

Bovril: The Occultic Connections

In the unit where I work there is a young lady currently employed by a management consultancy firm that I have long suspected is a cover for MI6 or some sort of industrial espionage operation - what with the odd hours they keep and with her boss having literally a dozen acronyms after her name. The other day I found out the young lady in question has rather eccentric tastes. Apparently, her favourite snack consists of buttered toast with peanut butter and... Bovril. Yes, Bovril.

Subsequently reading about the controversial yeast extract, I found some interesting occultic connections.

Bovril was originally a beef extract, and the name was derived from merging the Latin word for cow, *bos*, with Vril. The latter term will be familiar to some of you from the Dutch NSBM band by that name, which in 2004 released a cassette on Blutreinheit Productions, titled 'Once and Again Thule'. From the title and the cover of this release, featuring a photograph of Wewelsburg Castle, it is obvious that they borrowed their name from the quasi-mythical Vril Society, reputedly an inner circle within the Thule Society in Berlin. (The Thule Society eventually founded a political wing, the D.A.P., later known as the N.S.D.A.P., whose Schutzstaffel, under the leadership of Heinrich Himmler, and at the suggestion of Karl Maria Wiligut, bought Wewelsburg Castle in 1934 to set up a Nazi leadership school, the Führerkorps. A Renaissance building located in North Rhine-Westphalia in Germany, the castle's marble hall - depicted on the cover of TENEBROUS debut album and in the booklet of NOKTURNE's "Kruelty Kampaing" - was used by the SS for their occult meetings. That much of the SS ceremonial was occultic in origin is not surprising, for the SS was meant to function as a religious order, and Himmler liked to compare the SS to the Knights of the Round Table.) The Vril Society, if it ever existed, obtained its name from the novel *The Power of the Coming Race* by the Englishman Edward Bulwer-Lytton, published in 1870. In the novel 'vril' referred to a form of energy possessed by a powerful subterranean race. Because the book was popular during the XIXth Century, the word 'vril' came to be associated with life-giving elixirs. Hence, the Vril Society and eventually Bovril.

The Thule society was founded by the ariosophist Rudolf von Sebottendorf, who had been influenced by Freemasonry and Helena Blavatsky's theosophical writings. Thule was originally a region located in the far North by Graeco-Roman geographers; Ultima Thule was the northernmost part of that region, and is generally understood to refer to Scandinavia. In Nazi Mysticism, however, Thule is supposed to be the capital of ancient Hyperborea, which, according to Julius Evola, was the home of a race of Nordic Supermen that lived in the North Pole, and who played a role in the founding of Atlantis. Originally Hyperborea meant 'beyond the north winds', and there is an American NSBM / Noise project by that name, which in also 2004 released a CDr limited to 4 copies, adorned with a photograph of the Esoteric Hitlerist Miguel Serrano and of Savitri Devi's shrine. The CDr, containing an album titled *Aryan Cult of A-Mor*, opened with a mammoth track reminiscent of the magnificent Polish Dark Ambient project WIERZBA.

Many of the references made above will be familiar to fans of BAL-SAGOTH (cf. *Atlantis Ascendant* or *Starfire Burning on the Ice-Veiled Throne of Ultima Thule*). As is well known from interviews with the band, one of Byron's principal sources of inspiration was Robert E. Howard's story, *The Gods of Bal-Sagoth*, which was first published in 1931 in the pulp science fiction magazine, *Weird Tales*. Howard is considered the father of sword-and-sorcery-type fantasy, and is the creator of one of the genre's most famous characters, Conan the Barbarian. The influence of theosophical cosmogony is evident in Howard's works.

I of course attempted to enlighten the young lady in question as to the amazing chain of links to myth and history stemming from what she spreads on her toast, hoping that she would develop an interest in Black Metal music. After all, she does seem

to appreciate some of the bands covered in this magazine, and I would not be doing my job properly were I not trying constantly to evangelise among peripheral types, bringing to stifled dark hearts the good news of Black Metal. What she made of my email I have no idea, for after a long silence and weeks of the oddest hours and what looked like either fieldwork or debriefing sessions at Vauxhall Cross, her response was to send me encrypted messages to see if I could crack them. Her first one, responding to my question of where she had been, read 'R zn mlg zg oryvigb gl hzb' ('I am not at liberty to say').

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