

Mjöllnir



The Thelemic Journal of Yggdrasil Camp, Ordo Templi Orientis

June 1999 E.V.

An IVvii

Sol in Cancer

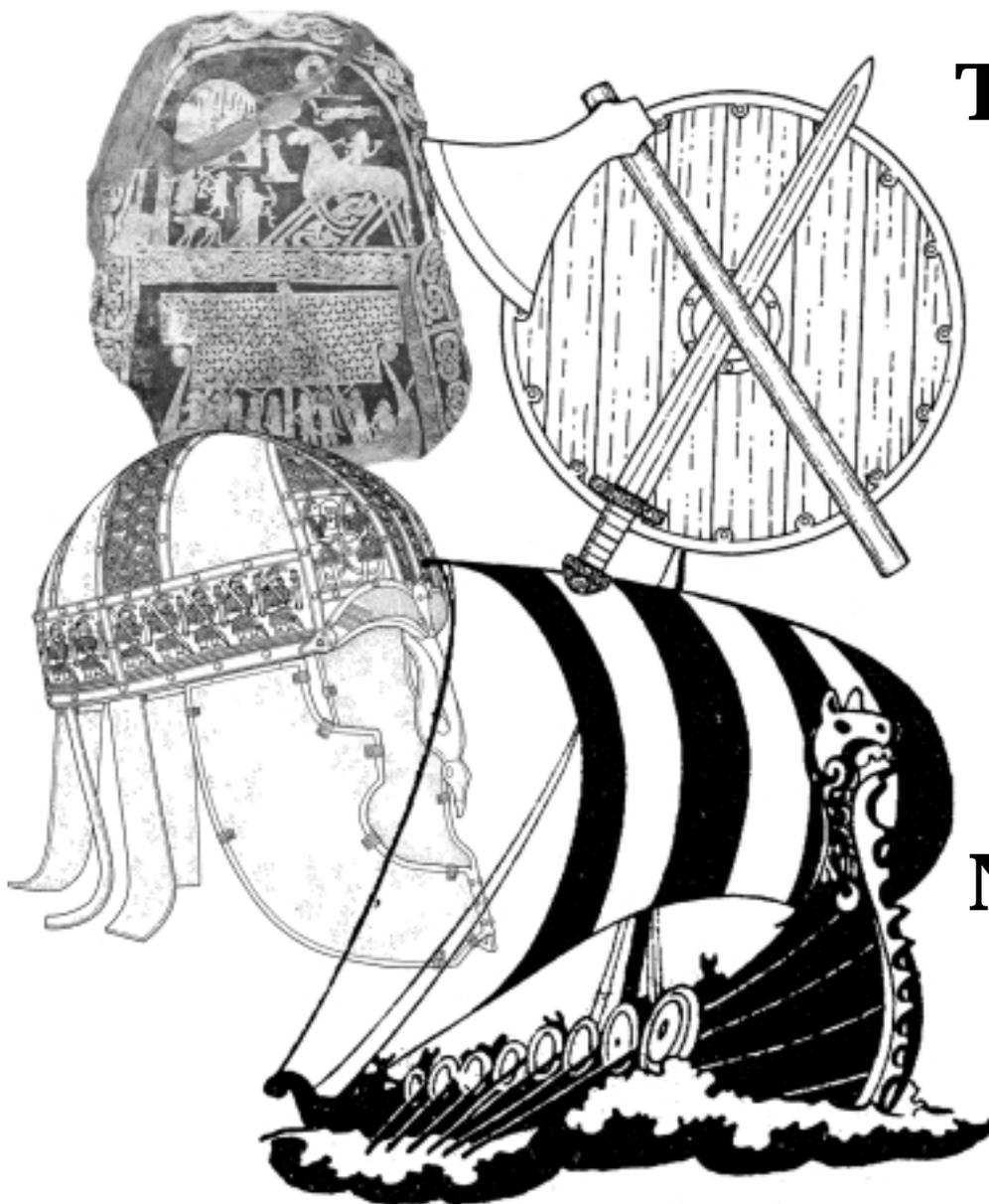
Vol. I, No. 1

An Introduction to Norse Mythology

**The Treasure
House of
Achad**

**Atheism as
Freedom**

**The
Non-Gnostic
Saint**



CONTENTS

From the Editor	1
An Introduction to Norse Mythology . . .	2
Atheism as Freedom, My Personal Experience	3
The Treasure House of Achad	4
Contacting the Ordo Templi Orientis in Georgia	5
Hippolytus: The Non-Gnostic Saint	6



Copyright © 1999 Ordo Templi Orientis and the individual authors.

The viewpoints and opinions expressed herein are the responsibility of the contributing authors. They do not necessarily reflect those of the Ordo Templi Orientis or the editors of this journal.

Mjöltnir is published quarterly by Yggdrasil Camp, O.T.O., Acworth, Georgia, U.S.A.

From the Editor:

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Welcome to the first issue of Yggdrasil Camp's quarterly publication, Mjöltnir. This publication will act as the main literary outlet of Yggdrasil Camp. Mjöltnir will contain essays on various esoteric topics, poetry, art, rituals and other items of interest. As the name of the body is based on the Norse mythology and that very little is written about the Norse as compared to the Roman and Egyptian mythologies, we hope to present material explaining and exploring the particulars of the Norse religion.

We also will be using many Nordic and Scandinavian terms. In these instances, we will provide pronunciation and definitions of the terms used. For instance, Yggdrasil (IGG-dra-sil), the name of the body, is the Norse tree of life. Mjöltnir (MI-ol-near) is the name of Thor's hammer. The hammer was a very important symbol to the northern tribes. When children were born, it was drawn on their forehead. It was also worn around the neck as a talisman of protection.

Mjöltnir was emblematic of destruction, fertility and resurrection. It is with these ideas that we select its name for this publication. We will use Mjöltnir as a tool to destroy ignorance and intolerance, resurrect interest in various philosophical and religious topics and in the end, hope it bears fruit in expanding our knowledge and experience. Just as most Thelemites are eclectic in reading and practices, so shall this publication be diverse in its offerings. Each issue will contain various topics, but with always the goal of expanding one's mind.

We hope you enjoy this issue and welcome comments and submissions. Correspondence, comments, or submissions should be sent via email to mjolnir@thelema.nu. If email is not available, correspondence should be sent via the body address:

Yggdrasil Camp, O.T.O.
P.O. Box 7045
Marietta, GA 30065
U.S.A.
Attn: Mjöltnir

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to publishing more in the future.

Love is the law, love under will.

Fratr 117, Editor

An Introduction to Norse Mythology

By Frater 117

Most people are familiar with Norse mythology to some degree. Many know of Thor, the hammer god, Odin the wise one-eyed leader or Loki the mischief-maker. But few know details about the structure, the customs or beliefs of the northern tribes. For this reason, the following is a brief introduction into the structure, beliefs and customs of this magnificent but distinct faith.

The Northern tribes had a rich and vibrant spirituality that was very eclectic and regional. The political and religious structure was based on clans that cooperated for both commerce and security. Although they shared the same deities, each clan or region held reverence to some gods over others. They also had varying names for the same deity. For instance Tyr was also known as Tiu or Ziu. Odin was also known as Woden and Wotan. The way people shared the religious experience was through traveling poets or bards who sung tales or kennings relating the trials and tribulations of the various deities and their battle with mortality, giants, and other cosmic calamities. The gods were always larger than life. They performed great acts of bravery, strength and cunning. Together they bound a region under the same religious customs and built a mythology so diverse, that it rivals those of Rome and Egypt.

Unlike Islam, Christianity, or Roman mythologies, there was no center of Norse religion or any religious authority. Instead, each clan favored particular gods, modified tales and adapted rituals for their needs. This accounts for many of the inconsistencies within the sagas. The stories are, for the most part, independent of each other. Except for the creation myth and Ragnarok, the end of the world saga, all the other narratives can be seen in a non-linear sequence, although some tend to be nearer to one end, such as the tale of the death of Balder is closer to Ragnarok.

The Norse religion is actually the combination of three sets or families of gods. With the constant warring of tribes, the mobile bards and the conquering of kingdoms, religious ideas exchanged and combined. What seems to be the oldest group of gods is a trio named Ægir, Kari and Loki. These were the personification of the sea, air and fire. Then came two families of gods called the Vanir and Æsir. The myths tell of a war between these two groups that eventually is settled by the exchanging of hostages. The myths also include the merger of Ægir and Loki within the Æsir but gives little or no mention of Kari.

In general, all the gods in the Norse religion are the personification of some part of nature. Balder is the personification of the Sun and light while his blind twin brother, Hodur,

is unwavering darkness that eventually kills the light, Balder. Since the Norse were agriculturally based, the majority of the myths are miracle tales of the cycle of life, the seasons, and celestial objects.

As with most religions, the myths explain the creation of mankind and all things that exist in the world. The lives of the northern tribes were difficult. The weather is cold and dark. The Sun shines for less than half the year and there are periods where it does not shine at all. While to the South, the heat was considered intense and no one could live there except those born in the region. For these reasons, the Norse believed life sprang from the intersection of fire and ice. At this intersection, the Earth and heavens were made from the remains of a slain giant called Ymir. From this giant, Odin and his brothers Vili and Ve created the Earth, sky and all that is found in between. These three were also responsible for the placement of the stars, Sun, and Moon. Mankind was created from the animation of an Ash and Elm tree. For these acts, Odin is referred to as the "All-Father".

As other mythologies, the Norse have fantastic legendary creatures. Their myths contain light-elves or ferries, dark-elves or dwarfs, giant snakes, dragons, and wolves. They also have eight legged horses, steeds that fly and golden boars. Boats can hold hundreds of men and large buildings or halls can hold thousands at a time. But one thing that makes the Norse very different from other mythologies is that their gods were not immortal. They were considered to be a mix between the divine and mortal and thus doomed to die. It was only through the intervention of magic and Idunn's apples of regeneration that they did not grow old and perish. And even this was a temporary solution because at the end of the world, Ragnarok, evil will triumph over good and the



whole world will be ripped asunder and the fires of the South will consume the North and all life, even the gods.

Another unique characteristic of the Norse belief system is in regard to death and the immortality of the soul. Because warfare, courage and bravery were so vital to the race, they felt that the way one dies determines their fate in the afterlife. If one's sword fails in battle and they are slain, the warrior would be taken by one of the Valkyries to be seated in the Hall of Glory, Valhalla. But if one dies from sickness or old age, then they die a "straw death" and were sent to Niflheim, the underworld controlled by the goddess Hel. The funeral customs originally started with funeral pyres on land or in the warrior's boat. With the deceased would be burned or sent their weapons and other personal objects. If they were a lord or noble, their horse or even servants might be killed and burned with them. Later the customs changed to being buried in large mounds. Many of these mounds can be found in Scandinavia. Some of the most famous Viking mounds can be found in Uppsala, Sweden. Many times the bride of the slain warrior will kill herself or throw herself on the pyre. The result is that they both go to Asgard, home of the gods. Couples in Asgard together went to Folkvang, the Hall belonging to Freya, goddess of Love and the personification of the Earth.

The Northern tribes not only celebrated the gods and their actions, but also had many sagas of mortals performing acts of bravery and valor. As was the custom, if someone murdered a family member, the family would seek to kill the perpetrator and redeem the family name. Many of the sagas are based on this kind of redemption. Others are based on conquering kingdoms and winning brides. Heritage and bloodlines were vital to proving stature and hierarchy. Many tales outline the genealogy of kings and heroes, always leading back to some divine source from which the right to rule was derived.

When combined, these tales of creation, glory and misadventure create a unique and vibrant religion that still has its legacy in society today. The Norse were proud and strong people who saw the world around them and created a belief system from it unique to their experiences. Arising from a purely oral tradition, variations on sagas were abundant. But instead of diluting the tales, the variations add an energetic and mystical quality that makes the sagas more personal. Seeing life ended, so too the gods were imperfect. And seeing that night ruled more than day, they had the belief that darkness would eventually overcome the light. But they were not pessimistic. They knew that after the end, a new beginning would come, led by the Sun god Balder. It is with this knowledge they lived their everyday lives and hoped for the future. Together they made a system so creative that it can be appreciated as well today as when the gods of the North were called on to bring health, wealth and prosperity to all.



Atheism as Freedom, My Personal Experience

By Rosa Lena

I have often been met by horror from Christians who don't understand atheism. They think it must be the most terrible outlook to hold on life. A life with no future, no god, and no one to talk to when you are down is all they see. But nothing could be further from the truth.

My struggle with religion was intense. I was raised southern Baptist. To even think that there was no god, to consider the idea, was a matter of guilt. I soon tired of Christianity. I moved on to other religions, but in none of them did I find the experience I longed for. I did not even realize what it was I wanted.

After a time, I began to study Buddhism and I learned meditation practices I could apply to life. I did. The practice I learned is a method of negating beliefs that one is attached to. It is analyzing where the belief originated and why you believe it, meticulously. Is it because someone told you so? Do you cling to it because of emotional attachment? Why? Then you take the opposite belief and justify it. You use the opposite belief to overcome your attachment to the current one. Then you see what is left and analyze that.

I did this with god. I found I had no proof. I found I could find no basis for believing in a god. With patience... The idea was simply gone.

However, the result for me was at first deep depression. Having realized there was no god, it followed there was no soul and no after life. I was nothing but a collection of ideas. At this stage I encountered a great deal of confusion in myself. It went on for months, but then came a change.

I began to work with the practice again. Why the attachment to an after life? I found it rooted deep in my own personal greed. I wanted to keep those who had died alive. I wanted to see them again.

In time it came clear to me. It was sudden. A shift took place. It was annihilation of religion, and with it my basic concepts of the self.

Death is not a bad thing. It is simply a progression of nature. Death itself is the end of the self. The end of nothing more than a collection of experience.

My father, he is dead, but there really is no more suffering for him, because there is nothing. The same will be for me.

This is a great freedom, because it cast off the chains of fear and opens the door to new ideas. My mind had been deadlocked by the idea of God.

There is no more guilt. No guilt for being angry. No guilt for wanting to strike out at the oppressor. No fear of acting. This opens the door to accepting fully that there can be good and just violence! There is only death, and end as a possible consequence.

I have come to see religion as one of the most oppressing things there is. I am far better without it. Religion stalls us out. It holds us back. It allows women to accept oppression as their god given lot in life. It breeds a terrible guilt for acting against the system!

The Treasure House of Achad

By T Allen Greenfield

Frater Achad, a magical name of Charles Robert John Stansfeld Jones, was, by any account, a remarkable individual. His *Liber Thirty-One*, which I had the honor of annotating and introducing in its definitive edition a year and a half ago, would alone justify an interest in his career by any New Aeon metaphysician or Qabalist. More controversial by far are the masterpieces of occult lore produced in the 1920's. These works are often reprinted and more honored in wider circles than among hard core Thelemites. They include *the Anatomy of the Body of God*, *Q.B.L.*, *The Egyptian Revival* and several smaller works like *I.N.R.I.*, a short metaphysical masterpiece, and *the Chalice of Ecstasy*.

Then there is silence. In the 1920's Achad and Crowley completely broke relations, and Jones seemed to disappear into relative obscurity. As it turns out, however, by his own account his magical initiation continued. He continued to teach a scattering of students loosely organized quietly all over the world. At this same time, occultism was in decline after the collapse of the original Golden Dawn at the turn of the century. So too most of the world, Achad had vanished.

Apparently, even his earlier writings have not received a full hearing. I was astonished to discover that *The Equinox* had published only a rather small fragment of his *A Master of the Temple* which, as of this writing remains mostly unpublished. To the initiated, it is obvious that *The Equinox* has not given us a full accounting of that which one would properly expect from a student of this stature claiming the illustrious Grade of a Master of the Temple, but that the entire work is extant and unpublished is most astonishing.

At the end of 1947, Achad's acknowledged mentor, Aleister Crowley, passed from life. Suddenly, after 20 and

more years of relative silence, we find Achad writing a prolific series of semiprivate letters to Crowley's agents, successors and friends, detailing a radically differing perspective on Thelema, from its origins in 1904 of the vulgar era to the years immediately following Crowley's death. These letters are exchanged with such luminaries as Karl Germer, Crowley's lawful successor as administrator of the Prophet's magical orders, and most especially with the more sympathetic but uncompromising Gerald Yorke.

Right, wrong, sane, utterly deranged or merely sour grapes, for a furious year or so, an enormous volume of mystical, practical, historical and anecdotal material flows from Achad's rickety typewriter. He occasionally refers to family, his own health problems, life in Canada in the 1940's, and to visits to his own students in America. Then, again there is silence. Another year or two passes and Jones, too, has died. His legacy, and any meaningful evaluation of it is lost completely in the magical desert of the 1950's in which the whole Thelemic tradition in the English-speaking world teetered on oblivion.

The latter would be rescued by the second occult revival of the 1965-1975 period; Crowley would be rediscovered by the efforts of his one-time secretary and life-long admirer Israel Regardie, and his faithful student and chosen champion Grady McMurtry. While Achad had no such partisans, even his published works were back in print. But his early life was displayed exclusively through the lens of Crowley's more ardent adherents, and his unpublished and quietly circulated work was utterly lost.

I first became aware of the existence of an extensive unorganized correspondence and unpublished Achad literature some years ago quite by chance. A substantial cache of "Achadiana" was given me in exchange for some of my own rather rare files of other occult thinkers and writers by a member of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the O.T.O. acting as agent for an occult archivist in California with an admirably open mind and an interest in Achad, C.F. Russell and other Thelemic "bad boys." Later, the Frater Superior of the

O.T.O. was kind enough to open up his home and his own files to me, and many additional documents were placed in my hand. On one memorable evening I spent the entire night simply copying Achad documents from the Frater Superior's files, exchanging with him what comparatively little I had at that time. Letters, rituals and documents covering over a 30 year period presented themselves. Other documents came my way through other sources, as my name inevitably became linked to Achad's with publication of the definitive annotated edition of *Liber Thirty-One*, and of the previously unpublished monograph, *The Conjunction of Kronos*. In 1998 my agent in such matters, the editor of this journal, was hosted by the Frater Superior, who provided for me many additional Achad documents.

Much of this material is unsorted and unclassified. I have for years searched for a research assistant with experience in data base work simply to establish an organized system for me to fully integrate this great mass of material. In the meantime, what I hope to do in this column is to offer tantalizing glimpses of Achad's decidedly unconventional but unmistakably Thelemic world view. I must emphasize: Don't shoot the messenger (that's me). I find Achad brilliant, decent, crafty, naive and more than occasionally off the wall. His proposed "Aeon of Truth and Justice" leaves me entirely cold, for example. Yet, I feel, it deserves a hearing more decent than the self-serving filtered version it has gotten from, say, a Kenneth Grant. On the other hand, I find Achad's notion of *Liber AL vel Legis* as the latest in a line of revered holy books an eminently wise, eclectic and ecumenical antidote to those who, in their zeal, might throw out the spiritual baby with the bath water.

But my task shall be to introduce you to an undiscovered country; the lost and unpublished world of Frater Achad.



The Lamén of Frater Achad

Contacting the Ordo Templi Orientis in Georgia

There are a number of O.T.O. bodies in the state of Georgia. If you have questions or seek initiation, please contact the OTO body closest to you.

Yggdrasil Camp, O.T.O.

(Serving the Metro-Atlanta area)

P.O. Box 7045

Marietta, GA 30065

Phone: (770) 618-8755

E-mail: yggdrasil@thelema.nu

URL: <http://www.thelema.nu/yggdrasil/>

Solve-Coagula Camp, O.T.O.

513 Bankhead Avenue, Suite 289

Carrollton, GA 30117-2446

Phone: (770) 617-2956

E-mail: solvecoagulacamp@yahoo.com

URL: <http://www.geocities.com/~solvecoagula/>

Lilith Camp, O.T.O.

Athens, GA

Phone: (706) 369-2325

E-mail: LilithCamp@Hotmail.com

Netmet Ankh Netmet Camp, O.T.O.

Braselton, GA

Phone: (404) 271-3925

E-mail: netmetankhnetmet@mindspring.com

To contact O.T.O. Grand Lodge, write to the following:

Ordo Templi Orientis, U.S. Grand Lodge

P.O. Box 32

Riverside, CA 92502-0032

Ordo Templi Orientis, International Grand Lodge

P.O. Box 684098

Austin, TX 78768

U. S. A.



Hippolytus: The Non-Gnostic Saint

By Frater 117

In 1913 e.v. in Moscow a poet and mystic named Aleister Crowley wrote a religious ritual called the Gnostic Mass or *Liber XV*. This ceremony, based on the Russian Orthodox Mass, was made the primary public and private ritual of a semi-Masonic group called the Ordo Templi Orientis. In one section of the Mass, the Deacon calls out the names of many obscure and historical figures. One name in particular is Hippolytus.

As well as being the first Anti-Pope, Hippolytus was a very important figure in the early Catholic Church during the 3rd century e.v. and is responsible for supplying much of the Gnostic text available today.

Little is known about the early life of Hippolytus. He first appears in public during the pontificate of Pope Zephyrinus (199-217 e.v.). At that time Hippolytus was a very vocal opponent of Zephyrinus. He criticized pope Zephyrinus for “being ignorant and not determined enough in fighting the Monarchian heresy.”¹ Zephyrinus also did not support the Logos doctrine of which Hippolytus was a passionate supporter. At the time, Catholicism was only a few hundred years old and illegal in the Roman Empire until the Edict of Milan in 313 e.v. During these early years, the different views of Christ were being developed and debated. The Logos doctrine was a form of “ditheism” that professed two gods, the Father and the Son.² On the opposing end was “Monarchianism” or “Modalism” in which the Father and Son would be different “modes of self-manifestation of the one God”³

Once elected Pope, Zephyrinus was quick to appoint Callistus “his secretary and give him the responsibility for administrating goods to the community.”⁴ Callistus was also made the administrator of the Catacombs. This was a very important task at the time being the major repository of many documents and papal possessions. At the time he was appointed, the catacombs were in huge disarray. Because of his service and the great job he did as an administrator, the catacombs have since been named after him.

Callistus had a very mixed past. He had been tried in courts twice. Once for a failed bank in which he lent funds to Jews and Gentiles and the other for offenses during the Jewish holidays. He was sentenced and condemned to the quarries in Sardinia. While there he was freed with an intervention of Marcia, Roman Emperor Commodus’ (180-192 e.v.) concubine. Once in Rome he received a pension from Pope Victor I (189-199 e.v.).

When Pope Zephyrinus was martyred, Callistus was chosen to be the Bishop of Rome. This was against the views of Hippolytus. He thought he should be Pope and so did many of his followers. The result was that a separate group of Bishops elected Hippolytus pope. This caused the first schism in the Church and made Hippolytus the first Anti-Pope. Hippolytus’ opposition group lasted during the reign of three pontificates. The reasons for his opposition to Callistus were many. Beside the personal animosity against Callistus, “Hippolytus accused Callistus of being too soft.”⁵ Callistus extended absolution for more serious sins, such as adultery and fornication. Hippolytus had the view that the Church should be a place only for just. He also felt that the translation of liturgy from Latin to Greek by Callistus was vulgar and unacceptable. Latin was for those who were respected and Church educated. Greek was for the common man.

Callistus was martyred in 222 e.v. when, during a revolt, he was brutally dragged from his home, thrown into a well and stoned to death. Urban I was elected pope next and he ruled until 230 e.v. during which the local sheriff decapitated him. During this period maintaining itself very difficult for the Church. Roman persecution under Emperors Alexander Severus and Maximinus Thrax was relentless. The results were the new pope, Pontian, and Hippolytus were both exiled to Sardinia. During this time Hippolytus reunited with the Church under Pontian. During their banishment both Hippolytus and Pontian “renounced the papacy in order that the Church give itself a new pastor who would be in Rome.”⁶

Hippolytus died in exile with Pontian in late 235 e.v. due to poor treatment. Because he had reunited with the Church, he was made a Saint and his remains were buried in Tiburtina. His martyred feast day was set on August 13th.

During his life (170-235 e.v.), Hippolytus wrote a large number of ecclesiastical works. In these various volumes, he quotes large sections of Gnostic text that, in many cases, are the only existing versions. His most famous work is the ten volume *Refutation of All Heresies*. In it he discusses the heresies of many people including Pythagoras, Aristotle, Socrates, Valentinus, Simon Magus, Callistus and Zephyrinus. He also critiques ideas and concepts like astrology and horoscopes, magic rites, divination and animal sacrifice. Since the mid 1800’s, these volumes, excluding the missing volumes number two and three, have been in print. He is also credited with writing the basis of the *Apostolic Tradition*, the Church’s order.

“In 1551[e.v.] a badly mutilated statue of a person on a throne came to light. On both sides of the throne and on the right rear upright post there are some carved inscriptions. There, one could read a list of works and a Computo Pasquale, which was immediately identified with the one attributed by Eusebius to Hippolytus.”⁷ Pirro Ligorio restored the statue between 1564 and 1565 e.v. When completed, it was named Hippolytus, Bishop of Porto, who lived during the reign of the Emperor Alexander. Today, the statue resides in the Vatican Library.

Hippolytus was a very conservative Christian during the 3rd century and a very prolific writer. It is from his writings we have the only copy of many lost Gnostic texts. Yet he quoted these texts to refute their claims and discount their

beliefs. And in doing so he saved texts he felt were ungodly. So it is with some irony and humor that Crowley would make Hippolytus a saint of the very traditions and beliefs he spent his whole life refuting.

End Notes:

1. Nopar, Charles, translator , The Popes: the lives of the pontiffs through 2000 years of history, Futura Edizioni, Rome, Italy, 1997, pp. 5
2. Dal Covolo, Enrico, The Catacombs the Destination of the Great Jubilee, Vatican Web Site, <http://www.vatican.va/>
3. Ibid.
4. Nopar, pp. 5
5. Nopar, pp. 6
6. Nopar, pp. 6
7. Dal Covolo, The Catacombs...

Yggdrasil Camp, O.T.O.
P.O. Box 7045
Marietta, GA 30065
