

THE INQUISITION AS AN INSTITUTION

As has already been hinted at last time, not only the church but the whole society of Europe was in a paradigm shift. This is a term coined by Thomas Kuhn in the 60's which refers to a major shift in consciousness of a society. We are in one right now, for that matter, and it effects all aspects of life.

In the case of Europe in the middle ages there is the rise of the new middle class, merchants, bankers, etc. who make money by their labor. Both the church and the landed aristocracy were operating on the old Roman system in which the establishment did not dirty their hands by commerce, labor, or whatever.

In other words, the renaissance brought major changes in society and there was a severe conflict of values as the changeover in the power structure meant it was not who owned the most land had the power, but who had the most wealth became the issue.

It is interesting to note here that Spain never allowed a middle class to develop, and the patron system still visible, even here in New Mexico, is part of the old Roman and Moorish idea of aristocracy.

This was a time of classical revival, artistic endeavor, and poetry and books being written in the vernacular of various countries. Francis of Assisi, for example, wrote his "Canticle to Brother Sun" in Italian, not Latin. (1224)

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the INQUISITION as an institution evolved over a period of time, and many factors played into its creation. However, the Church was strengthened in its intentions by the actions of the Hohenstaufen emperor Frederick II, who boldly led the way in the violent assault against heresy. He was brilliant but had contempt for humanity, a cynic, who played politics with peoples lives.

Frederick was anything but devout and was constantly in fueds with the church. He proceeded against heretics for purely political reasons. His "Decree against Heretics" was meant to show the church it could not exist w/ the state.

This freethinkin ruler who turned heretics over to the executioner manifested no trace of tolerance. He showed no responsibility towards God, but the Church was so impressed by his policy that it imitated him, and made his legislation against heretics its own.

There were, of course, serious objections. When the campaign of annihilation of heretics was in full swing, Francis of Assisi was asked by a Dominican doctor of theology in Siena what interpretation he gave to the words of Ezekiel: "If you speak not to warn the wicked, his blood I will require at your hand." Francis answered, . . .The servant of God must, by his saintly life, become such a flame that the light of his good example and the language spoken by his way of life will strike the consciousness of all wicked men."

From the viewpoint of the gospel, this was true, but the Old testament was used. The Bible, it was felt, condoned the greatest brutalities, for heresy was so grave a sin that it could only be atoned for by death.

The Inquisition thus emerged from a complicated historical process whose details can no longer be entirely sorted out. Its beginnings are found in papal orders to bishops to take more energetic measures against heresy in their dioceses.

The Inquisitions formal beginning is often dated to a decree of Pope Gregory IX, who in 1231 ordered that repentant heretics be imprisoned for life and those who refused to recant their heresy be turned over to the secular authorities for execution by burning at the stake.

Pope Gregory was trying to bring and keep the Inquisition under the control of the church rather than having various bodies controlled in whole or part by the German (holy Roman) emperor, independent minded bishops or other rulers.

In 1246, Pope Innocent IV officially made the Dominican order the official inquisitors, tho they had been active in this since their founding in 1216. Some Franciscan friars were also involved by the 1220's.

Unlike heretics condemned by bishops, those condemned by the Inquisition were not supposed to be able to appeal their sentences to the pope, although some could in later decades.

At first inquisitors made circuits thru areas where heresy had spread; but as the bureaucracy, and archives, grew, it was easier to set up regional tribunals and summon heretics to them. Toulouse in France was selected as one because it lay squarely in Albigensian territory.

Pope Gregory's constitution for the Inquisition, known by the first words in its latin text: Excommunicamus (we excommunicate), contained various provisions besides those listed above. Instructions to dig up and destroy the bones of dead proven heretics and to demolish the homes of convicted living heretics.

Albigensians and Waldensians were excommunicated, and so were their friends, defenders, and anyone who failed to denounce them.

Though most of the inquisitors were Dominicans, Gregory sent Conrad of Marburg, a secular priest who had been involved in the crusade against the Cathars, to Germany to destroy the Waldensians, to reform monasteries, and denounce corrupt priests.

Conrad caused the execution of so many suspected heretics with so little formality that he frightened the German clergy and nobility. One German count accused of heresy, called on bishops to hear the charges and was freed. Conrad refused to accept the verdict and five days later the count was murdered along with a Franciscan friar by unknown persons.

ROBERT LE BOUGRE another of the first inquisitors, was sent by Gregory to Burgandy, n. France. He had a short but bloody official career. A Dominican friar, he was a former heretic himself, probably a Cather.

He was so enthusiastic at his job his clerical colleagues gave him the nickname "the hammer of heretics". He survived an attempt of the French bishops to have him removed in 1234. The pope was more afraid of the spread of Cather doctrine than of Roberts enthiasm for large public trials and subsequent executions.

Robert would bring groups of suspected heretics before a public trial and give them the alternative of recanting or being handed over for execution. In one of his more notable mass trials, he interrogated nearly 200 suspected Cathars with bishops and royalty looking on. 183 convicted heretics were burned at the stake.

He made even powerful people nervous, and was finally removed from office by the Dominican order itself and kept out of sight in virtual imprisonment for the rest of his life.

The Inquisition was further strengthened by Innocent IV who permitted the use of torture to gain confessions, reinforced the use of burning at the stake as the cheif method of execution and heightened the persecution of heretics in Italy, in particular.

His bull provided for the confiscation of not only heretics' property but ~~their~~ wealth, thus further increasing

The possibility of corrupt inquisitors looking for rich heretics. In a subsequent bull, Innocent IV divided Europe between the Dominicans and the Franciscans for the purpose of heresy hunting.

As inquisitors searched for heretics, they needed uniform processes and procedures to follow. The most notorious one, the Malleus Maleficarum, was not written till 1486 but there were some early ones written when a few years experience showed that freewheeling inquisitors like Conrad of Marburg and Robert Le Bougre got into trouble because they didn't follow consistent procedures.

There were a couple of early manuals, one prepared for the Barcelona Inquisition in 1242, and one used in Toulouse by the famed inquisitor, Bernardo Gui, who headed that office from 1307-1324. (He was the Inquisitor named in the Book The Name of the Rose)

Raymond of Penafort's directory was designed to use against the Cathars but included other heretics. The language of this and other manual's effectively prevented an accused heretic from being represented at their trial by either a cleric or secular lawyer, since anyone helping a heretic was automatically suspected also.

The manual also set out punishments, from simple penances to imprisonment, excommunication and finally, transfer to the secular authorities for execution.

The bones of heretics were to be removed from any consecrated ground and burned if they were recognizable.

The other manuel the PROCESSUS INQUISITIONIS contained additional material including numerous fill in the blank legal formulas.

It provided questions for the inquisitors to ask and laid out punishments. The legal maneuvering that permitted authorities to claim that the Inquisition never executed anyone or imprisoned them was turning them over to the secular authorities for burning or imprisonment.

Subsequent papal bulls expanded and further defined the inquisitors authority. Local bishops were supposed to approve inquisitor's verdicts, but at times they were out-manauvered. Some Inquisitors were scrupulous, but many were not and used the system to destroy people of any social rank and confiscate their possessions. Torture was used to extract confessions.

In southern France the inquisition continued its work into the 1400's; in other areas it declined, partly because increasingly independent secular rulers and parliaments resented dealing with an arrogant outside authority.

the papal Inquisition was never such a force in England, the low countries, or scandinavia, although the English parliamentary act of 1401, De Heretico Comburendo, was passed to combat the Lollards. This act, "on the burning of a heretic," stated that heretics were to be arrested and tried before ecclesiastical courts. If they refused to repent, they were to be handed over to the secular authorities to be burned.

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FLAGELLANT SECTS

Medieval flagellants--persons who whipped themselves and one another in penance for their own or community sins--occasionally formed groups that attracted the church's condemnation. It was acceptable for monastic discipline, but the church frowned on public displays.

Usually the outbreaks were during times of stress. One began in Italy following the plague of 1259. This spread to other countries but was prohibited by the church in 1261.

Processions led by priests marched from town to town, when they arrived they would stand for hours in the street or square in front of the church flogging themselves. Some townspeople would join them and swell the procession as it moved on.

The first Italian movement died away after 2 years but some of its members moved into Germany and spread the same message. God was angry with humanity for its misdeeds and had decided to wipe it out as he had at the time of Noah.

Moved by the pleas of the Virgin Mary, he had relented but on the condition people abandon their adultery, blasphemy, usury and other sins. A miraculous letter found in Jerusalem said believers should join a flagellant procession for $33\frac{1}{2}$ days, equivalent to Jesus years on earth.

Tho the flagellation mania was shortlived, the idea was part of the European religious consciousness, occuring again and again in times of social crises.

THE BLACK DEATH which swept Europe again starting in 1347-50, caused many people to believe God was punishing them. They were led by renegade priests and Beghards, or other self appointed masters. But the routine was the same.

Realizing that the flagellants' were in effect, substituting their practices for the normal church sacraments, Pope Clement VI forbade the demonstrations in 1349, but they continued to reappear spurred by later outbreaks of the plague.

The church's objection was twofold: 1. the penitential practices were inappropriate as public displays instead of being performed alone and, 2. flagellant groups frequently turned to heretical thoughts, for example, preaching the onset of the millennium.

Particularly in Germany, flagellant spokesmen began to condemn the Catholic church as corrupt and its sacraments worthless. Some incited hatred toward Jews, blaming them for the plague. This resulted in mob action such as the massacre of most of Frankfort's Jewish population in July 1349. (similar massacres occurred in Cologne and Mainz)

Later flagellant groups arose in Spain in the 15th century. They were connected with the spanish and Portuguese lay brotherhoods. they grew to such a point that their public processions and whippings during holy week were banned in the 18th century, tho it took decades to end it.

The practices were transfered to New Mexico and S. Colo. where, influenced by 3rd order Franciscans, it was continued in the penitentes, also condemned by Catholic authorities.

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THE SPANISH INQUISITION

At the end of the 15th century Spain, under the instigation of TOMAS DE TORQUEMADA, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella secured the papal appointment for Tomas in 1483.

Tomas was born in 1420 and entered the Dominican order and rose to become prior of a monastery in Segovia. With his appointment as grand inquisitor of the kingdoms of Castille and Aragon, his conduct caused his name to become a byword for cruelty.

The Inquisition had been in Spain for centuries, but Torquemada's appointment coincided with its restructuring under royal, rather than papal, control. It had its own ministry, its own courts, and its own prisons, all operated under an atmosphere of total secrecy.

As the Spanish empire grew, so did the inquisitions. It extended from Spain to Mexico, Peru, and the Philippines. (the headquarters in NM was Abo mission). Its mission was to guard spanish catholicism from all corruption by mystics, Jews, or Muslims who only feigned conversion but practiced their religion in secret, other heretics and protestants.

As first head of this regenerated Inquisition (it lasted till 1498), he exceeded any of his counterparts in power and secrecy. He died in 1498 but put his stamp on the inquisition that would horrify outside observers.

the Spanish Inquisition was suppressed by French military authorities after Napoleon I's conquest of Spain in 1808. It revived briefly, but was permanently shut down in 1834 by the royal Spanish government.

WITCHCRAFT AS HERESY

More than any other heresy, medieval witchcraft has provoked a wide variety of incompatible explanations.. Unlike other heresies, it was not a re-interpretation of Jesus teaching, a new formulation of church doctrine, or a reform movement w/in the church.

Mny historians think it was a continuation of the old Pre-Christian Pagan religion. And, it may have been during the middle ages. Unfortunately, today's version is, as stated in the introduction, a romantic re-working of that religion.

Witchcraft is also unique in that it is the one heresy whose very existence has been seriously questioned. In modern times, it has been suggested that the whole witchcraft persecution was based on mass delusion, religious mania, official greed, and mental illness of a few "confessed" witches.

It is also possible that, as the inquisitors ran out of Cathars, Waldensians, et. al to kill, witchcraft was invented to fill the gap. The first trials were held in Provence, part of the old Cathar territory.

CANON EPISCOPI - This ecclesiastic legal document, first publicized in 904 CE, was an obstacle to the late medieval inquisitors and has also been cited as evidence that pre-Christian Paganism coexisted with Christianity into at least the early middle ages.

It was claimed it dated from the 4th century, but was first published in Trier in Western Germany. In Essence the canon

stated that witchcraft as commonly imagined was a delusion. What constituted heresy was the belief in the reality of witchcraft, not witchcraft itself. However, it did accept the reality of sorcery and traffic with the devil.

Basically, the Canon denies the common tales of withces flying thru the night or transforming themselves into cats or other animals, for it says only the creator can cause such things, and thus anyone who believes it is a infidel.

in the 1400's, inquisitors sought ways around this time-honored church law. The main argument by a Dominican inquisitor, argued that the so-called witchcraft of his day was a new heresy (1458), a deliberate renunciation of Christianity rather than lingering Paganism, and hence not covered by the Canon's prohibition of belief in witchcraft.

It was this logic that would be expanded in the 1486 publication of the MALLEUS MALEFICARUM, the most complete and infamous handbook on demonolgy and witchcraft ever produced. It would be used by the Inquistion and by Protestant witch hunters.

The destruction of the Knights Templers (1307) by the French royalty had been designed to capture the Templer's wealth and erase, what was viewed as a rival religous system. The success of this set the pattern for subsequent persecuttion of witches. (I will discuss the Templer's next session).

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF WITCHCRAFT AS HERESY

Whether witchcraft existed or not, its persecuters believed that it did and they developed working definitions and

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proceedures with which to attack it. Magic was considered to exist in two forms--"high magic" and "low magic". High magic was depicted in the Tarot, and included the study of astrology, Kabbalah, Neo-platonic mysticism.

It was restricted mainly to educated males, many of them in Religious vocations. It rarely caused anyone to be sentenced to the stake. Giordano Bruno was a notable exception.

Bruno, a Dominican because of his interest in study, became a little too free in his thinking. For the first time in post classical thought, the physical universe was described as infinite and filled with innumerable stars. He (like Plato and Origen) described the stars as ecstatic living beings.

After publishing his book, On Heroic Rages, he lived in protestant parts of Germany where he felt safer from ecclesiastical persecution. He alienated some Protestant leaders as well. He was betrayed to the Inquisition in Venice and burned alive at the stake in 1600. He was regarded as a progressive and a martyr of science and enlightenment.

Back to magic, "low magic" was equated with sorcery and favored by women. Thru its powers one could cause or cure illness, bring lovers together, (or tear apart), change the weather, etc.

While witchcraft persecutions were unknown during the early middle ages, the components were already being assembled. Even before the Christian era, Roman writers accused followers of certain mystery cults of cannibalism, infanticide, and sexual

orgies in darkened rooms. As discussed earlier, these are standard accusations against ones "enemies."

What drew all these beliefs together in the late middle ages and united thm in a new "heresy" was the developing notion of the devil and his powers. Here it is hard to deny the influence of the Cathers and other duelist heresys, if only at second hand.

Since these duelists had taught that the devil had created the world, his power grew in people's minds. He could be anywhere,percieve their thoughts, and send his countless lessere demons to do his work. It was from the time the Cathars arrived in western Europe that concern with witchcraft greatly increased

Thus, with the devil's realm of influence growing, it is only logical that some people would worship him. This led to some even hoping for Satan's victory. The whole conflict played itself out in a time of social change. --the breakup of the old, settled, feudal world in the wake of the Black death and the rennaissance, the rise of cities, and finally, the rise of protestantism, which broke down the categories and heirarches that had sustained medieval life.

Mixed with the persecution of actual diabolists' was the arrest, torture and execution of thousands (or millions)of others who were merely victims and scapegoats for local animosity or larger scale social change. This along with greedy inquisitors who would persecute and execute those with money.

Animosity against the Jews also fed this witch mania. Jews were not identified with witches per se, but throughtout the middle

ages some of the same accusations of ritual murder and so forth were made against Jews. These people lived among Christians but stubbornly and suspiciously refused to accept Christianity. A parallel was drawn between their closed meetings and those said to be held by witches.

Thus, by re-defining witchcraft as a new heresy rather than the "old" witchcraft of surviving paganism and folk religion, this "new" witchcraft was a more conscious diabolism of persons organized into "synagogues" and making pacts with the devil.

The chief individual components defined as witchcraft in the 14th and 15th centuries (the "classical" period) were the following: 1. Those generally derived from sorcery (31%), shapeshifting, riding or flying, cannibalism, child murder, the use of salves, familiars, invocations of demons, and the choice of night as time for witch activities;

2. components derived from other folklore like the Goddess Diana, wild dances, the wild chase, incubi, passing through closed doors or walls. (23%);

3. components derived mainly from heresy, formal repudiation of the church, sex orgies and feasting and finally, (27%)

4. components added by theologians.--pact, devil's mark, homage to the devil, obscene kiss and the sabbat.(19%)

THE MALLEUS MALEFICARUM (THE HAMMER AGAINST WITCHES)

The greatest of the Inquisition handbooks, this reversed the earlier church doctrine stating NOT to believe in witchcraft was

a heresy. During the height of both the Catholic and protestant witchcraft persecutions it was reprinted at least 28 times.

Because of its widespread influence, it helped cause the death of thousands of innocent Europeans and indirectly, the Salem, Mass executions of the 1690's.

It was written by two dominicans, Heinrich Kramer and Jakob Sprenger. The first part defines what witchcraft consists of. It lays the blame for witchcraft on women, who are "naturally" weaker, more lustful, more prone to magical evil-doing than are men.

the second part of the book covers the traditional works of evil and discussed ways of dealing with them. The third part was the most sinister. This was the inquisitors handbook for accusing, questioning, torturing, trying, and sentencing people for witchcraft.

The book is anti-female. using the feminine in its title, and in most its descriptions of witches. Statements like "When a woman thinks alone, she thinks evil." or "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which in women is insatiable."

The book's influence continued into the 20th century among those convinced of the reality of medieval and Renaissance devil worship. Ironically, the most paranoid groups today are some Protestant fundamentalist sects who give more credence to the devil than they do to Jesus. To wit: the Halloween rallies by the "Victory Love Fellowship" church the past few years at Tingley stadium.

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Sprenger and Kramer had mentioned, and mistranslated, the biblical injunctions against witchcraft, leapfrogging over earlier canon law and secular legal codes that mandated mild punishments for witchcraft, the witch hunters, especially among the protestants, turned to the Bible.

In the 16th and 17th centuries the protestants turned to mis-translations of the bible. For ex: Exodus 22:18 "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Here the hebrew word Kashapa should be "poisoner" not witch. likewise the "witch of Endor" was simply a spirit medium. In the NT, Gal 5:20 lists witchcraft among the works of the flesh but is not condemning in that sense.

Ironically, the increasing use of vernacular translations of the Bible in Protestant lands made it easier for Protestants to justify their witch burning scripturally.

A WAR AGAINST WOMEN

80 to 85 percent of the people executed for witchcraft were women. Noone knows the real death toll, but estimates usually range between 200 and 300 thousand over three centuries. Followers of the modern wicca movement have used a figure of 9 million, an exaggeration considering the European populations at the time and an attempt to outdo the Nazi holocaust.

The witch craze also coincided with the new professional male doctors, who based their more theoretical training in the university than bedside practice. Thus, some historians see the medical establishment as abetting the witch burnings because they eliminated competition.

The "wise women" had a host of remedies which had been tested over the years. for ex: ergot used for the pain of labor (related to LSD) but the church said women were supposed to suffer as the Lord's just punishemnt for Eve's sin. Also, digitalis, still important in treating heart ailments, was discovered by an English "witch".

The suppression of female healers by the medical professionals was a class struggle aided by the church. This was plain in the Malleus "and if it is asked how it is possible to distinguish if an illness is cuased by withcraft or by some natural defect, we answer that the first way is by means of the judgement of doctors."

In addition, the Malleus lays out belief that women should not control the outcome of sexual activity. Ie, no abortions. The attitudes of Catholic and Protestant clergy of the time toward sexuality is difficult to disentangle from thier attitudes toward what they saw as witchcraft.

Hallucinogenic plants were used by the "witches" much like drugs are used by shammans around the world for altered states of consciousness. For the most part they were made int salves which, in the right dosage, was spread on skin and, absorbed would cause hallucinogenic "trips". These could be extracted under torture by inquisitors as proof of witchcraft.

WITCHCRAFT AS SURVIVING PAGANISM - was the idea that witchcraft had nothing to do with worshipping the Christian Devil but represented a surviving Pagan practice libeled by generations of

inquisitors. This idea was most associated with Margaret Murray (1863-1963), a British archeologist who wrote 3 books on the topic between 1921 -63. It was initially well received but roundly criticized by folklorists and historians.

Nevertheless, her ideas have been echoed by scholars studying religions in other parts of Europe. Murray concentrated on British, Irish and Northern French materials and decided she had uncovered the worship of a male god, the horned one known as Herne. She said the witch hunters had referred to him as the devil but his image went back before the coming of Christianity.

She hypothesised that the Norman rulers of England from 1066 onward had all been secret Pagans who either died in ritual executions or found substitutes to die in their place, as Henry II selected Thomas a Beckett in 1170.

She explained the events leading up to the execution of Joan of Arc as one of these Divine victims. However, the case of Joan of Arc had more to do with politics. She led the French who turned back the English besiegers in 1429, part of the 100 years war. Charles, her Dauphin, was crowned king instead of Henry VI.

The war continued and in 1430, after a 9 month military career, Joan was captured by soldiers in Burgandy, whose duke at that time was an English Ally.

Joan was handed over to the English and a church court to be tried for heresy and sorcery. The charges against her included claiming to believe that she was directly responsible to God rather than the church and wearing men's clothing. She was condemned to death but repented so the sentence was life in

prison. When she again put on men's clothing in prison, the church authorities decided that she had relapsed into heresy.

She was also convicted of idolatry since she claimed to have seen the saints physically and have embraced their feet. On 30 May, 1431, she was burned at the stake in Rouen, France.

She became a national heroine and 25 years later Charles VII the dauphin she had put on the throne, had a re-trial and she was pronounced innocent. She was canonized in 1920, largely due to the lobbying of the right-wing group Action Française, which saw her as a symbol of the Catholic monarchist France.

While not generally accepted in academia, Murray's version of witchcraft was taken up in the 1930's and 40's by people who claimed to be inheritors and lineal initiatory "descendants" of her underground Western European Paganism.

This was the real beginning of the Neo-pagan movement which subsequently spread this pagan and polytheistic religion in Europe, North America, and elsewhere, but the evidence suggests this, as I pointed out, is an outgrowth of Murray's views and the German romantic movement of the previous century.

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