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Pulp magic

[From Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford, 2009).]

Delaurence began his publishing empire at a time when most books of substantial length were bound in hardback. This kept production costs high and, consequently, while some of his titles went through numerous editions, their price was still out of the reach of many. In 1913, for instance, we find a small advertisement in one American newspaper offering new copies of *The Book of Magical Art* for sale at $5, knocked down from $12.[1] This may have been a bargain indeed, but it was hardly affordable out of loose change. As we have seen, cheap, mass-produced grimoires had been produced for several hundred years in Europe in the form of chapbooks and the *bibliothèque bleue*. But it was only in the 1920s and 1930s that a similar boom occurred in America as part of the influential cultural phenomenon of pulp literature. While Delaurence continued to publish his handsome hardbacks with their gold embossed occult symbols, other small, enterprising occult publishers exploited this new, mass-market book format, which consisted of coarse wood-pulp paper pages and glued rather than stitched bindings.

American printers had always suffered from a shortage of rags, and by 1857 the USA was importing over forty million pounds in weight of linen and cotton rags from across the globe to sustain its publishing industry.[2] By the end of the Civil War paper prices were at an all time high, and as one newspaper warned, 'while such prices prevail, cheap books and newspapers are out of the question'. Across Europe and America the race was on to find a commercially viable alternative. Considerable entrepreneurial effort was expended experimenting with the production of straw, hemp and grass paper. It was wood, however, which proved the most appropriate raw material and America certainly had that in plentiful supply. The first wood pulp paper mills were set up in the 1860s and the shift away from rag pulp began. The quality and durability of the paper was certainly not as good, but as a government census agent reported in 1884, 'it answers the transient purpose for which it is employed'. In other words it enabled a massive expansion in newspapers and pulp magazines. The latter became hugely popular during the early twentieth century, providing between a hundred and two hundred pages of escapist racy, pacy fiction involving detectives, cowboys, romance and science fiction for as little as a dime. Sold in drugstores, bus and train

[1] *The Washington Post*, 30 March 1913.
[2] See David C. Smith, 'Wood Pulp and Newspapers, 1867-1900', *The Business History Review* 38, 3 (1964) 328-45.

stations, and newspaper stands, pulp literature was directed at and primarily consumed by the urban working-classes.[3] It was the success of such cheap, populist literature that eventually led mainstream publishers in the 1930s to adopt the same production values, heralding the paperback revolution.

Pulp also came to signify not only the quality of paper but also the merit of the contents printed on it - worthless, pappy, throwaway literature fit only for those too intellectually limited to digest more serious fare. They were not the sort of publication that found their way into academic and public libraries. Yet their influence was such that, by the late 1930s, American educationalists were waging war on the genre. One High School teacher writing in 1937 observed that some 90 per cent of older high school students read pulp magazines that required 'no mental effort from the reader.' The 'mere mention of "pulp" magazines used to fill my mind with pious wrath', she said. Further investigation led her to develop strategies to wean them off such literature, admitting, 'the process is slow – dishearteningly slow.'[4] While westerns, romances and detectives were the mainstay of the pulp fiction industry, dream books, fortune-tellers and grimoires provided the ultimate fantasy. Their contents held out the promise that readers could shape their own destiny rather than merely live vicariously through the sensational exploits of fictional characters. The market for magic and divination was huge. In 1943 it was estimated that $200,000,000 or so was being handed over to an estimated 80,000 professional fortune-tellers in the United States.[5] The pulp publishers responded. Tens of thousands of copies of *The Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, *Albertus Magnus's Egyptian Secrets*, *Pow-Wows: Or, The Long-Lost Friend*, and the *Secrets of the Psalms* poured from the presses, selling for a dollar a piece on the streets. In the back of some editions was the publisher's statement in large type, 'Agents can make big money with these books – apply to your jobber or direct to us'.[6] As well as through mail order many copies were sold by urban druggists in African-American districts and in occult merchandise shops often known as 'spiritual', 'religious' or 'candle' shops.[7] In 1929 an American newspaper article observed,

> It is amusing to find how possessors of such volumes as the Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses, "Egyptian Secrets" by Albertus

[3] See Erin A. Smith, *Hard-Boiled: Working-Class Readers and Pulp Magazines* (Philadelphia, 2000).
[4] Anita P. Forbes, 'Combating Cheap Magazines', *The English Journal* 26, 6 (1937) 476-8.
[5] Maurice Zolotow, 'The Soothsayer Comes Back', *Saturday Evening Post*, 17 April 1943; cited in Weiss, 'Oneirocritica American', 519-20.
[6] Lewis de Claremont, *The 7 keys to Power: The Master's Book of Profound Esoteric Law* (New York, [1936] 1949).
[7] Anderson, *Conjure*, pp. 116-20;

> Magnus, "The Long Lost Friend" and similar publications set exaggerated store upon them. They think they have great rarities of priceless value. Carefully guarded, these books are usually kept for the eyes of the select few. Yet they are the cheapest books in the market and are as common as almanacs when you know where to shop for them.'[8]

The most successful of these new paperback occult ventures was the Dorene Publishing Company founded in New York in 1937 by Joseph W. Spitalnick, the son of Russian immigrants.[9] Spitalnick, who anglicised his name to Joe Kay, made a modest living as a jazz musician and in the 1930s decided to supplement his income by becoming a small-time publisher, setting up first Dorene and then Empire Publishing a few year later. His first venture in the occult paperback market was a manuscript given to him in 1937 by a man named Mr Young, as payment for a debt. Kay hawked the publication door to door and found a ready market amongst the numerous storefront fortune-tellers and psychics in New York. Other works followed, selling for between one and three dollars.

One of Dorene's earliest successes was *Black Herman: Secrets of Magic-Mystery & Legerdemain*, which capitalised on the fame of Benjamin Rucker, the most successful and well-known African-American magician of the era. The cover depicted Rucker sitting astride the globe, garbed in a gown, an amulet around his neck and a scroll with 'Power' written on it in one hand. A publicity photograph of Rucker in a similar pose, scroll in hand, ran with the caption, 'the world famous magician, master of Legerdemain, holds in his hand the paper containing all of the magic secrets which have been hidden for centuries'. The image was one of a powerful African-American reclaiming the mystical wisdom that had for so long been withheld by the whites.

Rucker was born in Amherst, Virginia, in 1892. In his youth he became fascinated by the card tricks performed by a travelling salesman of quack medicine called Prince Herman, whose name was presumably inspired by editions of a popular paperback book on conjuring tricks entitled *Herman's Book of Black Art Magic Made Easy*, written by the well-known American stage magician Alexander Herrmann (1844-96). Rucker became the Prince's assistant and on his death in 1909 Rucker began his own career taking the name Black Herman, and later adopting the titles of Professor and Bachelor of Divinity. So far there was little to

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[8] *The Charleston Gazette*, 16 December 1929.

[9] This account of Dorene is based on Long, *Spiritual Merchants*, pp. 209-10; Catherine Yronwode, 'The Enduring Occult Mystery of Lewis de Claremont, Louis de Clermont, Henri Gamache, Joe Kay, Joseph Spitalnick, Black Herman, Benjamin Rucker, and the elusive Mr. Young', www.luckymojo.com/young.html

distinguish Black Herman from the swarms of snake oil salesmen with their bogus credentials who plied their trade around the States. It was when he branched out into faith-healing and fortune-telling that his financial success took off. He also became increasingly skilled and ambitious with regard to the tricks he performed to drum up trade. By the early 1920s he was famed throughout the Midwest and living comfortably with his wife and children in Chicago. His career and fame advanced even further when he moved to New York where his performances at Liberty Hall, the headquarters of Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, sold out night after night. He loved to play on the fact that he possessed real magical powers derived from his African ancestry. One room in his New York home was decked out with an altar decorated with occult symbols, candles and a human skull, and African masks hung on the walls. His success was only marred by a short stint in Sing Sing prison for fortune-telling. He died performing onstage at the Old Palace Theater, Louisville, Kentucky, in 1934.[10]

Although Joe Kay first published *Black Herman* four years after Rucker's death (we can dismiss the Dorene claim that it was the fifteenth de luxe edition), it is possible that the magician wrote some of it. Rucker had some publishing experience, having written a cheap how-to guide called *Easy Pocket Tricks That You Can Do*. In the late 1920s he had also funded the publication of *The Spokesman*, a short-lived monthly magazine for New York African-Americans, in which the occasional interesting article punctuated acres of space devoted to promoting himself.[11] Some sections of *Black Herman* read clearly like the sort of puff that quack doctors and stage magicians had long published to promote themselves on their travels, and the preface and foreword are dated 1925, New York. The section recounting the extraordinary 'Life of the Great Black Herman' smacks of familiar self-publicity. Its vaunted boasts of great secrets discovered during fabled global travels follows in the footsteps of occult hucksters like Charles Roback, though Rucker was perhaps influenced more by the legendary journeys of the likes of Noble Drew Ali.

Black Herman's 'Life' claimed he was born in the 'dark jungles of Africa'.[12] He was possessed of 'knowledge of hidden mysteries' from birth, and it was foretold that he would grow up to be the greatest magician that ever lived. At the age of ten he was taken to America by a missionary. As a young man he travelled to Cairo, 'where all the secrets

[10] This biography of Rucker is based on Jim Haskins and Kathleen Benson, *Conjure Times: Black Magicians in America* (New York, 2001), ch. 7; Jim Magus, *Magical Heroes: The Lives and Legends of Great African American Magicians* (Marietta, GA, 1995).
[11] Charles S. Johnson, 'The Rise of the Negro Magazine', *The Journal of Negro History* 13, 1 (1928) 19.
[12] *Black Herman: Secrets of Magic-Mystery*, pp. 8-19.

of the ages are held'. He next moved on to India where he befriended a great Hindu magician. In China he fell in with a secret society of robbers. He feigned his death by using his arcane knowledge of medicine, and his friends had his body sent in a casket to the Zulu king in Africa. People understandably fled in fear when he appeared to return from the dead when it was opened. After a few weeks of further amazing adventures in Africa he set sail for France, and then moved on to Britain for a short stay before returning to America the wisest magician in the world. He printed brief encomiums from the places he had visited. London said with regret, 'We hated to give him up', while Paris uttered messianically, 'He is the first and last'. Columbus, Ohio, was much more down to earth in its praise: 'It is more fun to see Herman than it is to see a barrel of monkeys with their tails chopped off.'[13]

The sum total of the wisdom garnered from Herman's extraordinary experiences, as revealed in *Secrets of Magic-Mystery*, consisted of no more than simple slight-of-hand tricks, basic horoscopes for each month of the year, and a guide to the signification of dreams. It is only the poorly written final section, entitled 'The Story of Oriental Magic I found in the Orient an Ancient Practice: Called by some the Magic of the Kabbara Herbologist, Mystic', which takes us briefly into the realms of the grimoire. It includes advice on how 'to bring happiness to broken lives' by carrying the Seal of Moses in one's pocket, and the following instructions on how 'To Cross or Hex a Person: Cast a Spell – No Matter Where':

> There are many different ways I gathered to do this, one of the most popular is to put some hemp string in the person's path and then some Oriental Gum – another way is to use some crossing powder, Confusion Dust – another way is to send them some Black Art Powder and Oil.

A remedy to banish the 'source of unhappiness' required the reader to wash all the floors, doors, and beds, everything in fact, with Chinese Wash and then to say the following prayer every day:

> O! Lord, Father, King please help (name here) thy child to banish unhappiness, misery, to remove it at the source. Help me. Father, to overcome these things that hold me down. Thank you, and then to believe all misery banished and it will be banished.

[13] *Black Herman*, p. 32.

No ceremonial spirit conjuration here, and as the above extracts suggest, some of the spells were basically vehicles for product promotion. A recipe for gaining the love of the opposite sex also required a pint of Chinese Wash, which was a simple cleansing scrubbing liquid containing 'oriental gums', lemon and ginger grass, which accrued a reputation at the time for also cleansing rooms of evil spirits and bad luck.[14] Another spell for 'uncrossing friends' required Van Van Oil, King Solomon Oil, Dragon's Blood, John the Conqueror Root and Devils Shoe String, all of which were commercial hoodoo products. Dragon's blood, the red resin obtained from two species of *Dracaena* trees found in Africa, had long been used in western folk medicine and magic, and in nineteenth-century England it was commonly bought from chemists for use in love spells.[15] John the Conqueror, the legendary name for various roots such as jalap and galangal, which were marketed as powerful luck charms, was a distinctive component of the African-American folk magic tradition.[16]

This commercialisation of charm production developed out of the flourishing trade in herbs, charms, perfumes, oils, candles and other ingredients sold by druggists and the numerous 'spiritual', 'religious' or 'candle' stores that sprang up in urban African-American communities. Many such shops were merely retailers, purchasing goods from mail-order wholesalers run mostly by whites. Quite a few of these companies were offshoots of toiletry and cosmetics manufacturers who were already prospering by making beauty products for the African-American community. As a 1920s survey of advertisements in the *Chicago Defender* and the *Negro World*, the leading African-American newspapers with a nation-wide circulation, showed, there was a huge market for skin lighteners and hair straightening products amongst the newspaper-reading public at the time.[17] One such enterprise was the Valmor toiletry company of Chicago, a subsidiary of which, the King Novelty Curio Company, produced a comprehensive catalogue of charms and spiritual products during the mid 1930s. It included seals from the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, dream books and occult texts, along with lingerie, cosmetics and hoodoo products.[18] These companies also sent salesmen around southern African-American communities, and hired representatives, such as Mattie Sampson of Brownville, Georgia, who

[14] Catherine Yronwode, 'Spiritual Cleansing with Chinese Wash', http://www.luckymojo.com/chinesewash.html
[15] Owen Davies, 'Cunning-Folk in the Medical Market-Place during the Nineteenth Century', *Medical History* 43 (1999) 63.
[16] See Long, *Spiritual Merchants*, pp. 229-46; V.E. Tyler, 'The Elusive History of High John the Conqueror Root', *Pharmacy in History* 33, 4 (1991) 164-6.
[17] Guy B. Johnson, 'Newspapers Advertisements and Negro Culture', *The Journal of Social Forces* 3, 4 (1925) 707-9.
[18] Long, *Spiritual Merchants*, pp. 193-4.

sold the products of the Lucky Heart Company and the Curio Products Company. One of her best sellers was the Mystic Mojo Love Sachet.[19]

Big strides had been made in African-American educational provision during the 1920s and 1930s, though several Southern States lagged badly behind. In Louisiana, for example, over a fifth of African Americans had no schooling at all, leading the founder of the Nation of Islam, the mysterious W.P. Fard, to denounced such obscurantism as 'tricknollogy', the deliberate attempt to keep the people enslaved through illiteracy and therefore ignorance.[20] In the Northern States and cities, however, literacy rates were high by the 1940s. Consequently the press came to compete with the Church as the most important institutional influence on African-American social and political opinion.[21] Newspapers depend heavily on advertising revenue as well as purchasers, of course, and so the *Chicago Defender* and the *Negro World* also became important facilitators in the commercialisation of off-the-shelf magic. They provided both magical practitioners and mail order manufacturers with a cheap means of reaching potential African-American and white clients living far beyond their shops and warehouses.[22] As we saw in the last chapter, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the press had helped generate the huge market in quack medicines and astrology, and now in the early twentieth century the African-American press led a similar boom for hoodoo and conjure products. A trawl of five African-American newspapers over three months in 1925 turned up numerous advertisements for such products as the Sacred Scarab Ring of the Pharoahs, which would shower riches, success and happiness on the wearer, the Imp-O-Luck Charm to '*make* things come *your* way', and the Mysto Talisman Ring that 'wards off evil spirits, sickness, spells'.

African-American magic also kept pace with other commercial developments. By the 1960s those Hoodoo favourites, graveyard bones, were increasingly being substituted by plastic ones, while the increasing use of smoke detectors in rental properties led to the development of incense aerosol sprays for ritual use.[23]

Charms, grimoires and dream books were also bought wholesale and sold directly to clients by hoodoo workers, conjure doctors and spiritualist preachers. In 1940 *The New York Amsterdam-News* estimated

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[19] *Drums and Shadows*, pp. 55, 95.
[20] Beynon, 'The Voodoo Cult', 898.
[21] John H. Burma, 'An Analysis of the Present Negro Press', *Social Forces* 26, 2 (1947) 172-80; George N. Redd, 'The Educational and Cultural Level of the American Negro', *The Journal of Negro Education* 19, 2 (1950) 244-52.
[22] Chireau, *Black Magic*, pp. 142-3.
[23] George J. McCall, 'Symbiosis: The Case of Hoodoo and the Numbers Racket', *Social Problems* 10, 4 (1963) 365; Robert Voeks, 'African Medicine and Magic in the Americas', *Geographical Review* 83, 1 (1993) 76.

that in Harlem alone more than 50,000 people were consulting such people annually, spending nearly $1,000,000.[24] One of the most common reasons was to ensure success in illicit gambling, the hugely popular Numbers Racket in particular. This involved the picking of a three-digit number, the winning combination of which was picked randomly the following day by such means as drawing it from the racehorse results. A whole magical trade developed around this, just as treasure seeking had done in previous centuries. The commercial success of John the Conqueror was due, in part, to its purchase by gamblers. As one conjure doctor pitched: 'Y'know, the women and the numbers, they's both jus' alike. Ain't neither of 'em can hod out long when yuh got Big Johnny workin' fo' yuh.'[25] Gamblers also splashed themselves all over with magic perfumes such as Essence of Van Van (10 per cent oil of Lemon Grass in alcohol).[26] If this was not enough, psalms for luck, such as those in the *Secrets of the Psalms*, and the fourth and 114th psalm from the *Sixth and Seventh Books*, could be employed. The latter instructed, 'if you desire success in your trade or business, write this Psalm with its appropriate holy name upon clean parchment, and carry it about your person constantly in a small bag prepared especially for this purpose.'[27] These psalms were also sold in the form of medals and written on pieces of parchment in red ink.

On the last page of *Black Herman* was the following statement: 'I am told one can gain a Mastery over Occultism by reading and studying some of the works of Lewis de Claremont, L. W. De Laurcne, Wait, Macgrueger, Duval Spencer and Young, and in this way can help to become an initiate.' The reader is already familiar with the work of DeLaurence, Waite and Macgregor, but what of de Claremont, Young and Duval Spencer?[28] It is certainly curious that these are the only three names that are spelt correctly, the others perhaps being unfamiliar to the typesetter. The reason for this may have been because they were one and the same man; someone who, it is likely, also had a hand in writing parts of *Black Herman*. It was a Mr Young who gave Joe Kay his first occult manuscript for publication. Young's name was also given to a brand of Chinese Wash sold by the Oracle Products Company. The earliest occult publications of Lewis de Claremont, who was described in advertisements as 'the famed adept', and was depicted as a Hindu swami, were *The Ancient Book of Formulas* and *Legends of Incense, Herb and*

[24] Cited in McCall, 'Symbiosis', 365.
[25] McCall, 'Symbiosis: The Case of Hoodoo', 366.
[26] Hurston, 'Hoodoo in America', 411.
[27] P. 166.
[28] I have been unable to find any publication by Duval Spencer, though Young also wrote the following booklet under the name Godfrey Spencer, *The Secret of Numbers Revealed; the Magic Power of Numbers* (New York, c. 1942).

Oil Magic, both of which were published by Oracle. The latter book contained sections on 'How to fix Devil's Shoestring' and other products mentioned in *Black Herman*. It would appear that de Claremont was the *nom de plume* of Young, who was also the proprietor of the Occult Products Company.[29] In 1940 de Claremont/Young assigned the copyright of his publications over to Dorene. Amongst them were *The Seven Steps to Power* and *The 7 Keys to Power: The Master's Book of Profound Esoteric Law*, which contained recipes for candle magic, benedictions against enemies, dream magic and numerology, along with discourses on hypnotism and Hindu magic. They were advertised a few years later as 'Two of the World's Foremost Occult Best Sellers'.[30] According to Ed Kay, the son of Joe Kay, Young was also the one and the same as Henri Gamache who wrote a series of magic pulps in the 1940s, which were published by Sheldon Publications and marketed by Dorene, among them the *Mystery of the Long Lost 8th, 9th and 10th Books of Moses* (1948) and the *Master Key to Occult Secrets* (1945). Gamache's *Master Book of Candle Burning* had the most enduring influence. One expert on African-American folk magic, who visited many magic shops during the 1970s, found that it was for sale in every single one.[31]

Whether Gamache and de Claremont were one and the same is open to question. The style and content of Gamache's work are significantly different from that of most of de Claremont's booklets, which heaved with product plugs.[32] Gamache's approach consisted of the presentation of conscientiously referenced snippets of spells and magic culled from an eclectic mix of nineteenth and twentieth century discourses on ancient Judaism, Christian and other middle-eastern religions, and studies of African, Indian, European and Caribbean folklore.[33] Indeed, the subtitle of the *Master Key* was 'A study of the

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[29]Catherine Yronwode, 'The Enduring Occult Mystery of Lewis de Claremont', http://www.luckymojo.com/young.html; Long, *Spiritual Merchants*, pp. 125, 210.

[30] Lewis de Claremont, *The 7 Keys to Power: The Master's Book of Profound Esoteric Law* (New York, [1936] 1949), p. 83. See also pp. 80, 81. Intriguingly in several places in the *7 Keys* the author seems to write as though a British citizen, such as 'In Great Britain we are too materialistic, far too incredulous, to appreciate half the wonders of the world'. This may just be an example of plagiarism though.

[31] Loudell F. Snow, 'Mail-Order Magic: The Commercial Exploitation of Folk Belief', *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 16 (1979), p. 62, n. 17.

[32] Yronwode has noted that some of the illustrations in Gamache's work were lifted from OPC catalogues; Yronwode, 'The Enduring Occult Mystery of Lewis de Claremont'.

[33] The references are not entirely accurate. In the bibliography of *Mystery of the Long Lost 8th, 9th and 10th Books*, for example, Gamache lists 'Dr Ginsberg: The Kabbalah Unveiled'. He has obviously conflated Christian D. Ginsburg, *The Kabbalah: Its Doctrines, Development and Literature* (London, 1865) with S.L. MacGregor Mathers, *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (London, 1887). Other sources included, Joseph W. Williams, *Hebrewism of West Africa: From the Nile to Niger with the Jews* (London, 1930); Joseph J. Williams, *Psychic Phenomena in Jamaica* (New York, 1934); J.A. Dubois, *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies* (Oxford, [1817] 1906); R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (Oxford, 1927).

survival of primitive customs in a modern world with sources and origins'. In the preface he explained how it had taken him three years to accumulate all the material. His reason for going to all this effort? Because 'it presents truthfully the lengths to which humanity will extend itself in an endeavour to gain what its heart desires'. Gamache was not disingenuous enough to claim that his motives were solely educational, yet neither was he ready to acknowledge that the book was intended to be used as a grimoire; yet it was, along with the *Mystery of the Long Lost 8th, 9th and 10th Books of Moses*. Chapter three of the latter, entitled '44 Secret Keys to Universal Power', consisted of a series of magical seals and amulets for love, recovering buried treasure, wreaking vengeance and protection gathered from diverse sources. Gamache turned educational literature into magical literature, performing a sort of alchemy by taking a mish-mash of excerpts from magical traditions across the globe and revealing them as the universal keys to the founding occult wisdom of Moses.

It is revealing of the cultural reach of American pulp magic that as early as 1949 an anthropologist researching the Carib culture in British Honduras, now known as Belize, referred to the influence there and in neighbouring countries of *The Seven Keys to Power*, *The Secrets of the Psalms* and *The Ten Lost Books of the Prophets*.[34] In Jamaica, and elsewhere in the Caribbean where the Delaurence oeuvre had been banned in 1940, the de Claremont and Gamache books filled the vacuum.[35] During the second half of the 1940s a Kingston mail-order company, Spencer's Advertising Service and Commission Agency, regularly advertised the full range of Gamache and de Claremont publications in the *Daily Gleaner*, along with *Secrets of Psalms* and the *Long Lost Friend*, all of which were available from Dorene.[36] A survey of the books sold by Kingston drugstores half a century later found that they consisted almost exclusively of dream books and the works of Gamache and de Claremont.[37] They never achieved the mythic status of Delaurence, but their works were seen as being more accessible. As a Montserrat 'scientist' explained, '*Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* do not help much. Help only a master or adept. The naïve medium not able

[34] Taylor, *Black Carib*, p. 136.
[35] Olmos and Paravisini-Gelbert, *Creole Religions of the Caribbean*, p. 138; Kean Gibson, *Comfa Religion and Creole Language in a Caribbean Community* (New York, 2001), p. 60; Laitinen, *Marching to Zion*, p. 31. *Black Herman* also circulated; Bougerol, *ethnographie des conflits aux Antilles*, p. 145.
[36] See, for example, *The Daily Gleaner* 7 December 1946; 11 October 1947.
[37] Payne-Jackson and Alleyne, *Jamaican Folk Medicine*, p. 192. De Claremont's numerology pamphlet, *How to Get Your Winning Number*, which contains a tell-tale 'Master Code' of three digit numbers, was recently re-reprinted in India for distribution there and in Nepal.

to operate that book. They use *Black Herman* or the *Seven Steps to Power* and the *Seven Keys to Power*.'[38]

The Hispanic market

Dorene also turned an eye to the burgeoning Hispanic market, producing a Spanish translation of de Claremont's *Legends of Incense, Herb and Oil Magic* in 1938.[39] The decision to do this may have been triggered by the evident growth of the Puerto Rican population in New York, the area of East Harlem in particular. During the 1920s it had been a predominantly Italian district, the biggest in America, with a large Jewish community as well, but in the 1930s many moved out while increasing numbers of African-Americans and Hispanics, mostly Puerto-Ricans, moved in.[40] The sound of Spanish voices became a familiar sound on the streets of northern cities for the first time.

Botánicas were and are key institutions in Puerto Rico's tradition of folk medicine, selling not only herbs but also Catholic sacramentals, incense, candles, oils, statues, and representations of the saints, along with charms and grimoires – in other words all the ritual paraphernalia required by adherents of *Espiritismo* and *Santería*.[41] As One Puerto Rican *botánica* shop owner in 1960s Chicago reported, most of her business was not concerned with drugstore medicines for natural ailments, but 'supplies to people affected with *brujeria* [witchcraft]'. Another important sideline for her were products such as incense and bath herbs to promote luck, particularly for the numbers.[42] Probably the first high street *botánica* to be set up in America was that established in East Harlem in 1921 by a Guatemalan named Alberto Rendón. He had worked in a drugstore and noticed how many African Americans and West Indians came to purchase herbal remedies, bath oils and powders for magical purposes. So he opened the West Indies Botanical Garden, selling his own herbal products, some of which were based on plants sent to him especially from Puerto Rico. As the ethnic balance of the area changed Rendón shifted the focus of his product range from the hoodoo and *Obeah* requirements of his black customers to the those of the followers of Central American *Espiritismo*. The store's name was consequently changed to Botánica.[43] Over the next few decades, as Hispanic

[38] Dobbin, *Jombee Dance*, p ??.
[39] Lewis de Claremont, *Leyendas de la Magia del Incienso Hierbas Y Aceite* (New York, 1938).
[40] Francesco Cordasco and Rocco G. Galatioto, 'Ethnic Displacement in the Interstitial Community: The Easy Harlem Experience', *Phylon* 31, 3 (1970) 302-12.
[41] See, for example, Stanley Fisch, 'Botanicas and Spiritualism in a Metropolis', *The Mibank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 46, 3 (1968) 377-88.
[42] Richard M. Dorson, 'Is There a Folk in the City?', *Journal of American Folklore* 83 (1970) 205-7.
[43] Long, *Spiritual Merchants*, pp. 169-70.

immigration increased, particularly with the huge exodus from Cuba as a consequence of the Cuban Revolution of 1959, *botánicas* spread across the United States.[44] By 1970 there were at least twenty-five in Chicago, and in the last couple of decades they have become particularly popular in the Southwest of the USA, with several hundred stores in Southern California alone.[45]

The Mexican magical healing tradition of *curandismo* has been practised in the southern US for much longer, and in the mid-twentieth century folklorists and anthropologists commented on how it had remained largely impervious to European-American influence. It was not completely free of it though. The lure of foreign occult secrets was irresistible to some. In the 1970s a Texan *curandero* practitioner attempted to impress one researcher by showing him 'two books on witchcraft, which he would not let me touch. Since he could not read English, he showed us pictures from the books, commenting on each.' Another *curandero*, eager to impress, read some passages from the Bible and a bilingual edition of Mary Baker Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*.[46] It is true, though, that the North American grimoire tradition had less impact in Mexico and other Central American countries than it did in the Caribbean. A major reason for this being that Spanish grimoire publishing kept apace.

Between the two World Wars several editions of the *Libro de San Cipriano* were produced by publishers in Barcelona and Madrid, and Portuguese versions in Lisbon.[47] These could be ordered by overseas customers of course, but during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was a huge migration of Spaniards to the Americas. Between 1900 and 1924 some five million left, heading mainly for Argentina and Cuba, though 3.8 million returned hme. Around one third of the emigrants were Galicians, and another twenty per cent came from neighbouring Leon and Asturias.[48] These were, of course, the northwestern regions were the *Libro de San Cipriano* or *Ciprianillo* tradition was strongest and some emigrants must have brought copies with them. Ethnographers studying the religious cultures of Cuba during the first few decades of the twentieth century found the *Libro San*

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[44] Anderson, *Conjure in African American Society*, p. 145.
[45] José Madero, 'I Don't Do Black Magic: Mysterious World of Botanicas', *Los Angeles Mission* (December 2004).
[46] Joe S. Graham, 'The Role of the Curandero in the Mexican American Folk Medicine System in West Texas', in Hand (ed.), *American Folk Medicine*, pp, 185-6.
[47] For example, *Libro de San Cipriano : libro completo de verdadera magia o sea Tesoro del hechicero* (Barcelona : Maucci, c. 1920); *El libro infernal : tratado completo de las ciencias ocultas que contiene El Libro de San Cipriano* (Barcelona : Maucci, c. 1920) ; *O grande livro de S. Cipriano ou o tesouro do feiticeiropor Cipriano* (Lisbon: J. Andrade e Lino de Sousa, 1923); *O verdadeiro livro de S. Cypriano ou o Thesouro da feiticeira* (Lisbon: Emp. Literaria Universal, 1919).
[48] R.A. Gomez, 'Spanish Immigration to the United States', *The Americas* 19, 1 (1962) 59-78.

Cipriano had been adopted by *santería* practitioners, and was being sold along with editions of the main French grimoires.[49] Portuguese migrants also brought copies with them judging from a copy found on a wizard imprisoned by the São Paulo authorities in 1904.[50]

Under Franco's regime occult publications were effectively suppressed in Spain, and it was only from the late 1970s onwards that a new wave of editions poured off the Spanish presses.[51] In the meantime Spanish language grimoire production shifted decisively to Latin America.[52] Buenos Aires, the principal post-war publishing centre in the region, and also the home to hundreds of thousands of Galicians, was one source of grimoires. As early as 1916 a limited edition Solomonic work entitled *La Magia Suprema Negra* was produced there, though its stated place of publication was Rome. Its equally spurious author was the legendary tenth-century monk Jonas Sufurino, finder of the *Libro de San Cipriano*.[53] The man who supposedly translated it from the German and edited it was the mysterious Dr Moorne. An early twentieth century catalogue of cheap occult publications produced by the Madrid publishers Librería de Pueyo shows that Dr Moorne was cited as the translator of a raft of cheap magic books at the time, few of which now survive, such as *El Libro de Simón el Mago* (two pesetas), and a joint Spanish edition of the *Enchirideon* and *Grimoire de Pape Honorius* (six pesetas).[54] It was in South America, though, that his name became most well known, particularly in Argentina. This was not only due to the grimoires he purportedly translated, but also for a long running, successful set of Tarot cards attributed to him, *El Supremo Arte de Echar Las Cartas*, which were first published around the 1930s and sold far and wide by peddlers.

It is possible that the earliest South American edition of the *Livro de São Cipriano* was produced in neighbouring Brazil. A São Paulo publisher advertised a booklet for sale in 1916 entitled *O Verdadeiro e Último Livro de São Cipriano* (*The True and Last Book of Saint Ciprian*).[55] Dr Moorne's *Magia Natural* was certainly published there in

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[49] Lydia Cabrera, *El Monte* (Havana, 1954), p. 275; Erwan Dianteill and Martha Swearingen, 'From Hierography to Ethnography and Back: Lydia Cabrera's Texts and the Written Tradition in Afro-Cuban Religions', *Journal of American Folklore* 116 (2003) 275; Fernando Ortiz, *Los Negros Brujos* (Miami, [1906] 1973), pp. 164-5.

[50] Jerusa Pires Ferreira, *O Livro de São Cipriano: Uma Legenda de Massas* (São Paulo, 1992), p. 116.

[51] On the publication history of the Cyprianus book in twentieth-century Spain see Castro Vicente, 'El Libro de San Cipriano (I)'; 'El Libro de San Cipriano (II)'; Alvaro Cunqueiro, *Tesoros y Otras Magias* (Barcelona, 1984), pp. 69-72.

[52] Between 1973 and 1975 a New York Spanish-language publisher, Extasis Corps, also put out a series of books on practical occultism, including *El Libro de San Cipriano*.

[53] In the last few years publishers in Chile have also produced editions: *Libro de San Cipriano* (Santiago: Ediciones Olimpo, 2001); *El libro infernal :tratado completo de las ciencias ocultas que contiene el libro de San Cipriano* (Santiago : Eds. Puga, n.d.).

[54] *Ciencias Ocultas: Magia, Hipnotismo y Espiritismo* (Madrid, n.d.), pp. 5, 9.

[55] Jerusa Pires Ferreira, *O Livro de São Cipriano: Uma Legenda de Massas* (São Paulo, 1992), p. 42.

1928, testifying to the pre-War origins of Brazil's occult publishing industry. It was in the 1960s, though, that the first mass-market editions of the *Livro de São Cipriano* were printed in the country. By the 1990s publishers in Rio and São Paulo had put out at least seventeen different editions.[56] Some continued to reprint the lists of buried treasures to be found in Portugal and Galicia.[57] Treasure was probably not uppermost in the minds of most purchasers of the *Livro de São Cipriano*. Many were and are followers of *Umbanda*, a heterodox, protean religion based around a pantheon of spirits including Yoruba deities, and the spirits of native Indians and slaves. It emerged in the 1920s, growing out of *Candomblé*, folk Catholicism, Kardecism and spiritualism, and spread rapidly from the mid century onwards in the country's industrial centres.[58] The *Livro de São Cipriano* was added to the mix and became a popular seller for the Rio de Janeiro occult publisher Editora Espiritualista, which, from the 1950s, produced a range of books on magic and spiritualism for those interested in or initiated into *Umbanda*.[59]

It is likely that it was these Latin American editions of the *Libro de San Cipriano*, rather than the earlier Spanish ones, that leached into the indigenous Indian magical traditions in some regions of South America. In the 1970s the anthropologist Michael Taussig found itinerant Putumayo Indian magical healers selling a version of the *Libro de San Cipriano*, along with roots, barks, sulphur and mirrors, in their street stalls in the southern Colombian town of Puerto Tejada. One copy he saw was ascribed to Jonas Surfurino and contained 'The Clavicule of Solomon, Pacts of Exorcism, The Red Dragon and the Infernal Goat, the Black Hen, School of Sorcery, The Great Grimorio and the Pact of Blood'. The Putumayo were thought by the dominant Hispanic population of the region to be adepts in the healing arts and deep in both good and bad magic - a reputation that they understandably exploited commercially.[60] In the 1980s the *Libro de San Cipriano* was similarly found to be a significant component of the famed healing practices of the Bolivian Kallawaya. Since at least the eighteenth century the Kallawaya, who live on the eastern slopes of the Andes near the Peruvian border, have been consulted from far and wide for their herbal and magical knowledge. Some of the tribe continue to make a living as itinerant

[56] Ferreira, *O Livro de São Cipriano*, pp. 149-50.
[57] *São Cipriano, o Bruxo* (Rio de Janeiro: Pallas Editora, 2005), pp. 295-315.
[58] Diana De G. Brown and Mario Bick, 'Religion, Class, and Context: Continuities and Discontinuities in Brazilian Umbanda', *American Ethnologist* 14, 1 (1987) 73-93; Graham M.S. Dann, 'Religion and Cultural Identity: The Case of Umbanda', *Sociological Analysis* 40, 3 (1979) 208-25.
[59] *O Verdadeiro grande livro de s. Cypriano* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Quaresma, 1962); *Magia prática sexual; o sexo base da criação, o sexo em tõdas as religiöes, a pratica da magia sexual, a magia sexual na Umbanda* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Espiritualista, 1959).
[60] Michael Taussig, *Shamanism, Colonialism, and the Wild Man: A Study in Terror and Healing* (Chicago, 1987), pp. 268-9.

practitioners, bringing their herbs, stones and amulets with them. Not only do they consult the contents of the *Libro de San Cipriano*, the book itself is imbued with purifying qualities.[61]

During the second half of the twentieth century Mexico City was probably the most active and influential centre of pulp grimoire production in Latin America.[62] A survey of the cheap books on magic and divination sold by peddlers in two Peruvian towns in 1967 revealed Mexican titles such as *La Magia Negra*, *La Magia Blanca*, and *La Magia Roja*.[63] In 1976 a Mexican publisher produced the first Latin American edition of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*. It was apparently a translation of one of the US editions and had a print run of 5000.[64] Copies of these Mexican grimoires became a staple product for *botánicas* and *yerberias* across Central and South America, and in southern US towns with large Hispanic populations like Tucson, Arizona.[65] In the last few years a new generation of Mexican pulp spell books with cheap-looking garish covers have appeared, such as *Brujería: hechizos, conjuros y encantamientos* and *Brujeria a la Mexicana*. These also sell well across the border and can be purchased mail order from the likes of Indio Products, one of the biggest mystical supplies companies in the States, founded by Martin Mayer in 1991. Mayer's aunt and uncle had run a hoodoo drugstore in Chicago's South Side during the 1920s.[66]

The cultural influence of Mexican magical commerce in the US is also evident in the recent growth of the Catholic folk cult of *Santísima Muerte* (Holy Death), which some of the recent Mexican pulp grimoires promote. The image of the spirit of the Holy Death is that of a robed female skeleton. Because of this macabre image she is associated with evil by some, and is seen as the patroness of Mexican drug lords. Yet in Mexican folk religion the *Santa Muerte* has also become an intercessionary patroness, resorted to by 'good' Catholics as well as those seeking to inflict harm.[67] The creators of spiritual products have been quick to adopt the striking image, using it to market prayer cards, Holy

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[61] Ina Rösing, *Die Schliessung des Kreises – Von der Schwarzen Heilung über Grau zum Weiss: Nächtliche Rituale in den Hochanden Boliviens* (Frankfurt, 1991), pp. 255, 263, 320. See also the review in *Current Anthropology* 35, 3 (1994) 327-8. On their herbal knowledge see Joseph W. Bastien, *Healers of the Andes: Kallawaya Herbalists and Their Medicinal Plants* (Salt Lake City, 1987). There is no mention of the use of books in the 1917 account of the Kallawaya doctors in G.M. Wrigley, 'The Traveling Doctors of the Andes: The Callahuayas of Bolivia', *Geographical Review* 4, 3 (1917) 183-96.

[62] Ferreira, *O Livro de São* Cipriano, pp. 45-52.

[63] Marlene Dobkin, 'Fortune's Malice: Divination, Psychotherapy, and Folk Medicine in Peru', *Journal of American Folklore* 82, 324 (1969), p. 133, n. 2.

[64] http://www.esotericarchives.com/moses/editions.htm

[65] John Thompson, 'Santísima Muerte: On the Origin and Development of a Mexican Occult Image', *Journal of the Southwest* 40 (1998) 409, 414.

[66] Long, *Spiritual Merchants*, pp. 214-9; www.indioproducts.com

[67] See Thompson, 'Santísima Muerte'.

Death incense sprays and the like, supplanting that of the Hindu Swami popular on earlier hoodoo product labels. It is through the *botánicas* that she has also been incorporated by some into the pantheon of *Santería*, which has become increasingly popular amongst Mexicans. A few years ago the bishop of León called on the Mexican government to suppress a newly created independent church, *La Iglesia Católica Tradicional Mex-Usa*, dedicated to the worship of the *Santa Muerte*. The growth of the cult in southern California and Arizona has also led to expressions of concern regarding the influence of *yerberías* and *botánicas* and their merchandise.[68]

The war against grimoires in Germany

It was in Germany, though, that the publication of cheap grimoires proved most contentious. Esotericism flourished in early twentieth-century Germany and Austro-Hungary. As in England, America and France, there was considerable middle-class interest in spiritualism, ancient religions, mystical belief systems, and ritual magic.[69] Theosophy was particularly popular and gave birth to the spiritualist Anthroposophy movement of Rudolf Steiner. By 1912 there were also thirty-three Mazdaznan branches in Germany, Austro-Hungary and Switzerland. Leipzig became the cult's second home outside of Chicago. Numerous homegrown groups sprung up. A few years before the First World War the *Ordo Novi Templi*, which claimed an occult inheritance from the Templars, was founded by the Austrian rightwing anti-semite, Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels. He was a follower of the mystical, Aryan supremacist doctrine of his fellow Austrian, the writer and runologist Guido von List (1848-1919). Their racist philosophy of a supreme Teutonic life force, known as Ariosophy, later fed into Nazi racial ideology. Another society that claimed a Templar heritage was the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (OTO), whose overtly magical philosophy was based, they said, on eastern mysticism, and Masonic and hermetic secrets. Aleister Crowley set up a branch in England. The writings of Éliphas Lévi were an undoubted influence, as was Beverley Randolph's conception of sex magic – a strong theme in German ritual magic.

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[68] José Madero, 'I Don't Do Black Magic'.

[69] See Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism* (London and New York, [1985] 1992); Corinna Treitel, *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern* (Baltimore, 2004; James Webb, *The Occult Establishment* (La Salle, 1976), ch. 5; Hans-Jürgen Glowka, *Deutsche Okkultgruppen 1875-1937* (Munich, 2003); Heather Wolfram, 'Supernormal Biology: Vitalism, Parapsychology and the German Crisis of Modernity, c. 1890-1933', *The European Legacy* 8, 2 (2003) 149-63; Peter-R. König, *Der O.T.O. Phänomen Remix* (Munich, 2001). English translations of some of König's detailed research is available at http://user.cyberlink.ch/~koenig

This esoteric boom generated a thriving occult publishing industry. In 1906 the German Theosophical Society set up their own publishing house in Leipzig, which produced not only theosophical works but also astrological periodicals and books.[70] The list of the Berlin publisher Herman Barsdorf Verlag contained a mix of erotic books and texts on ancient magic, including translations of the works of Francois Lenormant. Its most impressive occult publishing venture was the five-volume *Magische Werke* (*Magic Works*) (1921), which included editions of the *Heptameron*, *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy*, and the *Arbatel*. The 1922 catalogue of another Berlin publisher, Nirwana-Verlag für Lebensreform, contained 937 books on astrology, religion, spiritualism, magic and sex, which were advertised in the form of a poem:

> Study the catalogue diligently,
> And quickly choose
> Many books, rare, ideal
> Solid works full of power,
> For every scientific branch,
> Especially for the occultist.[71]

Another leading publisher in the field was Johannes Baum. By the 1930s *Baum Verlag* had become a major force in occult publishing with a series of titles on modern Rosicrucianism and books such as the *Handbuch Der Astromagie* (1926). One of Baum's most prolific authors was G.W. Surya, the *nom de plume* of the occultist Demeter Georgievitz-Weitzer (1873-1949), who before the First World War was editor of the popular esoteric magazine *Zentralblatt für Okkultismus*, and who later wrote guides on Rosicrucianism, medicine and alchemy. Equally prolific was an intriguing character named Franz Sättler (b. 1884), an expert on Arabic dialect and founder of the Adonistic Society, a sex-magic group formed in 1925. Under the pseudonym Dr Musallam, he wrote a series of publications for the Berlin publisher Bartels on astrology, chiromancy, magic and necromancy, which collectively came to be known as the *Zauberbibel* or *Bible of Magic*.[72]

During the first two decades of the twentieth century Bartels was the main producer of grimoires in Germany, reprinting versions of works culled mainly from Scheible's *Das Kloster*. It published several large compilations of between 500 and 700 pages including the *Romanusbüchlein*, *Der wahrhaftige feurige Drache*, and the *Sixth and*

[70] Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism*, p. 27.
[71] Quoted in Treitel, *A Science for the Soul*, p. 75.
[72] Glowka, *Deutsche Okkultgruppen*, pp. 81-6

Seventh Book of Moses.[73] Bartels was also responsible for introduction to a wider audience *Das Buch Jezira*, described as the 'big Book of the Moses Books'. The title was borrowed from the *Sefer Jezirah*, but its contents consisted of the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth books of Moses. In 1917 it was noted that a Munich bookshop was selling numerous copies of this publication to women, probably the wives and mothers seeking protective magical aid for their husbands and sons in the trenches.[74] Bartels also sold cheaper single editions of the *Eighth and Ninth Books of Moses*, as did other publishers such as Max Wendels Verlag in Dresden and Hülsmann Verlag in Leipzig. It was sales of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, though, that far outstripped the other grimoires in Germany. During the 1920s and early 1930s at least five publishers were producing editions, most with Philadelphia as the place of publication.[75]

It was presumably one of these editions that police found amongst spiritualist books in the house of Fritz Angerstein, the director of a cement works near Siegen, Westphalia, who in 1924 murdered eight members of his household with an axe, including his wife. She was a devout Pietist who had apparently miscarried several times. These influences no doubt contributed to the morbid premonitions she experienced, and which played on her husband.[76] Rumour would later have it that Angerstein was inspired by the hope of activating a seal said to be contained in one edition of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of* Moses, which would provide great riches to anyone who killed nine people. The case attracted press attention around the world, and he was beheaded in November 1925. As well as the occult connection, the case was also notable as one of the last in which the authorities took seriously the notion that the violent last moments of the murdered were imprinted on the retina for a short period of time after. Local police took photographs of the eyes of one of Angerstein's victims after someone in the morgue said they saw the image of Angerstein with a raised axe in the eyes of the corpse.[77]

During the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich there were at least seventeen court cases in Germany involving the belief in witchcraft,

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[73] See Spamer *Romanusbüchlein*, pp. 36-7; Bachter, 'Anleitung zum Aberglauben', 132-3.
[74] Spamer, Adolf, 'Zauberbuch und Zauberspruch', *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 1 (1955) 122; Bachter, 'Anleitung zum Aberglauben', 134.
[75] Bartels, Buchversand Gutenberg, Hülsmann, Max Fischer, Buchdruckerei Poetzsch.
[76] Philipp Schmidt, *Superstition and Magic*, trans Marie Heffernan and A.J. Peeler (Westminster, Maryland; [1956] 1963), p. 227. For a brief account of the case in English see Helmut Lethen, *Cool Conduct: The Culture of Distance in Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, 2002), pp. 206-10;
[77] On this belief see Bill Jay, 'Images in the Eyes of the Dead', *The British Journal of Photography* 18 (1981); Véronique Campion-Vincent, 'The Tell-Tale Eye', *Folklore* 110 (1999) 13-24.

some of which involved the 'Moses Books'.[78] A report on one trial in the town of Stade in 1931 commented that spell books were to be found in many houses in the area. When, in 1935, an old couple in the Black Forest complained of being plagued by witches and ghosts, they hired two men from the town of Haslach who tried to rid the house of evil influences by reading invocations from the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*.[79] Most such cases seem to have been prosecuted under the general laws for fraud, but the authorities in Bavaria were particularly well equipped to deal with the occult arts. Article 54 of the Bavarian police code allowed for the imprisonment of those who practised magic, spirit conjuring and divination for profit. Just after the end of World War I the military authorities in Bavaria extended this clause to punish those who lectured on such subjects without having any scientific qualifications.[80]

Numerous sensational and dubious claims have been made regarding the influence of occultism on Hitler and the architects of the Third Reich. There certainly were prominent Nazis who had an active interest in various aspects of the occult, most notably Himmler, Rudolf Hess and *SS-Oberführer* Karl Maria Wiligut, who, influenced by the work of Guido von List, developed his own mystic 'key' to the meaning of runes.[81] From the beginning of the Third Reich, however, the authorities were concerned that occult philosophies could undermine popular confidence in the supremacy and glorious destiny of the Reich. A recent authoritative study has rightly stressed that the Nazis' 'selective affinity for occultism was dwarfed by the enormity of their regime's hostility to the occult movement more generally'.[82]

Predictions and prophecies had long been exploited by rulers for political propaganda purposes, but they had to be strictly controlled otherwise they could unsettle and sow fear amongst the populace. The Nazi authorities decided that the balancing act was not worth it. In the autumn of 1933 the police in Berlin, Hanover and Cologne ordered newspapers to cease accepting advertisements for astrologers. The following year, the Berlin police banned the sale and production of astrological periodicals and almanacs. Booksellers' stocks were confiscated.[83] The next step was to suppress the wider occult community. Individuals were targeted – people like Eugen Grosche, a Berlin bookseller and founder of the *Fraternitas Saturni*, whose private library

[78] Figure calculated from Herbert Schäfer, *Der Okkulttäter: Hexenbanner-Magischer Heiler-Erdentstrahler* (Hamburg, 1959), pp. x-xi.
[79] Kruse, *Hexen Unter Uns?*, pp. 26, 137.
[80] Treitel, *A Science for the Soul*, p. 201.
[81] See Stephen E. Flowers and Michael Moynihan, *Secret King: Karl Maria Wiligut. Himmler's Lord of the Runes* (Waterbury Center & Smithville, 2001).
[82] Treitel, *A Science for the* Soul, p. 241.
[83] Ellic Howe, *Urania's Children* (London, 1967), pp. 114-5.

was seized by the Gestapo.[84] In July 1937 an official decree outlawed Freemasonry, occult societies, and religious sects like the Christian Scientists, throughout the country. The extent to which these clampdowns affected provincial publishers is not clear, though the occult publishers *Baum Verlag*, and *Regulus Verlag* of Görlitz, which published books on astrology and Nostradamus, evidently continued to operate until June 1941 when the authorities rounded up occultists of all shades, closed down all occult publishing houses and confiscated publications.[85] The trigger for this purge was the propaganda embarrassment of Hess's bizarre flight to Scotland, which Goebbels portrayed as the actions of a man unhinged by his association with astrologers and seers. A line was drawn in the sand, and occultism would no longer be a public issue in Nazi Germany.

During the Third Reich the authorities were concerned not only with forms of mass-market divination but also the esoteric belief systems embraced by the middle classes and urban blue-collar workers. Occult philosophies came to be seen as antagonistic to the shared ideology being forged by the Nazi regime. When, in the autumn of 1937 the SS newspaper *Das Schwarze Korps* printed a series of articles on the danger of *Aberglaube* (superstition), which it typically blamed on Jews and the Catholic Church, the focus was on the evils of spiritualism and astrology.[86] The world of rural folk magic slipped under the radar: this was 'superstition' that had no philosophical or organised framework and therefore posed no threat to Nazi hegemony. Cunning-folk were periodically prosecuted, but no more so than in Weimar or Imperial Germany. The Third Reich was, nevertheless, hardly a propitious time to publish popular grimoires – particularly the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* with its pseudo-Hebraic characters.[87]

Neither did the academic study of 'traditional' magical beliefs seem to attract the same opprobrium as intellectual occultism. Indeed, Himmler's interest in the idea that the witch trials were a Church-inspired crime against the German people led to the formation of the *H-Sonderkommando* unit, a team of around eight researchers employed to find and catalogue early-modern witch prosecutions in German-language

[84] König, *Der O.T.O. Phänomen*; English translation of the relevant chapter from an earlier edition online, http://user.cyberlink.ch/~koenig/fs1.htm; Christine E. King, 'Strategies for Survival: An Examination of the History of Five Christian Sects in Germany 1933-45', *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, 2 (1979) 211-33.
[85] Howe, *Urania's Children*, p. 199, n. 1.
[86] Treitel, *A Science for the Soul*, pp. 238-9.
[87] One experienced German antiquarian occult bookseller, with an impressive collection of editions, claims to have a copy of the *Sixth and Seventh Books* published around 1935 and another from 1939

archives.[88] Regarding contemporary folk beliefs, the Nazis enthusiastically promoted the academic respectability of German *Volkskunde* (folklore), funding research and creating the first professorial chair in the subject in 1933. Nazi support for folklore research came at a price of course. The discipline was partly under the brief of Himmler's SS Office of Ancestral Inheritance, and partly under the supervision and control of Alfred Rosenberg, one of the architects of the Nazis' racial policies and Hitler's supervisor for 'All Intellectual and Worldview Schooling and Education'. Folklore had to have a purpose beyond mere scholarly interest. If folklorists wanted to be sponsored they had to work for the good of the National Socialist message, legitimating Nazi racial theories and promoting the purity and nobility of 'true' Nordic-German traditions, folktales and rural cultures.[89] Those who did not display sufficient enthusiasm for the Nazi 'project' were swiftly unseated from their chairs. One of those who prospered was Adolf Spamer, a Nazi party member and director of the Regional Research Office for Folklore in the Reich Union Folk-Nation and Homeland. He also happened to be the leading expert on German folk grimoires.

In 1907 the German Union of Folklorist Associations agreed to organise the creation of a Collection of German Formulae for Charms and Incantations. This was inspired, in part, by the collection of German manuscript charms, celestial letters and magic manuscripts gathered by Albrecht Dieterich, an eminent expert on ancient Egyptian magic who was also fascinated by German folk magic. It was no doubt also inspired by the publication in 1902 of the pioneering assemblage of Nordic manuscript grimoires and charms by the Norwegian clergyman and politician Anton Christian Bang.[90] Spamer was instrumental in getting the Union's project underway, and in 1914 published an *Appeal to Collect German Formulae* to German, Swiss and Austrian folklore associations. Over the next few decades he personally accumulated a comprehensive collection of published grimoires and manuscripts.[91]

Spamer's ambitious ideas for German folklore research and willingness to cooperate with Rosenberg's bureau meant that by 1936 he had been elevated to professor of folklore at Berlin University, and was

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[88] See Gerhard Schormann, *Hexenprozesse in Deutschland* (Göttingen, 1981); Wolfgang Behringer, *Witchcraft Persecutions in Bavaria*, trans. J.C. Grayson and David Lederer (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 37-9.

[89] See, for example, James R. Dow and Hannjost Lixfeld (eds), *The Nazification of an Academic Discipline: Folklore in the Third Reich* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994); Christa Kamenetsky, 'Folktale and Ideology in the Third Reich', *Journal of American Folklore* 90 (1977) 168-78; James R. Dow, 'German *Volkskunde* and National Socialism', *Journal of American Folklore* 100, 397 (1987) 300-304; Richard F. Szippl, 'Folklore under Political Pressure', *Asian Folklore Studies* 55 (1996) 329-337.

[90] Bang, *Norske Hexeformularer*.

[91] 'Institutions', *Current Anthropology* 4, 4 (1963) 370.

described by one colleague as 'the Pope of *Volkskunde*'. Yet in 1938 he fell out of favour due, in part, to scholarly differences with another influential folklorist more closely associated with Rosenberg's agenda.[92] Ill health further inhibited his work during the early 1940s. His fortunes improved soon after the war, though, when he became the first academic folklorist to be appointed in Russian-controlled East Germany, becoming Professor of *Volkskunde* at the Technical University of Dresden. His passion for folk magic resurfaced publicly and led to the establishment of the Corpus of German Formulae for Charms and Incantations. In 1949 he gave a lecture on magic books and spells to the German Academy of Sciences, and by the time of his death in 1954 the Corpus collection housed an impressive 22,000 items. Some of the fruits of his research on grimoires were collated in a book tracking the bibliographical history of the *Romanusbüchlein* in which he meticulously traced the origins of nineteen of the charm formulae it contained. A posthumous article on magic books also appeared, which recorded the letters received by a Dresden publisher of grimoires between 1925 and 1935, revealing the popular demand for instruction on practical magic.[93]

For some, the cleansing of the curse of Nazism also required the rationalising of German society. The enthusiasm for occultism in the early twentieth century was viewed as a contributor to the *Sonderweg*, or special path that the course of Germany history took in its development into a racist totalitarian state.[94] So, in post-war Germany, middle-class occultism, alternative medicine and folk magic were seen by some as an obstacle to the forging of a new social and moral enlightenment. There was a raft of court cases involving witch belief and magic in post-war Germany. This has been interpreted by historians as a result of increased witchcraft accusations arising from general economic and social instability, and related to the large number of single women returning to rural communities after the War.[95] From a contemporary perspective it was confirmation of the 'superstitious' darkness that had flourished during the Third Reich. For anti-superstition crusaders the two main pillars upholding the edifice of superstition were the influence of *Hexenbanners* (witch doctors) and the dissemination of occult literature prior to and after the Third Reich.

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[92] Hannjost Lixfeld, 'The *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* and the Umbrella Organisations of German *Volkskunde* during the Third Reich', *Asian Folklore Studies* 50 (1991) 101-3.
[93] Adolf Spamer, 'Zauberbuch und Zauberspruch', *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 1 (1955) 109-126.
[94] See, in particular, G.L. Mosse, 'The Mystical Origins of National Socialism', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 22 (1961) 81-96.
[95] See Willem de Blécourt, 'The witch, her victim, the unwitcher and the researcher: The continued existence of traditional witchcraft', in de Blécourt, Hutton and La Fontaine, *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Twentieth Century*, pp. 214-5.

For several years after the war the German publishing industry was understandably in bad shape. Paper and ink were in short supply and the transport network badly damaged. The two major centres of German publishing, Berlin and Leipzig, had suffered from allied bombing. Currency reform also led to further short-term hardship and a shortage of money. In Soviet-controlled Germany publishing houses were either nationalised or forced out of business. One consequence of the blow to the old established publishing industry was the expansion of publishing in West German provincial centres such as Stuttgart and Hamburg. While allied authorities in western Germany banned the writings of prominent Nazis, censorship was not heavy-handed and only in the French sector publishers were required to submit manuscripts for inspection.[96]

The Third Reich and occupation forces aside, democratic Germany had its own strong tradition of censoring *Schund* (trashy) and *Schmutz* (dirty) publications – in other words pulp literature, which was considered deleterious to Germany's youth and therefore the future of the nation.[97] In 1926 the Weimar government had instituted a law concerned with identifying and blacklisting cheap and easily available books and magazines that glamorised violence and sex or offended public decency. However, due in part to excessive bureaucracy the law largely failed in its aims, with the exception perhaps of pornography. The Nazis were, of course, far more successful in controlling popular literature, ensuring the format was used to spread Arian political aspirations. In post-war Germany the old worries over corrupted youth returned. The concern was not only with the lingering influence of Nazi indoctrination, but also the growth of American cultural imperialism. The influence of American pulp magazines and detective and western serials had already been a concern in Weimar Germany, but now the floodgates were fully open. This was not just a German fear. At the same time a similar vociferous campaign against the tide of American pulp also rose in Canada, with talk of the country becoming an open sewer for what some saw as its neighbour's cultural filth.[98]

Now the political, anti-capitalist sentiments of the Weimar Republic were replaced by a resurgent influence of religious organisations in politics and society. In 1953 a new statute was passed against publications that endangered the morals of the German youth. Between 1954 and 1956 a series of private initiatives, usually

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[96] Harry Bergholz, 'Survey of Book and Music Publishing in Post-War Germany', *The Modern Language Journal*, 34, 8 (1950) 616-25.

[97] See, for example, Luke Springman, 'Poisoned Hearts, Diseased Minds, and American Pimps: The Language of Censorship in the *Schund und Schmutz* Debates', *The German Quarterly* 68, 4 (1995) 408-29.

[98] Mary Louise Adams, 'Youth, Corruptibility, and English-Canadian Postwar Campaigns against Indecency, 1948-1955', *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6, 1 (1995) 89-117.

orchestrated by religious organisations, led to the setting up of public collection points where trash literature could be swapped for morally improving juvenile literature. Despite acute awareness of the book-burning predilections of the Nazi authorities, several pyres of offensive publications were publicly burned or buried.[99] Hard-boiled detective novels and pornography were the main preoccupation of the moral crusaders but popular literature that encouraged 'superstition' was also deemed fit for the flames.

The words '*Schund*' and '*Schmutz*' may not have found their way into the 1953 law, but they were at the heart of the criticisms of one of the most vocal campaigners against the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, the respected Austrian forensic doctor Otto Prokop. In an article written in the early 1960s he thought it pertinent to list the range of 'trashy' lifestyle books of what he called the 'cynical' *Schmutzliteratur* publishers who printed editions of the Moses Books.[100] One of those he mentioned was the Brunswick publishing house Planet-Verlag. This was one of the provincial publishers that had been quick to take advantage of the new realities of post-war Germany, exploiting the undoubted thirst for cheap, escapist popular literature. It specialised in guides for women on how to look young, remain desirable, and achieve the perfect bust.[101] More controversially, since the war, it had been re-publishing the pulp science-fiction tales of Paul Alfred Mueller, who also wrote under the *nom de plumes* Freder van Holk and Lok Myler. Mueller's tales of futuristic, Arian scientific enterprise and colonisation of Atlantis were hugely popular in Nazi Germany. It was this uncomfortable association that led Planet Verlag to discontinue the re-editions in 1953, in anticipation of the imminent censorship law.[102] It was not the peddling of rip-roaring Arian fantasies that landed the publisher in court, however, but rather accusations of fostering pernicious magical beliefs. For, in 1950, it had printed nine thousand copies of a hardback version of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*. This was not a version of the Scheible edition with its numerous pseudo-Hebraic sigils and amulets, but was nevertheless controversial due to its advice on making a pact with the Devil. Nine thousand was a sizeable print run for the time and Planet Verlag was obviously confident it could sell them in large numbers. In other words they were aware of the thirst for practical magic in post-war

[99] Springman, 'Poisoned Hearts', p. 421.
[100] Von A. Eigner and O. Prokop, 'Das sechste und siebente Buch Moses: Zur Frage der Kriminogenität von Büchern und besonders laienmedizinischer Schundliteratur', in Prokop (ed.), *Medizinischer Okkultismus* (Jena, 1964), p. 270.
[101] See, for example, Jane Viers**,** ***Wovon eine Frau sonst nicht spricht*** (Brunswick, 1950); Marion Stephani, *Schöne Büste - ja aber wie ?* (Brunswick, 1957).
[102] See Manfred Nagl, "SF, Occult Sciences, and Nazi Myths", *Science-Fiction Studies* 1, 3 (1974): 185-97, esp. n. 25.

Germany. Not long after it also brought out an edition of *Das Buch Jezira* to capitalise on their initial success.

In 1954 the German Society for Protection against Superstition, or DEGESA (*Deutsche Gesellschaft Schutz vor Aberglauben*), was founded. As one member put it, the Society was dedicated to combating 'the commercial exploitation of superstition'.[103] It acted as a network for a diverse bunch of campaigners against the influence of grimoires and their influence. There was Will Emrich, a former president of the German Animal Protection League, who believed the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* had led to the painful deaths of numerous cats, chickens, moles and toads by followers of its magical cures.[104] Herbert Schäfer was more concerned with the social consequences. He was a criminologist for the West German federal police, who examined the files of ninety-five court cases involving witchcraft beliefs between 1925 and 1956, and twenty-nine legal actions against magical healers between 1947 and 1955. He found the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* was mentioned in 20 per cent of all the cases he analysed. Amongst them was that of the *hexenbanner* in southern Germany who, since 1941, had been offering to remove evil from farmer's cattle sheds with the help of his 'Moses books'.[105] The Jesuit priest Philipp Schmidt concentrated on the religious and moral threat posed by grimoires. In 1956 he published a book on the evils of magic past and present in which he exaggeratedly stated that magic books had played their part in nearly all the recent cases of witchcraft and magic heard by the Germany courts. They accounted for the 'almost uniform methods and practices of the "unwitchers"', he asserted, and they were 'calculated to have a pernicious effect on simple minds and on uncritical, credulous persons.'[106] In 1960 another Catholic author Dr Herbert Auhofer published a book on the subject, *Aberglaube und Hexenwhan heute* (*Superstition and the Witch-craze Today*), which was apparently officially praised by the Catholic Church.

All these authors fulsomely applauded one man who had pioneered the campaign, a man whom Aufhofer said had 'preached to deaf ears' for four decades and had been unfairly portrayed as a monomaniac for his earnest endeavour.[107] That man was the retired Hamburg schoolteacher Johann Kruse (1889-1983). As a farmer's son brought up in Brickeln, Schleswig-Holstein, he had heard people being accused of witchcraft and seen the suffering and torment it had caused. Indeed, his own mother was

[103] Schmidt, *Superstition and Magic*, p. 22.
[104] *The Dallas Morning News* 16 June 1963; George Hendricks, 'German Witch Mania', *Western Folklor*e 23, 2 (1964) 121; Reuters despatch from Bonn in the *Los Angeles Times*, 31 July 1955; Taras Lukach, 'Witchcraft in Germany', *Western Folklore* 15, 1 (1956) 65-6.
[105] Schäfer, *Der Okkultäter*, pp. 106, 96.
[106] Schmidt, *Superstition and Magic*, p. 221.
[107] Auhofer, *Aberglaube*, p. 9.

also slandered leading to much family anxiety. While most critical attention was focussed on the popularity of spiritualism, theosophy and other middle-class esoteric interests, Kruse began to wage a lonely campaign against the old, deeply engrained magical traditions rooted in rural German society.[108] In 1923 he published a book on the subject entitled *Hexenwahn in der Gegenwart* (*Witch-craze in the Present*). He was infuriated by the complacency of folklorists, educationalists and the clergy for treating witchcraft beliefs as mere folklore and not a serious social menace. It was in the 1930s that he seriously began to mount a national campaign. Although this fitted quite well with Nazi ideas about the pernicious influence of ecclesiastical 'superstition', Kruse was no ardent participant in the Third Reich, and although not actively opposed to the regime he was nevertheless sufficiently lacking in enthusiasm for it to cause him some personal trouble. Kruse's ire was chiefly directed at the thousands of *hexenbanner* who made large amounts of money by defrauding those who thought they were bewitched, and who caused untold suffering to those accused of witchcraft. In 1950 he founded his own Archive for the Investigation of Contemporary Witchcraft Superstition. The following year he published a book based on his extensive collection of cases entitled *Hexen unter uns?* (*Witches among us?*), in which he toned down the anti-clericalism of his earlier work. It was his legal challenge to grimoires a few years later, though, that would make him a figure of international interest.

Planet Verlag placed numerous adverts in popular magazines and newspapers for what was the first widely available German edition of the grimoire for twenty years. The impact of this advertising campaign was evident at the trial, in 1951, of a *hexenbanner* named Wilhelm Lühr of Ebersdorf. In defending his trade, which concerned the selling of celestial letters, Lühr told the judge that the *Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses* was 'openly allowed in the book-trade, and daily extolled in many newspapers and illustrated magazines.'[109] In 1952 the influence of these advertisements came to Kruse's attention and a new front of his campaign against 'superstition' opened up. The following year he denounced the Planet Verlag edition, alleging that the title page's claim to be a 'Philadelphia' imprint was fraudulent, and, more importantly, that its magical contents was a public menace that could potentially encourage murder.[110] In 1956 he took the bold step of suing the publisher.

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[108] For discussion on Kruse's views see Baumhauer, *Johann Kruse*; Dagmar Unverhau, '"Hexen unter uns?" – Die Vorstellungen eines modernen Kämpfers gegen Hexenwahn aus der Sicht der historischen Hexenforschung', in Dieter Harmening (ed.), *Hexen Heute: Magische Traditionen und neue Zutaten* (Würzburg, 1991), pp. 55-79.
[109] Schmidt, *Superstition and Magic*, p. 219.
[110] Baumhauer, *Johann Kruse*, p. 85.

Kruse's star expert witness at the trial was Otto Prokop. In his mid-thirties, the high-flying doctor had become a lecturer at the Forensic Medicine Institute at Bonn University in 1953, and in early 1957 he was appointed the manager of the Institute of Judicial Medicine at Humboldt University in East Berlin. Prokop seems to have first come into contact with Kruse in 1954 via a mutual acquaintance keen to help build on the network of anti-superstition activists fostered by DEGESA.[111] As well as his innovative work in forensic science, Prokop had already proved himself an ardent campaigner against magical and spiritual medicine, lecturing on the subject at university and later in several publications. He denounced alternative medicines such as homeopathy and acupuncture as superstitious, and during his long career he was frequently involved in court cases against spiritualist healers and other practitioners of alternative medicine.[112] He, not surprisingly, shared Kruse's disgust for the magical practices of German folk medicine, and saw the suppression of the *Sixth and Seventh Books* as a positive step towards eradicating 'unscientific', 'irrational' medicine.

Planet-Verlag produced its own star academic to counter the Prokop effect – the well-known professor of folklore at Göttingen University, Will-Erich Peuckert (1895-1969). At the time of the trial Peuckert's reputation was at its peak. Only a year before a *Festschrift* had been published to honour his sixtieth birthday, with congratulatory signatures from leading folklorists from across Europe and America. He had not always been in such favour however.

Like Kruse, Peuckert began his career as a provincial schoolteacher. Brought up in the mountainous region of Silesia on the German-Czech border, his industrious research on the popular traditions and beliefs of the region led him to a career in academia and a post at the University of Breslau. During the 1920s and 1930s he wrote a series of books on early-modern occult philosophy and mysticism, such as *Böhme* (1924) and *Die Rosenkreutzer* (1928). His most ambitious book was *Pansophie* (1936), which concerned the development of natural and demonic intellectual magic during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Peuckert was labelled as 'politically unreliable' by the Nazi authorities and was stripped of his post. He retired to the Silesian mountains from where he continued to research and publish. Untainted by Nazi associations he was the first professor to be assigned an academic folklore position in post-war West Germany, and was a leading figure in the soul-searching debate that took place amongst folklorists regarding

[111] Baumhauer, *Johann Kruse*, p. 118.
[112] *Tagesspiegel*, 30 September 2001.

their discipline's role during the Third Reich, and how it should develop in light of its recent history.[113]

Peuckert had a deep understanding of the historical and cultural significance of grimoires. In 1954 he had published an article on the *Egyptischen Geheimnisse* and shortly after the Planet Verlag trial the fruits of his research on the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* also appeared.[114] His reputation was such that, like Kruse, the magic-believing public saw him not only as a scholar of the subject but also a skilful worker of counter-witchcraft.[115] He received letters from distraught people asking him to unbewitch them and provide love potions. One farmer from a remote village in the wild Lüneburger Heath, north of Braunschweig, wrote to him that his cows were bewitched and that reading the Bible in the cowshed at midnight had failed to remove the spell upon them. Instead of giving the man a lecturer on the fallacy of believing in witchcraft, as Kruse might have done, Peuckert visited the man and seeing that the stalls were filthy, he said, "Witches hate light and air and cleanliness; clean the place out and they will go.'[116]

His support for Planet-Verlag was based, in part, on the historical perspective that the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* provided a fascinating insight into the origin and reformulation of magical traditions over the centuries. From a folklorist's point of view, furthermore, it had been an important influence on rural German folk magic for over a century - part of a valuable tradition that should be understood and preserved not condemned and suppressed. The prosecution accused him of romanticising ignorance and credulity.[117] Peuckert was also, perhaps, motivated by professional pique. How dare an amateur like Kruse and a scientist such as Prokop assume expertise on a subject that was the preserve of historians and folklorists?

Peuckert's enthusiasm for finding value in old magical remedies was most graphically demonstrated by his experiments with hallucinogenic plants, which garnered international attention in the press a few years later. In 1960 the 65-year-old academic published a brief account of how he and a lawyer friend had concocted numerous narcotic potions based on early modern magical remedies and spells. He occasionally tried some of these out on himself, most notably a witches' ointment described in della Porta's *Magia Naturalis*. He and his friend rubbed some of the ointment into their skin and soon entered an

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[113] James R. Dow and Hannjost Lixfeld, 'National Socialistic Folklore and Overcoming the Past in the Federal Republic of Germany', *Asian Folklore Studies* 50 (1991) 117-153.
[114]Will-Erich Peuckert, 'Die Egyptischen Geheimnisse', *ARV* 10 (1954) 40-96; Peuckert, 'Das 6. and 7. Buch Mosis', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 76 (1957) 163-87.
[115] For a discussion of this phenomena see de Blécourt, 'The Witch, her Victim', p. 156.
[116] *Newsweek*, 4 April 1960.
[117] Schöck, *Hexenglaube*, pp. 21-2; Baumhauer, *Johann Kruse*, pp. 152-6, 164-7.

hallucinatory alternative world. For more than a day and a night they dreamed of wild aerial rides and participated in orgies with grotesque creatures. For Peuckert it was proof that some of those who said they had been to Sabbats were influenced by their drug-induced alternative realities.[118] As a newspaper report explained, 'Peuckert's research has convinced him that there is a scientific basis for many things associated with witchcraft.'[119] But let us return to the rather more sober environment of the Braunschweig magistrates' court, where, in November 1956 the trial came to a head.

Peuckert's testimony failed to convince the lower court, which agreed with Prokop's contention that the Moses book was harmful and 'a danger to the general public'.[120] The owners of Planet Verlag were fined 9000 deutschmarks and required to withdraw the remaining stock and the printing plates. They appealed, and in September the following year the two sides were once again back in court and in even bitterer mood. Kruse and Prokops garnered the support of Philip Schmidt and other members of DEGESA. Peuckert was in acerbic form denouncing Kruse's opinions, his book, and his 'useless' archive. The appeals court rescinded the decision, though legal proceedings rumbled on for another three years with the higher court launching an investigation as to whether the publisher's advertisements regarding the origin and contents of the Moses Books had deceived those lured into buying it. Several purchasers were persuaded to give testimony, such as the farmer and mechanic who recounted how he had seen a magazine advertisement for the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*, in which it was stated that it contained valuable old remedies for curing people and animals. He ordered a copy, but on reading it soon realised he could have saved himself some money, as it was merely a 'catchpenny publication'. He showed it to a local veterinarian who agreed it was worthless, and so his wife burned it.[121]

Finally, in July 1960, the court ruled that the publishers should pay a fine totalling several hundred deutschmarks rather than thousands, but otherwise all other charges arising from the original prosecution were to be dropped. Kruse had lost the battle, but the war against the Moses Book was not over. The trial acted as a spur to others, like Schmidt, Schäfer and Auhofer, to join Kruse's crusade. Another consequence of the case was the international spotlight it cast on Germany's 'problem'. Even though, as we have seen, the USA was by now the leading global purveyor of cheap magic literature, Germany was portrayed in some

[118] Will-Erich Peuckert, 'Hexensalben', *Medizinischer Monatsspiegel* 8 (1960) 169-174.
[119] *The Times Recorder*, 13 April 1960.
[120] Baumhauer, *Johann Kruse*, p. 87. For a detailed account of the ensuing legal battle see Baumhauer, *Johann Kruse*, pp. 83-97.
[121] Baumhauer, *Johann Kruse*, p. 96.

quarters as a centre of the market in 'superstition'. In 1957, for instance, a report in the American press regarding the prosecution of a female *hexenbanner* from Offenburg, stated that, 'German book publishers are making fortunes by printing short pamphlets and long volumes with instructions for those wishing to practise or benefit by sorcery.'[122]

So far we have seen how concerns over the social influence of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* led to the rather unlikely coalition of those inspired by anti-clericalism, professional medical hegemony and Catholic authority. Protestant participation in the crusade was personified by the industrious Lutheran minister Kurt Koch (1913-1987). While Kruse was battling against the influence of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Magic* in northern Germany, Koch had been orchestrating a similar campaign against the use of such 'devilish merchandise' in the southern German province of Baden and neighbouring Switzerland. He fought, he said, against the 'flood of magical conjuration which washes the Alps'.[123]

Koch, whose theological career began after receiving a revelation from God at the age of seventeen, trained for the ministry at the University of Tübingen, and specialised in the practice of evangelical Christian psychiatry.[124] From the commencement of his pastoral activities in the 1930s he began to record the instances of magical practices he and fellow ministers encountered in parts of southern Germany, Switzerland and Austria. Over three decades he claimed to have compiled a file containing thousands of cases of occult disturbance, many of them the result of experiences with magical healing and grimoires. During the 1960s he wrote a series of books in German on the perceived occult crisis, and the successful of the English translations, marketed for a popular audience, soon gave him international renown. By the 1970s he was lecturing all over the world on the evils of the occult in the modern world. He saw himself as leading a Protestant counselling crusade, believing psychotherapists were failing both religiously and practically to deal with the mental traumas being caused.

Koch shared the same goal as Kruse. He had participated in the Planet-Verlag trial, and considered *Hexen unter uns?* one of the most informative works on contemporary 'superstition'. However, considering Kruse's anti-clerical stance, it is not surprising that the two campaigners did not share the same interpretation of folk magic. Koch accused Kruse of 'failing to recognise its true background'.[125] For Koch folk magic was not merely pernicious or foolish superstition. Whether white or black, it

[122] See, for example, *Winnipeg Free Press*, 17 August 1957.
[123] Koch, *Christian Counselling*, p. 127.
[124] See Bill Ellis, 'Kurt E. Koch and the "Civitas Diaboli": German Folk Healing as Satanic Ritual Abuse of Children', *Western Folklore* 54, 2 (1995) 77-94.
[125] Kurt Koch, *The Devil's Alphabet* (Grand Rapids, 1969), p. 12.

had ‘the devil’s very own stamp on it’.[126] He recognised that its continued popularity was because it seemed, in many cases, to have successfully cured the sick and the victims of witchcraft and spirits, but Satan’s hooks left lasting moral and psychological damage. For the evangelical Koch all this magical activity had apocalyptic significance: ‘an increasing flood of occult movements tries to overrule the Church of Christ. We live in the last phase of the end of the age … Empowered by this fact we can dare to face all the onslaughts of the defeated foe.’[127]

Koch detected three groups of grimoire owners. There were those who were aware of the ungodliness of keeping such books and kept them a close secret, passing their copies on to their eldest sons only on their deathbeds. Those in the second group confessed their awful secret to their families and requested them to burn their magic books. During his ministrations many copies had been handed over to Koch to be destroyed in this way. The most disquieting group consisted of those, including churchmen, who believed that some grimoires were Godly religious texts, the devilish charms they contained being camouflaged by the use of Christian words, symbols and customs. During a large conference of pastors, for instance, Koch strongly protested when a local conjurer was characterised as a decent, godly man. How could he be if he practised charming?[128]

In 1961 Koch warned that such books ‘circulate among people like poisonous gases, poisoning their very minds and souls.’[129] The *Sixth and Seventh Books*, in particular, had ‘caused untold harm in the world and people who read it invariably suffer in the process.’[130] Those who used it were in thrall to the Devil. In evidence he cited the following case:

> At a youth conference a 17-year-old lad came to an evangelical meeting with a New Testament in his left pocket and, bound in similar format, the 6th and 7th book of Moses in his right. My assistant at this meeting took the 6th and 7th Book of Moses from him. We looked through the magic book and found that the lad had bound himself to the devil by putting his signature underneath a picture of Lucifer. We then burned the book.[131]

The mere possession of the book was enough to cause misfortune and severe psychological damage. An ethno-psychiatric study conducted in 1950s Ghana had suggested that expressions of the intention to practice

[126] Koch, *Devil’s Alphabet*, p. 20.
[127] Koch, *Devil’s Alphabet*, preface to fourth edition.
[128] Kurt E. Koch, *Christian Counselling and Occultism* (Berghausen, 1972), pp. 161-2, 193.
[129] Koch, *Between Christ and Satan*, p. 131.
[130] Koch, *Between Christ and Satan*, p. 89.
[131] Koch, *Christian Counselling*, p. 155.

magic using the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses* 'frequently herald the onset of schizophrenia'.[132] For Koch the Moses book was the cause not the symptom of mental illness. 'It is a remarkable observation of pastoral experience,' he observed, 'that in all homes and families in which the 6th and 7th Book of Moses is kept, or even used, psychological disturbances of various kinds appear.' 'I have not met one possessor of the 6th and 7th Book of Moses who had no psychological complications', he concluded. One man who used it to charm people and animals died in terrible pain 'amid the spread of a penetrating odour', even though he had burned his copy. When the man's sister, who was sceptical about magic, used some of the formulae in mockery, 'she sensed a change in her emotional equilibrium, became insane, suffered manic attacks' and ended up in a mental institution.[133] It was even the cause of many cases of hereditary psychological problems. Indeed this is how he explained his own childhood experience of terrible nocturnal visions of diabolic beasts. Kurt's father revealed to him that his great-grandmother had used the *Sixth and Seventh Book of Moses*: 'At one stroke I understood the various coincidences in the experiences of my father and his siblings, and also in my own childhood. My grandmother, about whom there had been many rumours, was thus the demon-oppressed daughter of a spell-caster'.[134]

How successful was the anti-grimoire campaign in Germany? Could Koch break the devilish cycle he so graphically demonstrated? Well, perhaps it had a limited localised influence. An ethnological study of witchcraft in the deep rural region of central Germany known as Franconian Switzerland noted in the early 1970s that, 'While almost all of the older peasants know of the book … few have seen it. I have met only one person who admitted to having seen – indeed used – the book.' It was suggested that this was due to the success of the Church in restricting its availability.[135] As we have seen elsewhere, however, the perceived scarcity of grimoires does not tally with the reality of their easy availability. Koch and his ilk also had to battle the tidal wave of western occult interest that surged in the 1970s. Ultimately Koch would be no more successful than King Cnut. During the 1970s and 1980s German publishers continued to pump out editions of the *Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses*.[136] Planet Verlag reprinted its 1953 edition of *Das Zehnte, Elfte und Zwölfte Buch Moses* in the 1970s along with *Das sechste bis zwölfte Buch Moses*. Pulp won with a knock out.

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[132] Field, *Search for Security*, p. 350.
[133] Koch, *Christian Counselling*, pp. 161, 162, 133.
[134] Kurt Koch, *Gottes Treue: Aus Meinem Liebe, Teil 1* (Lavel, 1980) pp. 20-2; passage translated in Ellis, 'Kurt E. Koch and the "Civitas Diaboli"', 82.
[135] Sebald, *Heritage of a Heresy*, p. 91.
[136] Kramer Verlag (1979 and 1984); Schikowski Verlag (1976 and 1980).