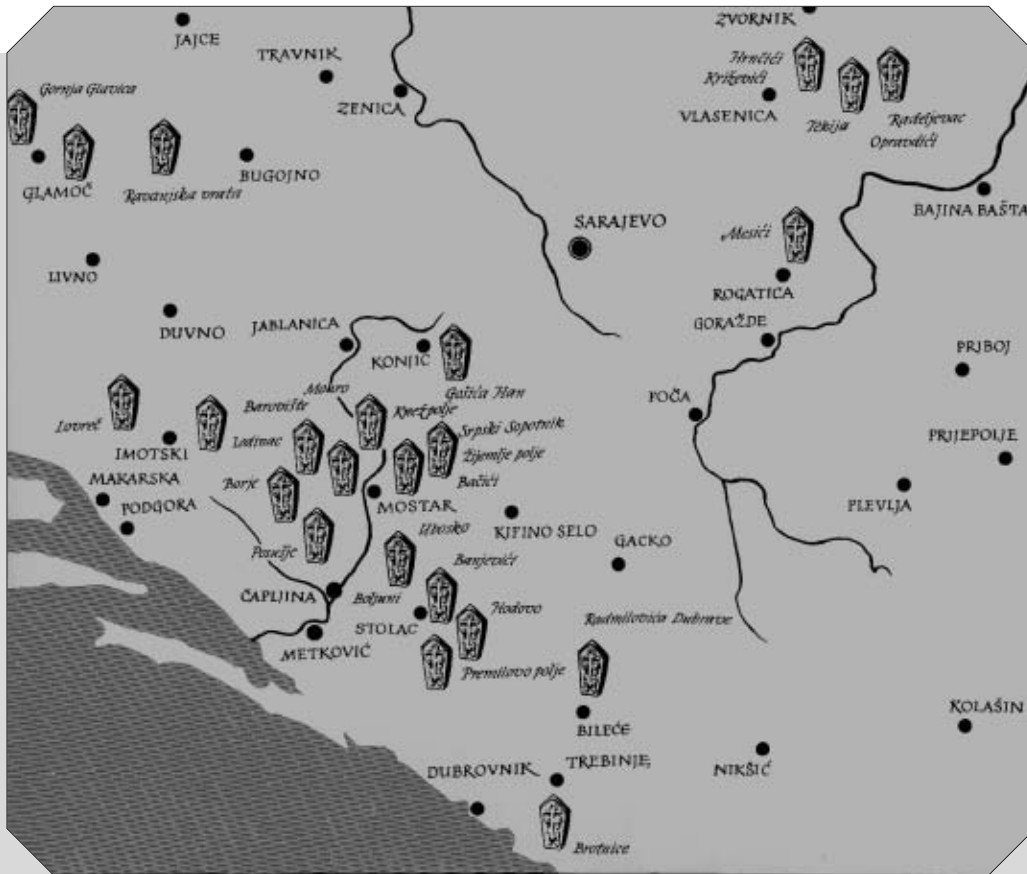
*'Purify me, my God.
Purify me inwardly and outwardly.
Purify body, soul and spirit,
so that the light germs within me may grow
and cause me to become a torch.
Let me become a flame that changes everything
within me and around me into light.'*

Literature: see pages 7, 12 and 31.

Testimonies in stone

Bogomil taught that a human being can be a Theotókos: a human being who allows God to be born from himself. This is expressed in a particular way by a few groups of ancient stone monuments that can be found at the most idyllic places in Herzegovina and Bosnia, in regions to which the followers of spiritual Christianity, the Bogomils and other groups, ultimately withdrew, caught between Orthodox and Roman Christianity, and more than once attacked by Muslim armies.





Left: Oplifici near Stolac.

Left page: 'The knight with the raised hand', one of the 133 steles in the necropolis near Radimlja (near Stolac) in Herzegovina, © K. Papisov, Christen und Ketzer, 1983.

Below: Hart and knight. Stele at Lovrec, Imotska Krajina, South Dalmatia.

Those monuments bear images, partly carved in relief and supplemented by simple, archaic, scratched drawings. Yet, these small stone creations touch a cord; they are impressive in their simplicity. Who created these stones and what is their meaning?

Science offers various explanations. Scientists usually claim that these stones are burial stones; that they form a kind of 'necropolis', but hardly ever human remains have been found there. It is generally assumed that these stones were carved by the Bogomils, which is the reason that they were called Bogomil stones. It is said that they were produced during times of persecution, between 1150 and 1500 AD. Nowadays, some people

assume that they are much older. They show similarities to the expressions of Neolithic culture.¹ These stones give us an impression of the faith of these gnostic groups, and their message may give us wings on our path.



FIGHTERS FOR THE LIGHT

A huge, monumental stone is standing in Radimlja cemetery near Stolac. The images carved in this stone become gradually clearer to the beholder. Depending on the position of the sun, we see on the left hand side a huge figure wearing a mail armour and boots. Above his raised arms, to the left and the right of the head, we see a circle with a notch and a bow and arrow. Below, we see two smaller figures and on the right hand side, a large shield and a sword.

We may interpret this as a fighter for the kingdom of the light. He overcomes evil within himself and in this way is cleansed of the powers of darkness. Through this light power and in the power of the divine love, he protects his pupils, who are symbolised by the two smaller figures, and he helps them on their path to the original life. In a blessing gesture, he spreads his arms, but simultaneously protects the sanctuary from those who want to approach it without the required purification. He is a 'perfectus', an initiate.

In the same way, also the sword and the shield can be interpreted as symbols, as 'weapons of the light', as 'the shield of the power of faith' and as 'the sword of the

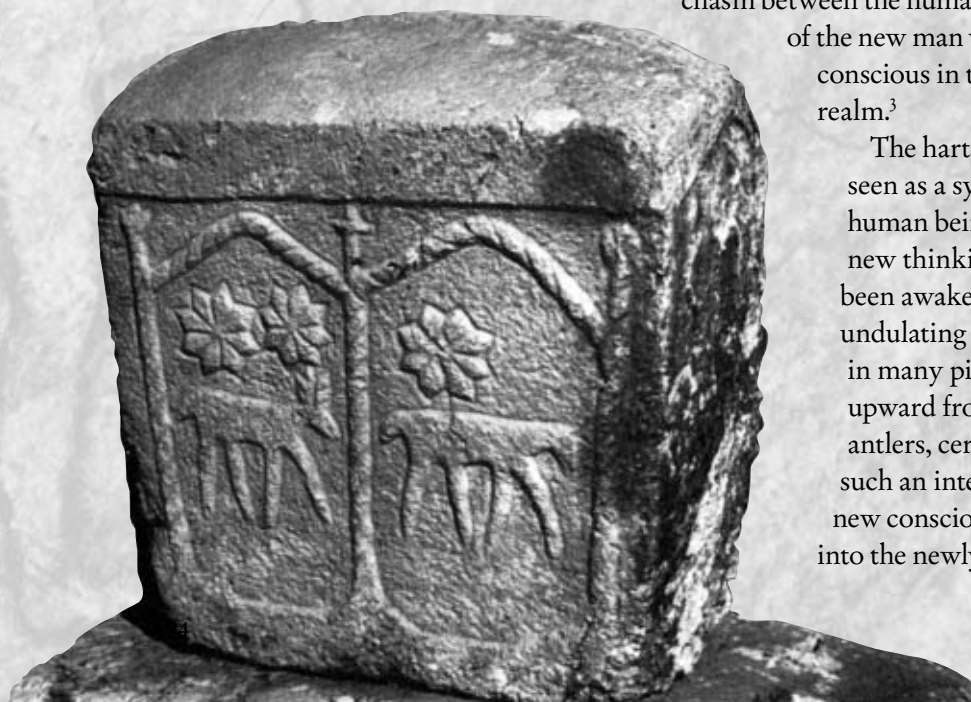
spirit'. The bow, too, belongs to the attributes of a spiritual fighter, who has practised on his path of initiation and has demonstrated to be able to accurately neutralise the counterforces. The 'perfectus' lives through the link with the light powers. This is confirmed by the circle, above his head on the right, which symbolises eternity. An undulating line above the fighter refers to the eternal alternation of being and becoming; the three leaves symbolise the continuously active trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.²

THE HART

On many ancient stone monuments, a hart is carved as a powerful symbol. The Bogomil sculptors often used, for example on the Konjic stone, the image of this noble animal 'that longs for flowing streams'. It inadvertently makes us think of the cry of a soul that 'wakes up', achieves consciousness, in a realm that is alien to it. A human being, with his arms and head in a position of prayer and reaching for a hart, kneels next to a stylised tree. The distance between the kneeling human being and the hart is large. The whole image expresses the chasm between the human state and that of the new man who has become conscious in the divine realm.³

The hart may also be seen as a symbol of the human being, in whom the new thinking faculty has been awakened! The undulating lines and circles, in many pictures pointing upward from the hart's antlers, certainly allow such an interpretation: the new consciousness radiates into the newly opened space

Tombstone,
presently in the
museum in Split.





My first word, brother, reads: 'If you do not offer help, you will not receive help. Develop while helping someone else. Fertilise the feminine within you, sons of barrenness. The way cannot be revealed through standards or dogmas. Do not seek rules. Withdraw into your inner being and seek the path, my brother! Learn the complicated and difficult art of *staying within yourself*.'

and becomes one with the all-manifestation.

It is represented in yet another way by a beautiful stone with a very different power of expression, which can be seen in the museum in Split. On it, two harts demonstrate the unmistakable peace and harmony of the soul that has come home in the 'sphere of the stars'. These images are very similar to those of the ancient Orphic world of ideas, in which the hart represents the son of the great goddess-mother.⁴

These are symbols that vitalise the message of the divine field of life through their vibrations. We can imagine which purpose these stones and the places where they were found may have served: to be havens in the landscape, in which the various images focused the thinking on the original world. As said before, science does not provide a definite answer to the question of who buried their dead in this place. It is, therefore, rather doubtful whether these places were used in this way, even more so, because hardly ever human remains have been found near these stones. They rather seem to have been power centres, to which the mediaeval seekers withdrew to carry out their spiritual work without being disturbed. If we look at it in this way, we can imagine the concentration of energy contained in the individual stones and in

the fields where many stones are standing together. These vibrations still fill the space. They are not memorial places, but spiritual powerfields that call us to become a *Theotókos*, a 'human being who gives birth to God', a carrier of the light.

LITERATURE:

¹ Similar images have been found at, among other places, Göbekli Tepe, in the most south-eastern part of Turkey. See: Klaus Schmidt, *Sie bauten die ersten Tempel. Das rätselhafte Heiligtum der Steinzeitjäger. Die archäologische Sensation an Göbekli Tepe* (They built the first Temple. The mysterious sanctuary of the Stone Age hunters. The archaeological sensation at Göbekli Tepe). C. H. Beck Verlag, Munich, 2006.

² Rudolf Kutzli, *Die Bogomilen. Geschichte, Kunst, Kultur* (The Bogomils. History, the arts and culture). Verlag Urachhaus, Stuttgart, 1977, p.77 ff.

³ *Ibid.*, p.88, figure 108.

⁴ Eugen Roll, *Ketzer zwischen Orient und Okzident: Patarener, Paulikianer, Bogomilen* (Heretics between East and West: Patarenes, Paulicians, Bogomils). Mellinger, Stuttgart, 1978.

The title The secret book of the Bogomils is certainly apt. Not only does the content entirely agree with the Bogomil ideas and images concerning creation, but at the end of the text, an opponent of the ‘heretics’ has even added a characteristic remark: ‘This is the secret of the heretics of Concorezzo that has been brought from Bulgaria by their bishop Nazarei and is full of deceptions.’”

The short text is a treatise about the original world, the fall, the activity of the saviour and the end of our day of manifestation. The book begins with the words: ‘I, John, your brother, said, when I laid myself in the bosom of our Lord Jesus Christ: “Lord, how glorious was Satan’s position with your father, before his fall?” And he answered: “His glory was such that he ruled over the powers of heaven. And he saw the glory of him who moves the heavens and thought about taking up a place

above the clouds of heaven and making himself equal to the Most High”’

To be able to understand the present-day world, *The secret book of the Bogomils* directs our view immediately to the original world. The spiritual beings are creatively active in realising the divine thoughts. The concept of ‘Satan’ comprises an indefinite number of higher spiritual beings, who are active on the same level of consciousness. *The secret book* speaks of seven heavens, through

Thracian landscape

The origin of evil

The secret book of the Bogomils



which Satan descended, before he entered the earth's sphere. It is said that the angel of air and the angel of water opened the 'gates' of their elements. 'When he continued, he found the entire surface of the earth covered with water. When he arrived "below the earth", he encountered two fishes lying on the water. They were like a team of oxen for ploughing and, at the command of the invisible Father, kept the whole earth back from ruin, until dawn.'

The life wave of the not yet fallen Satan assimilated the thoughts of God and

thus created the original universe. Originating in God, they were meant to create all spheres, be active in them, and ultimately become one with the universal spirit, after the completion of their own development to perfect consciousness. When *The secret book* mentions the elements of the earth, these are not the states of matter as we know them, but pure subtle spheres of the original earth.

'OSSOP' OR BLAZING FIRE

'Below the earth,' the spiritual beings en-

Obelisk in Donja Zgosca in Bosnia, with cosmic symbols and two fishes. © K. Papasov, Christen und Ketzer (Christians and Heretics), 1983

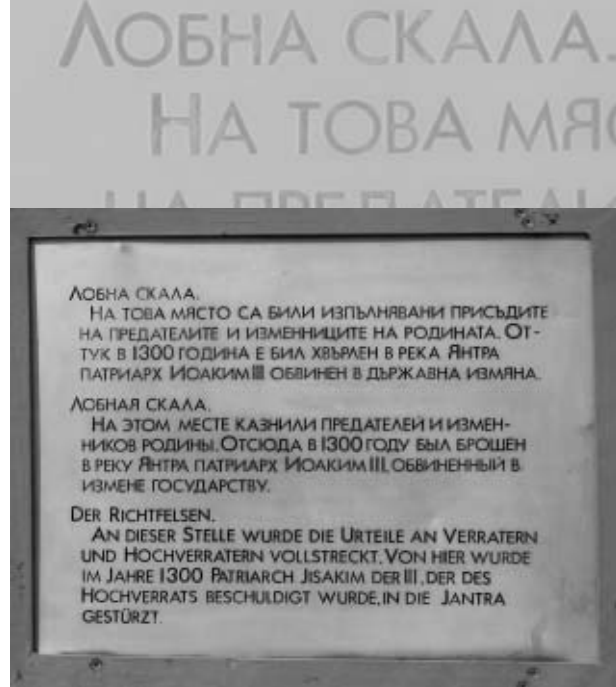
Plato used the expression Demiourgos in his work *Timaeus*, an explanation of the aspects of the cosmos. In this cosmos, the Demiurge is the 'craftsman,' who joins together the existing elements of chaos and models them on the patterns of the eternal forms. He also generates all material things of this world, including the human body. Thus he was never seen as the Creator, who 'creates from nothing,' but was seen as the architect, who shapes and adorns. Plato saw this energy also as the personification of active reason. This expression was later adopted by the Gnostics, who, in their dualistic worldview, symbolised the forces of the undivine as the Demiurge. The Demiurge was held responsible for the creation of the material world which, after all, is transient and continuously changes, and who was placed next to the only-good Deity – 'the gentle stranger'. The secret book of the Bogomils is a dialogue between Jesus and John, his most beloved disciple. The concept 'secret book' was used by the members of the Inquisition, who actually had never seen the book. Only the *perfecti* possessed this book. In scientific circles, this work is also known as *The book of the Holy John* and as Pseudo-gospel. There are two Latin copies, the oldest of which dates from the twelfth century. Most likely, this work was written in the eleventh century in Bulgaria.



countered two principles: the two ‘fishes on the water’, like ‘a team of oxen for ploughing’, who ‘until dawn’ keep the whole earth from ruin.’ Here we see, in a way, the two original principles: positive and negative, as inactive principles of the primordial substance. They work together, are ‘a team’ and give form to the divine creative impulse.

‘And when he continued his descent he found his “ossop” – which is a special kind of fire. Thereafter he could go no further down because of the flames of the burning fire. And Satan returned full of anger.’ Here a special kind of fire is burning indeed! Descending further is impossible. It is the fire of another cosmic plane. The spheres lying ‘above’, the original field of creation, are filled with the unity of all living souls, vibrating and developing within them.

Tree of life stecci
near Radimlja



‘Satan went to the angel of the air and to him who ruled over the water and said to them: “All this is mine. If you obey me, I shall place my seat in the clouds and be equal to the Most High.”’

The substance and freedom of choice of the original beings allow a consciousness seemingly separated from the spirit. They saw the greatness of the divine creation, recognised the tremendous possibilities of its development – and subsequently lost themselves in it and let go of the link with the spirit.

The origin of our world is the dissolution of the unity of spirit and soul. In this sphere, both creative powers – male and female – manifest themselves separately. The beings of this sphere have separated the two forces of the ‘team of oxen’. In all heavenly spheres, angels were dragged along and the ethers, the substance of the spheres in which divine life waves were active, complied. Satan’s beings surrounded themselves with these changed life forces. This inevitably caused the original beings no longer to be able to share the life forces with the fallen creatures. *The secret book* describes this as follows:

‘Then the Father commanded his angels: “Take away their clothing” and



they took away the clothes and crowns from all the angels who had obeyed Satan. And I asked the Lord: “Where did Satan dwell after the fall?” He answered: “In punishment for his arrogance, my father changed his appearance; his radiance was taken away from him and his countenance took on the colour of glowing iron.”

The ‘colour of glowing iron’ is a shade of red that, according to ancient wisdom, develops when the light power of the soul is linked to ‘darkness’. This is symbolised by dusk and the red of dawn, while Satan is also described as the morning star.

According to *The secret book*, Satan asked the Most High for seven days, seven time periods, in which to create his own world. In this world, all spiritual beings could follow any path of experience of their choice. With the help of his angels, Satan created the present world. In this process, he had no option but to use the divine thoughts, which he subsequently executed according to his own insight and intentions.

“The father allowed him to act entirely after his own will for seven days... Thereafter he acted according to the plan envisaged by the Most High...” The fallen beings became lord over this world and

spirit of its matter. With the help of this matter, the elements, once united in harmony, were pulled further apart. Thus the increasingly dense dry land, the air and the seas were generated. From the jewels in the crown of the angel of water, Satan formed the stars. He created the atmospheric phenomena like thunder, rain, hail and snow and brought about animals and plants.

The fall from heaven of the spiritual beings, according to *The secret book* the only fall, resulted in the creation of paradise. The thinking of the spiritual beings was still so much linked with the divine thinking that it could generate the life of animals and plants.

“Then he thought and created the human being as a self-serving entity, and commanded the angel of the third heaven to enter the body of clay. He took a part from it and created a second body as a woman and commanded the angel of the second heaven to enter the body of the woman. The angels were full of sorrow, when they realised that they possessed a mortal form and that their original form was gone.”

In this way, the human beings created by Satan received a mortal form, which had not developed from an inner, divine,

Top left: The spot in the river Jantra (near the ancient Bulgarian capital Veliko Tarnovo) where heretics and criminals were executed: they were thrown down from here. These broken stones were found in the ruins of the old castle (right). © Pentagram.

creative thought. Therefore, they could not renew themselves from within without limitation. The consequence of this was the beginning of crystallisation, an ever-increasing condensation of the body. From the beginning, the human being, developed in paradise, was twofold: his body was of the earth and his inner nucleus belonged to the 'heavens' and, as such, was immortal.

The secret book clearly states that 'evil' developed in beings of a higher spiritual order. The fall is, in a way, 'larger' than the human being and covers his immortal nucleus:

'And the devil planted reed in the centre of paradise; made the serpent out of saliva and commanded him to dwell there. In this way, he hid his intentions so that the human beings would not notice anything of his deceit. And he said to them: "You may eat of all fruit in paradise, but not of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil." Then the devil entered the serpent and tempted the angel, who had the form of the woman. Subsequently, the devil also poured his venom and desire into the angel who was in the form of Adam.'

'Eat of all fruit...' What else can this fruit be except the possibilities for life and development offered to the human being?

In the view of the Bogomils, it is the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil that will ultimately open his eyes. Then the human being will see that all events are illusion, because everything continuously perishes as a result of the separation between spirit and soul. A great longing for *true* life develops, a yearning for the spirit. Because only that which is linked to the spirit nucleus, to the spirit of God, is ultimately reality.²

THE 'METHOD' OF THE SACRIFICE

The Bogomil idea is as follows: Satan has appropriated part of the light. He wanted a creation of his own, and be God's equal. He formed a world, he created a human form from clay and earth, and forced the 'heavenly figures' to enter into them and vivify 'the earth'. Although the 'fallen angels of the second and the third heaven' now experienced captivity themselves, they were, through their connection with matter, no longer directly subservient to the tempter, but to the body. This seems to be a paradox, but it is profound, divine wisdom: when the soul succeeds in making the human being, the personality that is of the earth, to listen to its voice, the captivity can be undone!

Of the task of the human being

Your words must guide the world to the word of the Christ, to the days of the sacrifice. Always be silent and do not reveal to anybody the complicated path of your inner life, and certainly not to outsiders.

The quotations on pages 12, 17, 25 and 35 were taken from part seven of the book *Bogomilentum, Slawentum, Wiedergeburt*. It is said that the book originates from Malta, where the writer Nikolai Rainov purportedly copied it. In the preface to part seven, we read: 'This part contains the text of one of the so-called secret books of the Bogomils.'

This is the 'method' of the sacrifice. The original gives itself captive to matter, so that matter, the earth, may be dissolved. This is the mystery of the Christ; also this light spirit surrendered to this world unto death. And the world, which eagerly accepts this 'sacrifice', imagines itself victorious. Yet, the victory of the light is certain, because it can no longer be driven from the cosmos and shall transform 'evil' completely. Perhaps this will be a slow process, but what is time in this context? The victory of the light is an absolute certainty.

BACK TO THE DRAMA OF PARADISE

This trap made the tempter furious! To prevent this, *The secret book of the Bogomils* continues, Satan created the woman out of the human being. He tried to incorporate all the properties of the light in her. He forced 'the angel of the second heaven' to enter into her and made her so seductive that Adam did not desire the soul, but the external appearance. Death and the necessity of physical development and procreation were the inevitable consequences.

And thus the paradisiacal state, which initially only possessed a slight material density, disappeared. Already from the very beginning, the impulse toward condensation is active. The earth developed into the state in which we presently know it. The expulsion from paradise is not mentioned even once in *The secret book*, because in the Bogomil view the actual fall did not occur in paradise but long before. Paradise is merely a halfway house on a downward path.

It is nevertheless encouraging that there is a latent immortal soul in every human being, waiting to be awakened.

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¹ The Bulgarian text is not preserved. There are two Latin translations from Slavonic, in Carcassonne and in Vienna. Both are published. The French translation in: Jordan Ivanov. *Livres et Légendes Bogomils: au sources du catharisme* (Bogomil books and legends: the sources of Catharism). Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 1976. A German translation can be found in: Donka Petkanova-Toteva. *Quellen des reinen Wassers; eine Anthologie bulgarischer mittelalterlicher Literatur* (Founts of pure water; an anthology of Bulgarian, mediaeval literature). Berlin, Neue Wege, 1979, p. 184-189.

² The apocryphal gospel of Enoch, known in two versions, an Ethiopian and a Bulgarian one, contains essential correspondences concerning the description of the creation of the world. Apparently, the author of *The secret book* possessed of the old-Bulgarian version of *The Book of Enoch*, see: Jordan Ivanov. *Ibid.* p. 91.

The quest for the golden bird

A Bogomil fairytale



Because the mediaeval Bogomils were persecuted by the official church, their teachings were often passed on in a veiled form, for example as popular fairytales. Their essence was often: he is the true son of the Father who accepts the task of the liberation of the soul out of love, walks the path of overcoming the ego and thus gains the treasures of the new soul.

He forgives the attacks of the jealous brothers who are still imprisoned in the old nature. He even asks the Father for mercy for them, because they do not know what they are doing. If they admit their guilt, he gives them the opportunity to also partake of the new life. Here we see the main motive of the Bogomils: 'love evil good' (in the sense of: learning to transform what is inferior into what is superior).

What does this mean? This happened as follows, they taught: In the primordial

beginning, only the good God ruled. He had no form or body. This God created the seven heavens that were without boundaries and did not have a beginning or end. Satanael and our more familiar Christ, who lived in the same atmosphere, originated from this God.

However, Satanael was self-willed, and because he had a powerful free will at his disposal was able to create his own world, and wanted to subjugate the light world to himself.

The only truly Bogomil book is *The*

book of mysteries, also called *The secret book of the Bogomils* or *The book of the Holy John*. In it, John and the resurrected Christ converse with each other, while the master explains all questions concerning the origin and the end of the world, the fall and the genesis of the second world – which we know as the earth. ‘My Father,’ Christ says in this book, ‘completely recreated him [Satan] because of his arrogant behaviour and took away the light from him.’

The role of the human being in this original drama is related as follows: The spirits of darkness wanted to penetrate into the kingdom of the light. They reached its borders, but were unable to do anything against the kingdom of the light. However, their action caused a reaction from the kingdom of the light. We might call this ‘punishment,’ but the kingdom of the light consists exclusively of what is good. Punishment is an unknown element in that world. The demons of darkness could, therefore, only be touched by something that was not a part of them. Thereupon, the spirits of the kingdom of the light gave them a part of their kingdom, their realm, their sphere. This part of the light was completely swallowed up by the darkness. But this caused upheaval in the kingdom of darkness; an alien element was added. Because of this situation, darkness was unable to maintain itself forever and death arose. The human race – primordial humanity stemming from the kingdom of the light – arrived in this world; both spheres work in this humanity. Again and again, the light within it is ‘transformed,’ until the darkness is completely overcome. The darkness eagerly absorbed the seed of its own destruction. At the same time, the human being, imprisoned in the darkness, received the seed of his

liberation.

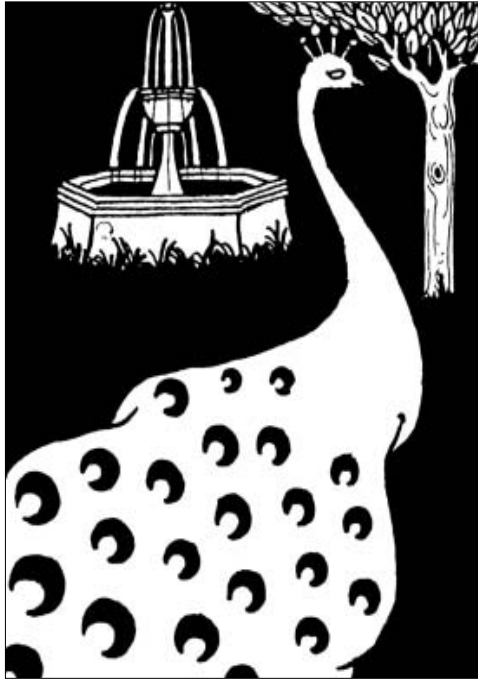
THE TSAR AND THE GOLDEN BIRD

The East European fairytale *The tsar and the golden bird* communicates the same message in a slightly different way. In a dream, a tsar receives the task of building a church and obtaining the golden bird of the Shah of Persia. The bird must be placed in the church, so that a priest would no longer be needed to hold a service. The tsar’s youngest son accepts the task and, together with his brothers, sets out into the world to seek the golden bird.

Already at the first inn, the elder brothers stay behind and spend all the money their father had given them for the journey. The youngest one continues alone and encounters an old man whom he does a good office. With his help, he finds the garden of the castle, in which the cage of the golden bird is located. Despite the old man’s warning, the prince is unable to resist the temptation to take a valuable sabre away. This draws the attention of the guardians, who take him prisoner. To escape by the skin of his teeth, he agrees to steal the golden horse of the tsar of Waran. He succeeds, but again he yields to the temptation and takes a precious saddle away. Again he is imprisoned, and now he can regain his freedom by abducting the three daughters of the Greek tsar.

This time he passes the test. The three daughters of the tsar go with him and the guardians cannot prevent him. On the way back, he recovers the golden horse and the golden bird. Magnificently clothed, he arrives at the inn where his brothers are living in misery and rags. Together they set out for their father. During the night, the elder brothers kill

Left: Two hundred million years old rocks in the Belogradchik Mountains.
© Pentagram.



Bird and fountain
by Aubrey
Beardsley, from
La Mort d'Arthur
(Arthur's death).

the youngest one out of jealousy.

Now the elder brothers, with the three virgins and the other treasures, continue their homeward journey and pretend that they have obtained everything themselves, and that the youngest brother continued alone. When the father takes the golden bird into the church, it refuses to sing and the horse refuses to eat, while the three virgins are inconsolable all day.

The youngest brother, revived by the old man with living water and not recognised by anyone, takes up office with his father, the tsar. At the moment that the young man enters the church, the bird begins to sing. A service follows as there has never been one before. When the young man leaves the church, the bird immediately falls silent. When the young man enters the stable, the golden horse begins neighing. It tramples with its legs and looks at him trustingly. When the young man leaves the stable again, the

animal falls silent and no longer eats either.


When the young man approaches the three daughters of the Greek ruler, they recognise their saviour and greet him full of joy. Now the youngest son reveals who he is. The father immediately wants to order the execution of the elder sons, but the youngest son asks for them to be his slaves. Yet, he does not treat them as such. He forgives and accepts them again as his brothers. Then the three brothers marry the three virgins, the three aspects of the human figure, while their motto remains: 'Do stay together in the castle of the father, for from now on love can dwell among you.'

This fairytale describes the development of a seeker, who has been touched by the light. He knows that he must find 'the golden bird' which represents the divine inner principle. In the temple of his microcosm, this divine nucleus celebrates the true religion, the return to true life. A mediator, a priest, is not necessary for this.

HELP ON THE PATH

A human being who does not strive for this goal on the basis of love for the Father, remains attached to matter already during the first stage of his path and forfeits the potential at his disposal. Only true love for God and man grants the insight and the power to make the interests of the ego play a secondary role. Thus the resistance of the nature of death is broken and the human being receives help on his path. In the fairytale, this is symbolised by the old man. The old man often also symbolises the brotherhood.

When the preparation for the path has



Protect the eyes of your heart

Protect the eyes of your heart from dirt, dust and shadows. Protect them from snares, whirlwinds and reflections. The dirt is what is visible, the dust the created external aspect and the shadows the created inner aspect. The snare is the temptation, the whirlwind is sin and the reflections are the forms of the lower realms. And the heart must rise above all these realms.

sufficiently progressed, the golden bird is found, the highest principle of life. But the human being is still unable to serve this higher element unselfishly. Again and again he is tempted by this world, represented by the sabre and the saddle. The guardians keeping watch at the borders of the world prevent people from the next step. New bonds arise, new karma that must be neutralised or be dealt with.

THE YOUNGEST SON

His stumbling and detours provide the human being with the experiences that enable longing for salvation and power of discernment to develop. Also, helping powers are unceasingly at his disposal until he has gained the new faculties of the soul.

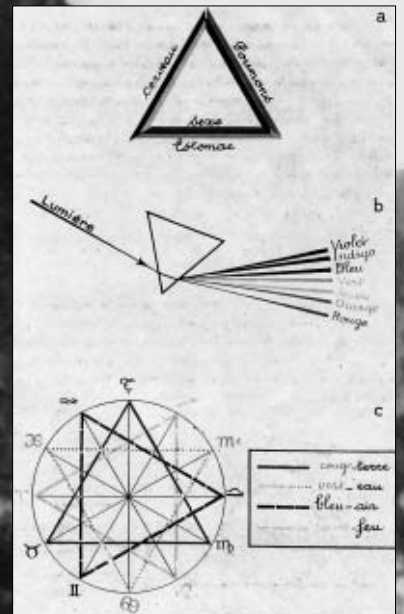
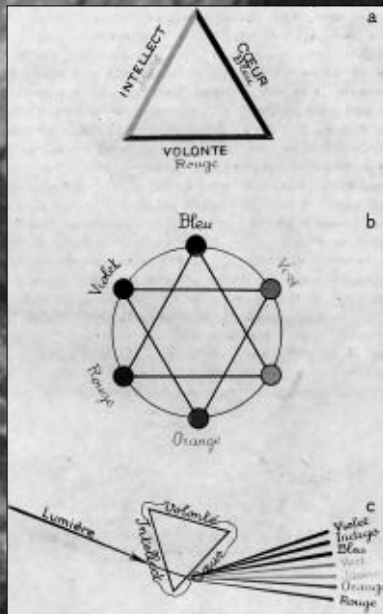
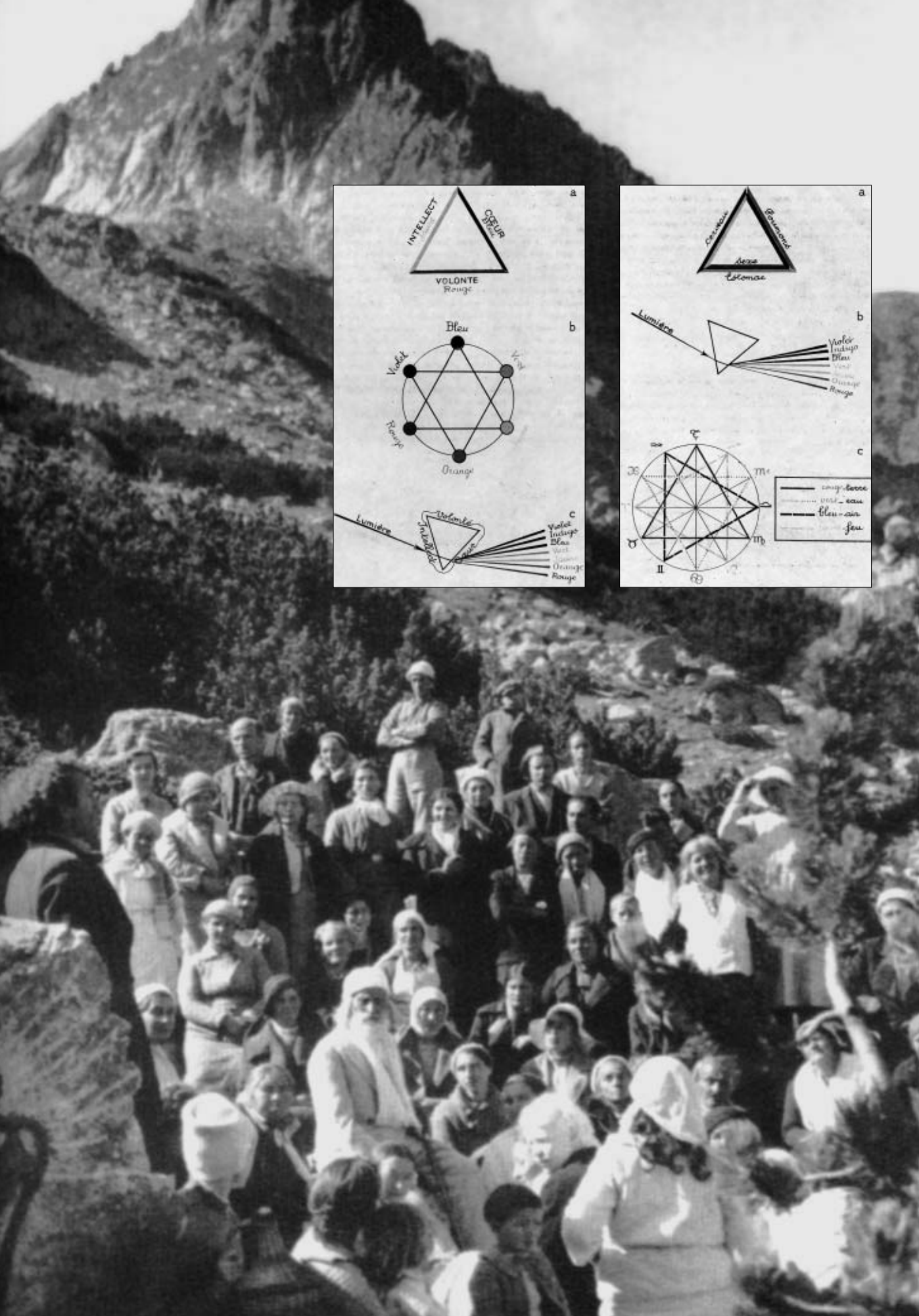
The Bogomils identified with the youngest son, who liberated himself from the chains of the world through insight into the two fields of life and won the truly divine life. The jealous, elder brothers represent the aspects of the personality that would want to appropriate the heavenly treasures and in that way are only imitating. Treason cannot remain hidden. Yet, the light cannot be killed. The human being is always 'awakened' again until, one day, he is going the path of the victory, in which his natural aspects (the brothers) also become involved.

In addition to the significance which the fairytale has for the individual seeker who is walking the path, yet another level can be discovered in it: the assignment given to the Bogomil church by the universal brotherhood. This assignment included the task to take away the golden bird from the 'Shah of Persia' and place it in the church, so that no longer a priest was necessary. The light of the Manichaeans, the light of pure love, came from Persia. In a church that puts the light in its centre, every human being himself is directly linked with the light, and a 'mediator' is superfluous.

The divine light is unity and love and it will one day, unavoidably, take up every misguided brother, every microcosm, into this unity. The Bogomils considered the imitation of Christ to be their task: 'Love evil good.'

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Photos: Peter Deunov and pupils in the Rila Mountains. Inset: Deunov's explanation of the seven rays and the seven colours in connection with the human being. The memorial stone from 1930 reads: 'Brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, friends and strangers, teachers and pupils, servants and masters: as servants of life, open your hearts to what is good and be like this wellspring.' © Along the Path of Light, Bialo Bratstvo, 2000.



Peter Deunov's work

'I believe in love and wisdom that have created life. I believe that they possess the power to recreate the world. I believe that the living love and wisdom are able to change our life, our society and our home. If we accept love and wisdom, truth and justice will emerge. The angels will descend from heaven and plant good fruits in our souls. I say to you: God lives in me and I live in God. If you do not believe this, this will not hurt me. You ask what I want and why I came on earth. I want to kindle the extinguished lanterns and make you radiate like candles or a torch. I do not preach salvation. I preach how God's will can be fulfilled on earth. I teach the path of fulfilling the will of the living God, in whom your liberation is hidden. He will make you feel like brothers and sisters and prepare you for the life that is coming to the earth. It is not necessary to let yourself be enthralled by my lectures or personality. It is important for you to accept the teachings. If you apply them, your problems will be solved. It is not important who I am. It is important how much you take over from me. Thank God that you have found a

flowing wellspring, and do not say anything about my role in it. We are called Deunovists. This is an error. I preach God's love. Do not say that my preaching has been invented by a certain Deunov, but say that it is the teaching of the brotherhood of the light. Tomorrow, someone else will come with another name. The greatness of those who have come into the world consists of their passing on the truth which God gave to them. If you believe that you can separate the master from God and God from the master, you have not understood the laws. If the master thinks that he can do





anything apart from God, he is wrong. The only master who teaches the people is God. To this end, He adopts any form. That is what makes God sometimes visible and sometimes invisible.

Do not follow me, but God's love. There is something alien in the world and that is the divine. It is the divine

that I would like to pass on to you and make you understand. To be able to understand it, you must enter the kingdom of love. Those are not my thoughts; they are divine thoughts. They stem from before the creation of the world and are, therefore, a manifestation of ourselves. Even the smallest impulse towards what is good is the language of God.

I am often asked for the content of my teachings, and then I answer: "They are the teachings of the living nature which encompass all living power with which science is occupied. It is the science of the human being, the science of what is rational in the world. It is the science of God, of love".'

He always emphasised the future, crucial importance of love:

'Love is necessary for saving the world. It is the only power that can bring peace between peoples and nations, in which everyone must accomplish a mission on earth. Love begins to appear; goodness, justice and light will triumph; this is only a matter of time. The religions must be purified; all of them contain something divine, but this is obscured by the repeated addition of human concepts. All faithful must assemble and agree with respect to one single principle: making love the basis of any faith. Love and brotherhood are the common points of departure.'

It is always said that the Bogomils were revived in the work of Peter Deunov, also known as Beinsa Douno. This son of an orthodox priest was born in 1864 in a village near the Black Sea. In 1888, he left for the United States, where he studied theology and medicine at Boston and New York universities. In 1895, Peter Deunov returned to Bulgaria, where he rejected several offers to work, amongst other things, as a teacher of theo-

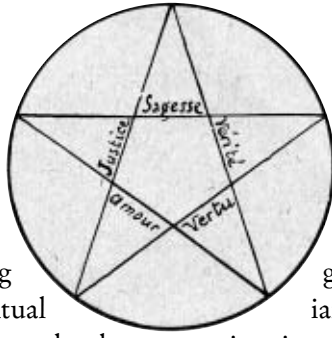
sophy and a vicar.

In 1897, he began his work as a spiritual teacher and subsequently published his manuscript *Appeal to my people*. In 1900, he founded the 'Universal White Brotherhood', which was based on love, wisdom and truth. From then on, he travelled throughout the country to teach and to heal people. Each year, more people attended his congresses. The church monitored his activities with increasing uneasiness and excommunicated him. Finally, he settled in Sophia, where gradually a community was formed around him. In Sophia, too, lectures were given on a regular basis. Annual August conferences were held in the Rila Mountains near the seven holy lakes.

In 1914, he was put under house arrest in Varna. In the same year, Deunov had a vision of Christ and from then on devoted his life to Him. Later he said: 'What Christ said and what I say now, stems from one source.'

During his life, Peter Deunov gave numerous lectures. Just as many other spiritual leaders from the beginning of the twentieth century, he, too, recognised the great opportunities of the beginning of

Right: Also with Deunov, the pentagram reveals the attainments of the new man: wisdom, truth, virtue, love, justice.



the Age of Aquarius. In his vision, this started in 1914 and he considered it his task to give guidance during this start of a new spiritual cycle. In 1922, he founded a school and also continued giving public lectures. In addition, there was also an annual summer conference, except in 1927, when the authorities prohibited any large assembly of the brotherhood.

He was a charismatic and gifted man – a mystic who experienced his teachings as a revivification of original Christianity. He, too, expressed that these teachings have been suppressed throughout the ages, so that they remained inaccessible to ordinary people. But in everything, love was the most important element. He said about it: ‘On the basis of true love, we see God in everything, even in the most insignificant thing. The human being must become a wellspring, a sun, a large space in which everything has its place. The divine love is the stone of the alchemists, the elixir of life.’ Peter Deunov was also a musician and he composed many beautiful, profound songs. He also developed ‘pan-eurhythmics’, a series of sacral dances, in which he tried to stimulate the spiritual human development.

World War II also had its repercussions on Bulgaria. Bulgaria was part of the Axis powers, which supported Germany. Approximately four months before D-Day, in the beginning of 1944, Sophia was bombed. Deunov sought a safe haven near Mount Vitosha. Later that year, he said to a pupil that he had finished his task on earth and would soon die. He died at 6 am on 27 December of the same year, with the beautiful Sanskrit ‘aum’ on his lips.

Two days later, the communist autho-

rities came to arrest and probably execute him. There is no name on his grave, just outside the Bulgarian capital. The only inscription is a pentagram with the words ‘Love, wisdom, truth, justice, virtue’ – the heritage of a great soul.

The pupil lives in the light.

This is the only real world.

The shadow is unreal.

Seek the light that casts no shadow.

Avoid any thought and any emotion that is of such a nature

that darkness enters your consciousness.

Pure human love leads to suffering,

suffering creates experience,

experience brings forth insight,

insight brings forth wisdom and

wisdom leads to the truth.

Human love is fickle and changes,

spiritual love changes without change,

divine love is unchangeable and does not change;

it only develops.

First, you must love the totality;

by loving everything, you will love its parts.

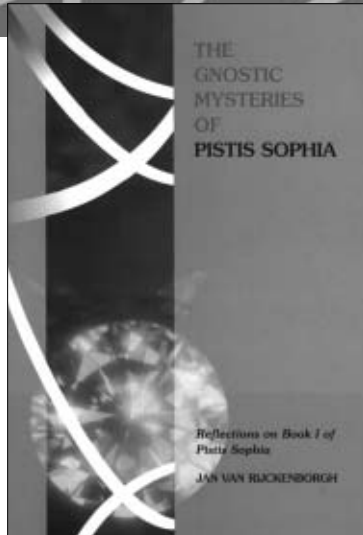
If you gain cosmic love,

you will love all creatures,

because the unity of life is your reality.

Peter Deunov

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