Books of the Los Angeles Cult

Unaussprechlichen Kulten

Written by the German eccentric von Junzt, the original edition of *Unaussprechlichen Kulten* (*Nameless Cults*) is also known as the *Black Book*. That edition was published in Dusseldorf in 1839; this copy is the cheap and faulty translation pirated by Bridewell in London in 1845. It is nevertheless markedly superior to the better known, but thoroughly expurgated, version published by Golden Goblin Press of New York in 1909. And even more so because the margins of this copy appear to have been heavily annotated by someone consulting the original German text.

Von Junzt (1795-1840) spent his entire life delving into forbidden subjects; he traveled in all parts of the world, gained entrance into innumerable secret societies, and read countless little-known and esoteric manuscripts in the original. In the chapters of *Nameless Cults*, which range from startling clarity to murky ambiguity, there are statements and hints to freeze the blood of the thinking man. Reading what von Junzt dared put into print arouses uneasy speculations as to what it was that he dared not tell.

In addition to the annotations mentioned above, there are additional annotations in a different hand calling particular attention to specific passages regarding the Black Stone. These annotations appear to cross-reference and copy text selected from some unknown secondary source (perhaps a travelogue of some sort). These notes identify the Black Stone – that curious, sinister monolith that broods among the mountains of Hungary – as the “spikes of his world” and the “ladders of faith” (intimating, perhaps, that other such monoliths might exist). It is described as octagonal in shape, some sixteen feet in height and about a foot and a half thick. Its surface had evidently once been highly polished, but it was now (according to von Junzt) thickly dented as if savage efforts had been made to demolish it (although to little effect). The travelogue draws parallels between the surviving symbols upon the Black Stone and “crude scratches on a gigantic and strangely symmetrical rock in a lost valley of the Yucatan”. A note of commentary remarks, “The God of the Black Stone cannot be summoned without the link of His stone or the Fire of his Jewel.”

Benefits of Skimming

- Bonus die for any research involving cults when using this book (usable once per Locale)

Benefits of Poring Over

- Cthulhu Mythos +5 (Bridewell edition)

Cults of the Akumsite Empire

Written as a thesis paper by Brill Davidsen in 1897 and published in a purely limited edition in that year. This copy has been recovered in some sort of fishy hide.

Daviden’s thesis is a remarkable work of scholarship, delving deep into the cult history of the Kingdom of Axum along the Red Sea coast during the 5th century BC, the resurgence of these cults during the Zagwe Dynasty of the 12th century, and even hinting darkly of evidence that the cults were still present (or at least their folk beliefs) well into the 19th century as the interior of Africa was opened to European eyes. There are suggestions that Italian colonists may have carried some of the Aksumite beliefs back to their homeland, possibly infecting Masonic lodges in Venice and Rome with their barbaric rites.

Davidsen also references the *Revelations of Dagon*, suggesting strange parallels between those apocryphal books of prophecies and lurid blasphemies and the Axumite beliefs he charts over the course of a millennia. At times it is unclear if he is suggesting that both the English text and the Axumite beliefs spring from a common source; or if he believes that the Axumite beliefs may have somehow traveled to Europe much earlier than the 19th century (possibly via Roman legionnaires) and found fertile soil in Celtic Britain. The last three dozen pages of thesis are given over to a detailed

symbological analysis of the “Prisoner of Dagon” and the “Wide-Open Mouth”, equating the two figures on a deep level through complicated Jungian metaphors despite the gross differences of their disparate mythologies.

Benefits of Poring Over

- Cthulhu Mythos +3
- Learn details of a “Spell to Open the Sky” from photographs of stellae meticulously reproduced in the text. (Sufficient details in order to actually learn how to cast the spell.)

Fishing the River of Stars

A strange and curious text reputedly among those in the blasphemous library of Auguste Chapdelaine. Recovered during the Second Opium War and brought back to London in 1858, the origins of this anonymous work were lost with Chapdelaine’s life. (Chapdelaine, along with other Chinese Catholics from his circle of followers, was arrested and executed in Yaoshan, helping to precipitate France’s involvement in the war. Reputedly Chapdelaine was condemned for his missionary work, but darker rumors suggest that it was dark rites emerging from his study of forbidden Chinese texts which ultimately brought down the wrath of the local mandarin.)

Fishing the River of Stars is reputedly a first-hand account of the rise of the Northern Song Dynasty during the 10th and 11th centuries in China. Much of its bulk is taken up with routine and unsurprising bureaucratic “revelations”, but the choice passages which have given the book its particular notoriety are those revolving around the legendary engineer Zhang Sixun, who served Emperor Taizu of Song.

Zhang Sixun is said to have been served by a council of “thrice-mouthed advisors”, each of whom was said to “speak with three tongues” and to “balance the words of one hand against the other”. The strangely cryptic and disturbingly inhuman descriptions of these advisors are echoed eerily in a description of the inner (or secret) gardens of Emperor Taizu, where the author reputedly saw flocks of blue-green hummingbirds, their “feathers flecked with gold and with lipped mouths gaping upon their hovering backs”.

There are also suggestions that the ingenious armillary sphere of Zhang Sixun’s astronomical clock tower, which employed liquid mercury in its escapement mechanism, was only the “precursor” or “broken model” of the true clock tower which was “hidden by the Emperor”. This “true tower” was reputedly powered by “reddened mercury”.

In its final, black chapters *Fishing the River of Songs* reputedly supports the legends that claim Emperor Taizong killed his brother Taizu to inherit the throne. Here, however, it is intimated that the “Golden Shelf Promise” (the sealed document which validated Taizong’s claim to the throne) was filled with such horrid blasphemies that its “golden inks were placed in flame until they melted into screaming lead” and the scroll was replaced with a more palatable forgery.

As for the bizarre claims that the “honey of the hummingbirds” nevertheless corrupted the blood of Taizong’s sons, it can only be said that the text descends into almost incoherent poetry and the true meaning of whatever metaphor is being sought is perhaps lost within the archaic Chinese.

Benefits of Poring Over

- +2 Cthulhu Mythos

Rift of the Mouth

This thin, ebon-covered book is a collection of thirteen meditative mantras. The character of these meditations, however, is severely disturbing to any civilized mind: They fixate upon imagery of depraved acts of violence, power, and control.

Each mantra is disparate (albeit varied) in its perverse obsession, but the common theme which joins the mantras together is that of the “Mouth” and the “Maw”. The Maw is the void from which both Truth and the turgid release of the flesh emanates. It is the gaping hole beyond the empty gulf which is the world of mortal perceptions.

The Mouth is characterized as being connected to the Maw. It is the path which cleaves its way through the barriers of the mind which lie between your voided gulf and that place beyond, releasing thereby the wisdom of the Maw. It is also the font from which such “honeyed knowledge” is spewed forth from the world.

Delving deeper into the imagery of the mantras, however, reveals another layer of truth: That there is a more direct path to the Maw. A rift. And that the “new-mooned Rift” will give “clear skies of truth” to those who find it.

The final mantra issues a chilling warning against the “name of the Maw”.

> “ For the name of the Maw is the Maw and the name of the Maw is its wisdom and the name of the Maw is its void and the name of the Maw is the gulf which swallows and the name of the Maw is that which destroys.

The name (which is not given) is a shortcut by which the Maw of the Mouth can be regurgitated (or vomited) into this world; but such sudden and overwhelming truth would “sear one whose mind has not been glazed to the stars beyond one’s own”.

Benefits of Poring Over

- +4 Cthulhu Mythos
- Bonus die for any research involving the Maw of the Mouth when reading this book

Ziggurats of the Pre-Helladic Period

A fascinatingly inchoate and bizarrely unorganized survey of its titular topic. Great and particular attention is given to Sir Leonard Woolley’s excavation of the Great Ziggurat of Ur, which was essentially contemporary to the composition of this text. Its dimensions (both real and hypothetically reconstructed) are given in painstaking detail and some sense of the structure of Alexander’s text begins to become apparent as one realizes that these dimensions are being equated through complex mathematical transformations to the dimensions of other ziggurats.

This, perhaps, also explains the sharp and sudden departures of the text from its topic: While drawing complex relationships between the ziggurats of Babylon, the ziqqurats of Akkadia, and the pre-ziggurat ical zaqaru of the Ubaidian period, Alexander will abruptly introduce discussions of monoliths and other structures from South and Central America and even from his native Hungary.

It then becomes clear that the dimensional diatribes – which at first seem a secondary characteristic of the text, wedged between lengthy narrative descriptions of each site – are actually of the primary and utmost important to the author: And in unwinding the strange cycles of his numbers, one realizes that he is making the bold claim that all of these disparate works of stone draw their ultimate inspiration from the preternatural dimensions of the “Black Stone” which the author ultimately claims “thrusts into the heart of every building constructed by man; thrusts into the very subconscious of our modern edifices of pride and hubris”.

Benefits of Poring Over

- +1 Cthulhu Mythos

Adrift in a Storm-Tossed Sky

A quaint, pocket-sized volume of poetry written in the 19th century by some metaphorical outcast of the Brontë household named Candace Hawthorne. The vast, sweeping vistas of the Scottish heaths form a faint patina of mildly amusing poetic imagery varnishing vague, groping lurches of romantic languishment.

But there is something distinctly unsettling in leafing through these competent irrelevancies, and as one reads the poems there develops an unmistakable sense of the work's central imagery. And regardless of the order in which the poems are read, this imagery becomes inexorably clearer: Of the night sky being a completely malleable entity. That the stars we see each night are radically "repainted across that tapestry" although we believe them constant. That the only constancy is the searing, sucking, and all-consuming depth of midnight black which seeks to swallow those "dancing motes" in their "chaos waltz."

Benefits of Poring Over

- +3 Cthulhu Mythos

Azathoth and Other Horrors

Published in 1909, this collection of Edward Pickman Derby's nightmare-lyrics was printed by the Miskatonic University Press when he was a youth of only 18 years. The forward describes Mr. Derby as "the most phenomenal child scholar I have ever known. At seven he was writing verse of a somber, fantastic, almost morbid cast which astonished the tutors surrounding him. In the scant few years which have passed since those early gropings, he has flourished into a sensational talent."

Included in this collection are the poems "Azathoth" (which occupies fully half the book), "Nemesis Rising", "Charnel House", "Dead But Not Gone", and "Medusa's Kiss", among others. These works draw heavily upon the local legendry of Arkham, Massachusetts, and combine startling insights with verse of surprising power.

This particular copy has been annotated with extensive marginalia in a cramped hand. These notes draw copious comparisons between Derby's work and Justin Geoffrey's *The People of the Monolith*, alleging that there was a close correspondence between Derby and that notorious Baudelairean poet. The scholarship seems half-crazed, but through a composite of the two poets' imagery it creates a strong correlation between the omni-present "gaze of the blind idiot" from Derby's "Azathoth", the "skipping ebon stones" that "dance across the skim-skein haze" of reality, and the "mastodonic horror" of Geoffrey. One facet of the "compound gaze" is fixed upon the "land beyond the stone" and some solace could be taken from that "plenipotent distance" if a "ladder of faith" had not been built between that land and this.

Benefits of Poring Over

- Bonus die to Spot Hidden in Arkham
- Cthulhu Mythos +3 if you already have a Cthulhu Mythos rating (no effect if you do not)
- Gain the ability to cast Fisherman's Blessing

The Broken Ouroborous of Ahtu

Although not as well known as *The Cancer of the Congo* – the lurid, pulp-retelling of Dame Alice Kilrea's explorations in the Congo Free State from 1895-1909 – *The Broken Ouroborus of Ahtu* is an infinitely more useful volume for any serious scholar. Written by Dame Alice herself, it possesses a curiously dry and formal tone which in no way alleviates the terrifying horrors inflicted upon the indigenous population during King Leopold II's brutal plundering of natural resources.

In 1895, she journeyed in the heart of the Congo in response to her belief that the "crawling chaos" which had been "eating at the heart of Europe" was manifesting under the jungle canopy. She describes her belief that this "infinite darkness, born from the collective subconscious of humanity or perhaps spewed down upon it from the stars above" sought nothing more than to "permeate our world like mold through a loaf of bread, until the very planet becomes a ball of viscid slime hurtling around the sun and stretching tentacles towards Mars." Her worst fears were, apparently, confirmed when she encountered a depraved cult of individuals mutilated by Belgium atrocities who had taken up the pagan worship of an entity they referred to as Ahtu: "Those without eyes could see Ahtu. Those without ears were called by him. Those without hands were guided by his touch."

She describes the cultists succeeding in manifesting Ahtu: "Pulsing, rising, higher already than the giants of the forest ringing it, the fifty-foot-thick column of what had been earth dominated that night. From the base of the main neck had

sprouted a ring of tendrils, ruddy and golden and glittering all over with inclusions of quartz."

Dame Alice spends the next fifteen years of her life hunting down the "cancer of the golden wyrm" throughout the Congo. Ahtu, which she describes as "but one mask of the crawling chaos", consistently manifests itself as some form of gelatinous mass extruding golden tentacles and worshipped by the disparate Cult of the Spiraling Worm. She describes certain protective sigils from the Akumsite Empire-- a raised lidded eye glyph-- which repel spying spells and mystical surveillance. Without these sigils, her work would be quite impossible.

Her explorations eventually lead her to Nyhargo, the "basalt-towered city" which she describes as "predating Eve herself". There she found that a new kingdom of necromancy and cannibalism had sprung up within the ruins. Although she managed to thwart the rituals being carried out there, she seems to take small comfort from that fact. "Surgeons do not kill cancers. They cut out what they can find, knowing that there is always a little left to grow and spread again… My time in the Congo has come to an end, but I fear that the work there will need to be taken up again before the stars have shifted far in the sky."

The ultimate fate of the two-parted golden bracelet that Dame Alice claimed from the cult is vague and uncertain.

Benefits of Poring Over

- Cthulhu Mythos +3
- Bonus die for Occult or Cthulhu Mythos associated with Nyarlathotep when referencing this book
- Gain the ability to cast the Nyhargo Dirge, a spell translated from the *Nyhargo Codex*, a volume which Dame Alice describes as being transcribed from charcoal rubbings taken by Lord Waite from the monolithic ruins of Nyhargo.

Children of the Night and Nahua Legends

This late-19th century volume is a curious blend of archaeological surmise and mythography. The author, Rupert Mulholland, catalogues a number of curiously anachronistic sites scattered throughout the eastern portion of Central America. Each site is marked by a cluster of earthen domes, with low doorways that are uniformly sunk into the ground. From the surface, these structures are largely unremarkable, but the dwelling-places are connected by underground corridors, so that the entire village would become like an ant-bed or a system of snake holes. Mulholland also reports some evidence that other subterranean corridors might run off under the ground, perhaps emerging long distances from the village (although he was never able to find their points of exit in wider surveys).

Mulholland links these curious communities to an obscure cycle of Nahua legends concerning the "children of the night" (or, in some translations, the "children of the earth"). These mischief-makers and outlaws are often described as being somehow reptilian in character with a particularly jaundiced complexion; some accounts even going so far as to describe them as being "yellow-scaled".

In this, Mulholland draws heavily upon *Evidences of Nahua Culture in Yucatan*, despite this work apparently having been widely discredited by Professor Tussman of Sussex. Mulholland insists, however, that the linguistic inconsistencies highlighted in Tussman's work are, in fact, evidence for an unrecorded epoch of cultural invasion among the Nahua tribes and that the legends of the Children of the Night are a reflection of that lost period of Mesoamerican history.

Of particular interest, perhaps, are the vestigial myth cycles which the author traces back to the obscure Nahua tribes which migrated to the Yucatan peninsula. These refer to the Children of the Night as being "chosen by the God of the Black Stone" and also claim that they "carry the legacy of the Isle of the Gods". They are somehow connected to a people referred to as the Xoxul (which translates roughly as "the tribe of strangers") and Mulholland is able to clearly delineate a myth cycle in which a "jewel" or "key" (or possibly "jewel-key") is said to have been taken from the Xoxul and hidden away somewhere in Honduras. (The author makes some effort to correlate this legendry with tales from the Pipil tribes of El Salvador, the southern-most survivors of the Nahua migrations, but it seems that any surviving myths have become thoroughly muddled by a transmigration of Mayan cultural influences.)

Benefits of Skimming

- Bonus die for any research involving Nahua legends, Xoxul, or Children of the Night when referencing this book

Benefits of Poring Over

- +3 Cthulhu Mythos

Collected Sermons of the Float'd Tongue

This is a handwritten volume purportedly presenting the “true words” which were spoken by the “many mouths of the Float’d Tongue”. The source of these sermons appears to have been the Misión Santa Maria de la Cabeza, located north of the Mission de Nuestra Senora de Loreto Concho, in Baja California. Starting in 1821, the mission’s padres seem to have formed some form of glossolalia cult, albeit with the curious variance that they were reputedly “speaking without tongues”. Rather, the “breath of their voice stirred the robes which fell about them”.

An initial religious fervor surrounding the incidents of glossolalia appears to have spurred a spike of local interest, which is accompanied by congratulations from the Spanish leadership for so effectively appealing to the local *mestizos.* The *mestizos* began to work hard, obey local authorities, stop drinking and having sex, and attend Mass daily. A letter notes the grim and dark countenances of the local *mestizos*, but the padres assure the Spanish leadership that all power over the *mestizos* is being exercised for their own benefit.

The leadership of the cult rapidly grows and appears to have even incorporated some of the indigenous people. The “sweet honey” of the “padre’s voice” is consumed by many and recorded sermons are attributed to over a dozen people.

Shortly thereafter, however, the attributions of the sermons vanish from the text. Instead, it refers only to the “Float’d Tongue”. Around this same time, the corporal punishments used to enforce the native population’s conversion to Catholicism are radically increased so that “their wounds might speak through fresh-slit lips”.

According to attached historical notes written in a much later hand, the mission was wiped out by a military action in 1825 and razed to the ground. Reputedly all official records of the mission were destroyed.

It is possible that members of the mission (and possibly the cult as well) escaped its destruction via secret, underground tunnels which had been built beneath the *iglesias*. That could explain the survival of this volume, assuming that it isn’t simply an elaborate hoax.

Benefits of Skimming

- Bonus die for any research involving the Mouth when referencing this book

Benefits of Poring Over

- Cthulhu Mythos +3

The Cradle in The Ocean

Paul Bunyan’s parents anchored his cradle in the ocean.

They anchored his cradle because he was too large for the house.

Paul’s size was the cause. His shackling the effect.

Paul rocked his cradle.

Paul’s cradle rocked.

Rocking was the cause. Rocking was the effect.

The paradox of self-causality remains until one sees each rocking for itself.

Because the cradle rocked, the ocean was stirred.

Stirred to a tidal wave.

A wave which wiped away the house. The parents. All that they had seen.

A wave which was the effect of all that it destroyed.

The cradle will rock. The cradle will fall. The cradle remains unfelled.

A thing too large to be contained by mortal structure.

Each jostling of mortal life.

Unconstrained. Unrestrained.

Unfathomed.

A seemingly nonsensical, but deeply disturbing, children's book which primarily recounts bizarre tales of the folk hero Paul Bunyan.

In another of the stories (recounted in broken prose) Paul wrestles with the Shepherd Death, whose scythe Tagh-Clatur is repeatedly described by the epithet "sly-angled". The sly-angled scythe eventually cuts Paul down, leaving behind a livid red mark "at the heart of a web of crimson" which spreads across Paul's chest.

The theme of cause-and-effect coupled to oceanic imagery, as established in the book's epigram, is constantly repeated throughout the collection, coupled to another set of imagery revolving around the surface of the ocean being a "wall" and that, beyond this wall, there lies an imprisoned a lying behemoth (referred to as both the "Prisoner" and the "Liar").

The Liar features most prominently in the story "The Saffron Bee", in which Paul seeks to steal honey from a colony of giant bees whose hive is as big as a mountain in the hope that he can use the honey as a bribe to free the Liar. But "the Liar is held by the lie of false history; of causality that cannot be" and though Paul gains the honey, he cannot find the gaoler.

Benefits of Poring Over

- +2 Cthulhu Mythos
- Learn the spell Kiss of Brine.

Fragments of Bal-Sagoth

This slim, peculiar volume purports to be "a dream woven from the true and factual accounts of many diverse peoples of the world", but it is rather difficult to separate what is meant to be scholarship from fancy. It is perhaps notable that the author's name has been savagely crossed out on every page on which it would normally appear with a thick, dark ink, making its recovery utterly impossible. The volume's only other distinguishing mark is an imprimatur placing its publication in Shanghai.

The book claims that the "Isle of the Gods", where "fabled Bal-Sagoth rested in her nest of milk-white streets", is a place unseated from the normal constraints of geography. Often it is found drifting through the depths of the Atlantic, but other accounts reputedly place it along the Coast or Arabia or "lost in the mists that drift through the dimmed tides of Nippon's Sea".

Deep beneath Bal-Sagoth, “in twisted warrens spun from serpent’s coils”, lies the Temple of Shadows. There is held the worship of Gol-Goroth “upon an altar of blood and black obsidian” where “youths and maidens die at the waxing and waning, the rising and the setting of each moon.” A human heart “forever throbs” upon that altar, which is “the pinion pinnacle upon the monolith which drives the spike, which is the Bridge of Bal-Sagoth, the Bridge of Gol-Goroth”. In this “court of horrors”, the figure of a jester death named Gothan recurs again and again in the fragments of verse and poetry.

The city itself, from which “the hundred hidden eyes of Bal-Sagoth” peep forth, is described as shimmering silk. A place stirring strange and arcane dreams. A thing of towering battlements thrust through fleecy clouds, dwarfing the hallowed scope of Rome, Damascus, and Byzantium, even as the proud civilization of Bal-Sagoth “o’erreaches them in the saga of years”.

It is said that Bal-Sagoth once ruled over the Isles of Gol-Goroth: A great empire which spread across “this and more than seven seas”. But the age of empire came to an end. The islands sank and vanished with their cities and people, until only Bal-Sagoth itself remained, its galleys rotting in their wharves for lack of ports to sail to.

In the final, darkened days of Bal-Sagoth – when “the touch of Gol-Goroth had grown light upon his city” – the Isle of Gods became besieged by red-skinned savages; a “tribe of strangers” who sailed from “just this side of the horizon” on fearsome war-canoes. Bal-Sagoth was consumed in the flames of its own iniquity, and the invaders carried off “not only the altars and jewels of Gol-Goroth, but his favor as well”. In many ways this is the closing image of the *Fragments of Bal-Sagoth*, although it lies in a poem only halfway through its length: “Let the skin of blood ride o’er the sun, for above the sky shall they journey upon the wings that bear them, carried as they shall be by the Sons of Gol-Goroth; their legacies forever shielded by the Daughters of the Black Stone”.

Benefits of Poring Over

- Cthulhu Mythos +3; +5 if you have encountered spawn of Gol-Goroth
- Bonus die for any research ability involving Gol-Goroth when referencing this book

The Gaze of Azathoth

Bound in black, brain-tanned leather, this book tells the tale of a nameless man (who is also sometimes described as “faceless”) who lives amidst the “dying lights” of the end of days. Blessed with the “thrice-cursed immortality” this man nevertheless feels as if a creeping doom has crept into his bones. His dreams are slowly filled by the recurring image of a great and terrible Eye which “gazes down upon the world”, and he is disturbed to find that many others among his friends and acquaintances have begun to share these dreams.

At last this “gnawing Eye” – belonging to the “dread amorphity of Azathoth” – manifests itself and its horrible gaze is “turned upon the last, burning days of his twilit world”.

Rather than embracing or accepting the doom of his world, however, the man seeks an escape. He finds it in the “flesh of Yog-Sothoth”, creating a gate which allows him to escape to another world.

Unfortunately, the “gaze of Azathoth” had become “locked upon him” through the “barbs which bear the runes of Nyarlathotep”, and the Eye follows him to the new world and turns its destructive force upon it. The man escapes again, using the same gate as before. And, once again, the Eye pursues him.

The man skips from one world to the next, watching as the stars he had doomed wink out one by one from the many skies above him until his nights are marked only by a “haze of unseen red”. But still he runs, carrying with him the curse of Azathoth’s gaze.

At the end of the story he makes the decision to stop running and throws himself prostrate upon the ground. But as he does so, he finds that he has landed “at the feet of the Herald”, who reveals to him a great truth: That the worlds he has left in his wake have not been burdened with destruction, for as long as Azathoth’s gaze is fixed upon the man, he will carry that destruction away with him and spare the worlds behind.

The Herald's words, however, come too late, for the mind of the man has been consumed by his "gibbering madness". And neither he nor any of the worlds he has saved will ever know his sacrifice.

Benefits of Skimming

- Bonus die for Occult or Cthulhu Mythos associated with Azathoth when consulting this book.

Benefits of Poring Over

- Cthulhu Mythos +3
- Gain the ability to cast Gateway To Things Long Past and Sights Unseen.

Geheimes Mysterium von Asien

Professor Gottfried Mulder was a friend and colleague of Friedrich von Junzt. According to *Geheimes Mysterium von Asien* (*Secret Mysteries of Asia*; published 1847, although this is a copy of the American version pirated in 1849 as *Secret Mysteries of Asia, with a Commentary on the Ghorl Nigral*), Mulder accompanied Junzt on a journey to Asia in 1818-19 and, many years later, served as the publisher of Junzt's *Unaussprechlichen Kulten*. Following Junzt's death, Mulder fled to Leipzig and used hypnotic therapy to recover his memories of the Asian journey.

Most particularly, Mulder recalls Junzt seeking a "cold and barren plateau" lost somewhere deep in the heart of the continent. Atop that plateau (or perhaps perched upon its side), Junzt led them to the Monastery of Yian-Ho. Mulder describes the approach to the monastery as strange and disconcerting: He was, himself, struck by a constant impression that the blasted wilderness which surrounded the monastery was, in fact, filled with ghostly buildings of which he could only catch half-glimpses. (But which, in later conversations, Junzt was able to describe in rapt detail.)

In a passage which is heavily annotated in this copy, Junzt and Mulder present themselves before the leader of the monastery, the "High Priest Not to Be Named". (Mulder claims that this High Priest is, in fact, the legendary Black Pharaoh of prehistoric Egypt from whose forehead the Eye of Ra was ripped.) Junzt petitions the High Priest, addressing him by numerous titles including the "Herald of Azathoth" and "Mouth of the Crawling Chaos", requesting access to the *Ghorl Nigral*, the *Book of Night* which was reputedly "written under the silvered light of alien stars" and of which only a single copy supposedly exists in the world.

Although both Mulder and Junzt gazed upon its pages of "black-upon-black script", Mulder reports remembering little or nothing of its contents. The material reproduced within the *Geheimes Mysterium von Asien* derives almost entirely from the detailed discussions Mulder had with Junzt regarding the contents of the book, all of which were uncannily recalled during Mulder's hypnotic therapies.

Benefits of Skimming

- Bonus die for any research involving Asia, Leng, Mu, or the Tcho-Tcho when referencing this book

Benefits of Poring Over

- Cthulhu Mythos +3
- Learn the Dread Name of Azathoth

The Last of the First: The Ends of Occult Dynasties

As the title suggests, this 1902 historical survey by H.L. Persig focuses on the final days of so-called "occult dynasties", the various mechanisms by which their magical potencies become diluted or lost, and how their bodies of knowledge disintegrate and disperse in the wake of their destruction. A few pertinent examples:

Hyksos Dynasts. The Hyksos ruled Lower Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period, deriving their power from powerful rituals performed in the temples and catacombs of Thebes. During a "turning of the constellations", Ahmose I

drove the Hyksos out of Thebes and then used their wealth to embark on massive construction projects which restored the glory of the Egyptian Empire. Near the end of his life, the conquering pharaoh constructed the Pyramid of Ahmose in the necropolis of Abydos (which is said to be congruent to the rifts of the Dreamlands). Although Persig carefully delineates historical records indicating that Ahmose I filled the pyramid with the dark lore he had accumulated from the Hyksos, the expedition of Arthur Mace and Charles Trick Currelly in 1899 suggests that the pyramid consisted only of a limestone casing filled with sand and rubble.

Asshurbanipal. Asshurbanipal was the last King of Assyria. He sent forth scholars to collect texts and lore from across the Empire and Persig suggests that, contrary to the common dating, his reign was preternaturally long (on the order of nearly two hundred years) with the “annals of his kingdom being stretched by the Fire of Asshurbanipal, that blasphemous ruby which the King held in his right hand”. The Fire of Asshurbanipal was stolen upon his death (or possibly during the civil wars which followed close on its heels) and the Babylonians overran the broken remnants of the Assyrian Empire only 11 years later.

Persig also invests a great deal of time analyzing the *Fragments of Bal-Sagoth*, which he maintains were produced by Asshurbanipal (or perhaps his predecessors) to create a sort of “divine right” for his imperial line. However, the *Fragments* also appear to have created a great deal of irreparable confusion around the identity of the cult figure at the center of Asshurbanipal’s worship: Its identity is variously given, possibly as the result of bad translations, as Gol-Goroth, Groth-Golka, or the “Fisher from Beyond”. It is unclear whether these are separate figures; if Groth-Golka and Gol-Goroth are one and the same; or if Groth-Golka (“or perhaps multiple Groth-Golkas”) are servitors of Gol-Goroth. (The name “Fisher from Beyond” is variously applied to all of these things.)

Amorian Dynasty. The Amorian Dynasty initiated the Second Iconoclasm of the Byzantine Empire, but the the author claims that its emperors maintained “dark crèches” of blasphemous icons, many “meteor-forged” (or perhaps “meteor-found”). These icons were lost during the fall of the Amorian dynasty, although it is rumored that the mad monk-mage Santabarenos secreted them away.

Kingdom of Kush. During the latter days of the Kingdom of Kush, after its capital had been moved to Meroe, the nation became ensnared by a strange cult that “sought the Black Stone”. In the 4th century AD, the kingdom was invaded by King Ezana of Axum. Persig claims that Ezana’s goal was to capture the secret lore of the Kushite cults in order to strengthen his own dynasty. King Ezana himself had powerful magic, particularly his lidded-eye glyphs, which warded off the magical surveillance which the Kings of Kush relied on to win battles.

Merovingian Bloodline. The Merovingians held the throne of France through the rite of their supposedly magical bloodline. Persig maintains, however, that, at least in their final days, they were mere puppets for the Council of Mayors (who were, in fact, sorcerers holding what would later become the lost crèche icons of Byzantium). Childeric III, the last of the Merovingian kings of France, was kept in utter seclusion except for one day a year. The Merovingian’s power was broken in 752 AD when Pope Zachary dethroned Childeric and stripped him of his royal rights and magical powers by cutting his hair.

Benefits of Poring Over

- +1 Cthulhu Mythos
- Gain the ability to cast The Voorish Sign.

Seven Masks

Apocryphally ascribed to Ptolemy, the text of the *Seven Masks* appears to originate several hundred years after his life and anachronistically refers to events Ptolemy could not possibly have known. No complete text is known to exist in the modern world (the last complete text having been defaced by the Vatican in 1436), but this 1917 popular edition from Golden Goblin Press attempts to reconstruct a complete text from various sources. Unfortunately, the effort is somewhat marred by the questionable translation and the unlabeled efforts made to complete unfinished tales.

The bulk of *Seven Masks* is made up of biographical sketches, purporting to be historical in nature despite their slow departure from anything resembling the realistic (or even the human). As the sketches disintegrate into an increasingly

surreal panoply, however, there is a growing implication that all of these tales are somehow seeking to describe the *same individual*.

Black Pharaoh. Nephren-Ka was the last Pharaoh of the Third Dynasty. He is said to have “eaten out the heart” of the Cults of Bast and used them as a seed by which he rose to power and, subsequently, corrupted the worship of all the Egyptian Gods. Named as the “Black Pharaoh”, all references to Nephren-Ka and his cult were wiped out by his successor.

Thing in the Yellow Mask. A tale of how Leng Bao, a fabled general of the orient, became separated from his army during the invasion of Yi Province. On a strange, mist-shrouded plateau Leng Bao found a monastery which was occupied by a sole figure clothed in yellow silk and wearing a yellow mask. Although he spent only a fortnight within the monastery questioning the Thing in the Yellow Mask, when Leng Bao left the plateau he discovered that many years had passed and that his men had named the plateau in his honor.

Pale Death. A shapeshifting harbinger. The Pale Death can appear in many forms, but always possesses a pale-grey complexion or even albino features.

Akousmatikoi Proof. Allegedly discovered by Pythagoras and used by certain degenerate branches of the Pythagoreans, it is said that to truly understand this proof is to gaze upon a Mask. A man named Aniolowski is said to have been the first to prove the Akousmatikoi Proof, although the text oddly seems to imply that he has done so in the future.

Black Wind. Here the Mask manifests as a devastating storm which sweeps down from the Mountain of Black Wind, which lies somewhere deep in Africa. The whispers of the Mask sweep forth from that mountain and howl through mortal ears.

Crawling Mist. And now the Mask infects your dreams, taking the form of a thick and pungent mist which clings to the edges of your nightly visions. Over the course of subsequent nights, the mist will crawl inexorably closer to the dreamer.

Empress in Red. Finally, the Empress in Red. Who is one figure in history and yet many. A beautiful and powerful woman with insensate sway over those who enter her presence, her path is tracked through centuries of history as paramour and priestess, lover and goddess. There are even intimations to be found here that she is the true author of the text.

Benefits of Skimming

- Bonus die for any research involving ancient Rome or Nyarlathotep when referencing this book

Benefits of Poring Over

- Cthulhu Mythos +3
- Learn all but the last syllable of the Dread Name of Azathoth.

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