

AGRICULTURE AS MOVABLE WORLD

PART THREE: FRIAR AND WEREWOLF



We'd spoken of the Early Middle Ages as Middle Muddle, picturing pageantry of horseback Kaiser endlessly riding, wealth-wasting counts entertaining drunk knights, free farmers farming, *Leibeigene* serfs toiling. Lacking (we touched on them only peripherally) are the fat friar and the scheming abbot.

Lena Lentz Hardt of Lentz Spelt Farms on the Columbia Plateau, on her first trip to the Old Country, yesterday visited the village – *Dorf* – of one of her Franconian forefathers. Today Lentz meets with a retired pastor, an erudite guide who'll show her around the Franconian Kloster Heilsbronn, a Zisterzienser abbey from the early 1100s.

Lentz follows a trail between grain fields overlooking the abbey that today constitutes the town center of Heilsbronn, population 8000. From this hillside the original layout of the former abbey can be traced, wall remnants embracing large stone buildings that cluster around the *Münster*, the cathedral-like church ("minster"). Not far down-valley in the other direction a *Dorf*, the village's decorated *Maibaum* ("May Tree") jutting up from the center.



The pastor is English-speaker Karl-Heinz Klose who awaits Lentz in an Italian restaurant operated by Turks on the market square – we'll get some background on medieval German abbeys while eating lunch. Lentz orders smoked salmon cut very thin, over grated-potato cakes. She drinks *Karamalz*, a sweet non-alcoholic malt drink; not bad, she says.

The restaurant's interior intrigues with its low vaulted ceiling. Eight hundred years ago this building was the horse stable of the abbey, Klose says. Gee, the first time she's having lunch in a remodeled stable, Lentz makes a mental note. Gee, even their stables they built to last a thousand years...

In abbey times, in place of the market square there was a plaza with a pond; arriving visitors would wash their ponies with water from the pond – well, their coachmen would –, before the steeds were led into the stables here.

Heilsbronn existed as *Dorf* for 300 years before the abbey was built. A landlord named Haholdes had encouraged farming here around 800 AD. The farmers called the village Haholdesprunn – “Haholdes’ Spring” –, which lent itself for renaming as “Heils-bronn,” *Fons Salutis* in monk’s Latin, that is, “Spring of Health.” (Centuries later the Heilsbronner interpreted the name as “Healing Spring” and did brisk business selling the water, until an analysis in the age of chemistry could ascertain only one beneficial component of the water, namely H₂O. Whoops.)

The big change in the Early Middle Ages was population growth. In 800 a mere one person per square kilometer lived in Franconia. By the time the Bishop of Bamberg, at a distance of about 60 miles, bought Haholdesprunn from a count in the early 1100s, the castles had gotten larger, the *Dörfer* more populated, and the first market towns were blossoming. Starting in the 9th century, decade by decade the population growth grew steeper. Amazingly soon we’ll speak of millions.

By the 12th century, abbey construction had accumulated to a network that connected bishoprics; about 25 to 30 kilometers was a day’s travel, which distance became the norm between the monasteries. Before long, abbeys were as common as, if not more numerous than, castles, serving as stop-over places for traveling clergy and nobles. Our abbey at Heilsbronn lies half-way between Ansbach and Nürnberg, both approximately 25 kilometers away (16 miles), Klose points out. Zisterzienser monks moved in because the Bamberg bishop was “friendly toward reform.”

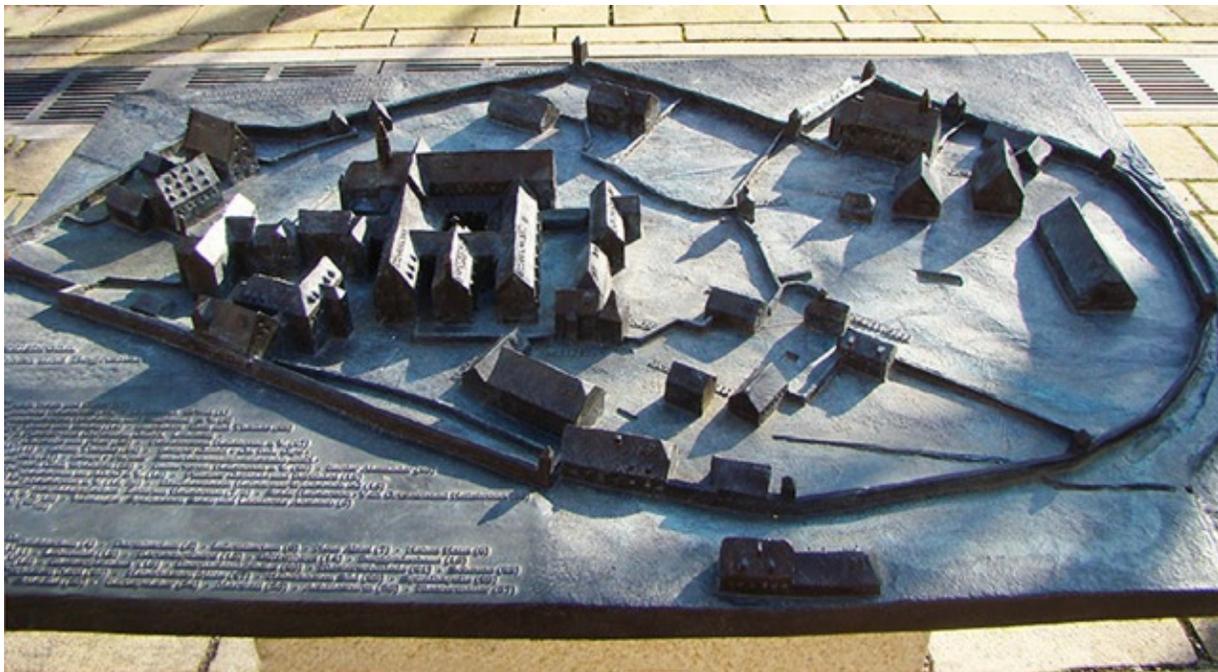


Who were the Zisterzienser? In general, catholic orders were a response to church corruption which was endemic, each new order attempting to correct aberrations of the previous one. The Zisterzienser split off from the Benedictines at Citeaux Abbey in France, after the Benedictine Abbey at Cluny had become obsessed with riches, even attempting to build a church

greater than St Peter’s Basilica in Rome; in founding the Zisterzienser Order, the monks at Citeaux wanted to get back to the original Benedictine rule of modesty. Architecturally this is visible in the *Münster* spires which are short and stubby rather than pompously sky-commanding; and, Klose notes, Zisterzienser abbeys were typically built in shallow valleys rather than on lofty hilltops. Still, the inside of the *Münster* church evokes great awe by its height and size in stone, as Lentz will see.

The medieval church typically erected abbeys and cathedrals at places holy for pagans and wiccan (just as Christian holidays such as Christmas and Candlemas were scheduled on days holy for Druids and shamans); if there was once a pagan shrine at Heilsbronn is not known, Klose says.

The German countryside's proliferation by abbeys had formative impetus, especially in view of the ongoing population growth. Abbeys were well-organized development projects that explored agricultural and technological advances. The image of the Fat Friar is appropriate, the monks loved to eat well and so made great agricultural strides, including in aquaculture (fish was allowed on fasting days) that marks the Franconian landscape to this day, carp ponds in every vale, even carp-pond-themed bicycle trails. Heilsbronn Abbey harvested over 26,000 fish annually from 93 fish ponds. The friars also liked to get high, so they put in vineyards at the two nearby *Dörfer* that belonged the abbey. Most famously, labor-intensive gardens were raised in abbeys, whereby many diverse vegetables were introduced – farmers at the time stuck with small grains, some oil seed crops and legumes, and wild herbs, in addition to meats of wild game and domesticated livestock and fowl, plus dairy products; if the abbey gardens signified dietary variation, their many vegetables the monks initially considered herbs.



The monks mostly ate, drank and prayed, leaving the bulk of the work to the laymen of the abbey, and the field work to the peasants. The monks did produce books, a most expensive undertaking at the time: Klose tells us that one single book's vellum required skin from 2000 sheep. No typo: two thousand sheep per book.

The abbey wall separated not only physically but also legally, Klose emphasizes, the people living inside the wall enjoying much greater rights than those outside, in the villages. As for the monks, not celibacy but a life without marriage was demanded of them; Klose estimates that about one third of the monks regularly slept with serf girls.

On a hillside the abbey maintained a 13-room mansion for the counts' occasional visits from Ansbach; in proximity of that mansion the counts had a third gate built into the abbey wall, a "secret gate" through which they could bring in their women cohorts in private. It goes to show that today's stilted morality was still a long way off, yet all too public the counts didn't want to be in their dalliances.

Klose begins the abbey tour by leading us through a big dormitory building, today an evangelical seminary. An upstairs exit lets out onto an elevated garden by the abbey wall. From here we have a good overview. About half the buildings of the 1100s are gone, but the others still stand proud even though the abbey ceased operations after the Reformation, the count in Ansbach having switched to protestant religion. Among the abbey buildings were hospital, brewery, blacksmith shop, the bakery next to the huge flour mill – we're impressed by how self-sufficiently well organized this abbey was.

In the former dormitory Klose takes us to a large room with black, carved wooden beams, many crests on the walls. This is where the German Kaiser slept when they made Heilsbronn their stop-over.

Next, Klose shows us the Refectory, the grand eating hall of the monks. We enter by an addition that was the kitchen under high ceiling, tall stone arches supporting a stone ring at its center above. The inside of this stone ring was open to the sky in abbey days, Klose says, to let out the smoke: cooking for over 250 people was a big chore requiring big fires under big spits turning hogs and big cauldrons of steeping soups. We imagine the daily bustle, the cooks' cacophony a crescendo from a fog of smoke and steam, aromas rising, curing, blending. Can you hear pot clang and firewood pop echoing on the surrounding stone...



In the monks' eating hall adjacent – today a lecture hall – silence was prescribed, Klose says. He bids us sit, then walks the length of the hall to the stairs up to the small balcony; from this lectern sounded bible readings while the monks ate. Klose says a few words into the room, to demonstrate that acoustics were a significant function of medieval architecture.

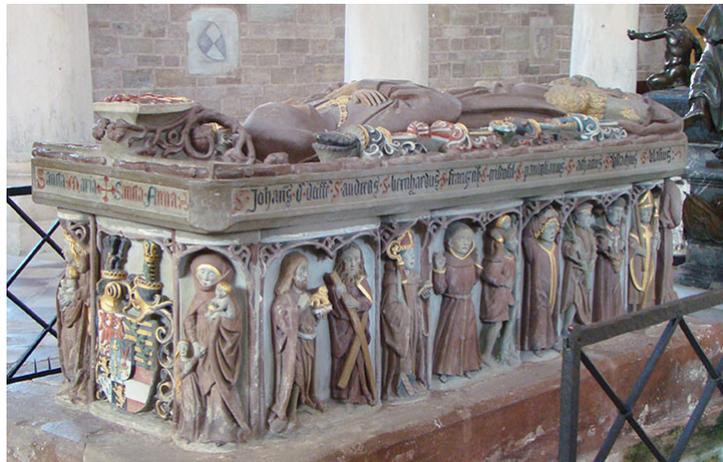
And then Klose opens a side door and we ascend by very tall stone steps, until we stand in a sort of loft. Klose wants us to inspect a pile of a crudely hewn poles with sharpened ends. We'd mentioned use of 11th-century stone axes during our lunch conversation: now, here in front of us, lies stone-axe work, judging by how roughly the poles had been chopped after tree felling.

Knowledge of these poles is recent; about five years ago the City of Heilsbronn was repairing some underground canals, and in this context had to determine the state of the foundations of nearby buildings. Whereas the abbey church, the *Münster*, is built on solid rock, the adjoining buildings were erected on swamp into which a mass of wooden poles had been pounded for the foundation to rest on. All these centuries later, those poles still hold. Extended drought would be devastating, Klose remarks, what keeps the poles from disintegrating is exactly their air-tight swamp environment.

In abbey days, an arch-covered passage called a *Kreuzgang* connected the Refectory to the church. Inside the *Münster*, Lentz's steps sound hollow, so tall is the stone edifice. If folks 900 years ago needed proof of the church's power – brutal and glorious –, here they could gape at how many forced-labor hours had to be commandeered to erect this cathedral structure, how much the skill of the masons must have cost in coin, how architectural arts of centuries' investment achieve a harmony somber yet uplifting.

The Heilsbronn *Münster* leaves no doubt about whose side the church was on: ancient counts rest here in eerie stone sarcophagi. The presence of nobles' bones underscores the intertwined dominance that church and aristocracy were determined to gain, maintain, and ever expand, world supremacy always in view.

One macabre curiosity preserved in the Heilsbronn *Münster* is the *Judensau Stein*, the “Jew-Sow Stone.” It depicts several men, identifiable as Jews by their hats, sucking on the teats of a big sow. Anything but subtle an affront to the Jewish faith that abstains from eating pigs because they're considered unclean, it's not clear why *Judensau Steine* adorned churches both catholic and evangelical, Klose notes: Jews weren't allowed inside churches, so why offend them here? Klose says that post-Hitler evangelicals decided to keep the stone in place as a reminder of the crimes committed in the name of Christ. A pamphlet explaining the significance of the *Judensau Stein* states that, “in the last decades we (German evangelicals) have found our way to a realization that's important to us – we must make a new beginning.”



Before we thank Klose for his gracious *Kloster* tour, we have a short discussion with him about our project, namely to tell of the 1000 years of rural Germany before the Lentzes emigrated to Russia. Their family was one of many thousands farmers as ardent as they were anxious to leave, to get away, away! Klose then gives us the leitmotif for our story, the central theme we'll be approaching when we get to the waning phases of the Middle Ages:

“In every emigration wave out of Germany, the first to leave were always the Pacifists.”

From the farmer perspective it was not a positive development that the church gained so much power in the Middle Ages. The church set itself up as another upper-class parasite layer demanding tithe, exploiting serfs, making up rules and laws. And, there was a shrewd impact the church had on early medieval society, in that it nurtured uniformity (probably because the more homogenous a people, the easier that people is governed). Peasant work became standardized by the bells chiming the hours from the church tower. Church fast days – there were 150 of those in a year – decreased diversity and variance of diet in the villages. And thanks to the church calendar that celebrates a holy saint on every day of the year, the names folks gave their children now were reduced in number, variety, imagination.

The church likes to tell how monasteries were places of contemplation, how the monks immersed themselves in holy script and glory of god. And that may have been much the case, it certainly seems to fit present-day monasteries such as Bavaria’s Plankstetten where monks raise organic spelt. But our image of abbey as calm and devoutly disciplined is only one side, the inside, of the monastery story. Abbeys acted arrogantly and dictatorially toward medieval farmers and serfs and townsfolk. Abbots schemed in seeking power that extended far beyond the abbey walls. No wonder that the lower classes resented the monks. The monks (were they naive?) themselves were taken aback when intense animosity was shown them during the peasant revolts a little later in the Middle Ages. We have descriptions of such hostilities from the monks’ view; one monk, von Rauche, gives this account: “... as we walked along in our habits, they yelled so against us that I cannot describe it adequately,” he writes, referring to the flight of Carmelite monks to their order’s safe-house in the city of Heilbronn, after rebel farmers had driven them from their abbey. “... if we had been Jews, it would not have been worse. They yanked one out here and another there; here they wanted to stab us to death; next they wanted to hang us. And everyone mocked us.”



In Roman times the information about free Germanic tribes – the “Belligerent” – was authored by Romans; in the Middle Ages the conditions of German farmer and serf were reported by the church. In both cases, strong bias. The church would have us believe that rural Germany was terrain of the pious. And it seems true that country folk flocked to church en mass wearing their Sunday best, genuflecting before Christian altars.

But. The farmers’ true spiritual disposition ranged from animist to pagan, never mind that on Sundays they adhered to the church, and that many of the officially recognized saints had their sainthood feats shaped by folk tales (which the church acknowledges).

Leave it to keen researchers like Aaron J. Gurjewitsch to ferret this out; whereas you find no note of animism in official church history books, Gurjewitsch examined the *Bussbücher*, the “Penance Books” of the era, speak: the in-house communications of the church. In the *Bussbücher* is discussed what the priests heard at confession, and what kind of atonement would absolve the sinner from a particular sin.

The priests heard about: magic spells, healing incantations, love charms, crop growth conjuration, and that’s just the tip of the iceberg. Gurjewitsch points out that scientists have difficulty in determining the origin of some of these customs, are they rooted in Greek and Roman, or in Germanic and Norse paganism? Nothing seems to apply across the board, so some origins must be older, must be an archetype, Gurjewitsch argues.

(For several paragraphs he wrestles with long German words explaining ...*die unmittelbare Verflechtung des Menschens mit der Natur...*, which “immediacy of human connectivity with nature” he could have expressed in one word – one he never does use –, namely animism that survived the pagans and is now, in the Middle Ages, surviving Christianity, too. Or?)

Many customs regarded by the church as superstitions intertwine farming with natural rhythms, Gurjewitsch emphasizes. For example, at new moon, “in order to help the moon rejuvenate his shine,” farmers congregate in the woods for magic ceremonies.

The church was utterly frustrated: Burchard, Bishop of Worms from 1000 to 1025, complains bitterly that such rites “are inherited by the sons from their fathers;” he’s at a loss to project what the church could do to eliminate such ancient traditions.

When it comes to customs of fortune telling and the casting of spells for good fortune – on certain days, especially on New Year’s Day –, the variance is altogether imaginative: from sitting on the skin of an ox at a crossroads, to buckling on a sword while perched on the roof of one’s house, to baking a certain type of bread in the middle of the night – it all drove our bishop nuts.

Gurjewitsch paraphrases Burchard of Worms in describing one farmwives’ custom to bring about the end of a prolonged drought: “The women gather a lot of the girls and position one of them at the front of the procession. This one is undressed so she’s completely naked, whereupon the column proceeds solemnly to the village edge where an herb called *belisa* is searched for; the naked girl must pull up the *belisa* plant with the little finger of her right hand. Thereupon the root of the *belisa* plant is tied to the little toe of the naked girl’s right foot; then the other girls, carrying switches, lead the naked girl to the nearest creek; on the way the naked girl must drag the *belisa* plant along with her foot. At the creek the children use their switches to get the naked girl and the plant wet with creek water, all the while chanting incantations for rain to come. At last they lead the girl back to the village, making her walk backwards like a cancer crab.”



As a cure for engaging in such rites, or even for believing that they might be effective, Burchard prescribes “twenty days of fasting with bread and water alone.” Right.

Burchard actually categorizes the “heathen.” Herders and hunters speak “the devil’s language” over bread, or over herbs, or over knots of rope, before they throw the object at a crossroads to protect their horses and dogs from disease. Farmers enunciate spells to lure bumper-crops of milk and honey from their neighbors’ to their own farmstead. Women, according to Burchard, commit the fallacy of murmuring workload-lightening charms while spinning and weaving.

And don’t get Burchard started on the topic of folk medicines, every herb a

woman ever gave a sick person had to be blessed with an animist rite first.

Not that the church forbade collection of medicinal herbs, Gurjewitsch remarks, the church actually encouraged it but wanted their flock to say the *Credo* or the *Pater noster* while herb-gathering. Instead the people insisted on animist incantations. We think this is easily enough explained: why, a medieval farmwoman might have asked if she’d not acted instinctively, why pay homage to monotheism that defines itself as separate from nature, when I’m gathering nature’s herbs and can communicate directly with the essence of the plant, the spirit of the forest?

All kinds of animist ceremony was practiced; to cure a baby of constant crying, for example, a mound of soil was formed by shoveling, then a hole was bored through the mound, and then the child was pulled through that hole. (Consult with your health care provider before you try that in your backyard.)

And what of witches on brooms? That’s where we connect with nordic paganism, writes Gurjewitsch: *Huld* or *Holda* appears in the sagas of the gods as a nightrider who flies on the back of fleet animals. Sometimes referred to as Friga-Holda, she bears close resemblance to Frigg, the Germanic goddess of magic, fortune-telling, fertility and marriage, who comes to the aid of birthing women, who rewards industrious weavers but punishes lazy ones. In Norse, Frigg is Frija the wife of Odin and Baldr’s mother. Think of that the next time *Fri*-Day rolls around.

Gurjewitsch notes that the Holda of folklore was “peaceful and kind.” Only the clerics of the *Bussbücher* with their lists of sins portray Holda as “evil spirit... with devilish character.”

Back to poor Burchard of Worms who just couldn't cleave the people from nature: not only did he have to try and defeat archetype animism, and suppress Norse and Germanic paganism, but he had to put in place also Diana, Roman goddess of hunt, of moon, of birthing. Apparently Diana was worshipped at sabbaths, too, the women declaring themselves as her servants: "Oh, that they were but the only victims of this lunacy, that they wouldn't drag others onto this path of (spiritual) withering," the bishop exhorts. "An incredible number of people let themselves... be led astray by Diana." Faith in Diana he judges much worse than animistic ritual, he demands "a penance of two years."

One desperate method the church applied against competing belief systems was to accuse of insanity; this was especially the case with women who in any way whatsoever were affiliated with that confounding witches' sabbath, many of them were publicly proclaimed "insane."

Lastly, the church had to deal with all the folks who give credence to *Parzen* (Latin: *Parcae*, "The Fates"). *Parzen* have the supernatural power to change a newborn into a werewolf or, really, any kind of creature. Of course Burchard weighs in: if you believe that, he thunders, "fast ten days with water and bread."

In conclusion, Gurjewitsch hypothesizes that medieval folks did not have a separate spirituality, nor a particular religion they worshipped parallel with Christianity; rather, a *blend* of spiritual notions both animist and pagan was handed down from one generation to the next, "and found fertile ground in the consciousness of the people."

Put that way, we have another Middle Muddle, haven't we.

Echoes of the medieval spirituality broth sounded from Lentz's lips when she told fairy tales to her children. According to Gurjewitsch, the netherworlds in the consciousness of the people never ended but would metamorphose into the large host of traditional folk tales and ghost stories, as they were collected by the Brothers Grimm and other seekers of folklore centuries later.

Metamorphosis is the keyword here. One Bohemian example: the numerous myths and fables of the Krkonose Mountain Spirit who comes to us as *Rübezahl* (Czech: *Krakonos*; Polish: *Liczyrzepa*). From the originally fierce, mountain-climate-forged apparition who's an impervious supernatural being with elk antlers, the imagery changes to a character who as long-bearded giant in human form shows his benevolence by contributing sourdough and mushroom soup to Bohemia. (Bohemians eat that slightly sour soup to this day; take our word for it, it's robustly delicious!)

In Bohemia's Trutnov you can see both incarnations of *Rübezahl*, as a modern metal statue based on the shamanic image of a drawing from 1561, and as a giant in the middle of town, this sculpture reminiscent of pagan art.

In his analysis, Gurjewitsch omits any essential facet of medieval day-to-day life, a facet that certainly conditioned “the consciousness of the people” – the people were stoned. They were stoned all the time.

So emphasizes Aldous Huxley in *The Devils of Loudon*. Alcohol consumption was the order of the day, every day, “... among the Celts and Teutons, and throughout mediaeval and early modern times... On the many occasions when we drink tea, or coffee, or soda pop, our ancestors refreshed themselves with wine, beer, mead and, in later centuries, with gin, brandy and usquebaugh (whisky/whiskey). The regular drinking of water was a penance imposed on wrong-doers, or accepted by the religious... as a very severe mortification.” This does shed a light on Bishop Buchard’s “water and bread” punishments in Worms.



(For what it’s worth, Europeans brought their habit of casual inebriation to America; the early American presidents, for instance, quaffed lots of hard cider, starting at breakfast.)

Further affecting medieval states of mind were various medicinal plants widely used, some psychedelic like the amanita mushroom of the old folk song, others of the painkiller kind.

Having explored some of the astonishingly rich and varied spiritual spheres of rural folk, we move on to two religious phenomena which arose among clerics and clerks, peaking a little later in medieval religion: necromancy and alchemy.

Yes, a whole shift of necromancers emerged, and we’re not talking about the cultured seances that Madame Blavatsky of the Theosophical Society held in Victorian England of the 1800s. Middle Ages’ necromancy – often referred to as Black Magick – ranks as twin of shamanism – which was known as White Magick –, in that it conjured up ghosts of the dead, and apparitions of demons, and sometimes the devil himself. The necromancers even got right cozy with actual corpses in some of their ritual. That’s what defined them more than anything, the ritual as the gateway for the spell they



applied to nefarious purpose. Graveyards were a favorite site at night, especially for the ritual of Magick Circle.

Three main objectives the necromancers were after: to hurt a person through demonic powers; to forecast fortune; and – don't tell your school-age kids this – to gain comprehension, because certain demons can bestow on you any and all knowledge indeed. This is well recorded in various books, the most famous of which is the *Münchner Zauberbuch* of the 14th century, elsewhere cited as *Liber incantationum, exorcismorum et fascinationum*, the Munich Manual of Demonic Magic of the 15th century.

A good description of how a young man might be recruited by a necromancer comes to us from John of Salisbury who became Bishop of Chartres in 1176. The priest under whom young Salisbury was studying Latin had him cooperate with necromancy ritual, in that he talked the student into having magic salve painted on his fingernails. After a lengthy casting of Black Magick spells, the priest then saw the fortune he was divining appear on the kid's fingernail. Really.

That such practice was widespread over centuries is clear to researchers – even some monks messed around with the black arts back then –, but they're stumped by who the clerics were. A "half-world" – a spiritual dominion half in, half out of the church – seems to have existed, with "cleric" a term of many meanings in those days prior to seminary and theology degrees. Before someone was ordained as priest, a series of lesser ordinations were administered. One of the lowest of these preparatory ordinations was that of the exorcist. Researchers note that the training required to be ordained as exorcist informed of the demons in very precise manner – it was but a small step to summon a demon once you knew how to address the fellow.

Of another lower ordination were *Messpfaffen*, clerics who specialized in reading a daily mass for the dead of rich people, so that their deceased relatives might suffer as little as possible in hell fire before ascending to Christian heaven. Not a bad job, and apparently well paid, reading daily mass left these clerics plenty of free time to commune with demons and devil.



And what was up with the alchemists? It's popular to think of medieval alchemists as the forerunners of modern scientists, and there is certainly something to that: alchemists experimented, observed, took notes (although most alchemists were so secretive that they wrote almost exclusively in symbols). Some of the laboratory equipment they designed is still standard today.

However, the foundations of their art (alchemy is sometimes referred to as The Art) couldn't be farther from modern science. Alchemists were on a spiritual quest seeking to conjoin with the cosmos. They combined astrology with esoteric occult such as the Kaballah; just as they sought to transmute elements of nature – somehow brewing gold, wouldn't that be nice –, so they wanted to conjure up a higher plane of existence for themselves. Were they to find the Philosopher's Stone ("the stone that isn't a stone"), they'd have immortality within their grasp, or at least a means to return to young age when they'd grown old.

Basing their Art on the four elements of earth, air, water, fire, the alchemists could not imagine that transmutation, be it physical or spiritual, would happen without communicating among celestial spheres. Their mysterious talismans are milestones of their paths taken.

And we're not done with all that the church condemned in the Middle Ages. In contrast to prevailing ultra-conservatism that kept diffusion of new ideas "on pigeon feet," an incubation of new thought was underway already. After the military defeat of Balderich von Lüttig (who died in 1018), his bishop's city spoke openly about human fate as determined not by god but by coincidence. And Alpert von Metz, also a contemporary of the Wormser Bishop Burchard, writes of a count spreading the word that there is neither heaven nor hell, that the soul simply vanishes when death occurs.

The church also sought to squash the tiniest sprout of science. This had to do with the Islamic occupation of Spain since the 700s; in Arab culture, progress in the sciences was far ahead of Europe's (we still write Arabic numerals rather than Roman ones, don't we), so inquiring minds turned to the Moslems when it came to scientific matters. Astronomy in particular was a field of discovery by the Arabs. The church resented any Islamic influence in general, and specifically opposed research in astronomy because it appeared to resemble astrology. (But architectural influences of Arab culture the church didn't mind when building taller cathedrals...)

One people's movement that took action on a new idea was the *Gottesfriedensbewegung*, in Latin: *Treuga Dei*, in English: God's Peace Movement. Slogan: War against War! Beginning in the late 11th century, mass demonstrations demanded that safety and peace should not only be for church and clergy, but that there should also be protection for the lives and property of farmers and merchants. In the main, the "War" opposed were the frequent if not constant armed feuds between nobles. Ongoing aristocratic battles weren't good for the church either, so the church eventually responded positively to the demonstrations by threatening counts and dukes with ecclesiastical censure if they disturbed the peace.



Lentz must ask herself what her medieval forebears – if they could time-travel – would make of our 21st century. Surely they'd be flabbergasted by our technology, the autos, jets, ski lifts. But, coming from a swooning world of animist chants, pagan incantations, necromancers' rituals, alchemists' spells, they'd be most shocked to see that the demons do not keep their distance any more. No longer are rituals necessary to summon them, because demons are out of the closet, they've gone public, look: Obama, Putin, Merkel; Donald Trump, Bill Gates, the Queen of England. And there is George Bush revealed as the devil himself by the late Venezuelan demon Chavez at the United Nations.

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* Sources: *Mittelalterliche Volkskultur* by Aaron J. Gurjewitsch, Russia; *Die Revolution von 1525* by Peter Blickle, Bern; *Das Mittelalter, Beckische Reihe*: Friedrich Prinz / Michael Mitterauer / Richard Kieckhefer *