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Heresiarch of the Master Race:
Lanz von Liebenfels,
Catholicism and Occultism
in fin de siècle Austria

By

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Heresiarch of the Master Race

Jörg Lanz-Liebenfels was born into a world distinctly marked by social conflict. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, like much of the rest of Europe, was basking in the aftermath of an explosion of industry and economic growth that had fuelled and been fuelled by the triumph of liberalism and massive urban growth that had transferred great swathes of the rural population to metropolitan centers like Vienna. The capital itself became a shining image of cosmopolitanism, modernity, and culture, its Ringstraße featuring sweeping monumental architecture with great opera houses and theatres hosting a constantly changing variety of shows and performances to an extent that one could stay only a month in 1906 and see twenty-six different Operas of every national style.¹ It was nevertheless the same city that would see the rise of only political movement to take command of an urban center in Central Europe that was not explicitly Liberal, and indeed it was in the midst of Karl Lueger’s Christian Social Vienna that the urban modernity just described took place.²

The city itself and the age in which Liebenfels came to write his earliest works and develop his “Ariosophy” movement can itself be described in much the same terms in which the Christian Social movement itself has been captured by John Boyer. “Viennese politics between 1848 and 1914,” he writes, “were marked as much by continuity as they were by radical political change… there was no absolute, precise boundary line between ‘rationalist’ and ‘irrationalist’ politics.”³ Lanz-Liebenfels and his movement reflect this characterization of Vienna as the Janus city in himself; indeed, the coexistence of radical breaks and distinct continuity is the very core of the understanding of Liebenfels’ ideology and theology in this work.

² John W. Boyer, Political Radicalism in Late Imperial Vienna (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), xi-xii.
³ Ibid., xiii.
The story of Liebenfels’ life and works reflects several contrasts, in fact, that make him a very difficult persona to characterize precisely. He began his career as a deeply religious and devout Roman Catholic priest and monk, with broad theological and exegetical training in canonical and apocryphal Christian and Hebrew texts alike. Even after his departure from the priesthood, he remained a highly respected intellectual, featured in learned and less academic völkische journals alike, and often published along famous scholars—such as Ferdinand Tönnies and Erich Eyck. All during this time he maintained himself as a radical anti-Semite, envisioning breeding programs and state-sponsored eugenics initiatives with the explicit goal of Aryan racial purity; initiatives and programs that bear a deep resemblance to later programs implemented by the National Socialist state. Despite his learned reputation and fascination with science, however, Liebenfels chief works are all exegetical or theological in nature, dealing specifically with the construction of an explicitly religious worldview he would come to call alternatively “Ario-Christianity,” “Theo-Zoology,” or “Ariosophy,” an ideology that poised the forces of good, the pure Aryan race, led by the Aryan warrior Christ, against the forces of evil, a conglomeration of beast-men created through centuries of miscegenation and bestiality.

With his eugenic programs, anti-Semitism, and explicitly racial language, it is little surprise that the historiography of Liebenfels has exclusively associated him with the subsequent history of Austria and Germany, with an eye ever fixed on the National Socialist movement. Like the Christian Social movement that would play a distinct role shaping the world Liebenfels lived in, he has been characterized as a “protofascist crusader”—a conception he played no small

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4 See: Das Freie Wort 4 (1904-1905), 5 (1905-1906). During his time at Heiligenkreuz Abbey as a Cistercian Monk, Liebenfels taught theology and had his exegetical works of early Jewish texts well-received to such a degree that he was invited to participate in a massive translation and interpretation project with several distinguished theologians in 1905 called Monumenta Judaica, for which he was selected to be the Catholic editor, and used the titles “Dr. phil. et theo., prof. et presb. ord. Cist.” The project, which was meant to do exegesis in detail of the original Aramaic texts of the Pentateuch, was eventually abandoned after five volumes, but Liebenfels produced a detailed exegesis, and translation of the Book of Genesis. See Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 99.
5 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 97.
role in shaping himself—creating the central problem that he has not been approached in terms of his present and his past, on the moment he occupied and the history leading up to that moment.6

The reigning interpretation characterizes Liebenfels as a pan-German nationalist and inheritor to the vision of the “German occult revival,” which applied racial interpretations to a romantic understanding of Germanic and Norse mythology.7 His “Ariosophy” movement, alternatively known as “Theo-Zoology” and “Ario-Christianity,” has been cast as an esoteric, quasi-pagan, millenarian “gnostic religion,” significantly influenced by Theosophy and shaped by the scientific racism of the day.8 Further, the two principal authors dealing with him, Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke and Wilfried Daim, have both specifically written with the expressed goal of tracing National Socialism’s earliest roots to Lanz-Liebenfels and other members of the broad “Ariosophist” movement in Austria and Germany at the turn of the century.9 This paper, on the contrary, envisions him not as part of something distinctly new but as part of a long continuity, not a neo-pagan or Theosophist, but a Christian—indeed, distinctly Roman Catholic—heretic whose new doctrine of Ario-Christianity is founded in long and developed traditions of both Christian heresy and religious anti-Semitism.

Preparing his work questioning the viability of atheism in sixteenth century Europe, Lucien Febvre asks, “won’t the method of ‘Is it true?’ when applied to religious history lead to a dead end, and won’t that of ‘Was it possible?’ on the contrary guide the historian to the final goal

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6 Boyer, Political Radicalism, xiii.
7 Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, The Occult Roots of Nazism (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1985), 15, 29-31; Wilfried Daim, Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab (Munich: Isar Verlag, 1958), 82-86.
8 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 96-97, 101, 103.
9 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 90, 97; Daim, Der Mann, 21-22. “Ariosophy” is the term coined by Lanz-Liebenfels in 1915 to describe his own theology and religious movement, alternatively called “Theo-zoology” and “Ario-Christianity.” Through Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke’s writings, however, it has come to encompass all of the myth-making and esoteric racialism dedicated to the “Aryan” race in Austrian and Germany between the 1850s and 1940s and beyond. See Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 227.
of all history, not knowledge but… understanding?" In this spirit, the question of how wrong or right the previous historiography of Lanz-Liebenfels might be is not the central concern of this project; rather, the goal is to pursue the possibility of Liebenfels not as something else, per se, but something more. Liebenfels was certainly immersed in racism and esotericism and had contacts with many occultists, Theosophists, and neo-pagans, but his core concerns and the focus of his ideology do not end here—rather, this is only the surface of Lanz-Liebenfels and Ariosophy, and does not reach into Liebenfels’ real drive which, as it will be shown, was profoundly rooted in a Christian past.

While it is indeed difficult to pinpoint Liebenfels’ exact motivations, whether they be racial or religious, this project insists that a more nuanced view be taken than that presently in vogue. Historians of Liebenfels like Goodrick-Clarke have certainly shown that he was influenced by Theosophy and close to neo-pagan authors like Guido von List, and that there is great affinity in Liebenfels’ works for the same violent anti-Semitism and eugenics programs later employed by the Nazis. Nor is the connection between Nazism and Lanz-Liebenfels the invention of historians—indeed, Liebenfels himself asserts it in 1930 in an issue of his own magazine, Ostara: “Es sei nur daran erinnert, daß die Hakenkreuz- und Faschistenbewegungen im Grunde genommen, nur Seitenentwicklungen der Ostara-Ideen sind. Die erste Hakenkreuzfahne wehte zu Weihnachten 1907 auf der Burg W.[erfenstein], gehißt von Meister Jörg Lanz-Liebenfels.”

11 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 100.
12 Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, Ostara und der Reich des Blonden, Ostara, Series III, 1 (Vienna: Ostara, 1927), ii. “It should be remembered that the Swastika- and Fascist movements are little more than elaborations on the ideas of Ostara, and the first swastika-banner flew over Werfenstein Castle on Christmas 1907, hoisted by Master Jörg Lanz-Liebenfels.”
This focus on a forward-looking history of Liebenfels, tracing him to Adolf Hitler personally and National Socialism generally, places severe limitations on the historical understanding of Ariosophy and Ario-Christianity. For example, in the very same issue of Ostara that he is proclaimed the precursor of National Socialism, he also confirms explicitly that he is a Christian, and holds not to German neo-paganism of List or Theosophy of Blavatsky, but a religion that is “nicht nur supernational, sondern auch überkonfessionell, d.h. sie steht über allen Konfessionen.”

Likewise, the article declares Liebenfels’ earliest achievement to be his pamphlet Katholizismus wider Jesuitismus, in which, or so Ostara declares, he clears Catholicism (which contains the “hidden truths” of Ariosophy) of the corruption of the “Jesuitism”. Even Goodrick-Clarke is not beyond the use of words like “Manichean” and “heretical,” to describe Liebenfels’ world-view, but these words are used metaphorically, not descriptively. Nevertheless, Liebenfels’ continued belief that he held to true Catholic teaching, and was a true Christian, has been conspicuously absent in the historiography surrounding him.

In the interest of creating a more complete picture of the man and his work, it will be necessary to paint a portrait of a Janus-like character. He was in close contact and conversation with theosophy and neo-pagan esotericism, but nevertheless maintained a fundamentally Christian ideology; he was a racist and anti-Semite profoundly influenced by recent scientific racism and anthropological studies, but the shape of his own anti-Semitism reflects a far older Christian variety; he was clearly upset with and condemned the Church, but nevertheless maintained that he defended Catholicism; he was certainly a German nationalist in sympathy.

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13 Lanz-Liebenfels, Ostara III-1, iii. “not only super-national but super-confessional, i.e. existing above all confessions.”
14 Ibid.
15 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 91, 100.
with much Pan-German ideology, but maintained close ties to and shows likeness with the rival Christian Social movement.\textsuperscript{16}

It will greatly benefit the understanding of Ario-Christianity, which has been called Theosophical and esoteric, to contrast its creator with esotericists like Rudolf Steiner, a prolific Theosophical writer who would later break away from Theosophy to form his own “Anthroposophy” movement. This contrast will highlight the essentially superficial nature of Theosophical influence on Lanz-Liebenfels’ writing and reveal his real grounding not in South and East Asia (such as Steiner, who betrays a strong Buddhist influence), but ancient Near Eastern gnostic and neo-Platonic approaches well within the scope of Christianity. Likewise it is important to challenge the claim of anti-clericalism and Pan-Germanism in Liebenfels’ thought; he was not, after all, alone in suggesting that the church had become corrupted by “modernist” (however vague that term might be) and liberal influences that he ascribed to the Jesuit order. Rather, he was part of a broader phenomenon of clerical unrest that attached itself to the Christian Social movement under the leadership of men like Joseph Scheicher, a confirmed anti-Semite and a perennial reader of Lanz-Liebenfels’ Ostara journal.\textsuperscript{17}

The consequence of establishing Liebenfels in this Christian continuity is to emphasize the significance of heresy as an enduring category and Christianity as an enduring influence on European history. Liebenfels was a man thoroughly obsessed with science and race, and with what appears to be very material concerns—facts which have contributed to the conception of Liebenfels as an esoteric racist. By suggesting that all of his obsession with race and eugenics and fixations on physical and material are superficial, the real suggestion is that he was a part, albeit a fringe part, of a far greater continuity that was supposed to have been superseded by

\textsuperscript{16} Anton Szanya, Der Traum des Josef Scheicher (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2009), 173.
\textsuperscript{17} See: Joseph Scheicher, Erlebnisse und Erinnerungen, vol. 5 (Vienna: Fromme, 1911), 163-167.
scientific rationalism. By asserting Liebenfels’ immersion in a Christian identity despite his biological racism and use of anthropology, the doors are opened to the possibility of Christianity being an enduring and powerful motivation for generations of thinkers who otherwise appear quite divorced from religious experience. In the specific context of Austria, it further suggests that the influence of Catholicism and Catholic categories on the common man by no means ended with Josephinism as has been suggested by some historians.\textsuperscript{18}

**Heresy as a Historical Category**

The goal of this renovation of Liebenfels historiography and contextualization is and must be to recast him as a Christian heretic—which means several different things that have consequences far beyond Lanz-Liebenfels himself. It means that he must be cast as a Christian explicitly, and therefore is immersed personally in a specifically Christian—uniquely Catholic—training and milieu that serves as the basis of his heresy. It also means that he strayed from this orthodox foundation in developing his ideas—but not far enough to be considered an apostate. Rather, his situation as a heretic places him in a theological and intellectual limbo between on the border between Christianity and Apostasy.

This vague limbo which Liebenfels occupies is but one of many problems that must be overcome in using heresy as a category. The first, and by far the greatest, problem is the nature of the word itself. Over time, the term “heresy” has acquired very strong polemical connotations that make it an admittedly troublesome word to use in a historical work. Indeed, as Alistair McGrath observes in his work on the subject, “the judgment as to what is heretical and what is

\textsuperscript{18} See: Anne Coreth, Pietas Austraica, trans. William Bowman and Anna Maria Leitgeb (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University, 2004).
orthodox is not one that the historian can make using the legitimate tools of historical method.”

The key, then, is to capture heresy as a categorical rather than descriptive term—in other words, heresy must be described in terms of what it is rather than merely in contrast to what it is not, i.e. orthodoxy. Further, the real implications of applying the term to any given thinker at any given time need to be explored—since not only has heresy changed over time as a historical term, but it also changes as an analytical term according to the historical moment in which it is applied by the historian.

To envision Liebenfels as a heretic one must address two aspects of the word: first, the universal aspect, meaning the establishment of a theoretical category “heresy,” and, second, the particular aspect, meaning a brief look at the history of the word for its Christian meaning. Several authors will assist to build the first, the theoretical and categorical understanding of “heresy.” Using Lucien Febvre’s suggestion of immersion or super-saturation in his history of unbelief in the sixteenth century, Paul Tillich’s theological category of the “ultimate concern,” and Lester Kurtz’s vision of heresy, which itself works from Georg Simmel’s conception of “the stranger”, a clearer categorical understanding will be shaped from the vague limbo mentioned above. Following this, the more specific Christian understanding of heresy, and where it overlaps with the theoretical and categorical understanding, can be derived from a quick look at a Christian authority on the subject, namely St. Thomas Aquinas.

Fevre speaks of a super-saturation in the sixteenth century of Christian experience that narrowed one’s scope of conceiving and understanding:

Christianity was the very air one breathed…it was the atmosphere in which a man lived out his entire life—not just his intellectual life, but his private life… his

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public life... and his professional life. It all happened somehow automatically, inevitably, independently of any express wish to be a believer.\textsuperscript{20} The significance here is not necessarily the claim that Christianity was a total experience, touching every aspect of life and allowing no real choice, even for those who could imagine what not being Christian might be like. Rather, what Febvre is trying to get at is the primary motivator of a given individual—in his case, Rabelais. This motivation is envisioned by Febvre to be a result of total cultural immersion in the sixteenth century, but such a motivation derived from the experience of life is not unique to the situation Febvre describes.

The debate over drive and motivation is at the core of Liebenfels being categorized with esotericists and Aryan mysticists, and spoken of as the founder of a new “neo-Gnostic religion.”\textsuperscript{21} The word “heretical” is used in passing as a descriptive term by Goodrick-Clarke, but his insistence (shared with Daim) that Liebenfels was doing something new, something different, and was not in any way Christian, deprives the word of any real descriptive power. This is because they conceive of Liebenfels’ principal drive not in relation to his own context and to himself personally, but in relation to an inevitable sequence of events that results in the present day—the material drive centered on “racial hygiene” and “German world domination” that would have its realization in National Socialism.\textsuperscript{22}

Reaching the deeper motivation might be easier if Liebenfels is no longer thought of in terms of the means he suggested, or the material ends he pursued, but the motivation to achieve those ends. Paul Tillich writes that there are two formal criteria of any theology. The first is the existence of an “ultimate concern.” Tillich writes:

The religious concern is ultimate; it excludes all other concerns from ultimate significance; it makes them preliminary. The ultimate concern is unconditional,

\textsuperscript{20} Febvre, Unbelief, 336.
\textsuperscript{21} Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 94.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 97.
independent of any conditions of character, desire, or circumstance. The unconditional concern is total: no part of ourselves or of our world is excluded from it; there is no “place” to flee from it. The total concern is infinite: no moment of relaxation or rest is possible in the face of a religious concern which is ultimate, unconditional, total, and infinite.23

This is all very abstract, of course, but it gives the historian a language with which to establish what it is that makes a heretic. The ultimate concern becomes the uniting factor of the heretic and the orthodoxy, making heretical variations ultimately “preliminary concerns”—such as the means by which the ultimate concern might be reached, or the material ends to pursue if one wishes to address the ultimate concern. So the question becomes “was Lanz-Liebenfels’ ultimate concern racial purity, or was this meant to achieve something else?” It will be seen that by using the word “heretic,” one must insist that Liebenfels ultimate concern reached much deeper than racial purity.

The foundation of heresy from a theoretical standpoint is super-saturation in an orthodox environment, which itself inevitably results in the establishment of an ultimate concern that is indistinguishable from that of the orthodox ultimate concern. There remains now only to understand why the heretic is not orthodox.

Georg Simmel establishes a social and psychological category in his essay “Exkurs über den Fremden” of 1908. This “other” is not the category of heretic as envisioned here, but something whose characteristics are nevertheless very useful in understanding the heretic. Simmel speaks of the “other” as

innerhalb eines bestimmten räumlichen Umkreises—oder eines, dessen Grenzbestimmtheit der räumlichen analog ist—fixiert, aber seine Position in diesem ist dadurch wesentlich bestimmt, dass er nicht von vornherein in ihn

gehört, dass er Qualitäten, die aus ihm nicht stammen und stammen können, in ihn hineinträgt.\textsuperscript{24}

Simmel here describes the heretic in negative—his “other” or “stranger” is the foil of the heretic, one who shares the fundamental qualities of the group, but lacks all others. Simmel’s “other” moves from an indeterminate group into “the group”—the spatial group in which the other is trapped. The heretic might be imagined as the opposite: one moving from a determinate, spatial group into an indeterminate group—or, more to the point, into a group that does not exist. In doing so, the heretic shares with the other the characteristic of “Einheit von Nähe und Entfernung.”\textsuperscript{25}

Lester Kurtz imagines this unity from the perspective of the orthodoxy, writing that, “What is interesting about the stranger is that despite his or her presence, a distance characterizes his relationship with others present.”\textsuperscript{26} To the orthodoxy (the original group), “the heretic is a deviant insider. Every heresy implies a political stance and every heretic is the leader of an insurrection, implicitly or explicitly.”\textsuperscript{27} The similarity of Simmel and Kurtz, however, is that their conception of the other and the heretic only works from the perspective of the orthodoxy. From the perspective of the heretic, no departure, no rebellion, no insurrection is necessary—indeed, for many it never takes place. The heretic is disaffected rather than dissident—the departed from rather than the departing. The disaffected will feel “left behind” but this is not the same as actively departing themselves—to themselves, they are victims. As such, the heretic must still consider himself a Christian.

\textsuperscript{24} Georg Simmel, “Exkurs über den Fremden,” in Soziologie. Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot Verlag, 1908), 509. “fixed within a particular spatial group—or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries—but his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he brings qualities into it that neither originate nor can originate in the group itself.”

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid. “Unity of nearness and remoteness.”


\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 1087.
This theory is made clearer through concrete illustration. It is important to bear in mind here the original meaning of the word, the Greek αἵȡεσιȢ meaning “sect” or “school of thought.” This captures perfectly the other-within-the-group, and is more clearly stated by St. Thomas Aquinas:

A rectitudine igitur fidei Christianae dupliciter aliquis potest deviare. Uno modo, quia ipsi Christo non vult assentire: et hic habet quasi malam voluntatem circa ipsum finem. Et hoc pertinet ad speciem infidelitatis paganorum et Iudaeorum. Alio modo, per hoc quod intendit quidem Christo assentire, sed deficit in eligendo ea quibus Christo assentiat: quia non eligit ea quae sunt vere a Christo tradita, sed ea quae sibi propria mens suggerit. 28

This definition differentiates between the apostate and the heretic, such that those of non-Christian religions belong to a different category of unbelief entirely than those who are heretical. It is “the suggestions of his own mind,” and therefore an idiosyncrasy—preserving the original meaning, “sect”—by which the faith is disrupted. Thus there is “an intense union of both nearness and remoteness” in heresy, moved by the same forces that drive the orthodoxy, possibly even desiring the same end, but at some point being diverted, as Aquinas says, from “the righteousness of Christian faith.” 29 As Alistair McGrath points out, “the essential feature of heresy is that it is not unbelief…but a form of that faith that… indirectly leads to such unbelief.” 30

In the case of Lanz-Liebenfels, his own disaffectedness with the church is apparent, and it is a trait he shares with a number of others who were dissatisfied with the Church and its

28 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, II-II, ed. Peter Caramello (Torino: Marietti, 1962), 64. “So there are two ways by which a man can deviate from the righteousness of Christian faith. In the first [he deviates] because he is unwilling to assent to Christ: this man has an almost evil will in regards to this end. This pertains to the species of unbelief of pagans and of Jews. In the other, [he deviates] because he intends to assent to Christ, but fails in the choosing of those aspects of Christ to which he assents: he chooses not the true teaching of Christ, but the suggestions of his own mind.”
29 Kurtz, “Heresy”: 1087.
30 McGrath, Heresy, 33.
handling of changing social situations. He is, however, separated from the clerical unrest of the time by the totality of his “strangerliness”—he is personally dissatisfied as his fellow priests are, but he is also theologically dissatisfied, a step that men like Scheicher and Berthold Egger, who will be discussed in greater detail later, were never willing to take. Unlike the Theosophists, neo-pagans, and various esotericists fascinated with the Far East, however, Liebenfels himself is not making a departure: his desire is still to “assent to Christ”.

Frater Georgius

To understand how Lanz-Liebenfels reached heresy, and what that heresy entailed, it is necessary to understand how he came to be disaffected and feel abandoned by the Church. Much of it might stem from his education and his own personal dissatisfaction with himself. The man who would publish under the name Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, a name he would adopt only after he left religious life in 1899 claimed to be the son of a Sicilian Baron Lancz de Liebenfels born on the first of May in 1872 to Catherine Skala, both a noble history and auspicious birthday. His true origins were somewhat less glamorous. He was in fact born on 19 July 1874 in the quiet bourgeois district of Penzing in Vienna to a well-off, but hardly rich, schoolmaster, Johann Lanz, and his wife Katharina, née Hoffenreich. His parents were typical middle-class Austrian Catholics, and had the boy christened Adolf Josef in Reindorf parish church in the next district, where they had been married a year earlier, which probably the furthest either of them had ventured outside of their own Austria.

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32 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 90.
33 Daim, Der Mann, 42.
34 Ibid.
Though his parents had raised him Catholic, he was set apart from them by both his degree of devotion and his intellectual curiosity, and eventually decided (against their wishes) to join the Cistercian Order at Heiligenkreuz Abbey soon after his nineteenth birthday on 31 July 1893. He was by all accounts a promising monk, and rose speedily through the ranks, being welcomed into the priesthood by 1897 and granted the title alumnorum magister in 1898. The name “Jörg,” which he would later use, originates during his time at Heiligenkreuz, where he took the name Georgius upon his beginning his novitiate. His most significant training before his ordination took place under Nivard Schlögl, who had entered his novitiate ten years earlier and became professor of Old Testament at the Institutum Theologicum at Heiligenkreuz in 1896; Schlögl placed a specific emphasis on the Pentateuch and prophetic works, but also may have planted the seed in Lanz’s mind of interest in apocryphal works, which would constitute most of the latter’s exegetical work when developing Theo-zoology.

During his time at Heiligenkreuz, Lanz wrote a number of well-received articles that were published in scholarly journals. The earliest of these, which would serve as the entire basis for the Manichean aspects of Ariosophy, was a short article on a then-recently uncovered relief on a tomb that was supposed (incorrectly) to belong to Berthold von Treun, though later revealed to belong to Heinrich von Babenberg. The relief portrayed a nobleman treading on an unidentifiable beast, two images, as mentioned above, that would become central in Ariosophy. Lanz-Liebenfels himself was initially unsure of what it might be, and guessed a dog as well as a lion and a dragon, highlighting that lions and dragons appeared in other gravestones of famous

35 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 92; Daim, Der Mann, 252.
36 Daim, Der Mann, 252.
37 Ibid.
39 Daim, Der Mann, 49. This would be Heinrich “the Godless” or “the Terrible” (1208-1227), son of Leopold VI, not the Duke of Austria, Heinrich II (1107-1177).
noblemen. Further, he begins to reach into scripture, specifically the Old Testament, to draw out evidence of a basis for this symbolism; he points to Psalm 90:13 ("super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis et: conculcabis leonem et draconem") and, more significantly, he declares "es sei hier ferner auf die Anfangsblätter der heiligen Geschichte verwiesen, wo von den Weibe die Rede ist, das der Schlange das Haupt zertreten wird" (referring to Gen. 3:15). This serpent, the dragon, lion, beast, etc.—anything animalistic, really—occurring in art and scripture being tread upon is described by Liebenfels as being "das böse Prinzip, mit dem der Mensche sein ganzes Leben, in jeder, auch in der höchsten Würde... stets zu kämpfen hat und über das er erst siegt durch den Tod!" 42

Initially, therefore, the young Brother George (the article was published during his novitiate), was still well within Christian orthodoxy, and devoted to what he perceived as the ideals of the Cistercian Order. This inner struggle, however, would captivate Lanz-Liebenfels and eventually be translated into an outward and explicitly physical conflict between beast and man, which he would recast as "apeling" and "Aryan." This recasting of the two sides would take place sometime between when Lanz-Liebenfels left Heiligenkreuz in 1899 and when he

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41 Ibid. “Here it also makes reference to the opening pages of biblical history, where it is said of the woman that the head of the serpent will be crushed.” Gen. 3:15 reads: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,” from the Hebrew "ho yeshufecha" (“he shall bruise”) though the Latin translation uses the more forceful "conteret" (“he shall crush to pieces”)—Luther likewise uses “zertreten” here. Ps. 90:13, Biblia Sacra Vulgata, ed. Roger Gryson; the English reads “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.” (Ps 91:13 in Hebrew numbering). The fact that Liebenfels is using a translation coinciding with the Latin rather than the Hebrew here, in addition to the fact that he is using the Greek rather than the Hebrew numbering (thus being consistent with St. Jerome), suggests that his knowledge of the Old Testament was not at the level it would later reach under Schlögl’s direction, and indeed that Liebenfels’ interest in the original languages of the Old Testament may also have been the result of Schlögl’s tutelage.
42 “Berthold v. Treun,” 138. “The principle of evil in everyone, even those of the greatest dignity… with which a man has to fight through his entire life and over which he is victorious only in death!”
published his Anthropozoon biblicum in 1904, though it is possible that it took place even while he was teaching at Heiligenkreuz.\textsuperscript{43}

If it is uncertain whether Liebenfels had developed his full racist doctrine while at Heiligenkreuz, it is known that he was exposed to similar lines of thinking by another virulent anti-Semite, the same Nivard Schlögl who instructed Lanz-Liebenfels in Old Testament studies and ancient Semitic languages.\textsuperscript{44} Schlögl would himself in subsequent years find his work at odds with the church; only just beginning his career as a professor as Lanz was making his way through his novitiate, his mentor was known for his disdain for the ancient Hebrews as “an arrogant and exclusive religious group,” and would later publish his works dedicated “to the German people,” and by 1920 he had proposed to ban students with Jewish grandparents from Catholic youth organizations.\textsuperscript{45}

Specifically, Schlögl drew condemnation from the church for his work Die heiligen Schriften des Alten Bundes, which “accept[ed] the rabbinical traditions touching the composition of the prophetic books as definitely subversive of the equally authoritative Hellenistic traditions embodied in the canonical enumeration and attributions by the Councils.”\textsuperscript{46} One of his chief offenses was his reinterpretation of the original format of the Hebrew scriptures, written in “rhythmic unities,” specifically that the original work contained accented syllables that were the chief syllables of the line, between which there was a certain set number of “Morse” non-accented syllables; besides the Vatican, this also drew condemnation from Jewish scriptural

\textsuperscript{43} Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 92.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid.; Goodrick-Clarke, “Aryan Christianity,” 219n.
\textsuperscript{46} “Ecclesiastical Library Table,” in The Ecclesiastical Review, 67 (July-Dec. 1922): 528. The fact that Schlögl makes a significant appearance in this American Catholic publication testifies to how widely read his works were when the Vatican placed them on the Index of Forbidden Books.
The emphasis Schlögl placed on the Hebrew sources, as well as his belief in their conflict with the later Greek sources, is a trait displayed in Liebenfels’ approach as well, which depends heavily on an idiosyncratic interpretation of Old Testament and apocryphal Hebrew and Aramaic texts.

Despite his close relationship with Schlögl, and apparent dedication to monastic living as well as convicted devotion to the Cistercian Order itself, Lanz-Liebenfels either abandoned his vows or was ejected from Heiligenkreuz in 1899. The official records read “Vanity of the world and captured by carnal love, he rejected life as a monk and a priest, possibly as a Catholic and a Christian, and shamelessly apostatized on 27 April 1899.”

Lanz himself took a very different view of the situation and justified his departure by claiming conflict with his superiors and a need for intellectual freedom, and he would later argue that he remained steadfastly devoted to what he insisted was the original mission of the church and the Cistercian Order in particular, namely the racist vision of Christianity he would construct over the next five years. It remains unclear to what the “amore carnali” referred in the Abbey records, since there is no clear evidence that Lanz pursued any woman, or ever married.

After leaving Heiligenkreuz, Liebenfels devoted most of his time to private study, enrolled in two “learned societies” and began to mingle in higher academic circles, as well as

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48 Daim, Der Mann, 252. “Dedicated to the vanities of the world and captured by carnal love, he rejected life as a monk and a priest, possibly as a Catholic and a Christian, and shamelessly apostatized on 27 April 1899.”
49 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 92. Liebenfels’ specific attachment of this racist vision to the Templars and Cistercians likely stems from his interpretation of Bernard of Clairvaux and his involvement in the crusades to “reclaim” the Holy Land from the hands of the “infidel Saracens.” Thus the conflict of good man v. evil beast is superimposed over the crusader mission.
50 Ibid.
take out two patents and publish prolifically on the topic of “Jesuitism” and Christianity.\textsuperscript{51} His main body of works were so-called “anti-clerical” articles for a mixture of popular völkische and intellectual journals like Das freie Wort (in which he was published twice alongside Ferdinand Tönnies) and the Politisch-Anthropologische Revue.\textsuperscript{52} While the works have earned a reputation through Daim and Goodrick-Clarke of being anti-clerical, there is good reason to question the certainty of that conclusion. There is good reason to believe that the target of Lanz-Liebenfels’ ire was not the Church itself, and certainly not Catholic clerics, but specific liberal tendencies within the Church that stood at odds with his burgeoning racist vision of Christianity. Goodrick-Clarke admits that Liebenfels’ departure from the Cistercians was driven by a desire to “reform” that he could accomplish “better on the outside.”\textsuperscript{53}

Taken as a case-in-point, Katholizimus wider Jesuitismus was certainly not regarded by Lanz to be an attack on the Catholic faith or the Church; rather, under the influence of his still-developing twisted vision of Church history, he regarded the Jesuits as a nefarious “Jewish influence” and claimed that the Church itself was “ein ariosophisches Institut für sakrale heroische Rassenzucht,” that had lost its way because of the “‘verjudeten’ Jesuiten.”\textsuperscript{54} He put especial emphasis on the Church of the Middle Ages and the Chivalric Orders, specifically the Templars and the Cistercians, whose monastic living he reinterpreted as an effort to preserve racial purity against corrupting forces for which he had not yet found an explicit name. That he


\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 92-93.

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 92.

\textsuperscript{54} Daim, Der Mann, 54-55. “an Ariosophic institute for ecclesiastical, heroic racial breeds,” “‘jewified’ Jesuits.”
had already developed his notion of race being the primary expression of “good” is not surprising considering the prevailing ideologies of eugenics and racial purity, but its application to the spiritual purity of the Medieval chivalric orders is significant. The language of guarding purity against the very same “worldly lies” that the Cistercians asserted had led him into apostasy is preserved in Lanz racial interpretation—revealing that the identification of the spiritual goods of Christianity with racial purity that would become the defining feature of Ariosophy was already present as early as 1903.

Regarding Lanz’s political and religious sympathies after his departure from Heiligenkreuz, it has been suggested that he might have converted to Protestantism and joined von Schönerer’s Los-von-Rom movement, and indeed both Daim and Goodrick-Clarke consistently argue that Lanz was a Pan-German, both citing the foreword to the first issue of the third series of Ostara. The very same foreword, however, which does claim that Lanz was briefly known as a follower of von Schönerer after he left Heiligenkreuz, details in the very next paragraph (and this is supported later in the issue) the defense given by Lanz of Catholicism in Katholizimus wider Jesuitismus, released in 1903. It would seem that, if Lanz was a Protestant, it was only for a very brief period. Further, there is strong evidence suggesting that Lanz was instead a follower of Schönerer’s rivals in the Christian Social movement, having written to Karl Lueger with suggestions for a new economic policy for Christian Socialism. This, coupled with Lanz-Liebenfels’ distinctly Christian anti-Semitism, as well be illustrated later, coupled with the close relationship between Catholic lower clerics with Christian Socialism under anti-Semitic

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55 Daim, Der Mann, 54. Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 92. Both authors, however, completely ignore three significant defenses of Catholic clerics and Catholic doctrine in references to Lanz’s “Pan-German” sympathies, all found in Das Freie Wort 4 (1905), which Goodrick-Clark cites incorrectly as containing two articles not found in that volume, and completely omits the three articles that do appear.  
56 Lanz-Liebenfels, Ostara III, 1, ii-iv.  
57 Szanya, Scheicher, 173.
leaders like Joseph Scheicher, provide strong evidence that Liebenfels was in fact more likely to be a Christian social than a Pan-German.

If Lanz was a Christian Socialist rather than a Pan-German, it has incredible significance for his anti-Jesuit writings, and would make the label “anti-clerical” often ascribed to him highly inaccurate. Anti-Jesuit attitudes have frequently been associated, and were associated in Germany and Austria, with anti-Catholic and German nationalist movements; if the anti-Jesuit writer in question were Christian he would be a Protestant and if not he would be an occultist or neo-pagan. 58 Seemingly, however, there were no cases in which strong anti-Jesuit feeling came from circles defending Catholicism, as Lanz’s works did almost universally, always poising the Jesuits as a “Jewish” conspiracy to corrupt and destroy the “true faith”—his racist doctrine—which he believed was upheld by the “pure” Church. 59 His defense was, of course, rarely of the Papacy itself, but he was nevertheless in his own mind firmly in the camp of fellow Catholics, especially lower-level clerics and priests with which he seemed to feel kinship, despite having been defrocked himself.

Lanz certainly had some stake in the clerical unrest that was brewing in Austria at the time, which likely accounts for his interest in the Christian Social movement. His belief in the ability of priests to reform the church properly is confirmed in his 1904 article “Krists in Papstum”, in which he writes that “der letzte wirklich katholische Papst war der Germane Hadrian VI. Florent († 1523)” and praises Catholic clerics for taking up the task of interior reform while Roman politics created a situation in which “alle Papstkonklaven bis auf Pius IX.

58 Róisín Healy, The Jesuit Specter in Imperial Germany (Boston: Brill, 2003), 197-199.
59 See: Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, “Der grosse Kampf des Jesuitismus gegen den Katholizimus,” in Das Freie Wort 3 (1904): 49-56; “Deutschland und die Jesuiten,” in Politisch-Anthropologische Revue 3 (1904): 389-391; “Die Jesuiten und der Adel,” in Das Freie Wort 4 (1905): 81-85; Katholizimus wider Jesuitismus (Frankfurt: Neuer Frankfurter Verlag, 1903); Das Breve “Dominus ac redemptor noster” (Frankfurt: Neuer Frankfurter Verlag, 1904). Even in his criticisms of the Popes, of which he wrote only two, Lanz focuses on the influence of corrupting forces from outside (usually associated with the Jesuits, which itself is synonymous to “Jews”) that made the Church stray from what he perceived as its principal focus.
It is not until Vatican I and Pius IX, he declares, that a truly meaningful and Catholic council was once again held, though he does not regard Pius IX on equal footing with Adrian VI.

Nevertheless, while he criticizes the popes for their lack of theological knowledge and daring, he is (especially when compared to other “anti-clerical” writers) rather mild in his condemnation: Leo VIII was “a diplomat,” and “Pius X ist ein einfacher Landpfarrer.” To Liebenfels, they are all well-meaning and want to do battle with the evils of Jesuitism, but they are weaklings. He expands on this theme in his “Deutschland und die Jesuiten” in which he claims that the greatest danger of the Jesuits is that they train German priests, who are naturally the most gifted clerics, in evil doctrine, and so it is the Germans themselves, who should be combatting Jesuitism and defending the true church, who end up guaranteeing Jesuit power. If he is forgiving in his language towards the Popes, however, it is because he directs his venom against the Jesuit order, who he claims are entirely behind the doctrine of infallibility and other measures used as distractions to the real problems of the Church.

His defense of “wirklich Katholizismus”—it is significant to note he never uses any variety of the phrase “true Christianity,” only ever “true Catholicism”—is compounded by his criticism of Martin Luther’s translation of the Bible, which he says “das Werk Luthers, trägt ganz den Stempel seiner Persönlichkeit und seiner Zeit, sie enthält aber nur Spuren des Geistes

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60 Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, “Die Krists im Papstum,” in Das freie Wort 4 (1904): 404. “The last truly Catholic Pope was the Germanic Adrian VI. “Every conclave up to Pius IX was a meaningless Italian beggar’s tale. The papal throne was nothing other than a sinecure for some old Italian aristocrat.”

61 Ibid., “Pius X is a simple country priest.”


jener Zeit, in der die biblischen Bücher entstanden sind." Furthermore, he answers criticisms of the scripture, that it has a “Jewish spirit,” saying that “ich gebe ohne weiteres zu, daß die modernen (und auch die lutherische) Übersetzung nur zu stark jüdeln. Das kommt aber daher, weil Luther ein schlechter Hebräist war.” The irony of saying that the Hebrew scriptures are “too Jewish” is addressed by Liebenfels in his own conception of what constitutes “Jewishness” even among the Jews.

The Ariosophy Heresy

During the years of his anti-Jesuit polemics, Liebenfels was also working on the development of his own theological doctrine, inspired by the conflict of man and beast first encountered by Liebenfels in the grave uncovered at Heiligenkreuz. This new work, though, is far more detailed, far more rigorous, and far more daring than “Berthold v. Treun”; titled Anthropozoon biblicum and centered on the beasts in the Book of Job, the work contains an exhaustive exegesis of Job and St. Jerome’s commentary and several other books of both the Old and New Testaments, paralleled with secular histories of Herodotus, Strabo, Pliny, and others as well as with contemporary anthropologists and archaeologists like Assyriologist Friedrich Delitzch. His comparison of the original Hebrew and subsequent Greek and Latin translations with other ancient Near Eastern languages traces a history of obscure messages telling of bestiality cults and man-animal hybrids sent to kings and princes as tribute.

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64 Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, Das Buch der Psalmen Teutsch, Vol. I (Dusseldorf: Herbert Reichstein, 1926), 2. “Luther’s work bears the stamp of his personality and his age, but they contain only traces of the spirit of those times in which the books of the bible were composed.”
65 Ibid. “I readily admit that the modern (and Lutheran) translation are too strongly Judaized. However, that is because Luther was a bad Hebraist.”
66 One is rather reminded of Karl Lueger’s anecdotal declaration “I decide who is a Jew!”
68 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 93-94.
In the very first pages of the text, Schlögl reveals himself in Liebenfels’ praise of Jerome for recognizing the significance of the meter and rhyme scheme of Job, which was apparently part of its secrets; Liebenfels calls it “not merely lyrical poetry: it is truly a drama.” His abovementioned reliance on citations from contemporary archaeologists and anthropologists also seems to suggest influence from Schlögl, who himself was well-read on the subject and emphasized the use of modern science in his own work. While Liebenfels certainly developed his theological notions on his own, the methodology he borrowed from Schlögl betrays how great an influence the unorthodox and virulently anti-Semitic teacher had on Brother Georgius at Heiligenkreuz.

Schlögl’s training in ancient Near Eastern tongues like Assyrian and Sumerian also become very apparent in Liebenfels’ attempts at etymology. Specifically, in his focus on Behemoth and Leviathan, Liebenfels claims that St. Jerome is in error to equate these to real animals like the hippopotamus (Behemoth) and the crocodile (Leviathan). He insists, on the contrary, that the roots of the names are derived from Babylonian and ancient Assyrian in the terms pagu/paguta and labu (whence, so he claims, also the name of the Norse god “Loki”), and udumu. The “Behemoth”, he supposes, derived from pagu/paguta (later pagatu) and “Leviathan” from labu/labassu. Later in the work, he adds the word baatzu, which would become, with udumu and paguta, the three principal expressions of the bestial and diabolical forces in Liebenfels’ theology. These etymological studies of ancient Assyrian and Babylonian tongues are well-supported by citations and contemporary (albeit flawed) philology of the time,

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70 “Ecclesiastical Library Table,” in The Ecclesiastical Review, 67 (July-Dec. 1922): 528
72 Ibid., 56, 58, 63-64.
73 Ibid., 65.
74 Lanz-Liebenfels, “Anthropozoon biblicum” II, 108-109; Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 94.
and give Liebenfels a vocabulary for the expression of his exegesis, but the most exemplary segments of Anthropozoon biblicum are his reinterpretation of stories in the Bible and a more folk-etymological examination of popular idioms in his own modern German.

For example, he attempts to tie the Old Assyrian and Hebrew for “weasel” with the Austrian euphemism for having an illegitimate child “sie sei vom Wiesel angeblasen worden,” which for Lanz attests to the enduring image of the weasel as a “shameful beast.”  

He does this with a number of other creatures, tracing the language through books of the Old Testament such as Ezekiel and Job, to Greek animals and mythical beasts (Pan features very prevalently) as symbols of lust and fornication, pressing on to the real thesis of the Anthropozoon, namely that there were ancient bestiality cults that the law of the Old Testament was inspired by God to combat.

He also reinterprets the Fall as an act of the foundation of such bestiality cults—namely, he insists that because she is his spouse by God’s doing, “Der coitus der Eva mit Adam kann keine Uebertretung sein, kann überhaupt nicht das peccatum originale sein.” Rather, he says, the temptation of the “fallen ‘angel’” was in fact an act of copulation between the devil and Eve, attested in his literal reinterpretation of I John 3:12, “Cain qui ex maligno erat,” which Lanz takes to mean Cain was the literal son of the serpent, or Belial.

Through several more reinterpretations of scriptural passages like this, some obscure, some more literal, Lanz populates the whole Old Testament with a variety of transgressions against God that are all merely restatements of this Original Sin of bestiality producing a mixed offspring.

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76 Ibid., 71; Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 94.
77 Lanz-Liebenfels, “Anthropozoon biblicum” I, 69. “Coitus between Eve and Adam cannot be a violation, or at any rate cannot be the source of Original Sin.”
78 Ibid.
The Anthropozoon biblicum establishes the bestiality cults as the principal expression of evil and commandments of God to the chosen people against these cults, but it only deals with the Old Testament. As such, it plays a similar role to the Old Testament in Christian theology: namely, as a kind of primer to the New Testament, setting into place a world in which a messianic Christ is necessary to overcome what the old law could not. This message of the messiah, and a reinterpretation of the New Testament, is found in Liebenfels’ main work, Theo-Zoologie, oder: die Kunde von den Sodoms-Äfflingen und dem Götterelektron (“Theo-Zoology, or the Lore of the Sodomite-Apelings and the Divine Electron”) published in 1905, which is the systematic description of the entirety of Liebenfels’ doctrine, from which he would not stray at all and which would form the basis for all of his future works.79

In Theo-Zoologie, the terms he uses are altered somewhat into the forms that he would maintain for the rest of his works—pagutu, for example, becomes pagatu, and baaztu becomes baziati, transformed from their original mundane meanings into words to specifically describe types of “anthropozoa,” or man-beasts, that were the ancestors of all the dark and deformed races (specifically the Mediterranean race).80 Specifically, the pagu become associated with water, the baziati or bezah with fire, the udumi with earth and with apes and mankind, and the actual divine beings, the issuri, which are not anthropozoa, are associated with air and aether.81 He makes his focus on the ape a specific concern, using ancient inscriptions from Babylon and Assyria to suggest that ape-like creatures roughly corresponding to contemporary Pygmies (who had just been discovered when he was writing) were popularly used as tribute to the courts of ancient kings for grotesque sexual entertainment and orgiastic rituals.82

79 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 94.
80 Ibid.; Lanz-Liebenfels, Psalmen Teutsch, 4.
82 Ibid., 8.
some shaky etymological claims to support his reading of certain words in the bible (such as “gold,” “silver,” and “ivory,”) to have occult meanings related to the beasts.\textsuperscript{83}

The basis for his Christology is in a reinterpretation of the person of Adam in Genesis as the ancestor of these ape-like creatures (the titular “Sodom-Äfflingen”). He sketches out an interpretation which expands on (and somewhat contradicts) his interpretation of the Fall in the Anthropozoon,

\textit{Die Namen des Teufels bestätigen meine Annahmen. Er heißt „der altertümliche Wurm“ (Apoc. XX, 2), er ist der geile Asmodaeus (Tob.) und der Abaddon (Apoc. IX, 11). Durch den Neid des Teufels ist der Tod in die Welt gekommen (Sap. II, 24). Nunmehr wird es klar, was die Erb sünde war, die Sünde, die ins Blut aller Menschen übergegangen ist, es war die Sodomie.}\textsuperscript{84}

The Devil is, as before, bestial in nature and therefore the basis for the Fall, and again it is a sexual act of bestiality that precipitates the fall, making the “original sin” an act of bestiality. What changes, however, is that the divine origin and nature of the Devil is emphasized, and the earthly, debased nature of Adam is also highlighted, leading Liebenfels to conclude that the Devil, manifested in the form of nachaš, “the serpent with legs,” “war sogar ein gottähnliches oder gottgleiches über 'Adam stehendes Wesen. Talmud, Sabbath 146a sagt ausdrücklich, daß der nachaš die Eva begattet habe. Die Gottmenschen hatten die Affenmenschen, die Udumu-Menschen sodomisiert.”\textsuperscript{85}

However, the devil is only divine insofar as his origins as an angel. Liebenfels clarifies that “Godliness” is defined by something else. Liebenfels clarifies, “fragt man mich nun, was ich unter der Gottheit verstehe, so sage ich: Ich verstehe darunter die Lebewesen der ultravioletten

\textsuperscript{83} Lanz-Liebenfels, Theo-Zoologie, 9.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 72-73. “The names of the Devil confirm my views. He is called “the old serpent” (Rev. 20:2), he is the lustful Asmodaeus (Tob.) and Abaddon (Rev. 19:11). Due to the Devil’s jealousy, death came into the world (Wis. 2:24). Now it becomes clear what the Original Sin was—the sin that was transferred into the blood of all mankind—it was Sodomy.”
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 73. “was a god-like being, or equal to God, which was superior to Hadam. The Talmud (Sabbath 146a) expressly says that the nachaš copulated with Eve. The God-men sodomized the ape-people, the udumu-people.”
and ultraroten Kräfte und Welten." In addition to this radiological aspect of God’s nature, what separates the creator-God from the corrupter-devil is that only udumi-creatures and other forms of anthropozoa are sexual; the divine is sexless, or “hermaphroditic” in the sense that it can reproduce of itself and create new life completely of itself. The specific demonization of sex (literally in this case) is an important aspect of Liebenfels’ theology that reflects his moral preoccupations and central concerns, running deeper than the racism he used to analyze these preoccupations and make sense of them.

This original sin against God’s intention could only be rectified by the person of Jesus as the Christ. Liebenfels here reaches into contemporary science of radiation and electricity, proposing that the tell-tale sign of Christ’s divinity is his “ultraviolet” and electrical nature, which is elevated above the udumi nature of fallen man. He claims that the references to “stone” (another word he reads to be cryptic in nature) actually attests to Christ’s purity, and the emphasis of the blood of Christ (the “grail” of the Holy Grail legends) is an emphasis on blood-purity. He, however, takes on the form of udumi to remind the chosen people (the Aryans) of the message of the Old Testament—namely the avoidance of bestiality and the destruction of the impure anthropozoa.

To this point, Liebenfels’ theology seems to be merely a fantastical and racist reimagining of orthodox Christianity—all in all, it is not terribly original. He departs from an orthodox understanding, however, as soon as he reaches to apocryphal texts like the Acts of John and Pistis Sophia. From these readings, he concludes that Christ’s divine nature elevates him to

86 Lanz-Liebenfels, Theo-Zoologie, 90. “if one were to ask me what I understand divinity to be, I would answer that I understand it as the living beings of ultraviolet and infrared power and realities.”
87 Ibid., 89-90.
88 Ibid., 91.
89 Ibid., 107.
90 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 95.
the level of a god (in the pagan sense)—but these pagan gods were not actually God, but super-human beings who were the original creation of God, or the angels of the Old Testament that appear in Genesis.\(^\text{91}\) When Gabriel, the angel, descends to Mary, he is sent by God to create the last of these beings, whose sole purpose is to bring about the conquest of the debased udumi by their natural masters, the Aryans or “theozoa”.\(^\text{92}\) The fact that Liebenfels insists that Christ is “created” is important, since it denies one of the basic tenets of the Nicene creed, that Christ was “begotten, not made” and was eternal in God; Liebenfels recognizes this, and explicitly admits that he derives his ideas from the heresy of Arius, who held that Christ was a created being.\(^\text{93}\) He writes,

Der Logos (Christus) ist nicht Gott im eigentlichen Sinne, sondern ein Geschöpf (ktisis). Er steht nichtsdestoweniger über allen Geschöpfen und sei ein Mittelding (mesites) zwischen Gott. Uneigentlich (relativ) könne man den Logos Gott nennen. Diese Anschauung wirkt noch lange bei den Germanen fort. Im Pollinger Psalter ist der himmlische Mensch Christus, der Logos, bei der Schöpfung des irdischen (Affen-)Menschen zugegen und als ein Engel abgebildet.\(^\text{94}\)

Liebenfels thus places himself explicitly in the history of Christian heresy, proposing to skeptics that his vision of Christ is by no means new, but has already been recognized by ancient writers. For Liebenfels, there is nothing new about the ideas he is expounding—nor is there anything that departs from the fundamental Christian message; rather, over time Christ’s message has been blurred and corrupted by the forces of evil. He opens the book with this notion, writing that, “die Wahrheit, die ich in diesem Buche zunächst meinen liebsten und lieben Freunden vorlege, ist

\(^{91}\) Lanz-Liebenfels, Theo-Zoologie, 103-105.
\(^{92}\) Ibid., 117-118.
\(^{93}\) Ibid., 120. Arius of Alexandria was a heresiarch of the 4th century whose teachings were initially embraced by the great majority of Germanic peoples before their ultimate conversion to Latin Christianity—a fact Liebenfels specifically highlights. Arius held in opposition to the Nestorians that Christ was a created being, and therefore inferior to God, though superior to man.
\(^{94}\) Ibid. “The Logos (Christ) is not God in the real sense, but rather a creation (ktisis). He nonetheless is superior to all other creations and is a medial substance (mesites) between God and the rest of Creation. In no real sense, but only relatively, can the Logos be called God. This point of view has been at work for a long time among the Germanic peoples. In the Pollinger Psalter the celestial man, Christ—the Logos—is present at the creation of terrestrial (ape-)man, and is portrayed as an angel.”

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Lanz-Liebenfels further maintains a transcendent quality of God that seems to reflect the mysticism of Medieval Christianity, which Liebenfels held was the last true form of Christianity before the corruption of the religion in the fourteenth century symbolized in the suppression of the Templars.\footnote{Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 108.} For Liebenfels, attempting to fit God within the racial manifestation of good and evil, God is a spirit realized only through the fulfillment of the Ario-Christian gospel; he proclaims, “Gott ist gereinigte Rasse!”\footnote{Lanz-Liebenfels, Theo-Zoologie, 136. “God is purified race!” This highly abstract conception of God being manifest in the realization of His law (or at least according to Liebenfels’ perception) reflects some of Meister Eckhart’s notions of God as Creation expressed in several of his sermons and drawing suspicion from the Church. See: Meister Eckhart Sermons and Treatises, trans. M. O’C. Walshe (Dorset: Element Books, 1987).}

Liebenfels therefore translates the neo-Platonic search for God as “the One” as seeking the unity of God in the pursuit of racial purity, which itself becomes not an end in itself, but a means by which the devout Ario-Christian comes to experience and attain God. Indeed, he explicitly declares that “die Bibel, der Neoplatonismus, das Christentum waren die artbewußte, arioheroische Reaktion auf diese diabolische, geradezu teuflische Verschändung der Menschheit, die gerade zur Zeit der Geburt Christi ihre Höhepunkt erreicht hatte.”\footnote{Lanz-Liebenfels, Psalmen Teutsch, 5. “The Bible, Neo-platonism, [and] Christianity were the racially-conscious, ario-heroic reaction to this diabolic, frankly devilish disgracing of humanity, which had reached its highest point just at the time of the birth of Christ.”} In this way, the focus on Lanz-Liebenfels as a racial theorist seems to miss the central point of Ario-Christianity, which ultimately is the same point of orthodox Christianity, i.e. to attain God through living the gospel and seeking to become like Christ. Only Liebenfels interpretation of the means differs, not the spiritual end.
It was to this end that Liebenfels would found the Ordo Novi Templi as a rebirth of the Medieval Knights Templar, who he envisioned, along with the Cistercians and other monastic orders, were founded explicitly for the purpose of waging war on the forces of evil. The Order, though it has been cast as a religious institution in and of itself, was not founded by Lanz to be a new “church”, but an institution for the defense of the Church in imitation of the Medieval orders. Ariosophy, in other words, existed over and around the Order, which was merely an institution with the purpose of proselytizing the ideology of Ostara.

Anti-Semitism and Racism in Ariosophy

Liebenfels wrote frequently of the dangers of “Jewish” Jesuitism and the threat of the Jews as representatives of the udumi-creatures, so there can be no doubt as to his anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, his anti-Semitism seems to be of a more idiosyncratic type than the various strains of anti-Jewish sentiment in Central Europe both past and present. The nineteenth century is a distinct time in the history of anti-Semitism because, while mistreatment of and prejudice against the Jews had existed since Antiquity, it was in the nineteenth century that it first began to lose its religious and cultural trappings and morph into the far darker racial and eugenicist form that would come to a culmination in the 1940s. It is at this time that there is a real blossoming of the various types of anti-Semites, all of whom, in addition to attacking the Jews, have plenty of abuse to spare for each other as well for other reasons. In particular, the Jews came to be associated with ideas and movements that were perceived to be socially destabilizing, even though they existed on opposite economic poles—Bolshevism and Capitalism. In addition to anti-Semitism fuelled by socialist and anti-communist sentiment, there was of course the

99 Daim, Der Mann, 56.
100 Ibid., 58.
development of a racial anti-Semitism that conceptualized the Jews as a distinct and inferior “race”. Finally, there was the old tradition of anti-Semitism alive in the Catholic Church, the taboo of usury and the fear of Jewish conspiracies tied to Protestant phenomena like the Free Masons.\(^\text{102}\) All of these may be theoretically spoken of as discrete categories, but the reality of anti-Jewish attitudes and movements is that typically these reasons overlap and rarely was any given anti-Semitic organ or movement devoted to only one “kind” of anti-Semitism.

Books themselves can be written (and have been written) on the various kinds of anti-Semitism, why they exist, where they exist, and who is behind them. Such a detailed exploration is neither possible nor especially useful for the purposes of discussing Lanz-Liebenfels, whose own anti-Semitism, it shall be seen, was extremely unique. Liebenfels was certainly compelled by a belief in a racial hierarchy informed by his study of contemporary anthropology and pseudo-scientific racism. What this meant to him, however, seems unclear. He adopted racial categories like “Mediterranean” (the supposed South European, Middle Eastern, and North African race) and frequently attacked his enemies for their “Jewishness,” but always these concepts fit within his own worldview of Ario-Christianity.\(^\text{103}\)

For example, Liebenfels put out several issues of Ostara that deal explicitly with the question of anti-Semitism. However, in these, “anti-Semitism” doesn’t mean for Liebenfels “anti-Jewish” according to the contemporary meaning of “Jewishness”—nationalities outside of “Germanic” seem to have little meaning for Liebenfels—but rather those who fit his self-conceived notion of the anthropozoa and descendants of the udumi, pagatu, and baziati. He describes “anti-Semitism” as an essential part of Ario-Christianity: “Das Wesen der Bibelreligion war eben ariosophische Rassenhygiene, Eugenetik, war Antisemitizm,” adding in

\(^{102}\) Derek Hastings, Catholicism and the Roots of Nazism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 42.

\(^{103}\) Lanz-Liebenfels, Psalmen Teutsch, 4-5; See also the above listed anti-Jesuit tracts.
the notes that Antisemitismus was “von anti =gegen und simia =Affe.” Anti-Semitic, therefore, means anti-apeling, which encompasses the entirety of Ario-Christian racism and Liebenfels’ program to destroy the “dark races” before they can eradicate the holy “blonde races.”

In the first series of Ostara, several issues written by Lanz-Liebenfels himself emphasize this idiosyncrasy. The first appeared in 1907 in an issue written by R. Freydank titled “Triumph Israels” which was followed by several works of Liebenfels own pen including “Moses als Darwinist, eine Einführung in die anthropologische Religion” (“Moses as a Darwinist, an Introduction to Anthropological Religion”), and “Genesis, oder Moses als Antisemit, das ist Bekämpfer der Affenmenschen und Dunkelrassen,” (“Genesis, or Moses as an Anti-Semite, that is, Opponent of the Ape-men and Dark Races”) of 1911 and “Exodus, oder Moses als Prediger der Rassenauslese und Rassenmoral” (“Exodus, or Moses as Preacher of Selective Breeding and Racial Ethics”) of 1912 all detailing how the original laws of Moses were written for the Aryan chosen people of God, who constituted the ruling class of the ancient Israelites. Moses, like Jesus (always called by his “Gothic” name, Frauja) and the Prophets, are frequently mentioned as Aryan heroes contrasted with apeling villains and weak Aryans who surrender to apeling lust (as is hinted, but never explicitly stated, of Solomon).

There is, however, some precedent in Liebenfels’ approach to the Jews. There is, for example, a strong emphasis on the nature of Christ as “the stone rejected” in Theo-Zoologie; the

104 Lanz-Liebenfels, Psalmen Teutsch, 6, 6n. “The way of biblical religion was simply ariososophical racial hygiene, eugenics, and anti-Semitism” “from anti =against and simia =ape.”
106 See: R. Freydank, Triumph Israels, Ostara Series I, 14 (Rodaun, Ostara: 1907); Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, Moses als Darwinist, eine Einführung in die anthropologische Religion, Ostara Series I, 46 (Rodaun: Ostara, 1911); Genesis, oder Moses als Antisemit, das ist Bekämpfer der Affenmenschen und Dunkelrassen, Ostara Series I, 48 (Rodaun: Ostara, 1911); Exodus, oder Moses als Prediger der Rassenauslese und Rassenmoral, Ostara Series I, 54 (Rodaun: Ostara, 1912).
107 Lanz-Liebenfels, Anthropozoon biblicum I, 72.
mystical understanding of Christ as “der reine ‘Stein’, ohne Händewerk, d. i. ohne fleischliche Vermischung” is supplemented with the vision of Christ as “der ‘Stein des Anstosses’ (Is. VIII, 14), den die Bauleute der Sodomhäuser verworfen haben.” The rejection of the Jews and the necessity of anti-Semitism, therefore, may assume the mantle of racial anti-Semitism, by calling it “opposition to Apelings and dark races,” but the real drive of Liebenfels’ hatred of the Jews is their rejection of Jesus Christ, and their attempt to rape him in the grotesque and obscene Ario-Christian reimagining of the Passion. Aside from the more obscene aspects of the Ariosophical passion, this pattern is very familiar: “the Jews rejected Jesus, the Jews are responsible for Christ’s death, therefore the Jews should be made to suffer”—this is plain Christian anti-Semitism, not the racial anti-Semitism that permeated the Pan-German and later National Socialist movements. It is easy to see with the overtly racial language how Liebenfels might be confused for a Pan-German politically, but the true nature of his religious leanings and the root of his anti-Semitism betray how immersed he was in Austrian Catholicism and how alike he was to his fellow Austrian lower clerics.

108 Lanz-Liebenfels, Theo-Zoologie, 114. “the pure ‘stone’ made without the work of hands, i.e. without carnal breeding,” “the ‘stone of offence’ (Is. 8:14) that the builders of the houses of Sodom rejected.”

109 Ibid., 124-125. Liebenfels appeals to the Acta Iohannis and their remark that “die Dinge, die Jesus litt, nicht gesagt werden, und was er nicht litt, werde gesagt.” (“the things that Jesus suffered were not told, and what he did not suffer was told”), allowing him to essentially invent a new narrative of the passion in which Christ is “crucified” by being tied to a pole and then raped by various anthropozoa. He is then interred in a sex-den (how Liebenfels interprets “tomb”) but continues to resist, and on the third day escapes from the racial death of the Sodomitic cults and assumes his true form as a Theozoa.

110 Wilfried Daim draws comparisons between Liebenfels’ ONT and the Ku Klux Klan, but seems to completely ignore this glaring similarity between their shared reasoning for anti-Semitism. See: Daim, Der Mann, 61. Likewise, this religious anti-Semitism was identified by Hitler with the Christian Social movement, and explicitly rejected by him (and therefore National Socialism) in favor of Pan-German racial anti-Semitism. “The anti-Semitism of the new movement was based on religious ideas rather than racial knowledge… through this half-heartedness, the anti-Semitic line of the Christian Social Party lost its value.” Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, trans. Ralph Mannheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 119-120.
The Aryan Christ and the Theosophical Christ

One of the main assertions in recent scholarship on Lanz-Liebenfels is that his theology and writing was fundamentally changed by his encounter with Theosophy, and that after 1908, his Ostara journal showed significant Theosophical bias. The claim largely stems from Liebenfels’ association with other—especially völkische—writers and thinkers, such as Guido von List and Harald Gravell von Jostenoode, who were themselves undoubtedly shaped by Theosophical conceptions. Further, Liebenfels did write favorably about the opinions of several major Theosophists, even going through a detailed review and “selective exegesis” of Blavatsky’s The Secret Doctrine and featuring several Theosophists (whom he apparently knew through his völkische contacts) in the first series of Ostara. However, there is no evidence in the content of Liebenfels’ theological writing that he ever assimilated Theosophical ideology, only that he believed Theosophy confirmed what Ario-Christianity already claimed.

One of the best ways to show exactly where Liebenfels strays from Theosophy—and why he should not be considered a Theosophical thinker or writer—is to parallel the heart of his theology with another thinker who is steeped in Theosophical ideology. Rudolf Steiner was by far one of the most prolific Theosophical writers in Germany at the time, and was held in high esteem by Theosophical Society in Germany, of which he became General Secretary in 1902. After ten years as General Secretary, he resigned his position and left the Theosophical Society, apparently due to differences with the London Headquarters over their “Hindu enthusiasm” and

111 Goodrick-Clarke, Occult Roots, 101.
112 Ibid., 100.
113 Ibid., 101-102.
114 See: Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels, Die Theosophie und die assyrischen “Menschentiere” (Groß-Lichterfelde: Züllmann, 1907).
formed his own Anthroposophical Society in 1912.\textsuperscript{116} His work bears a distinct stamp of Theosophy, Buddhism, and a deep esoteric mysticism that will be found lacking in Lanz-Liebenfels highly Near Eastern and essentially materialistic Christian doctrine.

Rudolf Steiner was born in Austrian Croatia the son of a railway wireless operator, Johann Steiner, who during his own youth had been thoroughly exposed to monastic life through the Premonstratensian Order at Geras and had imparted his son with these childhood experiences.\textsuperscript{117} His mother and father were both devout Catholics and, he writes, “true children of the South Austrian forest country,” very much preferring their own Lower Austrian origins to the Croatian and Styrian lands where the railway had compelled the elder Steiner to relocate.\textsuperscript{118} Steiner writes that throughout his youth, “the reality of the spiritual world was to me as certain as that of the physical,” though he nevertheless had a desire to justify this certainty that led him into the sciences.\textsuperscript{119} Unlike Lanz, however, Steiner’s interest in the sciences was for the affirmation, rather than manifestation, of the “spiritual world” he believed in.

Steiner was like Liebenfels in that he was steeped in Catholicism—unlike the heretic Lanz-Liebenfels, however, Steiner showed early desire to depart from the Church and seek a different form of spirituality (though he reports he was once accused of wanting to reinstate “a clerical education policy” by one of his editors).\textsuperscript{120} He was an altar server in his parish during his youth, an experience that seemed to leave an indelible mark on his mind, reflecting decades later about his experience with priests as having “nowhere real piety or religious feeling,” and

\textsuperscript{116} Goodrick-Cla\textsuperscript{r}kr, Introduction to Rudolf Steiner, 6.
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 3. Steiner’s style of writing in regards to his parents and his youth is as telling of himself as the actual content of the writing – there is a distinct poetry in the language that contrasts heavily with Lanz’s own tendency toward scientific language when he was not trying to write prophetically; the reader is tempted to see in this a possible source of the differences in their thought. Without a doubt, Steiner’s writings do suggest a certain otherworldliness and mysticism lacking in Lanz’s racial diatribes and systematic exegetical works, something pronounced in each man’s account of the person of Christ.
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 103.
describes the Catholic clergy specifically as having “shadow-sides”.\footnote{Rudolf Steiner, “Autobiographical Sketch,” in The Essential Steiner, ed. Robert A. McDermott (Edinburgh: Floris, 1996), 14} He describes later encounters with a Catholic priest and regular contributor of the clerical journal Vaterland as being extremely learned but differing greatly from Steiner in aesthetic (Steiner was a devotee of Goethe, for whom the conservative clergymen he encountered “had the deepest antipathy.”)\footnote{Steiner, My Life, 87.}

Steiner’s encounter with another cleric and member of the Cistercian Order, Wilhelm Neumann, with whom he apparently again had a positive experience but, again, with whom he could not see eye-to-eye. His description of the encounter speaks greatly to his own perception of the world and testifies to the other-worldliness of his outlook:

This conversation remained deeply imprinted in my mind; ever and again it has arisen in memory. For it was profoundly significant for me. There were really three persons engaged in that discussion: Professor Neumann and I, and a third, unseen person, the personification of Catholic dogmatic theology, visible to spiritual perception as he walked behind the professor, always beckoning with his finger threateningly, and always tapping Professor Neumann on the shoulder as a reminder whenever the subtle logic of the scholar led him too far in agreement with me. It was noteworthy how often the first clause of the latter's sentences would be reversed in the second clause. There I was face to face with the Catholic way of life in one of its best representatives.\footnote{Ibid., 88.}

Steiner clearly felt that the dogma of the church was an obstruction, and though he esteemed the learning of the church, came to realize that there was no reconciliation between Steiner’s Christ and the Christian Christ, something compounded in a second conversation he recounts with Neumann on the topic of reincarnation and multiple lives; rather unsurprisingly, “The professor then listened to me, spoke of all sorts of literature in which something on this subject could be found; he often nodded his head lightly, but had no inclination to enter into the merits of a question which seemed to him very fanciful.”\footnote{Ibid.}
Steiner and Lanz-Liebenfels differ significantly on this crucial point, the interpretation of the person of Christ, in much the same way that Steiner and the Church differed. Steiner held that the person of “Christ” only entered the body of Jesus of Nazareth at the baptism, which he claims was signified “by the sign of the spirit descending in the form of a dove, and by the words ‘this is my well-beloved Son, today have I begotten him’ (for so the words stood originally).”

Contrast this with Liebenfels perception of Christ as the “electrical being” who was created by God before the creation of the debased anthropozoa, and who took on the shape of an anthropozoa through God’s sexual encounter with Mary. Steiner, like most Theosophists, was under significant Hindu and Buddhist influences, and, like most Theosophists, held to an understanding of Christ that specifically denied him a messianic place in their thinking. To understand Steiner’s Christ, one must trace the idea’s lineage through his experience with Theosophy. The Theosophical Christ is not the specific and singular entity of Christianity, but one of many “adepts” who are sent as teachers of theosophy throughout history, a collection that includes figures from the Buddha to, as she imagined, Madame Blavatsky herself.

Blavatsky makes her position explicit in asking “was Jesus as “Son of God” and “Savior” of Mankind, unique in the World’s annals? ...or was He only the “son of his deeds,” a pre-eminent holy man... one of many, who paid with His life for the presumption of endeavoring...to enlighten mankind...?” She condemns the notion of Christ as “Son of God”

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126 Lanz-Liebenfels, Theo-Zoologie, 118. Thus Liebenfels interprets the conception by a woman “who had not yet known man” because “man” is meant to be the debased anthropozoa, while she instead had intercourse with a theozoa to conceive a pure Aryan.
129 Ibid., 195.
being “blind, all-resisting faith” and insists that a less superstitious position is the latter.\textsuperscript{130} Jesus is little more than a man, likely a student of another rabbi, who was lucky enough to awaken enlightenment within him—expressed as chrestoi, the nature of God as “good”, which Theosophists held was misunderstood as Christ, the messiah.\textsuperscript{131}

This was joined by another vision of Jesus as a follower of the Essenes, who Blavatsky (erroneously) claimed were “converts of Buddhist missionaries who had overrun Egypt, Greece, and even Judea at one time.”\textsuperscript{132} Jesus was therefore a Buddhist who taught the people Buddhist “to benefit humanity at large by producing a religious reform.”\textsuperscript{133} As such, Christos/chrestoi completely loses its original meaning, and becomes the altered state of consciousness sought by the Buddhist that allows access to nirvana, or what the Theosophists interpreted as the “divine principle.”\textsuperscript{134}

Steiner certainly shows clear marks of this sort of thought in regards to spirituality. His own firm belief in spiritual evolution over time, preparing oneself to encounter the Christ on multiple levels is of Theosophical extraction—and in turn borrowed from Buddhist and Hindu meditation practices. He claims that

\begin{quote}
Until now there were only two sources of knowledge concerning the Christian mysteries for those who could not rise through the training to clairvoyant observations. One was the Gospels, all that comes from the communications contained in them or in the traditions connected with them The second arose because there have always been clairvoyant individuals who could see into the higher worlds, and who through their own knowledge brought down the facts of the event of Christ; other persons followed these individuals, receiving from them a never-ending Gospel… and now from the twentieth century onward a third source begins. It arises because an ever-increasing number of persons will
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
130 Santucci, “Theosophical tradition,” 195. \\
131 Ibid., 198. \\
132 Ibid., 199. \\
133 Ibid., 200. \\
134 Ibid., 202.
\end{flushright}
experience an extension, and enhancement of the forces of cognition which is not brought about through meditations, concentrations or other exercises.\textsuperscript{135}

It is from this understanding of the spiritual readiness of the person to encounter Christ that Steiner develops his notion that chrestos is the “Lord of Karma.”\textsuperscript{136} This is the “etheric Christ” that Steiner claims will make himself appear to people with an increasing aptitude for spiritual perception, as man naturally evolves toward a higher spiritual state. This “etheric Christ” represents the “second coming,” and whether or not one is receptive to it, i.e. whether or not one is spiritually prepared to receive it, dictates which “side” one will be on at the event of the “second coming.”\textsuperscript{137}

This contrasts greatly with Liebenfels’ perception of the end-times. For while Steiner allows that certain people “who use the life of the body for anything more than an opportunity to gain ego-consciousness” will form the “evil race,” there is no grand and sweeping apocalypse at which Christ comes to destroy the wicked and deliver the righteous.\textsuperscript{138} Liebenfels, on the other hand, makes this assertion very firmly that, just as it was when Jesus Christ first came and the world was at the height of Sodomite rule, and paints a very vivid image of what he expects,


\textsuperscript{135} Steiner, “Experiences of Christ,” 94.
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 95.
\textsuperscript{137} Ibid., 93-94, 101-102.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid., 103.
Hölle im Jenseits! Ist die, in der wir leben, und die in uns brennt, nicht schauerlich genug?\textsuperscript{139}

The coming of Christ to judge during the reign of the beast mentioned in Revelation, and literally interpreted by Lanz-Liebenfels, contrasts heavily with age of enlightenment and self-realization that Steiner foresees. The optimistic Steiner looks forward to an earthly paradise of enlightened beings and a spiritual hell in which men devolve into beasts, while Lanz-Liebenfels perceives himself to live in an earthly hell and seeks a paradise that only the being and person of Christ the theozoa can provide.\textsuperscript{140}

So it is clear that Steiner certainly does not fit the definition of a heretic. Rather than sharing the central concerns of Christianity, which is attaining God through following Jesus the Christ, Steiner seeks to attain enlightenment through “Christ” like Jesus. Theosophy itself completely denies the one core belief that makes one Christian, namely that Jesus of Nazareth is the messiah—proclaimed by Jesus that “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”\textsuperscript{141} This, in contrast, is a notion that Lanz-Liebenfels clearly endorses, going as far as to maintain that the very physical and electrical nature of “Frauja” makes it impossible to reach God except through the Ario-Christian racist doctrine Liebenfels interprets him as preaching. Steiner, on the other hand, claims that this proclamation is the “ego-

\textsuperscript{139} Lanz-Liebenfels, Theo-Zoologie, 133. “Krisis, the so-called ‘judgment,’ truly means ‘division’ or ‘selection.’ Christ, the God-man, the once more purely bred and transfigured white man of the future will divide them to the right and to the left. Jesus came in order to divide (Lk. 7:51) and he will come again when the Sodomite man will have revealed himself (Thess. 2:3). That time has come! Our bodies are polluted despite all soaps, they remain udumu-ized, pagatu-ized, and baziat-ized. Never has human life been so miserable as it is today—despite all technological advancements. Diabolical beast-men oppress us from above, slaughtering without conscience millions of people in murderous wars waged for their own personal gain. Wild beast-men shake the pillars of culture from below. Mankind is putrid like Lazaru and already exudes the stench of Sodomitic death. What do you seek in a Hell in the Beyond! Is that in which we live, and which burns inside us not terrible enough?”

\textsuperscript{140} This particular strain of thinking, of the corrupt and decaying world contrasted with the perfection of the divine, is a theme present elsewhere in Christian orthodoxy, especially in Augustine in his vision of the “City of God” contrasted with the “City of Man”—the latter being devoid of the presence of God.

\textsuperscript{141} John 14:6.
being” of the chrestoi declaring its presence in Jesus the man, as if Jesus of Nazareth were possessed by the Christ, rather than the Christ being a fundamental part of his being.\textsuperscript{142}

\textbf{Conclusion}

Liebenfels very explicit dependence on Christian tradition shown above clearly displays the lack of Theosophy in the core of Liebenfels’ ideology. Liebenfels “Frauja” is certainly a reinterpreted Jesus, but nevertheless remains by and large true to the original understanding of the messiah, and the explicit and unique Son of God who is the founder of the only true faith. Such explicit and exclusive language is absent in the Theosophic tradition in reference to any single teacher, and is further absent in the attempts to “revive” the polytheistic religion of the ancient Germanics by Liebenfels’ contemporaries. He repeatedly speaks of one truth, one God, one religion—and all others that exist are not only utterly in error, but indeed serve the ends and purposes of his imagine “sodomite-apelings”. There is no attempt to internalize any foreign religion or belief.

The pattern in Liebenfels’ work seems to be prolific sympathies with little commitment—he toyed with Guido von List’s neo-pagan Armanenschaft, with astrology and Theosophy, but his theology is firm and established before he encountered any of them.\textsuperscript{143} His political participation and application of his Ario-Christian worldview reflects this as well—especially in regards to the present interpretation that he was a Pan-German. Clearly, Liebenfels had some sympathies or he would never have been involved even for as brief a time as he was, but having sympathies with Schönerer’s movement does not mean Liebenfels was a Pan-German, as the historiography asserts. This is not to say the historiography is entirely in error—Liebenfels

\textsuperscript{142} Steiner, “Experiences of Christ”, 79.
\textsuperscript{143} Goodrick-Clark, Occult Roots, 103-104.
certainly speaks the language of the Pan-German, he identifies “Aryan” with “Germanic” like so many of his völkische contemporaries (indeed, he was frequently published in völkische journals), his disgust with the lack of racism in orthodox Catholicism certainly suggests an anti-clerical attitude, and he couches his anti-Semitism with explicitly racial language.

Nevertheless, three things clearly place Liebenfels outside of Schönerer’s camp. First and foremost is his insistence well into the 1920s that it was Catholic tradition that held the secrets of Ario-Christianity. Secondly, while Liebenfels uses racial language, his anti-Semitic beliefs and attitudes clearly betray a firm basis in anti-Judaism—moreover, his understanding of “Jew” does not correspond with the category “Jewish” as envisioned either by racial anti-Semites or by Jewish law itself. Finally, Liebenfels ideology is explicitly “transnational”, and he was quick to identify the Italians, Spaniards, and Hungarians as the “drei Länder des Jupiter” where the soil was ripest for Ario-Christian teaching to take root.144

While, obviously, none of these prevented Liebenfels from being interested in Schönerer’s movement, they do strongly suggest that the classification of Liebenfels as a Pan-German has been fixed rather hastily—especially since his clear sympathies with the Christian Social movement, contact with Karl Lueger, and commonalities with other lower clerics in Austria have all been conspicuously absent from the historiography. Indeed, it is the combination of Liebenfels own insistence that he was a true Christian, coupled with his praise for the Catholic Church and religious and arbitrary anti-Semitism that lead one to the opposite conclusion: if Liebenfels can be grouped into a broader political movement, Lueger’s Christian Socialism seems to be a far better candidate than Schönerer’s Pan-Germanism.

The consequences of shifting Liebenfels “allegiance,” so to speak, are very significant for the present teleological historiography that envisions Liebenfels as a forerunner of a neo-Pan-German and occultist National Socialism. In 1951, Eugen Rosenstock-Heussy suggested a new interpretation of A.E.I.O.U., the centuries-old Habsburg device: “Austria Europae Imago, Onus, Unio,” echoing the long tradition of envisioning Austria as Europe’s “mirror image.”

Taking the mirror as the metaphor for Austria, one might suggest that the historiography that has seen Liebenfels as a predominantly German nationalist figure must now understand him as more explicitly Austrian. In other words, rather than the spokesperson of a distinctly nationalist vision, his racism is transnational in nature, not only displaying the influence of having been born and lived all his life in a multi-national Empire, but indeed bearing the mark of the multi-national city of Vienna itself. As a Pan-German, Liebenfels is just that: “Pan-German,” with emphasis placed on the “German”. As a Christian Social and a Catholic, however, Liebenfels comes to be another product of the city of Vienna, and as such another (dark) reflection of the Janus City and its multifaceted culture.

In addition, there are broader consequences to this reimagining of Liebenfels. To conceive of Liebenfels explicitly as a heretic and a Catholic is to make a significant statement about the enduring quality of Catholic influence on society and politics well into the twentieth century. As a heretic at once Christian and not, at once remote and near, Liebenfels reveals how much orthodox Christianity can be alive even in the most remote of ideologies and ideas. The fact that he was pursued not just by the National Socialist state to be silenced, but also watched by the Austrians, further testifies to the ability of heretical beliefs to draw in others in critical

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times. \textsuperscript{146} The degree to which one might consider Liebenfels a fringe leader or a crank only emphasizes the possibility of Christianity’s—and specifically Catholicism’s—hold on the Central European mind, a hold which his not limited to explicitly Christian political movements like Christian Socialism or later, more moderate movements like Christian Democracy. In this way, Liebenfels as a historical character, split away from the teleological view as a forefather of Nazism, reveals the faults in the Nietzschean proclamation of the death of God, taken popularly—and indeed by some academics—as an accurate perception of the state of European culture and society.

Specifically, there are consequences regarding the influence of Christianity on nationalism and racialism. The reinterpretation of the struggle between good and evil into material, racial terms is not unique to Liebenfels, and may perhaps help to reimagine whence the often binary relationship of racist theory and racial conflict originates. It also presents answers to the often difficult questions that arise from periods of great destruction driven by ideologies and movements seemingly so contrary to Christian teaching. Derek Hastings recounts a satirical take on Nazi Bavaria, mocking the “religious battle standard” combining a “Stahlhelm and a rosary” as the symbols of Bavarian politics. \textsuperscript{147} Such satire plays on the seeming contradiction of racism typically associated with National Socialism and piety associated with Catholicism; Liebenfels seems to suggest that such a contradiction need not exist—but at the same time, the Catholicism need not be orthodox, either. The heretical category supported by this history of Liebenfels thus allows a more nuanced approach to, among other things, the often controversial role of the Catholic Church in twentieth century Europe, especially in racist movements.

\textsuperscript{146} Daim, Der Mann, 159-163.
\textsuperscript{147} Hastings, Catholicism, 77.
The enduring, fundamental concerns of Liebenfels belong to a time that is considered by many to be remote and distant—dead, even. Nevertheless, there they reside behind his racism, his (selective) anti-Semitism, his theosophical and esoteric sympathies. That a man so thoroughly obsessed with the science of his day (as his mentor Schlögl was) could be shown to be driven by something so much deeper and more ancient, suggests that our distant past is perhaps not so remote, and that our recent history might not be so near to our present conceptions. Culturally and psychologically, there seem to be core concerns that surface no matter the age or the circumstances, a revelation that lends itself to a more total approach to history, and encourages the historian never to allow himself or herself to become trapped in a given moment or a given perspective, but be ever mindful that in the flow of time, any given spot is always acted upon by what lies upstream.
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