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The Vampire Myth and Christianity

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THE VAMPIRE MYTH AND CHRISTIANITY

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Liberal Studies

by

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THE VAMPIRE MYTH AND CHRISTIANITY

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In historical connections a turn of the spindle moves a thousand threads, and we can follow only one at a time. Indeed, we cannot always do this, because the coarser visible thread ramifies into numerous filaments, which at places escape from sight. (R. Lange, 1866).

INTRODUCTION

The vampire has been a horrific figure in mythology from early civilization up to the modern age. The vampire calls on our most primitive instincts as humans and our fascination with fear and safety, death and eternal life, pain and pleasure, hatred and love, certainly bodies and blood, but most of all it brings forth the unremitting human intrigue with superstition and has done so for centuries. It is a myth that transcends both culture and region. Perhaps one of the most interesting characteristics of the vampire myth is the utter persistence with which humanity transforms and redefines it into a modern form that is relevant for current times. The most current television, motion picture, and book depictions of the vampire are influencing mainstream and popular culture to believe that vampires are nothing more than misunderstood creatures with super-human qualities that make for the perfect friend, lover, or spiritual confidant. Charliane Harris in *The Southern Vampire Mysteries* details the exploits of vampires who have proclaimed their existence and right to equality under the law. The story takes place in a backwater town in Southern Louisiana. Co-existence is made possible because the creation of synthetic blood negates their need to feed on humans. The novel series is bursting with sex between humans and the undead and vampire bars where humans seek to be fed on. Vampire blood called “V” is the new drug of choice for the living that desire to escape

reality. Home Box Office bought the rights to Harris's work and turned *True Blood* into a critically acclaimed television series for mature audiences.

A widely popular book series currently enjoyed by people young and old is the *Twilight Series* by Stephanie Meyer. This story chronicles a group of vampires in the far northwest United States who secretly co-exist with humans and choose a "vegetarian" pattern of eating. This diet consists of hunting and feeding on panthers, grizzly bears, and other various wild animals instead of humans. Meyer's vampires do not need sleep and only stay out of the sun because they sparkle in sunlight. In order to keep their existence secret, these vampires stay in areas that are persistently overcast. The main attraction of the *Twilight Series* is the dynamic tension between the vampire boyfriend, Edward, and his female human love interest, Bella. The sexual tension between Edward and Bella is palpable. Bella, however, must strike a balance between sexual curiosity and Edwards's natural instinct to feed on her. This mass media portrayal of the vampire myth is only one of the most recent examples of the human need to perpetuate the myth into present times with enormous commercial success. Why is a mythological figure that should incite fear and repugnance now the dark hero of popular culture?

Scholar Joseph Campbell suggests that it is the very nature of mythology to evolve as humankind and civilization advances. Archetypes and symbolic imagery in mythology evolve to meet a society's need for an internal understanding of their external environment.¹ Campbell also explains that myth is a metaphor. Basing his idea on Jungian psychology, Campbell states that myth is a product of a collective human psyche. Myth is the science of its time, an attempt to understand a complex and constantly

¹ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 255.

changing world. Since the currently accepted origin for the vampire myth is the fear of death and the superstition surrounding death, then the endurance in both region and culture is easily understood. Campbell also defines myth as “other people’s religion.”² If this definition is true, then why did Christianity not eradicate the vampire myth? The Church gave authority to the ancient vampire myth by declaring vampires an agent of the devil. By doing so, the Church fostered the threatening parts of the vampire myth and then offered solace to the true believer by providing remedies to prevent vampirism. This approach created a power structure where the Church held all of the power. To assuage the fear the vampire myth had created, the Church offered a Christian remedy to prevent vampirism. Additionally, the Church promoted the vampire as a metaphysical scapegoat, along with witches and werewolves, and set up the Inquisition to protect Christians from such demons.

The purpose of this work is to uncover the mystery of the relationship between the Catholic Church and the vampire myth. Presented first is a discussion of what a vampire is and its origins. The discussion moves to the vampire myth and the close relationship and similarities between the myth and Christianity, like the importance of blood as a life force. This work goes on to address how the late medieval Church exploited the vampire myth in order to impart a greater influence on society than any other non-Christian belief system. Also, it explores how the Church provided solace for the true believer and took it upon herself to defend the local population from vampires and other monstrous creatures such as witches and werewolves. Thus, the Church created a closed system whereby the institution actually fortified these myths in the minds of men while providing protection

² Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 3.

from them. Further, by giving credence to the vampire myth instead of negating it, the Church in its desperate need for expansion in the Balkans, actually helped create the historical vampire, Vlad III, or Dracula in the fifteenth century. Finally, the discussion moves to how the Church, by giving the vampire myth acceptance as an evil entity, inadvertently kept the myth alive in the Age of Reason and perhaps in the modern age as a form of entertainment.

Determining the relationship between the late medieval Church and the vampire myth involved one specific challenge for me, validating academic research material. During the course of performing this research, the viability of the project as a whole was brought into question on numerous occasions for two principal reasons. First, there is surprisingly little verifiable academic research material available on the topic. Second, for every legitimate academic source found and proved, ten to twenty counterfeit works needed to be parsed. Therefore, in spite of the vast amount of erroneous material discovered, the sparse quantity of credible academic reference material on the topic gave this work viability and it became academically necessary to complete.

The method of research used here includes a historical analysis of archived and published materials and an interview with an expert on vampire killing kits. The archived materials used for research are translated from the academic Latin generally used throughout Europe beginning in the Middle Ages through the Renaissance. The Reverend Montague Summers (1880-1948) is the principal translator of the materials on which most academics rely. Summers was educated at both Clifton College and Trinity College at Oxford; however, some scholars dispute whether he was ever formally ordained in the eyes of the Church. Nonetheless, Summers is still considered among

most scholars as an expert in the study of the occult. Although highly educated, his belief in the existence of vampires, werewolves, and witches makes some of his conclusions suspect. Rossell Hope Robbins, an academic leader in the study of witchcraft and demonology, considers Summers a valid academic source and cited his work in his *Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology*.

All my research is based on primary source material translated to English with a few exceptions.³ All of the secondary sources are translated and printed partially in one of Montague Summers books on vampires.

This research involved one interview with Edward Meyer, the Vice President of Exhibits and Archives for Ripley Entertainment, Inc. in Orlando, Florida. Mr. Meyer graciously shared the museum's vast collection of vampire killing kits built in America for the wealthy who wanted to travel in safety to Europe in the nineteenth century. All kits were dated and documented as to the origin and previous owners.

The second challenge for this project was how to remain unbiased, not about vampires that clearly are a myth, but about the Church. I was raised in the Roman Catholic faith and, though I have studied other religions, I have not practiced any other. I have come to believe that much of religion is myth and man's tendency throughout history to use religion to gain power and control over others is despicable. However, as a historian, working in the traditions of liberal studies, I have to critique my Church knowing that change in any human organization must come from within. When I criticize

³ These exceptions include: *De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionatibus* by Leo Allatus; *De Magorum Demonomania* by J. Bodin; *De Mastiatione Morturum* by Phillip Rohr; and a specific edition of Pope Benedict XIV book entitled *On the Beatification of the Servants of God and on the Canonisation of the Beautified*. Further, a complete primary translation in English could not be found for the above-mentioned exceptions therefore these four sources should be considered secondary sources.

the Roman Catholic Church, as a member, my discovery stands to bring more potency and understanding than that of a nonmember.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THE VAMPIRE MYTH

In *Medieval Folklore: A Guide to Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs, and Customs* the authors define vampire as “a revenant, reanimated corpse, or phantom of the recently deceased, which maintains its former, living appearance when it comes out of the grave at night to drink the blood of humans.”⁴ The entry further describes the physical characteristics of vampires as having a “lack of decomposition or rigor mortis, pallid face, sharp protruding canine teeth. These creatures must suck blood from humans or mammals for sustenance and victims are turned into vampires themselves when they are killed or forced to drink the creature’s blood. At daybreak the vampire must return to its grave or coffin.”⁵ The authors include an entry for vampires even though the word did not enter the English language until mid-eighteenth century during The Age of Reason. The authors acknowledge that even though the word *vampire* did not enter the English lexicon until 1734, they include the entry because the creature is a well-established part of medieval folklore in Europe.

Richard Dorson discusses the common traits of vampires in folklore in his book entitled *The British Folklorists: A History*. His discussion, however, does not include seeing a vampire out of its grave. Dorson reports, “The appearance of the European folkloric vampire contained mostly features by which one was supposed to tell a vampiric corpse from a normal one, when the grave of a suspected vampire was opened. The vampire has a ‘healthy’ appearance and ruddy skin, he is often plump, his nails and hair

⁴Carl Lindahl, and others, *Medieval Folklore: A Guide to Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs and Customs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 424.

⁵Ibid.

have grown and, above all, he/she is not in the least decomposed or in any way pale.”⁶

Dorson goes on to note that vampires are believed to “morph” into a wide variety of animals such as wolves, rats, moths, and spiders. Also, vampires are thought not to have a soul so they cannot cast a shadow or a reflection in a mirror. Some traditions hold that vampires cannot enter a house unless invited, but once they are invited they may come and go as they wish. Additionally, Dorson mentions that the Roman Catholic Church tradition holds that vampires cannot enter a church or any holy place because they are servants of the devil; however, he does not cite a source for these statements.

The origin of the word *vampire* is as obscure as the legend itself. In her article “The History of the Word Vampire” Professor Katharina Wilson writes of “four clearly discernable schools of thought on the etymology of vampire.” The first theory purports, “that the word *vampire* and its Slavic synonyms *upior*, *uper*, and *upyer* are all derivatives of the Turkish *uber*–witch.” The second theory suggests that the Greek word “ $\tau\tau\iota$ ” meaning “to drink” is a possible source for *vampire*. The third group subscribes to a Slavic origin, which is now the most accepted, explaining that “the root noun underlying the term is considered to be the Serbian word *BAMIIUP*.” Some etymologists, however, cannot come to a general consensus on which Slavic root word is the source for *vampire*. The fourth group of linguists advocates that the word is of Hungarian origin from the Hungarian word, *vampir*.⁷

⁶ Richard Dorson, *The British Folklorists A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 155.

⁷ Katharina Wilson, “The History of the Word ‘Vampire’” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46, no. 4 (Oct. – Dec., 1985): 577-581; however, “vampir post-dates the first use of the term in most Western languages by more than a century.” In 1688 Forman, “in his *Observations on the Revolution in 1688*, written in the same year and published in 1741, used the term in a footnote metaphorically without attaching any explanation to it.”

Regardless of the specific origins of the word, scholars agree that in England Paul Ricaut first defined vampire in 1679 in *State of the Greek and Armenian Churches* as “a pretended demon, said to delight in sucking human blood, and to animate the bodies of dead persons, which when dug up, are said to be found florid and full of blood.”⁸ However, Ricaut only describes the phenomenon. He does not name it. The *Oxford English Dictionary* is the first known lexicon with an entry for *vampire* in 1734 defining it as “a ghost who leaves his grave at night and sucks the blood from the living.” The OED mistakenly refers to the *Travels of 3 English Gentlemen from Venice to Hamburg, Being the Grand Tour of Germany in the Year 1734* as the first use of the word in English. The composition of the *Travels* postdates both Ricaut and Forman by half a century, and the work was not published until 1810 when the Earl of Oxford’s library was printed in the Harleian Miscellany.”⁹

The vampire legend has equally diverse geographic and cultural origins, as one can see by the many unique names these cultures have associated with vampiric creatures. In Russian there are the terms *upir* and *upyr*. In Albanian there is the *shtriga*. In Greek alone there are the *ghello*, *drakos*, *drakaena*, *lamia*, *vrykolakes*, *brykilakas*, *barbarlakos*, *borborlakos*, and the *bourdoulakos*. From Sanskrit come the terms *katakhanoso* and *baital*. In Poland dwelled the *upiory*, in Germany the *bltsauger*, in China the *giang shi*, and in pre-Columbian Peru the *canchus* and the *pumapmicuc*.¹⁰

⁸ Katharina Wilson, “The History of the Word ‘Vampire’” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 46, no. 4 (Oct. – Dec., 1985): 577.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Montague Summers, *Vampires and Vampirism* (Mineola: Dover Publication, 2005), 220.

THE PRE-CHRISTIAN VAMPIRE

The vampire legend seems to manifest due to some extension of man's fear of death or fear of what comes after death. Even today, death is regarded with great terror and not as a natural and inevitable process. The fear of death is universal. Death is an inescapable personal experience that can never be fully understood or known. The uncertainty of what happens during and after death is the basis of the fear. To placate this anxiety, historically different cultures have created different burial rituals. Indeed, many cultures even placed an emphasis on burial rites. In the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, Lama Kazi Dawa explains that "Tibetans generally object to an earth burial, for they believe that when a corpse is interred the spirit of the deceased, upon seeing it, attempts to reenter it, and if the attempt is successful a vampire results, which is why cremation is preferred so as to prevent vampirism."¹¹ Further examples of death ceremonies can be seen in ancient Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome in their literature, art, and monuments to the dead. A tablet inscription from the Babylonians states the importance of burial rites:

The gods, which seize upon man
Have come forth from the grave;
The evil wind-gust
Have come forth from the grave;
To demand the payment of rites and the pouring out of libations,
They have come forth from the grave;
All that is evil in their hosts like a whirlwind
Hath come forth from their graves.¹²

¹¹ Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: or the After-Death Experiences on the Bardo Plane*, ed. W.Y Evans-Wentz, trans. W.Y. Evans-Wentz (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2000), 26.

¹² Translated in Montague Summers, *Vampires and Vampirism* (Mineola: Dover Publication, 2005), 220.

The Babylonians believed that evil events would occur if the correct burial rites were not performed.

To the Egyptians, burial rites were also important parts of assuring an afterlife. For the Egyptians, the soul was made up of several parts. The “ba” was the individual soul that made each person an individual and the “ka” was the body double of a person’s spirit that left the body upon death. In order to achieve immortality, the ka and ba had to be united. In order for this to occur, the ka required an uncorrupted or mummified body called the “khat.” The ka also required sustenance such as flowers, herbs, food, and drink. If the ka was not given provisions, then it was believed it would leave the tomb clad in its burial clothes and drain the living of energy or blood. It would seem apparent that the ka staggering around in its body wrap would be the origin of the myth of the wandering mummy; however, there is no written evidence to support this claim.

Homer illustrates the importance of burial rites to the Greeks in the *Iliad* when the actual fighting stopped for days while the proper rituals and games were performed for Patroclus. Further, he demonstrates the importance when Achilles originally refuses to give up the body of Hector to the Trojans for a proper burial. Sophocles’ play *Antigone* is about the importance of burial rites to the gods no matter how man may feel about the person. John Cuthbert Lawson, M.A. Fellow and Lecturer of Pembroke College, Cambridge, discusses the idea of bloodguilt and vengeance pacts in *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* and states that “bodily return after death was expected to such a degree that murderers often mutilated the corpses of their victims by cutting off limbs in order to prevent them returning to seek vengeance. If they could return, they would then of course kill the murderer, who is thus also made a

revenant who wreaks horrors on the living.”¹³ So it would seem that in a number of different cultures, man has placed a strong belief on the significance of the disposal of the human body.¹⁴ Undeniably, the vampire myth owes its origins not just to man’s fear of death, but also to fear of a dead man returning in some form after death.

As a result of man’s fear of death, vampire-like creatures have been a part of superstition since prehistoric man. According to Montague Summers, the oldest evidence of man’s belief in the vampire is on a bowl that is pictured in the French journal “Delegation en Perse” of a man copulating with a vampire whose head has been severed from its body. Prior to Christianity, the examples of vampires generally take the form of the supernatural, such as demons or specters. In the early part of the twelfth century, vampires took the more commonly known form of the revenant, or a human that returns to the world of the living after death. On the surface it would seem that these two types of vampires differ; however, it is the vampiric traits that are similar, such as sucking the blood from victims and an interest in burial rites.

Evidence of vampiric creatures in the ancient world seem to go farther back than the discussion on man’s need for burial rites. In the second millennium B.C., the Babylonian and Assyrian states have writings of vampiric creatures. Among these are the incorporeal demon *utukku* and the *ekimmu*, which was the soul of a dead person who was unable to find rest in death. In Ancient Greece, the philosopher Philostratus mentions a type of demon that assumes the body of a person in his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (c. 170-c.247): “This fine bride is one of the vampires, that is to say of those beings whom

¹³ John Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion: A Study in Survivals* (Cambridge: University Press, 1910), 255.

¹⁴ Montague Summers, *Vampire and Vampirism* (Mineola: Dover Publication, 2005), 181. This also holds true for the Native Americans who had some vampiric myths due to erroneous burial rites.

the many regard as lamias or hobgoblins...they are devoted to the delights of Aphrodite, but especially to the flesh of human beings...she admitted that she was a vampire, and was fattening up Menippus [her new husband] with pleasures before devouring his body, for it was her habit to feed upon young and beautiful bodies, because their blood is pure and strong.”¹⁵ This type of vampiric creature was called *Lamia*, an ambiguous minor figure in Greek mythology.¹⁶ According to Gabriel Ronay, “Euripides and Aristophanes referred to the lamiae as pernicious monsters.”¹⁷ In *Ars Poetica*, Horace writes of a monster that shows a child, felled and devoured by a lamiae. Then the child is dragged from her entrails, and restored to life.¹⁸ The Roman writer Apuleius, author of *Metamorphoses*, commonly referred to as *The Golden Ass*, writes of Meroe who sucked the life force out Socrates. The writer Ovid defines *striges* as vampires that transform into flesh-eating birds, “which fly about at night sucking the blood of children and devouring their bodies.”¹⁹

Other non-Christian cultures across Europe also had vampiric creatures in their folklore. For instance, the Celtic folklore includes a drinker of human blood, referred to variously as a *dearg-dul*, *dearg-due*, *dearg-dililat*, and *dearg-divlai*. German or Teutonic folklore has a *doppelsauger* meaning double sucker, a night killer called a *nachtzeher*, and an *alp*, which is similar to the incubus.

¹⁵ Flavius Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, trans. F.C. Conybeare (1912; repr., Boston: Loeb Classical Library, 2001), Book IV, 225.

¹⁶ Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History of Diodorus Siculus* (Boston: Loeb Classical Library, 1954), http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Diodorus_Siculus/10*.html (accessed January 5, 2010). She was a beautiful princess seduced by Zeus and bore him children. Hera killed her children and turned ugly with anger and grief and was said to devote the rest of her life devouring children.

¹⁷ Gabriel Ronay, *The Dracula Myth* (London: PanMacmillan, 1975), 1.

¹⁸ Horace, *The Art of Poetry*, rev. ed., trans. Francis (New York: Fredrick Warne and Co., 1892), lines 340-41, http://fxylib.znufe.edu.cn/wgfljd/%B9%C5%B5%E4%D0%DE%B4%C7%D1%A7/pw/horace/horacepo.htm#N_1_ (accessed February 5, 2010).

¹⁹ Ovid, *Fasti*, ed. Anthony Boyle and Roger Woodward (New York: Penguin Classic, 2001), 179.

VAMPIRES IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN ERA

It is accurate to describe the clergy as disseminators of morality. After all, one of the primary functions of any religion is to legislate morality to both the elites and the commoners. However, the Catholic Church was not fortunate enough to be working with a *tabula rasa*. Prior to 1100 when Christianity was strongly established in Europe, the inhabitants had obviously held to various other belief systems. In order for the Church to establish a new religion, their first concern was securing the support of the monarch. In Western Europe, there was an established feudal system. Most people were poverty-stricken serfs who worked for the lords and barons who supported the monarch. Since the Church relied on the rich for support, her obvious alliance was with the ruling class. Seemingly, these pre-Christian institutions appear to have disappeared rather thoroughly throughout England by the middle of the tenth century, at least with the ruling class, but the ideas left behind by them and their companioned folklore continued to affect peasant life subtly for many centuries. The poor, who had no hope of improving their lot in life, were not satisfied with promises of an afterlife when they could not feed their families. Naturally, they would turn to pre-Christian beliefs that gave them some hope for a better life on earth. Additionally, the Church, in trying to make the conversion to the new religion smoother, built churches on old non-Christian sites and incorporated many of the non-Christian holidays and symbols. Reverend John Christopher Atkinson, a countryman on the Moors of Danby in Cleveland, describes the process from a commoner's point of view in his book *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish*, "Christianity turned the nature deities into devils, spells into magic, and spawwives into witches—but could not banish the ideas from the imagination of men. So adopted stones and wells turned spells into

exorcism and benedictions and charms into prayers.’’²⁰ Although this is not how the Church would describe her development, it is in fact how she combined the non-Christian elements with the Christian elements.

The willingness of the early Church to compromise was a great asset to the promotion of Christianity. One of these compromises was to superimpose Christian celebrations over the non-Christian festivities. A specific example of compromise is Christmas, the celebration of Christ’s birthday; during the first three hundred years, the Church in Rome discouraged such a celebration, concerned that it would appear to be more like a pagan ritual than a Christian holiday. As Church officials attempted to convert Romans to Christianity, many of the people continued to celebrate “Saturnalia” which commemorated the birth of the unconquerable sun. This celebration lasted a week and culminated on December 25, the time of the winter solstice. The theme for this celebration was the welcoming of the sun and the rebirth of the world. Since Christians believed that Jesus Christ was born to save the world, Pope Julius I chose December 25th as the birth of Christ. These two traditions fit nicely together since one is celebrating the return of the light to the world, and the other is celebrating the birth of the “Light of the World.’’²¹

Another example of superimposing Christian holidays over non-Christian celebrations is Lent. The Church did not observe Lent until 519 AD. The period of Lent

²⁰ Reverend John Christopher Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish: Reminiscences and Researches in Danby in Cleveland* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 255.
http://books.google.com/books?id=igshAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=forty+years+in+a+moorland+parish&source=bl&ots=hRmNehjsun&sig=lsL26uuoCIkNsArBbQPw6VIm5tk&hl=en&ei=K1a6S6bvA8aq1AeLmdGXCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CAgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage
 (accessed November 5, 2009).

²¹ James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Skokie: Varda Books, 2008), s.v. “Christian Holidays,” CD-ROM.

for Christians is a forty-day period of fasting, prayer, and reflection that culminates in Easter, the celebration of Christ's resurrection from the dead. Many pagan religions have a similar time of reflection that leads up to the celebration of the renewal of life in spring. For instance, in the Andes and in Mexico, followers practiced a forty-day period of fasting in order to honor the sun. This is why Lent and Easter are celebrated in the spring; Christ was reborn after his death, which runs parallel to the rebirth of the sun and the land after the winter. The origin of the name "Easter" is unknown. Venerable Bede suggests that it comes from Eastre, the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility, who had the month of April dedicated to her. Eastre's festival was celebrated on the day of the vernal equinox, and the rabbit, a symbol of fertility, was her symbol. The brightly colored eggs, also a fertility symbol, were representative of the bright colors of spring. Hence, Lent and Easter are further illustrations of how the Church simply integrated non-Christian holidays with Christian beliefs. So what did the Church do with the vampire myth?

The great irony of this period is that as the Church moved to fuse the non-Christian mythologies, it would be her own decree that would lend historical validity to the vampire. The absurdity is that instead of ignoring this myth, or replacing it, the Church condemned it as a work of the devil. The foremost among all the Church fathers, Bishop Augustine of Hippo (354-430), a philosopher and theologian, uses Platonic reasoning in *The City of God* to explain how a demon can use a body for evil purposes. Augustine writes, "Just as [the demon] can from the air form a body of any form and shape, and assume it so as to appear in it visibly: so, in the same way he can clothe any

corporeal thing with any corporeal form, so as to appear therein.”²² So Augustine ultimately amalgamates the vampire myth into Christianity by making it the antithesis of good. Although Augustine does not directly fuse the myth, he opens the door for scholars to see vampires as demons and therefore real. Further, the authoritative teaching of the Church decreed in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council under Pope Innocent III “the Devil and other demons were created by God good in nature but they by themselves have made themselves evil.”²³ Since vampires were corpses reanimated by Satan’s devils, then they are evil, and vampirism was divine punishment for sins.

A couple of hundred years after Augustine, philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) supports Augustine’s claims using Aristotelian logic. Aquinas responds directly to Augustine, “According to Catholic Faith, it must be held firmly both that the will of the good angels is confirmed in good, and that the will of the demons is obstinate in evil.”²⁴ So, Aquinas further supports the possibility of the vampire myth as demonic evil. Why would a theologian give credence to such a myth? The answer lies in the similarities between the basic beliefs of Christianity and the vampire. The vital feature in the foundation of both is blood. There could be no human existence without blood; it is the essence of life. British novelist Anthony Masters explains a brief history of blood in his non-fiction work, *The Natural History of the Vampire*:

Some believed that the soul lived within the blood; others, more simply, that it was the source of life. Warriors drank the blood of their slain enemies to gain

²² St. Augustine, *City of God*, Translated by Marcus Dods (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1952), IX, 18, 295.

²³ H.J. Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Texts, Translation, and Commentary* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1937).

²⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*. Translated by The Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Switzerland: Benziger Bros., 1947), <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/aquinas/summa/index.htm> (accessed November 12, 2009), I,q 59, a 1.

their strength. Blood was essentially sacred and played a prominent part in ritual worship and sacrifice—throughout the ages the gods have demanded it and in order to propitiate them man has obediently complied.²⁵

In the words of anthropologist Reay Tannahill, in her book entitled *Sex in History*, prehistoric man “knew that life was uncertain and sometimes short, that death was inevitable and sometimes abrupt. Every time he set out for the hunt he was aware that some day...the end would come with a slash and an outpouring of blood. It is not difficult to understand why...he should have come to the conclusion not merely that blood was essential to life, but that it was the essence of life itself.”²⁶ Therefore, blood is life and should be preserved with care, and if blood is the soul, it must be accorded religious respect.

Accordingly, anthropologists such as Tannahill reason that prehistoric man saw blood as a vital force of life. In fact, it was the custom of many tribes to drink the blood of their enemy in order to gain their strength. Roman gladiators drank blood for strength before going into battle. According to British author and journalist Gabriel Ronay, for a long time in the Mediterranean basin, the blood of the innocent, mainly children and virgins, was used to cure leprosy. It was considered a royal medicine since it was difficult to obtain.²⁷ Pliny, in his *Historia Naturae*, also writes of Egyptian pharaohs taking baths in human blood to help cure leprosy.²⁸ Ronay reports, “the drinking of human blood was believed to be the only effective medicine for dropsy [a form of edema] in Rome, and, according to Celsus, in the declining years of the Roman empire the still-

²⁵ Anthony Masters, *The Natural History of the Vampire* (Berkeley: Berkley Publishing Corp., 1972), 4.

²⁶ Reay Tannahill, *Sex in History* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1982), 43.

²⁷ Gabriel Ronay, *The Dracula Myth* (London: Pan Macmillan, 1975), 110.

²⁸ Quoted in Gabriel Ronay. *The Dracula Myth* (London: Pan Macmillan, 1975), 110.

warm blood of murdered gladiators was the standard medicine for epileptics.”²⁹

Moreover, Roman patricians who felt run down used to descend into the arena to drink the blood of beaten gladiators. Bloodletting was a long-standing technique physicians used to bleed out a disease and gain health. In more recent history, in Germany before WWI, epileptics were given blood at dawn from executed criminals to cure their seizures, which of course did not work. So for man, blood contains both the vanishing of life and strength.

In the past, blood was also used as a way to strengthen the foundation for buildings. Ornella Volta, Italian author, editor and critic explains:

The temple of Shiva was consecrated with the blood of an adolescent and the first stone that was laid of the city of Jericho was baptized with the blood of the two sons of a King of Canaan. This custom was so widespread among Slavic peoples that the word ‘dietirets’ (meaning vigorous) is used to denote a fortress and also the victim that was sacrificed before it could be built.³⁰

In the Middle Ages, bleeding was another way to bring a murderer to justice. This type of justice was called a bier right. It was a belief that a victim’s corpse would begin to bleed again in the presence of the murderer and thus was accepted as a judicial verdict.³¹ Additionally, from the thirteenth century forward, witchcraft was associated with blood, for it was believed that witches used blood in evil potions.

Historically, blood sacrifice was considered a vital part of worshipping any deity. Homer’s use of blood to bring back the shades in the *Odyssey* is just one example of how important blood was to the ancient Greeks. Interestingly, Leviticus mentions blood

²⁹ Gabriel Ronay. *The Dracula Myth* (London: Pan Macmillan, 1975), 110-111.

³⁰ Ornella Volta. *The Vampire* (London: Tandem Books, 1972), 25.

³¹ Carl Lindahl, and others, *Medieval Folklore: A Guide to Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs and Customs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 45-47.

sacrifice and how to properly manage the blood rituals. Jesus's followers picked up on this blood ritual and made it a major part of Christianity.

Initially the Church saw blood as a contaminant, “theologically justified by its association with bloodshed and sin,”³² but in the Middle Ages there was a growing popular devotion that focused on blood. This devotion included the blood of saints, martyrs, and Christ. The belief was that holy blood worked miracles such as curing blindness, paralysis, and leprosy. Further, in the thirteenth century there emerged miracle stories of the Eucharist (the consecrated communion wafer) bleeding, thus promoting another popular devotion to the Blood of the Eucharist.³³

Hence, blood has always been seen as the source of life. The drinking of blood of one's enemy is an ancient way of ingesting the essence of that person. This is the way, according to the Bible, that Christ asks his followers to remember him, through the drinking of his blood in a reenactment at mass every day or week. According to the Gospel of John, “Whoso eat my flesh, and drink my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eat my flesh, and drink my blood, dwell in me, and I in him.”³⁴ Christians drink the blood of Christ in order to be a part of him as a spiritual sustenance, and vampires drink the “blood” of others for physical sustenance. Catholics, however, believe that the wine is not symbolic of Christ's blood as Protestants do, but during the mass, the wine actually becomes the blood of Christ through transubstantiation. By accepting Christ, people live forever as servants of God; when bitten by a vampire, people live forever as

³² ³² Carl Lindahl, and others, *Medieval Folklore: A Guide to Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs and Customs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002),46.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ *Holy Bible: The New American Bible* (Wichita: Fireside Bible Publishers, 1995), John 6: 54-57.

the undead. So, both offer eternal life in one form or another. The similarities of blood between the vampire myth and Christianity would explain why the Church chose not to eliminate the vampire myth, but to use it as an example of the antithesis of good.

There are suggestions by several academics that the Church also used the vampire myth to explain the process of transubstantiation of the Holy Eucharist during mass. Dr. James Twitchell, Professor of English and Advertising at the University of Florida, writes in his introduction to *The Living Dead* that transubstantiation:

Could be described in terms of the older vampire myth. For just as the devil drank the sinner's blood and partook of his spirit, so now the righteous man might drink the wine and partake of Christ's holiness. It was a simple and straightforward way to explain this complex sacrament, and, of course, it put the fear of the devil quite literally into the sinner, as it put the salvation of Christ into the righteous.³⁵

Although this is a very intriguing idea of a liturgical use of the vampire myth, Twitchell offers no evidence to support that any Church cleric or Church doctrine illustrated transubstantiation in this manner. Although transubstantiation had been Church dogma since Aquinas took over Aristotle's idea of substance versus accident,³⁶ it was not made doctrine until the Council of Trent in 1563.³⁷ By combining the two ideas, however, Twitchell not only demonstrates how the Church attached Christian holidays to seasonal rituals and observances, but also how easily similar ideas can be joined together, growing and changing a myth.

³⁵ James Twitchell. *The Living Dead* (Durham: Duke University press, 1981), 14.

³⁶ Some could say that this makes Jesus a good vampire since he gives his blood for salvation and returned from the dead but that would be stretching the vampiric myth a little too far.

³⁷ Joseph, Pohle, "The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), 15 February 2010.
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05573a.htm>.

Through the teaching of Augustine and Aquinas, the Church firmly merged and established in the dogma about demons that the vampire could be a creature of the devil, and hence a real presence. As a religious institution, the Church is a place for members not only to seek communion with Christ, but also to find solace from evil and redemption from sin. It is through this function that the medieval Church recognized in the vampire an opportunity to use the myth as a tool to further her own strength. Thus, fighting evil required the Church's presence, and since the vampire was evil, one found it necessary to look to the Church for help and guidance. How did the Church offer assistance and support in dealing with the vampire? Most of her support manifested in the late Middle Ages.

CHAPTER 2: IMPLEMENTATIONS OF THE VAMPIRE MYTH

CHRISTIAN BURIAL

Like other heretical scapegoats she established, the Church offered relief for the evil vampire. Thus, the only way to prevent becoming a vampire was to follow the guidelines of the Church, and the only way to kill a vampire was with the use of the tools in the Church. There was only one sure way to prevent becoming a vampire according to the Church, and that was to have a Christian burial. According to the *Catholic Encyclopedia*:

Originally as burial was a spiritual function, it was laid down that no fee could be extracted for this without simony. But the custom of making gifts to the Church was partly as an acknowledgement for the trouble taken by the clergy, and partly for the benefit of the soul of the departed.³⁸

The idea behind the custom of gifts to the clergy alone speaks to the power and influence the Church had over its members. Prior to the Church's Vatican II Council in the 1960's, the sanctity of life and human body did not change when a person died. This belief was strongly tied to the analogy between the resurrection of the body and the resurrection of Christ. Since Christ promised to raise the dead on Judgment Day, the interment of mortal remains became an act of religious importance and ceremony. In addition, Church law lists various classes of people who must be excluded from Christian burial: pagans, heretic, apostates, suicides, and persons who have been excommunicated.

³⁸ William Fanning, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), s.v. "Christian Burial," <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02258b.htm> (accessed March 5, 2010).

Since people in the Middle Ages believed that a person would become a vampire if they did not receive due burial rites at death, the Church used elaborate rituals to ensure that the dead stay dead. First the body had to be decently laid out with lights placed around the corpse. A crucifix was placed on the deceased's breast or the hands were laid out on the chest in the form of a cross. The body was sprinkled with holy water, incensed at specific times, and then buried on consecrated ground.³⁹ British historian Elizabeth Stone explains that locals believed one of the benefits to being buried on consecrated ground was the powerlessness of evil spirits.⁴⁰ She goes on further to clarify her point: "In consecrated churchyard no self-murder, nor adulterer, nor perjured person, not even a heretic or a jew [sic] was allowed to be buried in consecrated ground."⁴¹ Burial customs set up by the Church were strict, and the men of the institution were the ones who decided who was a sinner and who was not; so ultimately, if you did not please the ministers of the Church, your body would not receive a proper burial and you would wander the earth as a revenant until the Church officially absolved you. Countryman Reverend Atkinson enlightens readers with the beliefs at the time:

There is no doubt that the self-murderer, or the doer of some atrocious deed of violence, murder, or lust, was buried by some lonely roadside, in a road-crossing, or by the wild wood side, and that the oak or, oftener, thorn stake as driven through his breast: but not because of any intended scorn, or horror, or

³⁹ Bertram Puckle, *Funeral Customs: Their Origins and Development* (1926; repr., London: T. Werner Laurie, 1990), 32.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Stone, *God's Acre: Historical Notice's Relations to Churchyards* (London: John W. Parker and Son, West Strand, 1858), 108.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=DFcCAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=god's+acre&ei=Jmq6S6y-Hp2MygSV8LEx&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false> (accessed November 12, 2009). Of course the Church promoted these types of beliefs.

⁴¹ Elizabeth Stone, *God's Acre: Historical Notice's Relations to Churchyards* (London: John W. Parker and Son, West Strand, 1858), 109.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=DFcCAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=god's+acre&ei=Jmq6S6y-Hp2MygSV8LEx&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false> (accessed November 12, 2009).

abhorrence. These are the characters who—to use an expression common enough among us to this day, though perhaps we do not trouble to think of its origin or meaning—could not ‘rest in their graves.’ They *had* to wander, nay, often they were self-constrained to wander about the scenes of their crimes, or places where their unhallowed carcass were deposited, unless, that it is to say, they were prevented; and as they wanted the semblance, the simulacrum, the shadow-substance of their bodies for that purpose – otherwise there could have been no appearance – the body it was which was made secure by pinning it to the bottom of the grave by aid of the driven stake. Here is an explanation, which has long been lost sight of, and replaced by notions involving the ideas of ignominy, abhorrence, execration, or what not; and it is just the explanation that was wanted. The corpse of the fearful malefactor, cast out of hallowed ground, as belonging to the devil and not to the saints, must be disabled, as well as the guilty spirit itself, for further mischief or ill-doing.⁴²

Again, these beliefs were enforced with stories told by the clergy every Sunday. People were afraid of doing wrong and being condemned by the Church.

Many folklore beliefs and customs grew from just the fear of vampires, as did burial customs. The burial customs prior to Christianity to prevent vampirism usually involved carrying the corpse out feet first to prevent the dead from coming back home again, severing the head from the body and placing it between the legs or between the arm and the side of the coffin, and tying the feet and legs together with a strong rope to prevent the revenant from walking. For added assurance, it was custom to whisper in the

⁴² Reverend John Christopher Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish: Reminiscences and Researches in Danby in Cleveland* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 244, http://books.google.com/books?id=igshAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=forty+years+in+a+moorland+parish&source=bl&ots=hRmNehjsun&sig=lsL26uuoCIkNsArBbQPw6VIm5tk&hl=en&ei=K1a6S6bvA8aqlAeLmdGXCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CAgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage (accessed November 5, 2009).

ear of the corpse that “he was not to come again.”⁴³ Medieval folklore suggests additional ways to prevent vampirism, for instance, burying the corpse facedown so it will not be able to find its way out. Severing the tendons and muscles in the legs or driving nails through its heart, hands, and feet prevents it from rising from the coffin.⁴⁴ Of course, these were measures taken along with the burial rites of the Church for extra assurance. In order for someone to be given a Christian burial, he or she had to be in good standing with the Church. It was up to the clergy of the Church to make that determination.

The most powerful form of punishment the Church used to punish members who did not follow the tenets of the Church was excommunication. The Catholic Encyclopedia defines excommunication as “a medicinal, spiritual penalty that deprives the guilty Christian of all participation in the common blessings of ecclesiastical society.”⁴⁵ To be excommunicated from the Church was very serious since it placed a person’s soul in immortal jeopardy. The *Fourteenth Century Preacher’s Handbook* explains:

Excommunication means the actual separation from any kind of permissible communion . . . and it must be feared both because it is a sharp spiritual sword that separates the soul from God, . . . and because an excommunicated person

⁴³ Reverend John Christopher Atkinson, *Forty Years in a Moorland Parish: Reminiscences and Researches in Danby in Cleveland* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891), 244-246, Atkins evidence comes from research on local customs both in the nineteenth century and before.

http://books.google.com/books?id=igshAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=fifty+years+in+a+moorland+parish&source=bl&ots=hRmNehjsun&sig=IsL26uuoCIkNsArBbQPw6VIm5tk&hl=en&ei=K1a6S6bvA8aqlAeLmdGXCg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CAgQ6AEwAA#v=onepage (accessed November 5, 2009).

⁴⁴ Carl Lindahl, and others, *Medieval Folklore: A Guide to Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs and Customs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 424.

⁴⁵ Auguste Boudinhon, “Excommunication,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909) 21 March 2010, <http://www.newadvent.org/cather/05678a.htm>.

is, ...deprived of the communion of the faithful and of all the good that is available in the Church.⁴⁶

The *Handbook* goes on to explain the dangers a person is in when he is excommunicated:

Someone who communicates with an excommunicated person exposes himself to great danger, first to himself, because he does not protect himself against a person who has an infectious disease. Next, he harms the excommunicated person also, because he takes from him the remedy for his death, that is, his social stigma that should lead him to repentance and correction. Third, he sins against him for whose sake the excommunication occurs, for he robs him of his own. And fourth, he sins against God, whom he scorns and despises in his minister. God separated the Israelites from the Egyptians as light from darkness, as a sign that there must be no communion between the good and the wicked, and especially the excommunicated.⁴⁷

Therefore, the fear of excommunication was a serious threat not only to the commoner, but to the political leaders as well. It is through the threat of excommunication that the Church exercised political influence across Europe. If one died while under the ban of excommunication, then one would not receive a Christian burial and was therefore subject to becoming a vampire.⁴⁸

Another reason one would not receive a Christian burial was death by suicide. The sanctity of life is one of the most consistent beliefs in Christianity throughout history. In the sixth century, Augustine argued that the sixth commandment, "thou shall not kill," included killing oneself. Further, Aquinas states that suicide is a sin against self, neighbor, and God. Suicide is a sin against self because all living things desire to

⁴⁶ *Fasciculus Morum: A 14th Century Preachers Handbook*, trans. and ed. Siegfried Wenzel (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 585.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 587.

⁴⁸ Montague Summers, *Vampire and Vampirism*, *The Vampire: His Kith and Kin*, 1929 (Mineola: Dover Publication, 2005), 181.

preserve life, a sin against the community since they are injured by self-killing, and a sin against God since he alone decides the time of death. Aquinas reasons, "To bring death upon oneself in order to escape the other afflictions of this life is to adopt a greater evil in order to avoid a lesser...Suicide is the most fatal of sins because it cannot be repented of."⁴⁹ The Church, however, did not stop at defining suicide as a sin for which one may be condemned to hell for eternity, but further institutionalized punishment and denied a suicide victim not only funeral rites but burial in a consecrated cemetery. In 1184 at the Council of Nimes, the Roman Catholic Church denied suicides burial in church cemeteries. The Synod of Sweden reinforced this policy in 1441 and included that to bury a suicide in a church cemetery would contaminate the sacred ground.⁵⁰ As a result, committing suicide, according to Church guidelines, was one way of becoming a vampire.

Along with excommunicates and suicides, the Church refused a Christian burial to apostates and the un-baptized. Canon law defines apostasy as a total repudiation of the Christian faith after baptism. Apostasy is considered a form of heresy and is thus subject to automatic excommunication, burial without Christian rites, and hence potential vampirism upon death. Baptism is "the sacrament whereby we are born again of water and the Holy Ghost and receive a new and spiritual life, through the dignity of adoption as children of God and heirs to his kingdom."⁵¹ A person having not received the

⁴⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*. Translated by The Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Switzerland: Benziger Bros., 1947), <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/aquinas/summa/index.htm> (accessed November 12, 2009), I-II, q.73, a.9.

⁵⁰ Alvin Schmidt, *Under the Influence: How Christianity Transformed Civilization* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2001), 70. Dr. Schmidt is a professor of sociology at the University of Nebraska.

⁵¹ William Fanning, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907), s.v. "Baptism," <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02258b.htm> (accessed March 5, 2010).

sacrament of baptism is not allowed Christian funeral rites and therefore, according to the Church, is subject to vampirism upon death.

Hence, in an effort to merge ancient myths into Christianity, the Church gave the vampire myth credence by assigning the vampire to the agency of the devil. By fostering the threatening parts of the vampire myth, the Church cultivated fear. To alleviate the fear, the Church offered remedies to prevent vampirism, with a caveat; one must follow the rules of the Church.

Historically there are several published examples of this power and influence the Church had over people, both commoners and leaders. In 697 CE, Venerable Bede, a monk, writes in the *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* of the bones of King Oswald and how his relics were “placed in the church, with due honor...they hung up over the monument his banner made of gold and purple; and poured out the water in which they had washed the bones, in a corner of the sacred place. From that time, the very earth which received that holy water had the virtue of expelling devils from the bodies of persons possessed.”⁵² In this story, Bede expresses one of many stories exemplifying that people who follow the rules of the Church will be blessed by God and honored by man on earth.

In twelfth-century England, the vampire tradition was prevalent. The ecclesiastical scholar Walter Map (1140–1210), the English historian William of Malmesbury (1080–1143), and the Augustinian monk William of Newburgh (1136–1198) write multiple accounts of people coming back from the dead and attacking their families. Each example involves the rules of the Church not being followed and the

⁵² Bede, *A History of the English Church and People*, trans. Leo Sherley-Price (New York: Penguin Classics, 1955), 158-59.

result. In his book, *Trifles of the Courtier*, a collection of folklore, tales, and the author's reflections and observations, Walter Map describes an animated corpse called a "revenant."⁵³ A soldier from Northumbria reported (before 1187) that his father came back as a walking revenant and spoke to him: "Dearest son, have no fear, for I am thy father, and bring thee no harm; but summon a priest that thou mayest learn the reason for my coming."⁵⁴ A priest was summoned, and before a great crowd, the revenant fell to the priest's feet and said:

I am the unhappy wretch on whom thou long since didst lay a curse because I wrongfully held back my tithes, and whom thou, without calling me by name, didst excommunicate along with a crowd of others; but of such avail to me have, by God's grace, been the general prayers of the Church and the alms of the faithful that I may now seek absolution.⁵⁵

The priest absolved him, and the revenant went back to his grave "into which he fell and which of its own accord closed over him. This strange hap introduced a new discussion of Holy Writ."⁵⁶ Walter Map also writes of a non-believer who died in unbelief and wandered about for three days. Before 1187, Bishop Roger of Worcester put a cross on a grave and then the man/demon returned and could not enter the grave. People later removed the cross and the man/demon fell into the grave and covered himself with earth. The people raised the cross and the man/demon lay in peace and never rose again.⁵⁷ A third vampire story from Walter Map stated, "A nonbeliever and Welshman returned each night for four nights calling fellow lodgers who quickly grow ill and die within three

⁵³ The *Catholic Encyclopedia* suggests that the book *Trifles of the Courtiers* which Map wrote was more of a court gossip for Henry II and therefore should be considered more of a folklorist than a historian.

⁵⁴ Walter Map, *Trifles of Courtiers* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1924), 127-128.

⁵⁵ Walter Map, *Trifles of Courtiers* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1924), 127-128.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 127-128.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 126.

days. William of Laudun, an English soldier, went to the Bishop for advice, who said, ‘Dig up the corpse, cut the neck, and besprinkle the body and grave with holy water and then rebury it.’”⁵⁸ These stories were repeatedly told throughout the country as warnings to people who choose not to follow the rules of the Church.

Furthermore, William of Newburgh⁵⁹ tells the tale of three incidents of revenants stalking their relatives. In his first tale:

A certain man died, and, according to custom, by the honorable exertion of his wife and kindred, was laid in the tomb on the eve of the Lord's Ascension. On the following night, however, having entered the bed where his wife was reposing, he not only terrified her on awaking, but nearly crushed her by the insupportable weight of his body.⁶⁰

He continued to visit her for three nights until, “being repulsed by the shouts of the watchers, and seeing that he was prevented from doing mischief, he departed.” Then he visited other relatives and former neighbors. Finally they “thought it advisable to seek counsel of the church.” After some consideration, the bishop wrote a letter of absolution and had the letter placed on the breast of the dead man and “he was thenceforth never more seen to wander, nor permitted to inflict annoyance or terror upon any one.”⁶¹ The other two stories are very similar. Someone dies who has not lived a good life according to the Church, and once they are forgiven, they rest quietly in their grave. Newburgh

⁵⁸ Walter Map, *Trifles of Courtiers* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1924), 125-126.

⁵⁹ The Catholic Encyclopedia writes of William of Newburgh being a historian in the same tradition as Venerable Bede.

⁶⁰ William Newburgh, *The Church Historian of England*, Volume IV part II., trans. Joseph Stevenson (London: Seeley's, 1861), Chapter 22., <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/williamofnewburgh-intro.html> (accessed November 5, 2009).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

does say that if he wrote “down all the instances of this kind...the undertaking would be beyond measure laborious and troublesome”⁶² which is why he only wrote of three.

In all these instances, when the Catholic Church rejected the man for not believing or following her rules, he then became the vampire. When the Church was approached for help, she prescribed the remedies for the vampires, which coincidentally always required priests or relics from the Church in order to kill the vampire and allow the body to rest in peace. Thus the Church not only perpetuated some of the established myths, but also created some of her own. Bear in mind that the Church created four main reasons for vampirism (suicides, excommunicates, apostates, and the un-baptized). The only other cause for becoming a vampire was one that was carried over from the pre-Christian tradition. It was burial with erroneous rites.

Folklore lists many folk remedies to ward off vampires. The most common and non-religious is, of course, garlic. The origin for using garlic to ward off vampires is unknown. Most scholars speculate that the pungent smell of garlic is the root cause of this tradition.

Thus it would seem that the Church, in pursuit of control over the masses, developed ecclesiastical remedies to prevent vampirism. The antidote to vampirism was simply to remain in good standing with God and the community; good standing was accomplished by obeying the rules of the Church. Obeying the Church would ensure that upon death, the proper funeral rites would be performed, thereby preventing any fear of vampirism.

⁶² William Newburgh, *The Church Historian of England*, Volume IV part II., trans. Joseph Stevenson (London: Seeley's, 1861), Chapter 22., <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/williamofnewburgh-intro.html> (accessed November 5, 2009).

Once a person became a vampire, the only cure was a wooden stake through the heart, decapitation, or burning the body. These vampire cures had to be performed by a priest in order to be effective. In some areas, the wooden stake had to be made of either Aspen or Whitethorn. Depending on the region, it was a belief that Christ was crucified on a cross made of an Aspen tree, and the crown of thorns Christ wore was believed to be from a Whitethorn tree.⁶³

THE VAMPIRE AND SEX

The belief that humans and supernatural beings can engage in sexual intercourse is in most ancient mythologies. The Greek and Roman pantheons are full of stories of how supernatural gods had sex with mortal women. The vampire was not any different. The vampire of folklore was not a sexually attractive figure; he was a dead man who fed on blood, a monster who killed those around him. The female spirit-like vampire in folklore, like the Lamias, though ugly in her true form, had the ability to shift her appearance to that of a beautiful maiden in order to lure men. The vampires of fiction are a different story. Bram Stoker, the author of *Dracula*, made the vampire into a sex symbol. He exhibited both the male and female vampire with a beautiful facade and a sexual appetite, evoking both violence and eroticism with the penetration of the skin by sharp canine teeth. So the idea of sexual intercourse between mortals and supernatural beings is age old; however, the Church exploited this idea to her own ends.

Augustine was “the first to consider fully whether the angels since they are spirits, are able bodily to have intercourse with women. Augustine inclined to the affirmative,

⁶³ Montague Summers, *Vampire and Vampirism* (Mineola: Dover Publication, 2005), 181.

although he denied that the angels of God so sinned.”⁶⁴ As early as the ninth century, Hincmar, Archbishop of Rheims, had recorded how a demon might sometimes deceive a woman by taking on the appearance of the man she loved and told of a nun who was tormented by the visitations of a priest until a priest exorcized it.⁶⁵ Pope Innocent VIII, Bonaventura, and Aquinas all believed intercourse between demons and humans was possible. From around 1340 to 1653 there was a great deal of debate on how demons or the devil could copulate with human beings. Aquinas explains in his *Quaestiones Quodlibetales* not only how sex with demons is possible, but also how women can be impregnated by a demon:

Because the incubus (male) demon is able to steal the semen of an innocent youth in nocturnal emission and pour it into the womb of a woman, she is able by this semen to conceive an offspring, whose father is not the demon, incubus, but the man whose semen impregnated her, because it took effect by the virtue of him from whom it was dissipated. Therefore it seems that a man is able without a miracle to be at one and the same time both virgin and father.⁶⁶

The Church, through *The Witch's Hammer*, uses Aquinas's theories, but instead of referring to demons inhabiting corpses as vampires, the Church refers to them as incubi (male) and succubi (female). Authors Henrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger combine the vampiric demons with witches or more accurately with evil females who wish to have sex with a demon.

Ludovico Maria Sinistrari (1622–1701), an Italian Franciscan who served as an

⁶⁴ Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959), 461.

⁶⁵ Reay Tannahill, *Sex in History* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1982), 272.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959), 326.

advisor for the Holy Inquisition, writes in *Demoniality* of a different theory about how a demon can have sex with a human being. He states:

If we seek to learn from these Authorities how it is possible that the Demon who has no body, yet can perform actual coitus with man or woman, unanimously answer that the Demon assumes the corpse of another human being, male or female as the case may be, or that, from the mixture of other materials, he shapes for himself a body endowed with motion, by means of which body he copulates with the human being; and they add that women are desirous of becoming pregnant by the Demon (which occurs with the consent and at the express wish of the said women).⁶⁷

Thus in an attempt to control every aspect of its followers, the Church even addresses its members' sex lives and claims how easy it is to fall away from the Church and be tempted through the weakness of the flesh to align with the devil.

The reason pre-Christian peoples made sacrifices to the gods were to appease anger and win approval. In communities of mostly uneducated peoples, the entire social order depends on ritual killings of a scapegoat. By transferring the responsibility of social ills or unexplained disasters to a scapegoat, the community is able, if only temporarily, to find release from their fears. The victim or victims are pointed out, purged, or killed, and life is restored to normality for a while. When disaster strikes again, the whole cycle of accusation, hunting, and punishing is renewed. Without a scapegoat to blame, people tend to spiral into fear and despair that would lead to the breakdown of communities. The scapegoat cycle is one of the things that unite a community, society, and religion because people will work together to fight against the

⁶⁷ Ludovico Maria Sinistrari, *Demoniality*, trans. Montague Summers (1927; repr., Tennessee: Kessinger Publishing, 2009), 12.

one who is causing the community harm. All religions have a scapegoat. In Christianity, the metaphysical scapegoat is the devil or agents of the devil. Historically, Jews and witches are the most prominent social examples of scapegoats for the medieval Church. Since the Church declared that vampires are agents of the devil, then the vampire is also a metaphysical scapegoat for the Church. According to Wayne Bartlett, a historian specializing in Eastern Europe, and Flavia Idriceanu, a Romanian philologist, as a scapegoat “the vampire threatens an entire community, as its touch contaminates all that is pure and orderly with the unholy and the un-whole patterns of the dark and the abnormal existence of the undead.”⁶⁸ Additionally, Klaniczay explains that vampires were a victimless scapegoat: “The vampire beliefs were shifted onto dead men returning from their graves which increasingly explained the spreading of this evil as pure contagion, and naturally exculpated the living victims attacked or related to the vampires.”⁶⁹ The only difference between vampires and witches is that witches could be found and slain. It proved somewhat difficult to punish the undead, blood-drinking fiend. As a result, the vampire joined witches as the scapegoat for the ills of the European society. However, as Klaniczay elegantly words it, “The magical mystery of vampirism was dissipated by re-invoking the scapegoat mechanism of witch persecution.”⁷⁰

WITCHCRAFT

The Roman Catholic Church’s position on witchcraft until the thirteenth century was “that the acts of witches were all illusions or fantasies originated in dreams, and that

⁶⁸ Wayne Bartlett and Flavia Idriceanu, *Legends of Blood: The Vampire in History and Myth* (London: Praeger Publishing, 2006), 109.

⁶⁹Gabor Klaniczay, *The Uses of Supernatural Power*, Translated by Susan Singerman (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), 187.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

consequently belief in the actuality of witchcraft was pagan and therefore heretical.”⁷¹

This position was written in a document entitled *Canon Episcopi* in 906 A.D. The *Canon Episcopi* “was incorporated in the *Corpus Juris Canonici* by Gratian of Bologna in the twelfth century and thus became part of the Canon law.”⁷² Robbins explains that “the broad influence of the *Canon Episcopi* and how it filtered down to the typical layman is best illustrated by its presence in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, where the Parson distinguished between maleficium (black magic or witchcraft) and white magic (the semi-Christianized pagan charms):”⁷³

What seye we of hem that bileeven on divynailes, as by flight or by noyse of brides, or of beestes, or by sort, by nigromancie, by dremes, by chirkyng of dores or crakkyng of houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and swich manere wrecchednesse?

Certes, al this thing is defended by God and by hooly chirche. For which they been accursed, til they come to amendement, that on swich filthe setten hire bileeve.

Charmes for woundes or maladie of men or of beestes, if they taken any effect, it may be peradventure that God suffreth it, for folk sholden yeve the moore faith and reverence to his name.⁷⁴

Unfortunately this all changed, according to several scholars most predominantly Robbins, because of the work of a single Dominican priest by the name of Thomas Aquinas.

⁷¹ Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959) 74.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 75.

⁷⁴ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, 3rd ed., ed. Larry Benson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000). 289-290.

Thomas Aquinas (1227–1274) was an Italian priest from the Dominican order and one of the most influential theologians and philosophers for the Church. Aquinas expressly denied the position on witchcraft in the *Canon Episcopi*. In his *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas redefines the association between man and the devil:

The second end of religion is that man may be taught by God Whom he worships; and to this must be referred ‘divinatory’ superstition, which consults the demons through compacts made with them, whether tacit or explicit . . . Divinations and certain observance come under the head of superstition, in so far as they depend on certain actions of the demons; and thus they pertain to compacts made with them⁷⁵

Although Aquinas did not suggest a formal pact between man and the devil, his ideas on their connection opened the doors for the witchcraft mania that gripped Europe.

According to Robbins, Aquinas had some bearing on five core areas of practical witchcraft:

1. Sexual relations with devils. The sexual perversions of the witches sabbat evolved from and were justified by Aquinas’ theory that humans could copulate with devils and that as a result, by a lightening transfer of semen from a male unsuspectingly masturbating or fornicating with a succubus, women could bear babies.
2. Transvection. Aquinas borrowed the speculations of Albertus Magnus that Satan, in tempting Christ on the mountaintop had assumed a body and carried Christ (who rendered himself invisible) on his shoulders—walking, however, rather than flying. From this came the corollary that devils, within certain divine limits, could transport witches through the air. Aquinas added Augustine’s doctrine of

⁷⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*. Translated by The Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Switzerland: Benziger Bros., 1947), <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/aquinas/summa/index.htm> (accessed November 12, 2009), II-II,q 93,a 2.

raptus, an early form of astral projection in which the soul could have experiences outside the body.

3. Metamorphosis. Aquinas accepted without dissent the popular theories, sanctioned by Augustine, of the Devil's ability to transform men into animals. His reasoning was extremely involved: The Devil creates an illusion in the mind of a man and then from a body of air makes a second outward illusion to correspond to the mental illusion. Thus the metamorphosis is not actual but imaginary. Although the effect on men is the same just as alchemists produce imitation gold which looks genuine. Both Augustine and Aquinas rejected literal lycanthropy (werewolf), but applied the 'imaginary appearance' theory. Later demonologists, however, cited Aquinas in support of transformation.
4. Storm-Raising. Aquinas believed in the power of devils, with God's permission to work maleficia including storm-raising. In addition, Aquinas set down rules for the use of charms.
5. Ligature. In his *Quaestiones Quodlibetales*, Aquinas wrote: 'The Catholic faith maintains that demons are something and that they can do no harm by their operations and impede carnal copulation.' They might effect this very simply, for example, by causing a man to have an aversion for some particular woman. Aquinas also believed that old women, by an accord [*foedus*] with the Devil, could harm children by the evil eye or fascination.⁷⁶

Aquinas's writing, however, did more than help establish and influence the five core areas of practical witchcraft; he also endorsed how heretics should be punished: "If false coiner or other felons are justly committed to death without delay by worldly princes, much more may heretics, from the moment that they are convicted be not only

⁷⁶ Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959), 28-29.

excommunicated, but slain justly out of hand.”⁷⁷ Bear in mind that Aquinas was a Dominican monk and the Inquisition was Dominican controlled and thus in favor of Aquinas’ theories and reasoning.⁷⁸

In addition to Aquinas’s influence in the thirteenth century, Pope Innocent VIII issued an influential document in the form of a papal bull on December 5, 1484, entitled “Summis desiderantes affectibus” [Desiring with the most profound anxiety]. This bull rapidly spread over Europe for two reasons. First, this papal bull covered provinces and not just specific localities. Second, it was printed in the *Malleus Malificarum* [*The Witches Hammer*] in 1486, which had a new printing every couple of years. Pope Innocent VIII’s papal bull marked the official reversal of the *Canon Episcopi* and the beginning of the Inquisition of heretics across Europe.

LYCANTHROPY

Beyond witches and vampires, the Church had another evil enemy during the Middle Ages—the werewolf. Man has both despised and venerated wolves at different times in history. Wolves embody wildness and chaos, yet a wolf nursed the legendary twin co-founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus. Lycanthropy is defined in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* as “a disease that was common in antiquity, especially the Middle Ages, as a result of the widespread belief that the transformation into animal form was possible.”⁷⁹ The most common form of transformation is a wolf.

⁷⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*. Translated by The Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (Switzerland: Benziger Bros., 1947), <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/aquinas/summa/index.htm> (accessed November 12, 2009), I-II, q 66, a 9.

⁷⁸ Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959), 28-29.

⁷⁹ James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (Skokie: Varda Books, 2008), s.v. “Lycanthropy,” CD-ROM.

The idea of shape shifting or metamorphosis though is not a new idea. In Greek mythology, people morphed into all kinds of different plants and animals. The word *lycanthropy* comes from the myth of Zeus changing Lycaon into a wolf after he sacrificed a child. Plato added that the eating of human flesh from the altar of sacrifice resulted in the transformation.⁸⁰ Virgil, Ovid, and Pliny the Elder also write of people who are transformed into wolves. Herodotus writes of people turning into wolves on certain days of the year. Montague Summers mentions a Roman poet, Marcellus Sidetes (117–161 A.D.), who wrote a medical poem inferring that lycanthropy is a disease of the mind.⁸¹ The belief in this metamorphosis was so prevalent that St. Augustine addressed it in his work, *City of God*:

Nor can the devils create anything but only cast a changed shape over that which God has made, altering only in show. Nor do I think the devil can form any soul or body into bestial or brutal members, and essences; but they have an unspeakable way of transporting man's phantasy in a bodily shape, unto other senses...or false shapes.⁸²

The lycanthropy legend, like the vampire legend, is universal. The most relevant features of a werewolf are the transformation into a wolf, the violent craving for blood, night traveling, attacking animals and humans, turning back into human before daybreak, and becoming a vampire upon death. An additional attribute that developed in the Middle Ages is sympathetic wounding, which occurs when a wolf is wounded during the night, and a human is found with a similar wound the next day. This was seen as proof that the wounded human was a werewolf and usually led to immediate execution.

⁸⁰ Plato, "Minos," *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

⁸¹ Montague Summers, *Vampire and Vampirism* (Mineola: Dover Publication, 2005), 181.

⁸² Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1952), 481.

The term *werewolf*, meaning outlaw in Anglo Saxon, came into the English language around 1000.⁸³ In 1188, an English writer Gervais of Tilbury mentions in *Topographica Hibernica* that people in England often see men transform into wolves with the changes of the moon.⁸⁴ In his work *The Vampire*, Ornella Volta reports that from 1520–1630 there were some 30,000 cases reported to different authorities in Europe, but he does not cite any source for these numbers. He further adds that some confessed werewolves explained that they did not change shapes, but instead wore their skin inside out “like a lining between the flesh and skin.”⁸⁵ This belief of werewolves wearing their skin inside out led to many attacks upon people suspected of lycanthropy.

Akin to the fear of vampirism, the fear of becoming or being attacked by a werewolf became a part of the popular trepidation of the common people. The *Compendium Maleficarum*, published in 1680, was considered to be the authoritative manuscript on witchcraft and demonology. The author Guazzo, an Italian priest, explains how metamorphosis is not possible:

No animal’s soul can inform the human body, and no human soul an animal’s body. The belief in such monstrous transformations is nothing new, but firmly held by the ancients many years ago...no one must let himself think that a man can really be changed into a beast, or a beast into a real man; for these are magic portents and illusions, having the form but not the reality of those things which they present to our sight.⁸⁶

⁸³ Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959), 326.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ornella Volta, *The Vampire* (London: Tandem Books, 1972), 130.

⁸⁶ Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, Montague Summers Edition., trans. E.A. Ashwin (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), 50-51.

Guazzo, however, does explain that the devil can take on the appearance of a werewolf and then blame it on an unsuspecting witch:

For the devil...sometimes he substitutes another body while the witches themselves are absent or hidden apart in some secret place, and himself assumes the body of a wolf formed from the air and wrapped about him, and does those actions which men think are done by the wretched absent witch who is asleep.⁸⁷

No matter if the devil or a witch was involved, lycanthropy was still considered a sin against God and was punished by the law, the most popular trials of which were recorded from 1522–1603.⁸⁸

Although St. Augustine essentially states that werewolves do not exist, Aquinas believed that an imaginary metamorphosis was possible and was created by the Devil. Since, according to Aquinas, the Devil tempts man in order to find the vice for which he is most prone, then the man is by definition in collusion with the Devil, and therefore a heretic. The purpose of the Inquisition was to seek out and kill heretics. This Dominican-run organization killed people who confessed to being a werewolf, thereby giving credence to their existence. In *De la Demonomanie* Jean Bodin, a French philosopher and professor of law, writes, “The severest measures were therefore taken against lycanthropes, especially on the part of the Inquisition, and this authoritative announcement of the reality of the transformation added to the popular terrorism.”⁸⁹ Since the Inquisition sanctioned the existence of lycanthropy, and the Inquisition

⁸⁷ Francesco Maria Guazzo, *Compendium Maleficarum*, Montague Summers Edition., trans. E.A. Ashwin (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), 50-51.

⁸⁸ Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959), 329.

⁸⁹ Translated in Summers, *Vampires and Vampirism* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2005), 30.

represents the Catholic Church, then subsequently the Church endorsed the existence of the werewolf.

INQUISITION

Ironically, when Christianity became the state church of the Roman Empire, it continued the intolerance to which it had been subject. According to Robbins, “By A.D. 430 the civil code was ordering death for heresy, although such laws were not rigorously enforced until many centuries later.”⁹⁰ The ecclesiastical and civil laws dealing with the practice of magic indicate the survival of pagan practices and beliefs despite several centuries of Christian rule in England. Theodore, the Archbishop of Canterbury, in seventh century “published a complete system of ecclesiastical laws for England, part of which dealt with sorcery.”⁹¹ One of the penalties in the Archbishop’s system for “resorting to demons” was “one to ten years’ penance.”⁹² King Withraed, also from the seventh century, passed a law incurring heavy fines for sacrificing to devils and idols and trafficking with evil spirits as a civil offence.⁹³ In the eighth century, the Archbishop of York, Egbert, enforced fasting as a punishment for women who used evil magic.⁹⁴

Further:

In 1144, Pope Lucius III created the earliest Episcopal inquisition and ordered bishops to make systematic inquiry or *inquisitio* into deviation from the official teaching of the Church. Any persons ‘found marked by suspicion alone’ had to prove their innocence or else be punished by the secular authorities; all law

⁹⁰ Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959), 266.

⁹¹ Eric Maple, *The Dark World of Witches* (New York: Castle Books, 1962), 24.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

officers had to co-operate or suffer excommunication.⁹⁵

It was this Episcopal inquisition that led to the Church formalizing an organization to deal with the spreading of evil throughout Europe. This organization was called the Inquisition.

The Inquisition was a Catholic tribunal responsible for all deaths related to witchcraft and the occult, including but not limited to vampires and werewolves. The panel was charged with exposing and punishing all religious unorthodoxy in Christian Europe. The Inquisition emerged around 1200. In 1215, Pope Innocent III set down in a decree entitled *Excommunicamus* (We Excommunicate) that ordered secular authorities to take a public oath to “strive in good faith, to the utmost of their power, to exterminate from the lands subject to their obedience all heretics who have been marked by the Church.”⁹⁶ Then in 1233, Pope Gregory IX put the committee in the hands of the Dominicans, making sure the inquisitors were appointed by and answered only to the pope. The inquisitors remained in an area until all heresy was gone. Unlike our justice system today, the Inquisition required the accused to prove their innocence. Once accused, records illustrate, very few escaped death, and even if the accused was not executed, the Church confiscated his or her property. Thus, the seizing of money and property became a strong motivator for accusing people of heresy.

By the late fifteenth-century, a book entitled *Malleus Maleficarum* or *The Witches Hammer* spelled out the process of finding heretics and destroying them. The *Malleus Maleficarium*, written by two Dominican friars, Jakob Sprenger (1436-95) and Heinrich

⁹⁵ Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959), 274.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 270.

Kramer (1430-1505), was published by the church in 1486, and was originally meant to be the handbook for the discovery and eradication of witches. The Aristotelian argument was based mostly on the writings of Aquinas. It also covered vampirism, their link to Satan, as well as how to deal with other evil beings, such as werewolves. By the 1600's, this treatise was being used as the "bible" of witch, werewolf, and vampire hunters across Europe. The Church fathers Augustine and Aquinas enabled others in the Church to include the vampire, werewolf, and witches in Christian dogma by making them heretical scapegoats. Further, the Church fortified these fears in the mind of men while providing protection from them through the Inquisition.

By the end of the seventeenth century the writing and publishing of different handbooks for conducting witch trials ceased, as did the Inquisition. Roman Catholic historian Lord Acton summarized the position of the Inquisition in the history of Europe, "No deduction can be made from her evil-doing toward unbelievers, heretics, savages and witches. Here her responsibility is more undivided; her initiative and achievement more complete."⁹⁷ However, Lord Acton's statement is also descriptive of another evil initiative of the Church – the crusades.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Rossell Hope Robbins, *The Encyclopedia of Witchcraft and Demonology* (New York: Crown Publishing, 1959), 274.

CHAPTER 3: THE BALKAN VAMPIRE AND DRACULA

The study of history involves identifying sources which contribute to the construction of accurate accounts of the past. It was not until the Renaissance that a true discourse of the past began to emerge. Consequently, reports of incidents prior to the serious study of history are considered stories and not historical discourse. The most prolific stories of the vampire in Europe come from the same geographic area—the Balkans. The fact that the most notable person associated with the vampire myth came from the Eastern part of Europe would explain the copious accounts. The person most commonly linked to vampires is Vlad III, who was born in Transylvania and ruled Wallachia. He was not a vampire, but a ruthless leader who did not think twice about killing his enemies. He is also the person on whom Bram Stoker based his most famous character, Dracula. Had it not been for Stoker, Vlad III would be an unknown. Vlad III's father was Vlad II, a duke of Wallachia, a region that is now part of Romania. He ruled intermittently from 1436 to 1447. Vlad II obtained the surname Dracul in 1431 when the Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund of Luxembourg, invested him with the Order of the Dragon for his bravery in fighting the Turks. The Order of the Dragon was a knightly order established by Serbian nobles and dedicated to defending Christianity against the Islamic Turks. Becoming a part of this order was Dracul's plan in order to gain political favor from the Catholic Church and to secure protection for Wallachia from the Ottoman Empire. His middle son was Vlad III. He was also called Vlad, son of the Dragon, which in Romanian is *Draculea*.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 15-28.

Even though Dracula was born in Transylvania, he had a claim to the throne of Wallachia. He obtained and lost the throne three different times. Dracula fought most of his battles against the Muslim Turks in and around Wallachia. Dracula surrounded “himself with priest, abbots, bishops, and confessors, whether Roman Catholic or Orthodox...he seemed intent on belonging to a church, receiving sacraments, being buried as a Christian, and being identified with the religion.”⁹⁹ In 1459, Pope Pius II called Christians to fight against the Turks in a crusade against the imperialist Sultan Mehmed. Due to many domestic squabbles all over Europe, most leaders ignored the Pope’s plea, with the exception of Dracula, who responded immediately. Of course, the Pope praised his courage and loyalty. In a letter to King Matthias dated February 11, 1462 Dracula writes of his feats, “[We killed] 23,884 Turks and Bulgars without counting those whom we burned in homes or whose head were not cut by soldier.”¹⁰⁰ Dracula was brutally loyal to Christianity.

Although Vlad’s surname by birth was Dracula, the name he earned was Vlad the Impaler. He earned this name not merely from his atrocious tactics against his enemies, but also with his subjects: “Dracula enforced public morality by means of severe punishment.”¹⁰¹ Pamphlets produced by the Hungarian court, who had imprisoned Dracula from 1462 until his death in 1476, portray Dracula as:

...a demented psychopath, a sadist, a gruesome murderer, a masochist, one of the worst tyrants of history, far worse than the most depraved emperors of Rome such as Caligula and Nero. Among the crimes attributed to Dracula are impalement, boiling alive, burning, decapitation, and dismemberment...Aside from impaling

⁹⁹ Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 40.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 43-49.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

his victims, Dracula decapitated them; cut off noses, ears, sex organs, limbs; hacked them to pieces; and burned, boiled, roasted, skinned, nailed, and buried them alive...one writer described Dracula as dipping his bread in the blood of his victims, which technically makes him a living vampire...he also compelled others to eat human flesh. His cruel refinements included smearing salt on the soles of a prisoner's feet and allowing animals to lick it off. If a relative or friend of an impaled victim dared remove the body from the stake, he was apt to hang from the bough of a nearby tree. Dracula terrorized the citizenry, leaving cadavers at various strategic places until the beasts or the elements or both had reduced them to bones or dust.¹⁰²

Some scholars dispute the veracity of these accounts as propaganda to discredit Dracula and justify his imprisonment. But according to McNally and Florescu, “Even granting that a common German anti-Dracula model may have inspired the accounts of the official Hungarian court chronicler, Antonio Bonfinius, one finds it hard to account for the similarity of the many other Dracula narratives written in a variety of languages and circulating over widely scattered geographic and political regions.”¹⁰³ Also, these tracts included very specific locations and “accurate geopolitical and topographical descriptions.”¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, a papal legate named Nicholas of Modrussa stationed at Buda, gave an account in 1464 to Pope Pius II in regards to a specific annihilation where:

Dracula killed 40,000 men and women of all ages and nationalities: ‘He killed some by breaking them under the wheels of carts; others stripped of their clothes were skinned alive up to their entrails; others placed upon stakes, or roasted on red-hot coals placed under them; others punctured with stakes piercing their heads, their breasts, their buttocks and the middle of their entrails, with the stake

¹⁰² Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 80-83.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 85-86.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 87.

emerging from their mouths; in order that no form of cruelty be missing he stuck stakes in both the mother's breasts and thrust their babies unto them. Finally he killed other various ferocious ways, torturing them with many kinds of instruments such as the atrocious cruelties of the most frightful tyrant could devise.¹⁰⁵

It is disconcerting to realize that the Pope received these reports, but did not condemn the acts. Vlad III was responding to a call from the Pope to fight a crusade against the Turks, thus making the Church ultimately responsible for the cruel torture Vlad inflicted. So the Church, through her political influence, helped create the historical vampire. It becomes evident that Dracula came by his nickname, the Impaler, quite literally. Together with his reputation for brutality, his strict adherence to medieval Christian morality, and a strong allegiance to the Church, it is easy to understand Stoker's interest in depicting his legendary character after Vlad Dracula. Besides using a historical character that tortured and killed for the Church as a model for Dracula, Stoker made use of all the beliefs that had grown from the Church making the vampire an agent of the devil. For instance, holy water and a crucifix thwart the vampires in Dracula.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Raymond T. McNally and Radu Florescu, *In Search of Dracula* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 86-87.

CHAPTER 4: THE VAMPIRE SIGHTINGS IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES

By the seventeenth and eighteenth century, vampire sightings were very prevalent in Eastern Europe. The most surprising part of the large number of reported vampire sightings is the timing. Across Europe reason, science, and enlightenment became the new religion. The Age of Enlightenment or Reason was in full swing. Man viewed himself quite differently. Medieval concepts of conduct and thoughts were openly challenged and the fear of being labeled a heretic was gone. Of course, the Church's power both politically and religiously had declined since the Protestant Reformation began in 1517. Nearly all of the famous vampire cases of this time period occurred in the peripheral territories of the Hungarian Kingdom. Interestingly, this region, the Balkans, was also where the Church met entrenched resistance of established religions of both the Muslims and the Greek Orthodox. It would seem that since the Church had given credence to the vampire myth, the myth continued to evolve despite all of the reasoning to the contrary.

The two most famous cases were reported in the press in great detail, the official exhumations of Peter Plogojowitz and Arnold Paole of the Hapsburg Monarchy. Paul Plogojowitz was from Hungary and died in 1728 at the old age of sixty-two. It was reported that three days later in the middle of the night he entered his house and asked his son for food, which he ate, and then left. The second and third night he appeared, but his son refused to feed him. It was then that several villagers died from the loss of blood. Plogojowitz was dug up and appeared to be in a trance, breathing gently with a smear of blood on his mouth. The Church officials judged him a vampire and when his body was

staked, blood gushed out of the body's orifices.¹⁰⁶

Arnold Paole was from Serbia and in 1727 he confessed to his fiancé that a vampire attacked him when he served in the Turkish-Serbian Army. A week later he died of a fatal accident. Three weeks after his burial, reports surfaced of Paole's appearances and the four people who made the reports died of unknown causes, which caused a panic. On the fortieth day after his burial, as per the tradition, the grave was opened to determine if he was a vampire. According to reports, Paole looked as if new skin was growing under the dead skin and when the Church officials pierced his body he bled. Paole was judged a vampire and was staked, beheaded, and burned. In addition, the four people who died after reporting seeing Paole were also staked, beheaded, and burned.¹⁰⁷

Over the next three months seventeen more people died with symptoms of vampirism. Word reached Vienna and the Austrian Emperor ordered Field Surgeon Johannes Fluckinger to make inquiries. In 1732 he made a full report to the Emperor and by March of the same year, word had already spread to France and England. The fear of vampirism was so widespread that Empress Maria Theresa of Austria passed laws making it illegal to exhume or desecrate a body after her personal physician, Gerhard van Swieten, investigated and determined that vampires do not exist.¹⁰⁸

A reasonable explanation of the vampire epidemics during this time would be the difficult time the Roman Church encountered in the seventeenth century while trying to expand and dominate Eastern Europe. At the same time, in Western Europe, the Church had lost much of its political power and religious stronghold due to the Protestant

¹⁰⁶ Montague Summers, *Vampire in Europe* (La Vergne: Kessinger Publishing, 2009), 1928, 132-170.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

reformation, so the Roman Church expanded east. In the Balkans the Church “met the entrenched resistance of established religions and the vampire legend was used as a wedge of ecclesiastical polity.”¹⁰⁹ The biggest quandary was “the assertion that all who were buried in unconsecrated ground would be denied eternal rest, instead becoming vampires.”¹¹⁰ Both Muslims and Greek Orthodox followers believe in an eternal afterlife. Consequently, the Roman Church moved in and preached about how a longed for afterlife could be spent as a member of the undead, increasing the level of apprehension and thus increasing the need for a safety valve or a scapegoat within the community. The scapegoat was the vampire and the Church took up a new crusade against a common enemy. Hence, the reason the Balkans has so many more vampire stories. The officials of the Church had a different explanation. Guiseppe Davanzati the Archbishop of Trani wrote *Dissertazion sopra I Vampiri* in 1744, scrutinizing the numerous outbreaks of vampirism. He concluded that the recent epidemic of vampire sightings was due to demonic spirits. Then again, Bartlett and Idriceanu propose something quite different in *Legends of Blood: The Vampire in History and Myth*:

At a local level, corruption within the Church may also have encouraged the outbreak. No less a person than Pope Benedict XIV ... declared that the real problem was not a supernatural pestilence but ‘those priests who give credit to such stories, in order to encourage simple folk to pay them for exorcisms or masses.’¹¹¹

Yet there is no written indication that Pope Benedict XIV did anything to put a stop to the corruption he so plainly identified. The Pope did, however, feel it necessary to refer to

¹⁰⁹ James Twitchell. *The Living Dead* (Durham: Duke University press, 1981),15.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Wayne Bartlett and Flavia Idriceanu, *Legends of Blood: The Vampire in History and Myth* (London: Praeger Publishing, 2006), 22.

the “vanity of the vampire beliefs”¹¹² in his *Treatise on the Canonization of Saints* in 1752.

Another theologian, Dom Augustin Calmet (1672-1757), a scholarly Benedictine abbot from France, wrote a book entitled, *Treatise on Vampires and Revenants: The Phantom World*, which merited several editions and was translated across Europe. Calmet’s main purpose in his book was to defend the original Catholic dogma on “resurrection, miracles and even the existence of Satan, as special signs of divine omnipotence.”¹¹³ Calmet traces vampiric incidents from the Middle Ages through the 18th century. He supports the Church’s position that vampires and phantoms do exist and are agents of the devil.

Also during this time many academics published works trying to understand vampirism. One such academic was Leo Allatius who wrote *De Graecorum hodie quorundam oionionatibus*, published at Cologne in 1645. In his work he describes an ordinance from the Greek Orthodox Church, instructing the faithful in how to recognize a ‘vrykolakas’ or vampire,

Concerning a dead man, if he be found whole, that which they call vrykolakas. It is impossible that a dead man should become vrykolakas, unless it be by the power of the Devil who, wishing to mock and delude some that they may incur the wrath of Heaven, causeth these dark wonders, and so very often at night he whom they knew formerly, appears and holds converse with them, and in their dreams too they see strange visions. At other times they may behold him in the road, yea, even in the highway walking to and fro or standing still, and what is more than this he is even said to have strangled men and to have slain them.

¹¹² Gabor Klaniczay. *The Uses of Supernatural Power*, Translated by Susan Singerman (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), 182.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Immediately there is sad trouble, and the whole village is in a riot and a racket, so that they hasten to the grave and they unbury the body of the man ... and the dead man – one who has long been dead and buried – appears to them to have flesh and blood . . . so they collect together a mighty pile of dry wood and set fire to this and lay the body upon it so that they burn it and destroy it altogether.¹¹⁴

Allatius goes on to explain what to do if you find a vampire, “[when] an incorrupt body shall be discovered, the which, as we have said is the work of the Devil, ye must without delay summon the priests to chant an invocation to thee All Holy Mother of God . . . and solemnly to perform memorial services for the dead with funeral meats.”¹¹⁵

In 1679 another academic, Philip Rohr wrote a thesis at the University of Leipzig entitled *Dissertation De Masticatione Mortuorum* or *A Thesis on The Masticating Dead*. In it he concluded that the Devil had no power to raise the dead; but, academically splitting hairs, he did not deny that the dead could emerge from their graves by Divine permissions with the help of some devilish agency. He concludes that the activity of the undead is the work of a devil with limited powers, assisted by witchcraft and its practitioners. He goes on to discuss remedies against vampirism:

The first of these remedies is to have a lively trust and firm faith in Our Blessed Lord Who hath crushed the serpent’s head and withal to nourish in our hearts a purpose of amendment and a hatred of sin. The second is the Word of God, that sharp sword which the Holy Apostles have put into our hands, relying upon which weapon under the protection of God we may utterly foil and frustrate the open attacks and the dark ambushes of Satan. The third protection is Prayer, the scourge of evil spirits, a sure safeguard against the wiles of the demon. The fourth protection is the help of the Holy Angels who by God’s command are ever

¹¹⁴ Leo Allatius, “*De Graecorum hodie quorundam opinionatibus*,” translated in Summers, *Vampires and Vampirism* (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2005), 30.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

at our side to keep safe, so that we may have no fear ‘of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the business that walketh about in the dark: of invasion, or of the noonday devil’ (*Psalm*, Xff,6). All these are treated of at greater length in the works of our eminent Theologians.¹¹⁶

Rohr concludes his academic thesis with a prayer asking for protection from the “snares of the devil.”¹¹⁷

In 1771 Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, marquis d’Argens a leading figure of the enlightenment wrote a letter to a friend on Vampirism and concludes “In truth, I would have shame to want to longer prove the impossibility of the Vampirism”¹¹⁸ Indeed, it seemed that religious and academics alike all believed in vampires.

One of the first to criticize the existence of any kind of supernatural power was a Dutch priest named Balthasar (1643-1698). He was intrigued with Cartesian ideas and in his treatise entitled, *The Enchanted World*, he

Took decisive steps towards breaking the spell by denying the effect and the existence of any kind of supernatural magical power. He based his arguments partly on rationality and partly on scientific reasoning. The ‘magic’ according to him had reality only as fraud and the ‘devilish’ acquired existence only in human wickedness and malignity.¹¹⁹

In 1764, Voltaire published his *Philosophical Dictionary*. The seventy-three articles in his work were written to criticize the Catholic Church and other institutions. Voltaire even went so far as to make personal attacks on Church scholars. His article on

¹¹⁶ Philip Rohr, *A Thesis on the Masticating Dead*, translated in Summers *Vampire and Vampirism* (Mineola: Dover Publication, 2005), 179-180.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Gabor Klaniczay. *The Uses of Supernatural Power*, Translated by Susan Singerman (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), 176.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Vampires begins with: “What! Is it in our eighteenth century that vampires exist? . . . Calmet became their historian, and treated vampires as he treated the Old and New Testaments, by relating faithfully all that has been said before him . . . the true vampires are the monks, who eat at the expense of both kings and people.”¹²⁰

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a major philosopher of the eighteenth century even addressed reported vampires in his letter to Archbishop Beaumont, “If there is in the world an attested story, it is that of vampires; nothing is wanting for judicial proof, - reports and certificates from notables, surgeons, clergy, magistrates. But who believes in vampires, and shall we be damned for not believing?”¹²¹

So it would seem that the Age of Reason produced philosophers such as Voltaire and Rousseau who had no problem debunking the vampire myth as a fairy tale. But despite all the rational evidence to the contrary, Pope Benedict XIV, although he agreed that vampires were make believe, did not move to censure ecclesiastical scholars from further promoting the vampire as an agent of the devil. Evidently, if the Pope condemned belief in vampirism in the name of logic and common sense, he would then have to deeply consider most of what the Church teaches, such as virgin births and the Resurrection, as also defying all logic.

¹²⁰ Voltaire, *Philosophical Dictionary*, Kindle Edition, 1123-1135.

¹²¹ Gabor Klaniczay. *The Uses of Supernatural Power*, Translated by Susan Singerman (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), 180.

CONCLUSION

The Medieval Church gave authority to the ancient vampire myth by declaring vampires a work of the devil. By doing so, the Church effectively fostered the threatening parts of the vampire myth and then provided solace to the true believer by offering remedies to prevent vampirism. This situation created a power structure where the Church held all the power. The Church fathers gave authority to the vampire myth by assigning the vampire as an agent for the devil. Why? Clearly, the vital feature in the foundation of both Christianity and the vampire myth is blood. Christians drink the blood of Christ for spiritual sustenance and vampires drink the blood of others for physical sustenance. It would be difficult to negate one myth, vampirism, without negating the other, transubstantiation.

In deciding to promote the vampire as evil, the Church cultivated the fear of becoming a vampire. To assuage that fear the Church offered a remedy, the Christian burial, to prevent vampirism. Further, the Church managed the rules for receiving the remedy, forcing people to comply with the rules of the Church through fear and intimidation.

Additionally, the Church promoted the vampire as a metaphysical scapegoat, along with witches and werewolves. The Inquisition was soon thereafter instituted by the Church to search out and kill all heretics in order to protect the Christians here on earth. At the same time, the Church was instituting crusades to further the Christian cause. And in promoting and rewarding loyal followers, the Church helped create the historical vampire, Vlad III.

A couple of centuries later, when man was no longer controlled by fear and superstition, but by the rational reasoning of the mind, vampire sightings were occurring all over the Balkans. The Church still unwilling to admit her mistake in naming the vampire as an agent of the devil continued to give credence to the vampire myth causing reasonable and educated men, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, to publically attack the ridiculousness of an institution willing to endorse such fiction as fact. Indeed, if the Church had not used the vampire as a heretical scapegoat, promoting its existence through history, then the modern world would never know of vampires. The monster myth would have died a quick and painless death only to be found in the folklores of ancient times.

If it were not for the Church upholding the vampire as real, then the vampire legend would not have infiltrated the field of psychology with the idea of the psychic vampire, people who drain the life force out of others. Further, in her book entitled *Sacred Contracts*, Caroline Myss lists the vampire as one of twelve archetypal patterns. She writes of the vampire archetype as symbolic of a relationship that “speaks for the power of dynamics that frequently drive male-female relationships, in which the male drains the power of the female for his own psychic survival, and, once bitten, the female submits even though this will eventually take all of her power ... of course, the roles can easily become reversed.”¹²² Myss goes on to explain vampiric psychic attachments and even suggests that co-dependency is a form of the vampire archetype. The psychological interest of the modern era has fostered the book and movie phenomena.

¹²² Caroline Myss, *Sacred Contracts* (Indiana: Harmony Publishing, 2002), 62.

If it were not for the Church encouraging the fear of the evil vampire, then the movie industry and the publishing industry would have little material in which to entertain the modern world. Thus the mystery of the relationship between the Church and the vampire has at last been revealed. It is to the Church that the vampire owes its seemingly immortal life.

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