ECCLESIA MYSTERIA – A REVIEW

July 1, 2015

DEAR MARTINET PRESS,

Thanks for forwarding the review copy of ECCLESIA MYSTERIA. A very interesting book, though I was confused to get the text, as I don’t normally do reviews. When you see Martinet Press publishing a book, you expect to see implicit themes that are fairly dark. This particular book doesn’t seem dark on the first reading. So I read it again, and again once more. Well, you have been clever. So voila: here’s your review.

First, a correction to myself: “Tau Constantine” has been clever. On the first read (and initially I was skimming) it seemed like an actual Gnostic movement. The vocabulary seems typically Gnostic, there’s the expected Hellenistic terminology like Barbello, Christos, Abraxas, the Demiurge and the archons.

Now one almost expects in modern Gnostic books to see the “anticosmic” current which has become oddly popular in the so-called Satanic crowd, but admittedly that wouldn’t have seemed to be the angle your press is taking. And Ecclesia Mysteria is not anticosmic at all, which was a relief. Of course, it is dualistic, which any gnostic book has to be. Usually the original gnostic tradition vilified this world while promoting the spirit realms or aeons, but Ecclesia doesn’t do that, it simply presents the two worlds as valid emanations of reality. In fact, to be specific, it seemed fairly much along the lines of “causal” and “acausal” realms of existence. Hmmm.

The book insists that any genuine spiritual current is “self-initiating”. Not many schools or orders have that belief, do they? I’ll give you credit, Ecclesia argues very convincingly that real gnosis only comes from interacting with the higher spiritual powers. But the original Gnostic current was heavily into initiation rites performed by the clerical ranks, and you’ve entirely dispensed with any pretense of apostolic succession. Hmmm, again.

The occult system is decent – you’ve presented a pantheon of [dark] alien gods that dwell in the [acausal] spiritual dimension, and they have some interests in entering or intruding into earth. The rites and practices were genuinely hermetic in the classical tradition. I like the use of the Typhonian litanies in the Eucharistic ceremony, that’s nicely incorporated. You have a series of planetary rituals (Assumptions), following the seven spheres. If I understand what you’re describing a kind of septenary system, though that term is not used. The ultimate rite – the crossing of the abyss – is present, though you call it “The Rite of
Descent”. Here’s a quote from that rite: “For this reason, rather than ascending upwards or outwards, the Gnostic descends inwards, discovering the truth of the abhorrent countenance in the deepest parts of the pneumatic self.” Pardon me? The abhorrent countenance? That’s not even ONA language, that’s something we’d see in Tempel ov Blood’s Liber 333. You have another edgy passage in the Gnostic Mass, let me quote it for you:

You carry off every living thing without growing weary of torturing it, rather having with pleasure delighted in pain from the time when the world came into being. You also come and bring pain, who are sometimes reasonable, sometimes irrational, because of whom men dare beyond what is fitting and take refuge in your light which is darkness.

The old saying goes: “when an author means something, he'll say it again.” Well, we see the themes of “pain” and “torture” repeated there, which seems suspiciously Noctulian. Then you included “austerities” like extreme fasting and ritual self-mortification. I enjoyed seeing blood rites dressed up as “Oblation” and self-flagellation tricked out as “Rectification”. That felt very Catholic, in a perverse sense, and calls to mind your current releases like Gulag.

The lectionary at the end is a nice touch. A decent edition of the Greek and Coptic texts, nicely adapted.

An obligatory warning: Hire an actual artist. The planetary sigils make sense, but they’re a little too crude. But then, some would say the same of Naos, so maybe there’s a method to your madness.

All in all, it’s a nice initiative. Good to see the Sinister Tradition expanding into new and diverse forms, even if those forms are obfuscated behind new language.

I wish Martinet Press best of success in the coming months. Looking forward to seeing more work from your particular clandestine press.

Sincerely,

Chrétien Sauvage