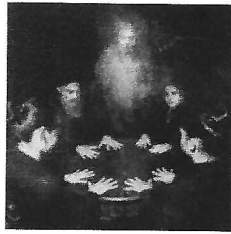


A Few Definitions

Encyclopedia of Anthropology: Witchcraft, sorcery, and magic relate to human encounters with and attempts to control the supernatural... They appear ... when humans are concerned with misfortune and harm, accusation and blame, risk and responsibility.

Necromancy: the supposed practice of communicating with the dead, especially in order to predict the future. From Greek *nekros*, a dead body, and *manteia*, divination.

Medium (noun): a person through whom the spirits of the dead are alleged to be able to contact the living.



1



2

Saul and the Witch of Endor

1 Samuel 28



Henry Fuseli, English Romantic period (1777)

אִשָּׁת בְּעֹלֶת-אוֹב
"A woman who has an Ov"

KJV: a woman that hath a familiar spirit
JPS (1917): a woman that divineth by a ghost
JPS (1985): a woman who consults ghosts
Koren Jerusalem Bible: a medium
Metsudah: a woman who is a medium of an Ov
Robert Alter (1999): ghostwife
New Koren Tanakh (2021): a necromancer

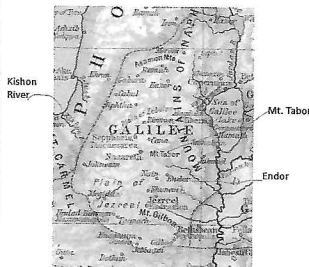
Septuagint (3rd c. BCE): "gynaike engastrimythos"
a woman who speaks from her belly
(Latin, ventriloquist).

Hebrew word for "witch"—*khosha'* כֹּשֶׁשָׁה
Exodus 22:17
Talmud Pesachim 110a נִשְׁפָּטוֹת (witches)

Hebrew word for ghost—*ruah* רוּחַ ???

3

Ein Dor עֵין דּוֹר
Etymology and exact location are disputed.
Lower Galilee



Kibbutz Ein Dor,
the first Jewish settlement
founded in Israel after
the declaration of
independence in 1948



4

What does the Torah say about sorcery?

Exodus 22:18 – You shall not allow a witch to live.
מְכַשֶּׁפֶת לֹא תִחְיֶה:

Leviticus 19:26 – You shall not eat [anything] with the blood or use enchantment, or interpret signs.
לֹא תִאָכֵל דָּם וְלֹא תַחְשֹׁא וְלֹא תִפְשֹׁעַ:

Leviticus 20:27 – A man or woman that is a medium or a wizard shall surely be put to death.
"Ov o yidoni", אוֹב אוֹ יִדְּעֹנִי, אֹב

Deuteronomy 18:10-11 – There shall not be found among you any ... that use divination, or an interpreter of signs, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or one who inquires of the dead.

הַסֵּם הַסֵּמִים מִעֵלָּו וּמִנְחָשׁ
וְדָרַשׁ אֶל-הַמֵּתִים:

וְחָבֵר חֲבֵר וְשָׁעַל אוֹב וְיִדְּעֹנִי

Urim ve Tumim: Permissible Divination

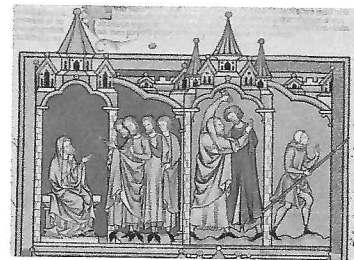


Exodus 28:30 and Numbers 27:21
Probably refers to casting lots.

5

Saul, the First King

1 Samuel 9:2 Saul was as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else.



(L) Elders complain to Samuel (R) Samuel anoints Saul.
The Morgan Picture Bible (Crusader Bible) (1250)

6

A Turning Point

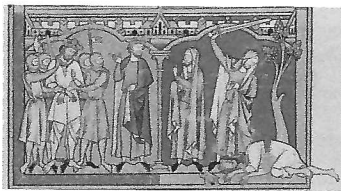
Haftarah for Shabbat Zakhor, immediately preceding Purim
Saul has disobeyed Samuel's command to kill Agag, King of Amalek

1 Samuel 15:23-35

Samuel said, "Since you have cast off the word of the LORD, He has cast you aside as king."... And Saul said to Samuel, "I have offended, for I have transgressed the utterance of the LORD... Now then, forgive my offense and turn back with me." And Samuel said to Saul, "I will not turn back with you, for you have cast aside the word of the LORD and He has cast you aside from being king over Israel." And Samuel turned round to go, and Saul grasped the skirt of his cloak, and it tore. And Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn away the kingship of Israel from you this day..."

[Samuel takes a sword and cuts Agag apart.]

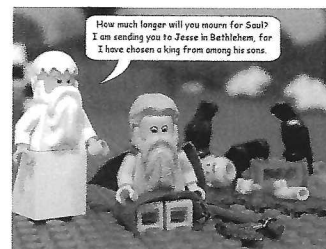
And Samuel saw Saul no more till his dying day....



Samuel kills King Agag, from Morgan Picture Bible (Crusader Bible) 1250

7

Trajectory of book of Samuel: from the rejected king, Saul, to the ideal king, David



1 Samuel 16

8



1 Samuel 19
"An evil spirit of God gripped Saul"
(ruach ra'ah)

9

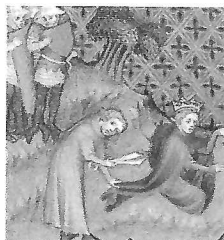
Saul Orders the Slaughter of Eighty-Five
Priests and Annihilates the Population of
Their City



1 Samuel 22:17-19
painting by James Tissot
ca. 1900 at NYC Jewish
Museum

10

David vs. Saul



1 Samuel 24



1 Samuel 26

11

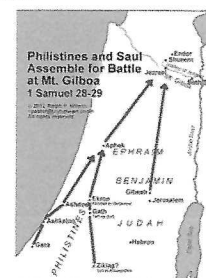
1 Samuel 28 The "Ghostwife" of Endor

3 And Samuel had died, and all Israel mourned him, and they buried him in Ramah, in his town. And Saul had taken away the mediums and the wizards from the land.

הַיִּדֹנִים וְאֵת הַיִּדְּעִים

"Ha-ovot v'et ha-yidoni"

4 And the Philistines gathered and came and camped at Shunem. And Saul gathered all Israel and they camped at Gilboa. 5 And Saul saw the Philistine camp, and he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. 6 And Saul inquired of the LORD, and the LORD did not answer him, neither by dreams nor by the Urim [method of divination] nor by prophets.



12

1 Samuel
28:7 The
Encounter
continues...

7 And Saul said to his servants, "Seek me out a female ghostwife that I may go to her and inquire through her." And his servants said to him, there is a ghostwife in Endor.
8 And Saul disguised himself and put on different clothes, and he went—he together with two men—and they came to the woman by night, and he said, "Conjure me, pray, a ghost and bring up the one I say to you." 9 And the woman said to him, Look, you yourself know what Saul did, that he cut off the mediums and the wizards from the land, and why do you entrap me to have me put to death? 10 And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying "As the LORD lives, no blame will befall you through this thing." 11 And the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?" And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me!" 12 And the woman saw Samuel and she screamed in a loud voice, and the woman said to Saul, "Why did you deceive me? You are Saul!" 13 And the king said, "Do not fear. But what do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "A god [Elohim—or: divine being(s)] do I see rising up from the earth."

בְּקִשְׁתִּי אִשְׁת בְּעֹלֵת-אֹבֹב eshet ba'alat 'ōv

קָאֹב "ס"

הַכְרִית אֶת-הָאֹבֹת וְאֶת-הַיִּדְּעָנִי
"hikrit et ha-ovot ve et ha-yidoni"

97

13

1 Samuel 28
continues

14 And he [Saul] said to her, "What does he look like?" And she said, "An old man (ישן עַם, and he is wrapped in a cloak." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed to the ground and did obeisance.
15 And Samuel said, "Why have you troubled me to bring me up?" And Saul said, "I am in dire straits, and the Philistines are fighting against me and God has turned away from me and no longer answers me, neither through prophets nor dreams, and I called to you to let me know what I should do." 16 And Samuel said, "And why do you ask me, when the LORD has turned away from you and become your foe? 17...and has torn the kingship from your hand and given it to your fellow man, to David—
18 Because you did not listen to the LORD's voice... [concerning Amalek]
כָּאֲשֶׁר לֹא-שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹל יְיָ: 19 And the LORD shall give Israel, too, together with you, into the hands of the Philistines. And tomorrow—you and your fellow man, to David—
20 And Saul hastened and flung himself full length on the ground and was very frightened by Samuel's words. Neither did he have strength, for he had eaten no food all day and night.

14

14

End of the story:
1 Samuel 28:21-25
The Meal

21 And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was very distraught, and she said to him, "Look, your servant has listened to your voice
הִנֵּה שָׁמַעְתָּ שְׁפֹטְתִיךָ בְּקוֹלִי
and I took my life in my hands and heeded your words that you spoke to me. 22 And now, you on your part, pray listen to the voice of your servant
וְעַתָּה שָׁמַעְתָּ גִּם אֶתְּרִי בְּקוֹלִי שְׁפֹטְתִיךָ
and I shall put before you a morsel of bread, and eat, that you may have strength when you go on the way." 23 And he refused and said, "I will not eat." And his servants pressed him, and the woman as well, and he listened to their voice
וַיִּשְׁמָע לְקוֹלָם
and arose from the ground and sat upon the couch. 24 And the woman had a stall-fed calf in the house. And she hastened and sacrificed it and took flour and kneaded it and baked it into flatbread, 25 and set it before Saul and before his servants, and they ate, and they arose and went away on that night.
וְלֵאשָׁה עַל-מִרְבֵּעַל בֵּיתוֹ וַתַּמְחֶר וַתִּזְבְּחֶהּ: וַתִּקַּח קֶמַח וַתֵּלֶשׁ וַתַּפְּחֶהּ מִצֹּת:

15

15

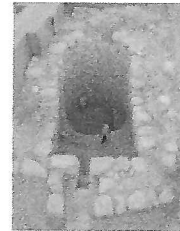
וְלֵאשָׁה עַל-מִרְבֵּעַל בֵּיתוֹ וַתַּמְחֶר וַתִּזְבְּחֶהּ:
וַתִּקַּח קֶמַח וַתֵּלֶשׁ וַתַּפְּחֶהּ מִצֹּת:

And the woman had a stall-fed calf in the house. And she hastened and sacrificed it and took flour and kneaded it and baked it into flatbread.

Why does the Ghost-diviner serve Saul a meal?
Compassion?
Rules of Hospitality?
Or... Suppressed/Scrambled Echo of a Primitive Ritual?

"Seek me out a female ghost-diviner..." (A woman who has an Ov)
בְּקִשְׁתִּי אִשְׁת בְּעֹלֵת-אֹבֹב eshet ba'alat Ov

1. An 'ōv originally referred to a pit from which a ghost would emerge. This was an ancient practice in the Near East and Asia Minor.
2. The ghost ritual took place at night.
3. An animal was sacrificed in the pit, and/or its blood poured into the pit. This was the bait for the ghost.
4. In some cases loaves of bread and silver ears were also added to the pit.
5. Only later did the word 'ōv come to mean "a medium," or "the dead spirit being summoned," and the memory of the pit was lost.



The Abi, a ritual pit at Urkesh, ancient Hurrian city in Northern Syria pre-1350 BCE

16

16

What details did we find out about the woman of Endor:

- Name?
- Age?
- Personal appearance?
- Marital status? name of husband or father?
- Children?
- Ethnicity?

Did her magic work?

In the following interpretations from art look at:

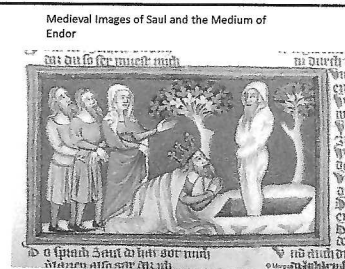
- how the woman of Endor is dressed
- her age and appearance
- how Samuel appears and where he is coming from
- how Saul is dressed

17

17



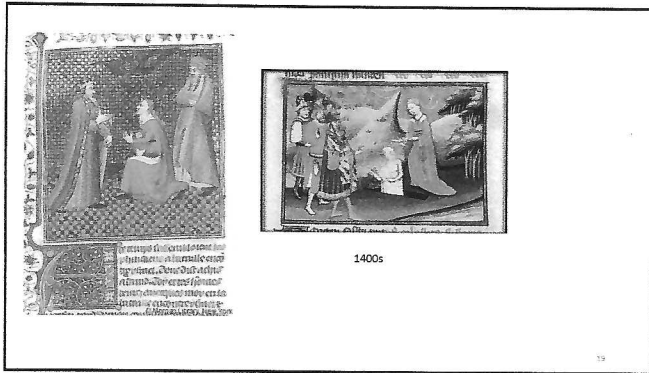
Gumbertus Bible, Regensburg ca. 1180
"Phitonissa" like the Delphic Pythia



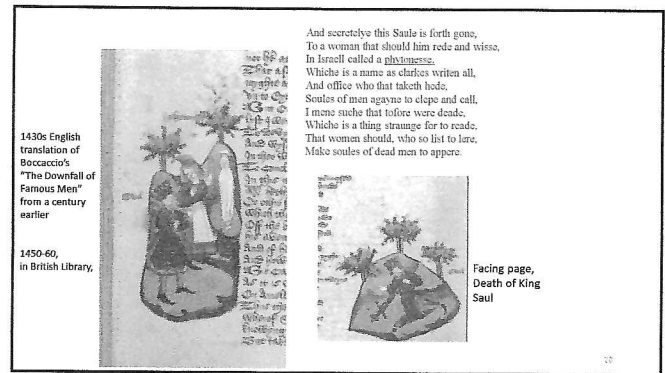
Germany, Regensburg, ca. 1360

18

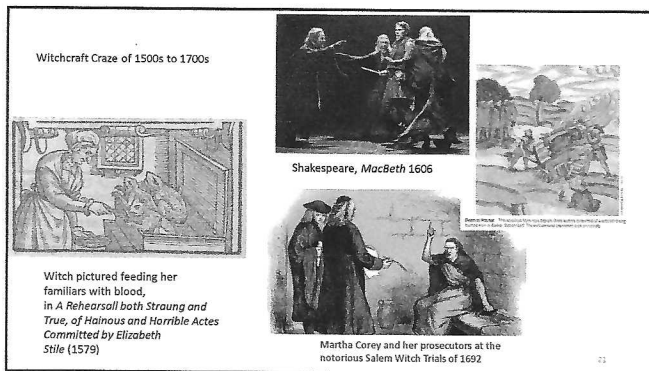
18



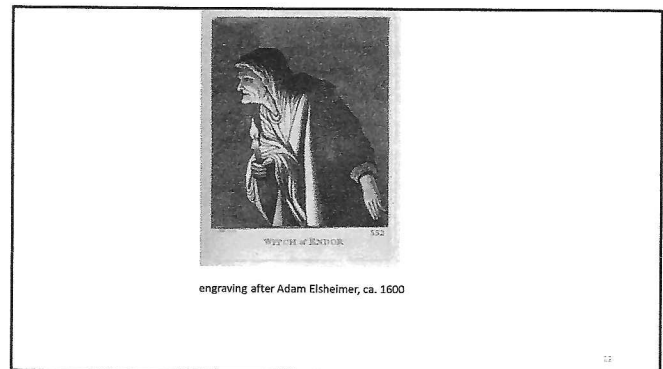
19



20



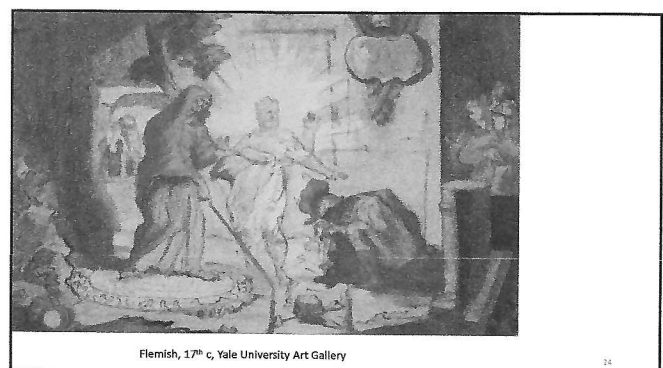
21



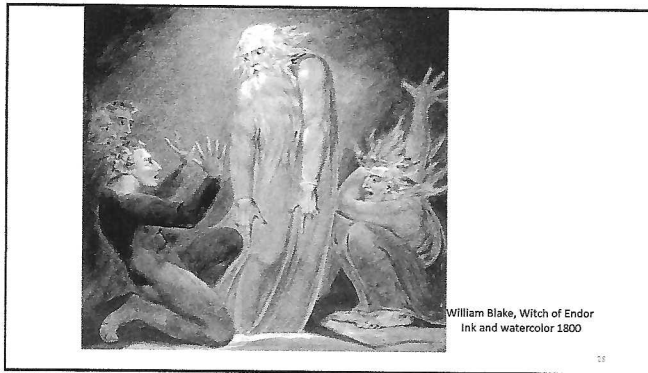
22



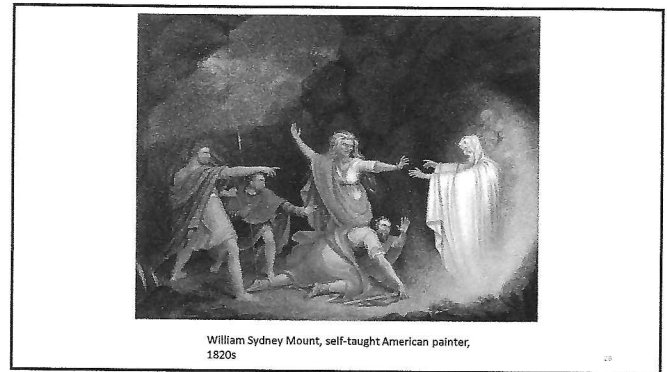
23




24



25



26



Fear of witches shifted to interest in spiritualism in 19th and early 20th c.


A Poet and Grieving Father's Warning About the Spiritualism Craze

Rudyard Kipling, "En-dor" (1919)

The road to En-dor is easy to tread
For Mother or yearning Wife.
There, it is sure, we shall meet our Dead
As they were even in life...

...
On the road to En-dor is the oldest road
And the craziest road of all!
Straight it runs to the Witch's abode,
As it did in the days of Saul,
And nothing has changed of the sorrow in store
For such as go down on the road to En-dor!

27




A Daring Escape from the Turks

The Road to En-dor, by E.H. Jones (1919)
Retold by Margalit Fox in *The Confidence Men* (2021)

Imprisoned in a remote Turkish POW camp during World War I, two British officers, Harry Jones and Cedric Hill, join forces to bamboozle their iron-fisted captors. To stave off despair and boredom, Jones takes a handmade Ouija board and fakes elaborate séances for his fellow prisoners. ...One day an Ottoman official approaches Jones with a query: Could Jones contact the spirit world to find a vast treasure rumored to be buried nearby? Jones, a trained lawyer, and Hill, a brilliant magician, use the Ouija board—and their keen understanding of the psychology of deception—to build a trap for their captors that will ultimately lead them to freedom.

28



Is there a subtext about antisemitism in "Bewitched"?

- Pilot was written by creator Sol Saks—1964
- Head writer was Danny Arnold, born Arnold Rothmann
- Director was William Ascher, who had a Jewish father and a Catholic mother, and who was married to non-Jew Elizabeth Montgomery. Ascher also directed "I Love Lucy," another show about a "mixed marriage."

Sheila: Do you know Dr. Hafter, dear? Samantha?

Samantha: Beg your pardon?

Sheila: Dr. Hafter, do you know him?

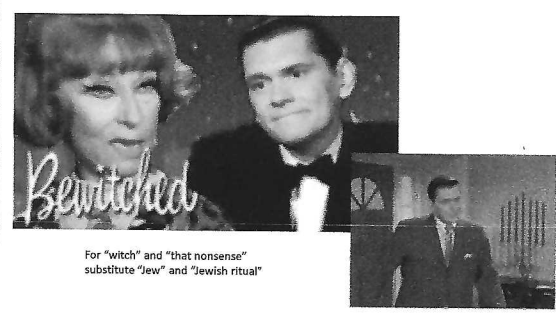
Samantha: No.

Sheila: The plastic surgeon. Does beautiful nose work.

Samantha: No, I don't know him.

Sheila: Funny, I could have sworn...

29



For "witch" and "that nonsense" substitute "Jew" and "Jewish ritual"

30