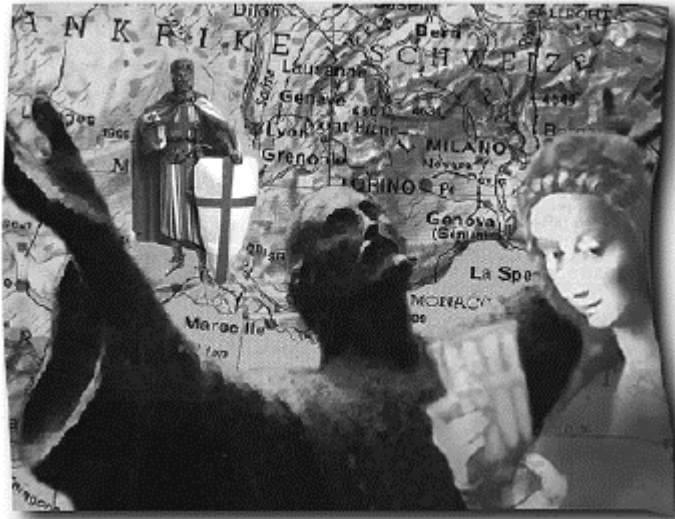


The Bloodline of Jesus

- Does it Exist Today?



By Anders Linder,
translation Lucie Minne

We live in a time of change. New circumstances put the old values on their head. To keep the balance, some people search in

our past to find explanations of the events of our time and to get ideas for the future. The interest in history is constantly growing and life role plays and medieval festivals raise questions about our history and our old myths.

I have along with others only a mild interest in religion but I am curious about new ways of thinking about culture. Thus it was that at the beginning of the 1980s I found myself absorbed in a book entitled 'Holy Blood Holy Grail.' The authors Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh and Harry Lincoln present in this book some ideas that, to start with, seem very peculiar. Ideas concerning, amongst others, Jesus, Mary Magdalene, the Cathars, the Knights Templar and the myth of the Holy Grail which we find in the medieval tales about King Arthur. In these tales, the Grail is described as a chalice, or as a stone, that can present unlimited amounts of food, light and power to the person who asks the right questions.

In 'Holy Blood, Holy Grail' we find the following thoughts and assumptions: The Holy Grail in French 'san greal', might well be, if we move the 'g', 'sang real', which means 'royal blood', and indicate a bloodline which originated from Jesus. The assumption is made that he was married to Mary Magdalene, who gave birth to his son. When Magdalene fled to France after the crucifixion, the child was with her. From this child a family would have emanated that brought the

bloodline through the French royal family 'the Merovingians' and other families to our time. Presumably a purpose of these descendants would have been to reinstate a one of their number on the royal throne of Jerusalem, a position that Jesus himself by right should have had. This was successful in 1099 as we will see later.

Behind all this there is a secret order, most commonly known as 'Priuré de Sion'. Their all encompassing purpose is to reinstate the dynasty of the Merovingians, descending from Jesus, onto the thrones of France and of Europe. This secret order, still active today, founded the Knights Templar and has been behind all the attempts through the centuries to bring the bloodline of Jesus to royal power in Europe. Attempts that, to a certain extent, have succeeded as in the case with the royal house of Hapsburg. Through time, we find as leaders in this secret order personalities such as Leonardo da Vinci, Sandro Botticelli, Isaac Newton and Victor Hugo, to mention the most renowned. These people are not claimed to have been part of the family of Jesus. But they are said to have participated in the alternative cultural movement that had to go underground in the 13th and 14th century after the obliteration of the Cathars and the Knights Templar. As a result of this we could state that a not insignificant part of the sources of inspiration in the West would be derived from underground movements. In France during the Second World War it would form the core of the anti nazi resistance movement.

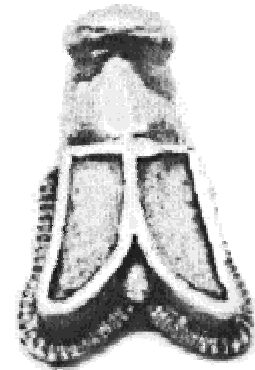
To be able to understand this alternative view of history, we need to go back to the time of the origin of Christianity and try to see with new eyes on what actually happened.

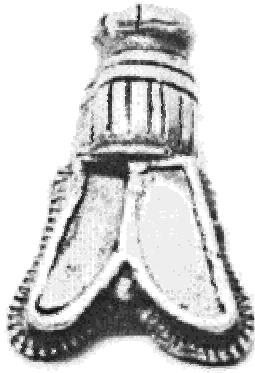
The divided church

In the 1940s, several of the lost Gospels were found, amongst others 'the Dead Sea Scrolls' and later 'the Nag Hammadis scriptures'. These turned out to be parts of the canon that had been excluded from the Bible during the 4th century by the Fathers of the Church who had their own view of what Christianity was. People from very early Christian congregations had hidden these scriptures in clay pots in the hope that they would one day be discovered. In several of these gospels, Magdalene is portrayed in a considerably more detailed way than in the Bible.

In the scripture 'Pistis Sofia', there is a conversation between Peter and Magdalene where Peter complains that Magdalene dominates the talks with Jesus and through doing that, she deprives Peter and his apostle brothers their rightful position of precedence. He asks Jesus to quieten her down but is soon reprimanded. Later Magdalene confesses to Jesus that she hardly dares to talk to Peter because he, with her own words, "Peter makes me doubtful, he frightens me because he hates the female race."

A common view is that this opposition between Peter and Magdalene, that can be found in several places, for example in the 'Gospel of Thomas' and 'the Egyptian Gospel', mirrors some of the tensions within Christianity during the 3rd century.





Peter represents the orthodox interpretation that denies inner enlightenment and rejects the right of women to preach. In 'the Gospel of Mary' this idea is turned upside down with the description of Mary Magdalene. Here it is evident that she is considered to be a disciple, and furthermore, the one that is closest to Jesus! She is the Saviour's beloved one and has a knowledge and wisdom that is superior to the apostolic tradition. Her superiority is founded on her visions and experiences and is demonstrated by her capacity to convince disciples in doubt and turn them to God.

In 'The Gospel of Philip', the rivalry between the male disciples and Magdalene is described like this: "And the companion to the Saviour is Mary Magdalene. The Lord loved her more than all the disciples and many times he greeted her with a kiss on her mouth. The other disciples were offended by this... They said: "Why do you love her more than all of us?" The Saviour answered, "Why do you presume that I love you as her?" "

There are circumstances that maybe have bypassed early church censorship, that very strongly indicate that Jesus would have been married. Even in the altered versions of the New Testament, he is many times referred to as 'the Rabbi'. Nobody could be called Rabbi in the orthodox Judaism unless he was married. The Fathers of the Church presumably did not know enough about the Jewish law to 'correct' this.

There evidently seems to be a significant opposition between Peter, who becomes the first church leader, and Magdalene who escapes after the crucifixion, probably through Egypt, and later, according to the legend, to the south of France where she becomes close to a national Saint and an object to worship.

During the centuries following the death of Jesus, there gradually developed a real battle between two main lines within Christianity. Between the different gnostic beliefs and the more dogmatic ones, where the latter, in the 3rd and 4th centuries, becomes victorious. The 'victors' write, as we know, history. Documents from the losers often disappear and consequently we are left with the winner's version of the argumentation.

Roughly one can say that the Gnostics believed in a dualistic struggle between good and bad in our existence, but that we could be delivered through 'gnosis', inner knowledge. Also there was a belief that Jesus was an ordinary person who had achieved this and that each and every one of us, through inner self-cultivation, could do the same. The more dogmatic and literal believers, declared Jesus holy and made an institution of the actual belief in him.

A thousand years later, echoes of the gnostic traditions appeared in the south of France and again became a matter of anxiety to Fathers of the Church and the Popes.

Under Mari's protection

So how did the view of women develop within the Catholic Church? Probably as

a result of Peters views, the Catholic Church seems to be alarmed by mature womanhood. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is all right, Virgin Mary is also all right but Mary as a mature woman is hardly accepted. This stands in sharp contrast to the view of the natural female embraced by the earlier Goddess culture,

which also developed the concept of the threefold Goddess, the original Trinity: virgin, mother and chrone. The church can with this attitude continue to deny the woman an active and independent role. Augustine was, in the council of 314 A.D., the driving force behind the connection between original sin and the female, that each and every child was born in sin and that the Catholic Church alone could save it. This was after a period of three centuries when women had been the most active ones within the church as their men were heathens at that time. When they eventually came to church, the wives got the second hand role.

This hostility towards women was really just a continuation of that which had been practiced by the Jewish priests for two thousand years, even though their hostility never went that far; they still looked upon sex between man and woman as generating life rather than as sin.

The concept of marriage was under the protection of the Goddess of Mari and thus this institution was opposed by the Fathers of the Church. Augustine even considered marriage to be a sin. St. Ambrosius said that marriage was a violation against God as it altered the status of innocence that was given by God to every human at birth. Paul considered that getting married was just slightly better than to be burned, while his successors completely cursed the marriage. Not until the 16th century did the church accept it as a sacrament and even then used forms of liturgy from pagan traditions.

Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene is a very celebrated patron Saint in France. In many places there are relics and shrines dedicated to her. The first tales about her appear with the Archbishop of Mainz, Rabanus (776-856). He recounts mass landings by the whole cast of the Passsion drama around Marseille during the first century A.D. According to later stories, written in the 13th century, Mary Magdalene was a so called 'noble woman'. Her father Cyrus was rich and her mother was Eucharis. Lazarus was her brother and Martha her sister. In the year 42, a boat without rudder is said to have landed in Marseillle, or more precisely in Ratis, later renamed 'Les Saintes Maries de la Mer'. Passengers on this boat were Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, Martha, Joseph of Arimathea, (in the Bible described as a secret follower to Jesus and the one who took care of the body of Jesus, collecting his blood in a chalice), a man called Maximin and a girl by the name of Sarah. In the boat were also a skull and some bones.

In this very place, gypsies still keep a festival every year between 23-25th of May to celebrate Sarah, their Queen of Saints, who is said to be a 'Egyptian child'.

According to other legends, Joseph of Arimathea is supposed to have brought the 'Holy Grail' to France before he continued to England, Glastonbury where he

planted his staff of hawthorn that since then flourishes every winter. Lazarus and Maximin are said to have become bishops in Marseille and Narbonne, while Martha and Mary settled in St Baume (meaning both 'balm' and 'tree') near Marseille where they are supposed to have worked in the forest to convert pagans. You can say that they arrived, founded a church and died as priestesses. They taught love, forgiveness, about a loving creator, eternal life, prayer, the bread and wine-tradition, christening, that suffering is a part of life. All that which the Cathars preached 1 200 years later and that was faught completely by the power of the Pope.

It is easy to imagine that Magdalene together with other Jewish people in the area of Marseille found themselves in a world full of goddess traditions and people of a variety of cultures, Arabs, Burgundians, Franks and Ligurians. The Ligurians originally came from Liguria in northern Italy, but later spread over vast areas, including Marseille. 'Ligur' means 'tie' in latin and the Ligurians were 'tied' in a loose alliance that was kept together by bloodties and hate of central power particularly that of Rome. They honoured the Greek tradition of free state formations and preserved the ancient Greek religious rites associated with the goddess Artemis. Simultaneously they kept a very ancient custom of preserving the skulls of the dead, a rite that was taken over by the Christians in southern France.

A sign of the return of the Goddess in our time is that more and more books appear that, like 'Holy Blood, Holy Grail', deal with the destiny of Mary Magdalene. The last one I have found is called 'The woman with the Alabaster Jar' and is written by an English woman who describes herself as an ordinary Catholic, but who in adulthood started to wonder about the dogmas in the Catholic Church. She interprets the Sarah in the boat as being the very child of Mary Magdalene and Jesus, who in year 42 ought to be at least nine years of age, as Jesus died on the cross year 33. These two women would later on be the mothers to the so called 'longhaired Merovingians'.

The Merovingians

The Merovingians were a royal family of Franks that reigned in France for 300 years after the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century A.D. It is peculiar that even by their contemporaries they were considered to be a royal family, that in a self-evident way had the right to the throne in a priest king tradition that had been kept alive through time.

The name on their first king, 'Merovech', hints a connection with 'mother' or 'sea' or even Mary, which is the same. The mother came, according to their myths, swimming over the sea. There she was fertilized by a fish being. Jesus was often symbolised as a fish. As a myth, this can imply a factual mingling of blood lines with claims of dynasti. In any case Merovech would hereby be equipped with super human powers. The long haired Merovingian kings often were considered to have occult, psychic or healing properities. It was said that they all had a birth mark, a red cross, between the shoulder blades. The red cross later became the symbol of the crusaders and the Knights Templar. The kings were considered priest kings, just like the Pharaoes of old Egypt.

Burial findings show that special rites were carried out on their skulls. A ritual hole was drilled to let the spirit out after death. The same rite can be found in connection with the Tibetan monks and is believed to be the origin to the so called 'tonsur' whereby European monks later shaved their heads.

The son of Merovech was called Childerik I. His grave was found in the 17th century and contained 300 golden bees that Napoleon later attached to his coronation mantle. Bees and their 'Queen' symbology belonged to the religion of the great Goddess. The son of Childerik was called Klodvig I. He founded the Frankish realm and through doing that, he became the most famous of the Merovingian Kings. He ruled between 481-511. In a few years he had expanded his realm to most of what is today known as France.

During this time, the Roman Church was not yet very strong. The Bishops in Rome had started to name themselves 'Pope', but they needed to secure their power in a material sense. The fight against the heretics of that time, the so called Arians, a gnostic faith that regarded Jesus as an ordinary human, was hard. Therefore it was a triumph for the church when Klodvig I became Roman Catholic. This was accomplished partly through pressure from his wife Klothilda who was a believer, and partly because Klodvig I was appointed new Roman Emperor. Furthermore the Pope and the Vatican guaranteed the Merovingians the right to inherit the throne for all time to come, a promise that the Merovingians have not forgotten!

After Klodvig's death, his sons divided France into four parts and, little by little, they were at each other's throats. There was widespread division in the country until Dagobert II finally appeared at the end of the 7th century.

He was in opposition to the church in Rome on several issues and therefore became a new threat to them. Furthermore his Minister of State, Pippin II of Herstal, had longed to take the throne, which in 679 resulted in the assassination of Dagobert II and opened the way for the Carolingian family to come to power. In the year 800 Charles the Great was crowned by the Pope and the betrayal of the Merovingians was complete. A bitter betrayal to those Merovingians that survived. One king was imprisoned and his long hair was cut, like Samson in the Bible.

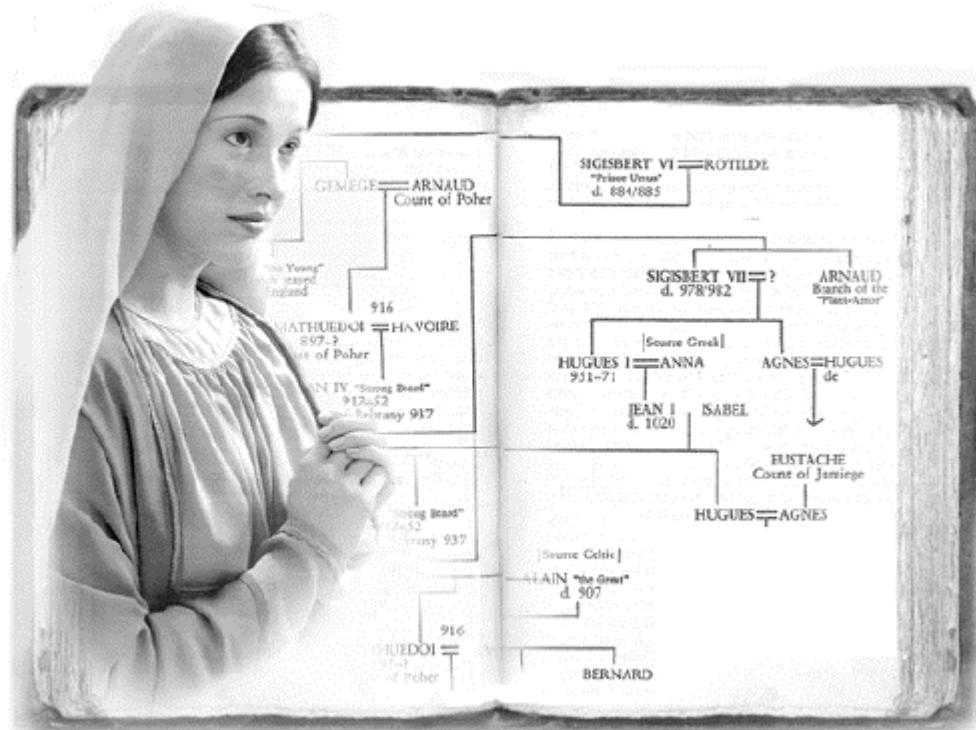
There are many signs that suggest a connection between the Merovingians and the Jewish Benjamitic family branch. One is that several of the Merovingian Princes are named Simon. Southern France became a refuge for many Jewish and Christian families that opposed Rome. The Merovingians seem to have interbred with these. As this family of kings considered themselves direct descendants from Jesus it seems likely that they would not just let go of that kingship.

The next chapter in the history appears in the families that count themselves as descendants from the Merovingians - de Razès, D'anjou, Lorraine, Plantagenet and Blanchefort, to name a few. One of these descendants, Guillem de Gellone, lived in the 7th century in the area near the Pyrenees. He was mentioned by the 'Grael tale' author von Eschenbach as 'Willehalm', the hero of Wagner who is famous for conquering the Moors. He turned out to be so successful that he was acknowledged as a King over an area that stretched from the Pyrenees to the French Mediterranean coast, earlier controlled by the Arabs. This

area around Narbonne was for the most part populated with Jews. They accepted the Carolingians as their superiors in exchange to their right to create a relatively independent Kingdom called Septimania between the years 768 and 900.

It is remarkable that Guillem de Gellone, a king of Merovingian descent, is acknowledged by his contemporaries and is considered from 'the root and stem of David' by the Carolingians as well as by the Kalif of Bagdad and even reluctantly, by the Pope. In poems of the time he is described as 'the lion of Judah, Prince of Orange'. In 792 he established an academy in Gellone. He died in 812 in the renamed San Wilhelm which also became one of the first places dedicated to the cult of Mary. The origin of several of the Graal tales can be traced back to this place.

When Jerusalem was conquered in 1099 by the Crusaders, the first king on the throne was of Merovingian origin - a direct descendant from Guillem de Gellone called Godfroi de Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine. The question is, has he in the eyes of his family, recaptured his true and righteous heritage - the heritage of Jesus?



Crusades for Magdalene

By Anders Linder, translation Lucie Minne

Under the headline 'The Bloodline of Jesus- Does it Exist Today?' we could in the last issue of ALPHAOMEGA join Anders Linder on his journey through history searching for descendants to Jesus and Mary Magdalene and an Alternative Church.

The last article concluded asking whether the Christian conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 implied that a descendant to Jesus and Mary Magdalene for the first time ascended the throne in the Holy City.

This part starts by examining the venture, veiled in myths, that made the conquest of that city possible, the Crusades.

According to the school-books, it was the monk Peter the Hermit who persuaded the Pope Urban II to proclaim the Holy War as a memory of the destruction of Jerusalem a thousand years earlier. This Pope decided

in 1095 to use the Crusade to kill two birds with one stone. First to regain Jerusalem, and secondly to unite the eastern and western parts of Christianity. In the year 1099 the Crusaders were victorious. In the years following the Knights Templar were formed and cathedrals were built under the patronage of 'Notre Dame', 'Our Lady' thought by many to refer to Mary Magdalene and not Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The Order of the Templars, or 'The Poor Knights of the Temple of Christ and Solomon' was, according to a Frankish history writer, founded in 1118 by nine Knights under their leader Hugues de Payen, a noble man from Champagne. They are said to have presented themselves to the King Baudouin I in Jerusalem, who had replaced his brother Godfroi. They were invited to stay in the King's palace and seem to have been very interested in the stables of Solomon, the only part that remained from the temple destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. The Order had as its motto Poverty, Chastity and Obedience and claimed their aim was to protect pilgrims on their way to the Holy Land. In 1127 the group returned to France and in 1128 Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, nephew of one of the original nine succeeded as head of the Order. For two hundred years after this, Gothic cathedrals dedicated to Notre Dame were erected all over Europe. Saint Bernard became one of the church leaders of the century and has left behind 200 lyrical sermons dedicated to the Madonna with themes of love inspired by 'The Song of Solomon' from the Old Testament. The Knights Templar became a significant power factor in the politics of the time. All noblemen that joined them donated their fortunes to the Order which became a great diplomatic and economic agent. They had their own fleet, office of transport and banking business in many countries - the first 'multinational company' operating all over Europe and even around the Mediterranean.

There seems to be yet another story behind the narrative of the origins of the Knights Templar. According to the 'Holy Blood, Holy Grail' there was another spiritual Order within the Knights Templar, 'Prieuré de Sion', who used the Knights Templar as their outer extension. 29 years before the conquest of Jerusalem, a group of monks are said to have come to the forest of Ardenne in the North of France, which belonged to the domains of Godfroi de Bouillon. They lodged with his aunt, Mathilde de Toscan, who later transferred lands to them near the place where the Merovingean King Dagobert II had been murdered. When the monks left in 1108, these lands were taken over by Saint Bernard.

To summarise, it seems as if some families in France, together with monks led by Peter the Hermit, through a secret Order initiated the Crusades and appointed a King in Jerusalem. They established the Order of the Templars who examined the remains of the Temple of Solomon and presumably found something that led to a development without comparison in history with the building of cathedrals and tributes to the Madonna all over Europe. In 1187, after the loss of Palestine, the Prieuré de Sion withdrew their support and the Knights Templar continued alone.

The Cathars

The Cathars, where did they come from? The word derives from the Greek 'katharos' meaning pure and to be called Cathar you had to receive a spiritual

baptism.

When Europe in the 11th century began to release the fear of a Moorish invasion and other chaotic remains resulting from the disintegration of the Roman Empire, then the quest for the soul, the anima, started. This led to an enormous gathering of spiritual energy, which partly was channelled into the Crusades. This longing was expressed in three different ways: 1. Spirituality in poverty 2. To live a life as described in the Gospels, criticizing the institutional Church and corruption of the priesthood 3. The belief in a dualistic view of Christianity as expressed in undercurrents stemming from the Balkans and other places. This resulted in a number of movements alien to the Catholic Church, the Cathars being one of them. Some of the others were the Waldensians, the Manicheans, and the Bogomiles.

As time went by the Cathars became an organized church with their own rituals and priesthood and claimed to be 'The True Church of Christ'.

The Catholic Church was taken by surprise and found themselves entangled in arguments about heresy, a word that derives from 'Cathar'. But the Cathars had no doctrines, to them such things came in the second place. They emphasized the life of Jesus and the way he lived it. He saved humanity through his life, not through his death. The true Cathars were called 'Perfecti' by the Catholics whereas the word used by the Cathars themselves was 'Bon Hommes' or 'Good Men'. They renounced all property, travelled around in the countryside, held outdoor sermons, paid tribute to Father - Mother God and had male as well as female 'Bon Hommes'.

There were five important rites: 1. The blessing of the bread 2. The greeting between the 'Bon Hommes' and the Cathar 3. The confession 4. The kiss of peace, to kiss on both cheeks 5. The baptism in spirit or in fire, referring to the words of Jesus about John baptising in water whereas he himself baptised in fire.

The area of Languedoc, where the Cathars had a strong hold, was at this time the most civilised part of Europe with its mixture of Roman, Moorish and Jewish people and their traditions. In Provence, for example, several Cabbalistic works were produced. During the great struggle between Catholics and Cathars, a number of official debates were held, the last and biggest one in the castle of Foix. The owner Esclairmonde was an initiated Cathar and thus participated on the side of the Cathars. Together with her sister-in-law she had founded a Cathar convent for women that became the very place for the last battle, Montségur. In the legend of the Graal, she is described as a kind of High Catharstess and Guardian of the Graal.

According to the Swedish 'Nordstedts family dictionary', 2/3 of the whole population of Europe in 1200 were embraced by the Cathar belief. One can easily understand that the Popes became troubled and when the Cathar cult reached a point when it was considered as being too extensive, the Pope Innocentius III ordered the fifth Crusade, to the South of France. The genocide lasted for forty years and ended on the yard of the previously mentioned castle of Montségur where several hundred of the last faithful Cathar believers voluntarily walked into the fire for the sake of their belief. Seventy years later the Knights Templar were destroyed by the Pope together with the French King Philip the Good and their

last Great Master was burnt at the stake in front of Notre Dame in Paris. In 1233 the Inquisition was ordained, a terror organisation that burned witches during four hundred years in Europe as well as in the rest of the world.

So what is the connection between these events and Mary Magdalene and the Alternative Church? This whole period, 1050 to 1300, we can see as 'a return of the Female', a kind of renaissance, or at least a pre-renaissance - a birth of a new age. By this is meant a return to ancient values where the feminine was respected and even elevated. It was the expression of this view that came into conflict with the patriarchal Catholic Church. Women had a renaissance during this time even in a social and material sense in opposition to the traditional values of the Church. Though in the beginning of this era, some of the men of the church embraced the female perspective. For example Saint Bernard who even told how in a dream he was nurtured with milk from the breasts of the Goddess. In Catholic tracts about the Cathar heresy, there is evidence that the Cathars perceived Mary Magdalene as being the wife of Jesus. There are thus good grounds to believe that a lot of what was the 'Female Church' that Mary Magdalene represented to the apocryphal authors, was resurrected in the South of France.

An interesting part of this cultural flourishing are the Troubadours who mainly sang to the tribute of 'The Lady' - a woman who was worth their songs and love and favours. The songs were directed to 'Dompna', a word in Languedoc or Occitane for the Latin 'Domina', feminine of 'Dominus', The Lord. After the persecutions of the church, she was turned into Virgin Mary, but there is no doubt that she before then was 'dompna' Mary Magdalene.

Alternative Church

How to look at this idea of claiming power or at least being in position of Kingship through a blood line? Was not Jesus the one who disposed of the idea of clan or family claims and the myth of the 'chosen people', through saying, that "where two or more are gathered in my name, I am in your midst"! I believe that if there were groups convinced about the importance of a blood line and acted on it when it was in their own interest, then it may be considered a historic force and

thus worth studying. Furthermore, if relating to this there are neglected and denied sides of history that we have missed and may be of use to us, then I believe it to be of interest.

In the great historic religious settlements during the first centuries, the Catholic Church reformed and adapted Christianity including the following: moved the birthday of Jesus from 6th of January to 25th of December which is the birthday of Mithras and other sungods,

abolished the concept of reincarnation which most other religions embrace, dogmatized the belief of the divinity of Jesus, emphasized his death instead of his life, contributed to the contempt of women



and developed a philosophy of guilt that has held people in an iron grip ever since.

The alternative to these doctrines was a belief that respected the female, emphasized life and cyclic processes and also had a more humble attitude to life. Like Jesus too it considered that heaven is within one and that we can get there through following his example. It is clear that people thinking in this way had to escape and go elsewhere. This 'elsewhere' might well have been the South of France and the area of Marseille. This region traded extensively with Caesarea in Palestine and Alexandria in Egypt. An interpretation of the story about Mary Magdalene and the boat without rudder might be that many Jews that escaped ended up in southern France. The fact that the legend still is alive might reflect the belief in the child of Jesus in a physical sense, but also as the symbolic child. Meaning the alternative church with other views than the ruling one. Looking at the myth about the descendants of Jesus and the possibility that Jesus apart from the claim to be a spiritual King might also have had claims on the throne of Palestine, it is not strange that from this some strong historical forces were set in action. Forces leading to Crusades and later a great religious movement supported by the people which had to be destroyed by all means. The end result of this being a Protestant movement which divided the Western church where ironically 'the female' element came under greater pressure than before.

Bit by bit we can thus trace an alternative western religious movement influenced by gnostic and female traits, by cults in contact with the ancient Goddess, by Celtic Graal traditions and by the dedication of women and their struggle to express themselves.

Naturally this alternative movement was not as homogeneous as the central power in Rome. It was rather a kind of popular belief with strong families coming from areas with well developed cultural networks. Areas with cults and rituals of different kinds stemming from peoples like the Celts, the Ligurians, the Merovingians and the Visigotes, all in contact with ancient popular goddess traditions.

There is a lot of evidence that under the symbol of the 'Holy Graal', we can find the ancient Celtic Goddess tradition but also a Christian variation. A Western mystic initiation system, a path of insight that through containing both male and female aspects or experiences could lead to a greater spirituality. We can see that a female experience, or a circular point of view, is preserved in different ways through history. One way is in peasant traditions throughout Europe where it is reflected in the rites of the year, another is in the Orders of the Freemasons and the Rosecrucians and also in more philosophical and symbolic rites.

Consequently we can see that the female element has been held down for five thousand years whereas the male religions have dominated. Under the surface the experiences of the Goddess have been kept alive and have found different religious expressions. Since the appearance of Christianity a certain form of Gnostic religiosity can be traced where the female element has co-existed within different heretic and protesting movements. When these expressions became apparent in the 13th century through the Cathars and Knights Templar, prosecution, active banishment and burnings began which resulted in:

1. The appearance of 'male activities' as for example underground orders and alchemical societies and magical, scientific researches. This eventually lead to the execution of Giordano Bruno in 1600 and Galileo Galilei being punished by the church.
2. 'Female' popular rites and seasonal festivals and presumably underground witch groups focusing on the female aspects, midwivery and herbal knowledge.

But despite prosecutions and witch burnings, we can still see the founding of democratic constitutions in Europe with religious freedom, citizen rights and universal suffrage from the 17th century and onwards. This being a crystallized result of negotiations between the rational scientific line of thought and the non-rational, between the 'male' elitism and discipline and the 'female' popularity, the latter possibly a result of the alternative culture.