

## Humanist Transhumanist Illustrated Catalogue

Pythia, oracle/seeress at Delphi, was given her powers to prophesy by the god Apollo who himself had come to preside over the powers of prophesy when he killed the serpent Python. According to Greek myth the Pythia's visions came to her via the **Χασμός** (Khasmos: Chasm, meaning "where-all-is-lost"). In this painting the Pythia



Pythia between **Χαός** and **Χασμός**, oil on canvas, 2785 μΟ (2009). 660x910 mm. Original drawing finished 5/6/2784 μΟ (2008).

glances into the **Χασμός** and stares at the Python. Above her lies the **Χαός** (Khaos: "chaos", meaning "gap"). Hesiod at c. 700 BC in his poem Theogony wrote that the god Zeus, subjected the cosmos which had sprung from the **Χαός** (gap) to laws which govern it, imposing order and righteousness upon it (hence the correlation of the word "chaos" with disorder).

The Jewish pseudo-historian Josephus wrote in the first century AD. In his Jewish Antiquities he summarised the Old Testament and claimed it to be history. In Contra Apion he ridiculed the Greeks, writing that their laws came late to them, whereas the Jews created by YHWH in his own image, were from the outset guided by divine law. Josephus wrote that "...some [Greeks] attributed their laws to Zeus, others traced them to Apollo and his oracle at Delphi..." (Contra Apion, 2.162) ; but for the Jews "...[YHWH] appointed the Law to be the most excellent and necessary form of instruction, ordaining, not that it should be heard once for all or twice on several occasions, but that every man should desert their other occupations to assemble and listen to the Law..." (Contra Apion 2.175)

These Jewish laws of which Josephus was so proud constitute the basis of Christian instruction. Some of the more memorable of these laws:

"Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth YHWH has chosen you to be his treasured possession." Deuteronomy 14.2

"...if you turn away [from god's directives] and ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations that remain among you and if you intermarry with them and associate with them, then you may be sure that YHWH your God will no longer drive out these nations before you." Joshua 23.12-13

"...if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you on this day that you will certainly be destroyed." Deuteronomy 30.17-18

"You must destroy all the peoples YHWH your God gives over to you. Do not look on them with pity and do not serve their gods..." Deuteronomy 7.16

"Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains and on the hills and under every spreading tree where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. Break down their alters, smash their sacred stones..." Deuteronomy 12.2-3

Racial purity, hatred, and intolerance were demanded by YHWH who Christians claim was later born onto earth in the form of a man, the so-called "used" one (**Χριστός**, Khristos: Christ, means "the used"). These instructions were inculcated in weekly sermons and became the force which guided those of the Judaist faiths. It was these edicts which nearly 2000 years after Josephus' time, were put into practice by Adolph Hitler who wrote in his Mein Kampf:

"...there is only one holiest human right... the holiest obligation... to see to it that the blood is preserved pure... by raising marriage from the level of a continuous defilement of the race, and give it the consecration of an institution which is called upon to produce images of the Lord and not monstrosities..." pp. 365-366 Mein Kampf

"Christianity ... was absolutely forced to undertake the destruction of heathen altars. Only from this fanatical intolerance could its apodictic faith take form....The objection may very well be raised that such phenomena in world history arise from the most part from specifically Jewish modes of thought, in fact , that this type of intolerance and fanaticism positively embodies the Jewish nature... we may deeply regret this fact and establish with justifiable loathing that its appearance in

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the history of mankind is something that was previously alien to history..." Mein Kampf pp. 412-413

Though Jewish in origin, it is this Biblical intolerance, part of the shared inheritance of Judaism and Christianity that Hitler pursued. (Those who make claims to the contrary have not read his Mein Kampf).

The snake, Python, too has, after several thousand years of Judaized thought, been distorted into an absurdity. For the Jews the serpent was a manifestation of evil. In the Old Testament it is in possession of knowledge which, were humanity to gain it, would make humans like god. This the Jews considered evil. The Greeks too associated the snake with knowledge, but for them knowledge (*σοφία*: *sofia*, *sophia*) was considered divine.

The snake is also a symbol of fertility. Freud assumed that the association of the snake with fertility was because it was considered to be a symbol of a phallus. This says more of Freud than of the snake.

The snake for the Greeks was associated with both the dead and with fertility. The significance of a snake being associated with the dead has to be understood in the context of its believed powers of regeneration from the state of being dead; the snake hibernating in the earth during winter, in a dead-like state, can "regenerate" itself and is "re-born" alive to come out from inside earth every spring. Snakes then, are believed to have the power to re-animate the dead inside earth. The snake is also seen as a "counter-vagina". A woman gives birth to an entire, intact, living being head-first. A snake swallows the dead, intact, head-first. And, every so often, by sliding out of its own skin, it "re-births" itself head first. As a "counter-vagina", the snake "births" the dead into Hades.

My Pythia is depicted in a state intended to represent decomposition. She is, after-all, associated with the

insights derived of the underworld. When the Pythia first appears in the *Homerica*, the cycle of poems which in antiquity were attributed to Homer (but which are now attributed to various authors other than Homer and ascribed largely to the 7th century BC), the Ode to the Pythian Apollo, states that after the god Apollo kills the Python:

"Apollo boasted over her:

'Now rot here upon the soil that feeds man...  
here shall the Earth and shining Hyperion make you rot..'  
And the holy strength of Helios made her rot away there;  
wherefore the

place is now Pytho, and men call the lord  
Apollo by another name, Pythian; because on that  
spot the power of Helios made the monster rot away."  
lines 362-375, (Evelyn-White translation)

I have rendered my Pythia with an intact face (which is contrary to how I would normally have depicted her). This intended to show her as a force of benevolence. She is not a malevolent being. My usual aversion to the depiction of faces is because a face can render a painting into a portrait of the sitter/model which is not the subject of the image.

Josephus' *Contra Apion* is available in translation in the LOEB, No. 186.

Hesiod's *Theogony*; best translation into English is by Athanasakis.

The translation of Hitler's *Mein Kampf* I have used is the Manheim translation.

A more detailed on-line essay which covers most of these points, but which is written in relation to other images, can be found at [www.vakras.com/sphinx\\_and\\_pythia.html](http://www.vakras.com/sphinx_and_pythia.html)

### photomontage: digital analogues of art



monument 5, 2003

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The earliest appearance of swastika patterns was in the Vinca culture of the balkans in the 6th millennium BC. It was at Lerna, greece, that the swastika came to acquire some kind of religious/mystical power judging by the number of clay impressions of swastikas found there. Lerna was sacked in the 24th/23rd century BC. It was in the following century that the symbol first appeared in india where it came to be known as "swastika". The supposition that the symbol was of indian ("Aryan") derivation, which is a claim still made on the Wikipedia, made it attractive to the Nazis who adopted it.

The greek Medousa who was usually depicted with arms bent at the elbow and legs bent at the knee in a "running pose" is the swastika as an anthropotherion. The symbol is associated with the polar axis and the terminus of sun-rise and sun-set at the winter and summer solstices. The symbol was known as a gammadion to the greeks. The symbols of the actual ideology that demanded the racial exterminations undertaken by the Nazis should have been the crucifix and star of David, as the



medousa gammadion, 2785  $\mu$ O (2009 AD)

demand for racial purity and religious intolerance is Biblical. My Medousa-gammadion hovers between the (χαός) gap and (χασμός) chasm.



experimental-organolithomechanism, 2784  $\mu$ O (2008 AD)