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What Do Masculinists Want?

Virile Vanguard, Identitarians, and Traditional Political
Theology

JOSH VANDIVER

Only when the king is dead can one think political theology. If he be not dead in body, let him be afflicted unto death. By body, think the immaterial body of sovereignty.¹ Yet the immaterial body of sovereignty stands—rises to presence and visibility—only in relation to the physical body of the king.² In his physical body as a male, the king is to be manly, masculine, virile. Likewise in his immaterial body as sovereign. Kingship rests on this duality, simultaneously physical and immaterial, the constitutional foundation for any political theology worth the name.³

Such is the groundwork on which we find erected the political theology of Julius Evola, the mid-twentieth-century Italian theorist of Tradition, self-avowed “superfascist,” and sometime esotericist and magician.⁴ In subsequent decades, his influence has grown so great that in 2003 a founder of the French New Right declared that “there is no doubt that Evolian political thought has, above all, seduced all the currents related directly or indirectly to the radical Right.”⁵ One now observes Evola’s ongoing impact among the twenty-first-century identitarian youth movements in Europe and America, including those I have elsewhere categorized as *masculinist*: fixated as much on sex and gender as on civilizational, ethnic, national, or racial identities.⁶ Evola is an arch-masculinist, and his Traditionalism

centers on a threefold decline—constitutional, sacral, and virile—from the sacred sovereigns and warrior aristocrats of a Golden Age to the long-term “devirilization” which terminates in our anarchic and disenchanting Dark Age.⁷ Studying Evola and his influence with care, one can better approach several questions regarding the radical Right, not least that of our title: What do (Traditional) masculinists want?

While not a fascist thinker, Evola collaborated with Mussolini on racial doctrines, working to better align the Italian regime with the German Third Reich. During WWII, he engaged in esotericism research for the SS *Ahnenerbe* (Ancestral Heritage). Investigating Freemasonry in Vienna, Evola became paralyzed from the waist down when a shell from an Allied bombing raid exploded nearby as he tempted fate by wandering around the city. He believed the injury to be, in truth, a spiritual attack. In the 1950s, Italian prosecutors charged him with inspiring youth in the right-wing *Movimento Sociale Italiano* (MSI). It was at this time, when called to trial and accused of being a neofascist, that Evola declared himself a *superfascist*: above and beyond, and thereby a *critic* of, fascism.⁸ Yet for all his postwar influence, Evola also sharply critiques right-wing vanguardism in a late work, his 1972 *Men Among the Ruins*: “The enthusiasm of young militants who conduct an active propaganda should be commended, but it is not enough.”⁹ To understand what he does offer young vanguardists requires an investigation into Traditional political theology and constitutional theory.

From CasaPound Italia to the French Bloc Identitaire to the American alt-right, scholars have recently begun to study the Euro-American identitarian youth movements.¹⁰ Yet few consider political theology in such movements or the broader Right—excepting, that is, a large but dubious literature on the specter of Christian nationalism.¹¹ Where *will* the contemporary Right turn for its theology? Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy?¹² Perhaps strains of Protestantism: Lutheran, Calvinist, Reformed, evangelical, or charismatic? Or will the Right draw on “indigenous” European or Indo-European religions, be they Hellenic, Roman, Germanic, or Norse?¹³ According to Evola, while at first glance there appear to be deep divergences among these religions, upon closer inspection what proves central is how well they embody and evince Tradition. Religious divides loom too large in the self-understanding of most right-wing activists, according to Evola. It remains to be seen if the Right follows him on this point—but given his

influence among identitarian youth, and indeed more broadly, it is worth considering what his political theology entails.

Identitarians look for intellectual guidance not only to Evola, but also to various members of the Conservative Revolution.¹⁴ They most often reference Carl Schmitt and Martin Heidegger, each in his own way also complicit in and critical of the fascist regimes they, for a time, served.¹⁵ As a jurist and author of a landmark treatise on constitutional theory, Schmitt informs identitarian thinking about constitutional law as he informs their thinking on the concept of the political, on geopolitics and international law, and on the nature of the partisan.¹⁶ Schmitt was not a theorist of Tradition in the mold of Evola. Yet, as the most influential revolutionary conservative in the field of jurisprudence, he took intense interest in nonbourgeois constitutions, urging a broader perspective on constitutionalism as more than a check on sovereign authority or a mechanism for balancing various powers and interests; rather, monarchies and aristocracies also rest on distinct *constitutional* forms.¹⁷ Evola, Schmitt, and Heidegger prompt identitarians to fundamentally rethink what a constitution *is*—especially the structure of constitutions built around neither the bourgeoisie nor the proletariat but to “higher” classes or castes.

Identitarian masculinists draw from Evola a Traditional understanding of constitutionalism, religion, and virility—indeed, a comprehensive political theology which integrates all three. In the present enquiry, we limit our approach to Evola and Traditional political theology to narrow questions which will nevertheless reveal such integration: Are there vanguards in the world of Tradition? If so, what do they look like? To the former, one needs answer with a qualified yes. But compared to ideological movements like Marxist-Leninism or fascism, a Traditional vanguard is quite different. To the latter question, we will consider the concept of the *virile vanguard* or, as Evola prefers, the *Männerbund*. Studying great empires and polities across the world, Evola saw a recurring pattern in Traditional politics: Elite groups, strictly male and united by a rigorous conception of virility, served as the generative seed for constitutional and sacral structures like kingship and warrior aristocracy. Evola identified such vanguards with the *Männerbund* (elite male fellowship; plural *Männerbünde*) which he found in medieval orders like the Knights Templar and Teutonic Knights and peoples from the ancient Spartans to modern Prussians.¹⁸

Our investigation will proceed as follows. The first section outlines the influence of Evola on contemporary Euro-American identitarians. The second advances a conceptual approach to virility in Tradition and identifies tensions between *Männerbünde* and other forms of vanguardism. The third describes how Evola and *Männerbund*-theorists envisage the virile vanguard as a transcendent force with ties to religion—a theme discussed further in the fourth section, devoted to the role of virile vanguards in the Traditional tripartite constitution of priests (and sacred kings), warriors, and workers. The fifth focuses on how Evola envisions virile vanguards emerging today, while the conclusion speculates on possible futures of identitarian masculinity and Tradition, especially given persistent conflicts and uncertainties regarding the place of Christianity in right-wing political theology.

Identitarians and Tradition

One of the more unusual features of the Euro-American identitarian youth movements is their intensive fixation upon masculinity. In Europe, identitarian activists bemoan the breakdown of masculine gender roles.¹⁹ In America, alt-right activists like Andrew Anglin seek to channel the perfervid energies of the online manosphere in the direction of White Nationalism.²⁰ Indeed, the common currency of identitarian movements is not only a fixation on identity in terms of specific ethnicities, nationalities, or races but on specifically *masculine* identity.²¹ Meanwhile, identitarian youth movements eschew a positive conception of religion both within their organizations—including the spiritual formation of male members—and in broader society. Here they follow one of their intellectual fathers, the French New Right thinker Alain de Benoist, who largely focuses on critiquing “semitic” forms of religion in his *On Being a Pagan*.²² Evola, in contrast, provides identitarians a theoretical route for integrating masculinity and religion, especially through the concept of the virile vanguard or *Männerbund*.

Ethnocentric and masculinist, the identitarians are trans-Atlantic in their influence on the United States and Canada and trans-Pacific in their impact on Australia and New Zealand.²³ As a transnational movement, identitarians loosely coordinate across national boundaries but focus most of their energy organizing young men in distinct local (or online) contexts

through a range of groups with varying names, modes of action, intellectual and ideological emphases, and aesthetics—all variations on what European activists call Generation Identity.²⁴

Bloc Identitaire in France, Identitäre Bewegung in Germany, and Casa-Pound Italia emerged from the early 2000s through 2010s, joined eventually by the American alt-right, a loose collection of Eurocentric, masculinist, and White Nationalist groups—many overtly modeled on, and some in active contact with, those in Europe.²⁵ As with most extremist movements, identitarians around the world face significant opposition from civil society, law enforcement, and public officials.²⁶ Opposition intensified following events like the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, and the 2019 mosque shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand. Yet identitarian young men continue to appear in the inner circles of more mainstream right-wing parties and politicians. In November 2022, Nick Fuentes, a leader of the alt-right who was present both at Charlottesville—he was nineteen years old—and later the United States Capitol on 6 January 2021, attended dinner with former president Donald Trump at his Mar-a-Lago home accompanied by hip-hop artist and fellow antisemite Kanye West.²⁷ In January 2024, a team of investigative reporters in Germany uncovered a clandestine meeting between leaders of Alternative for Germany (AfD)—the second-largest party in the country—and identitarian leaders like the Austrian Martin Sellner, an advocate for “remigration” of non-Europeans.²⁸

As a stridently youth-oriented movement, identitarians frame their critique in generational terms “against the ‘68ers”—as the Austrian university student Markus Willinger characterizes resistance to those who participated in, or affiliate with, the left-wing youth demonstrations of 1968—a generation identitarians consider decadent:

The people of Europe have lost their will to live; they are dying out, because they don't want to thrive any longer, because they don't want to have any more children, and because they've forgotten what it means to stand up and fight for one's own. The ideology of the '68ers has infected Europe. It is a sickness that will kill us if we don't find a cure. Even if we've lost our will to

power, our neighbors haven't, and they're already penetrating our borders and occupying the places that we freely surrender to them.²⁹

The Americans call this generation “Boomers,” in reference to the postwar “baby boom” generation, and similarly revile their cultural, economic, and political dominance since the late twentieth century. For identitarians, signature failures of the '68ers and the Boomers include their denial of collective identity, their fetishizing of individualism, and their renunciation of the state:

Sometimes we hear that there were once people who saw their highest honour in dedicating their lives to the service of the state. We can't understand or relate to this, as you [the '68ers] have made us loathe the state, rotting as it is from the inside. You've demonized it as an instrument of oppression. You want to abolish the state by any means. But you have failed. While all of you fought the state, the commonest and greediest among you seized control of it and became what today passes for politicians.³⁰

Like Evola, identitarians resolutely subordinate the economic realm in preference to the state and to its constitutional role in creating a hierarchy of higher classes and values in which the bourgeois and proletarian rank near the bottom. As Evola puts it:

In modern times the dimension of sociopolitical organization has descended from a plane in which the vital, material part is subordinated to higher faculties, forces, and goals, to a plane in which this higher dimension is lacking or, worse yet, through an inversion, deprived of its own dimension and subordinated to inferior functions.³¹

Not all identitarians are Evolians. But many share his conviction that modernity is symptomatic of long-term processes of civilizational decline going back centuries or millennia, in which states cease to be constitutionally oriented to higher classes and values (spiritual and martial) and become increasingly dominated by lower classes and values (bourgeois and proletarian). Evolian identitarians wish to organize politics and society with reference to a transcendent law beyond this worldly realm, a constitutional theory

of elitist and hierarchical classes and masculine types. Since identitarians appear to be a medium-term fixture of right-wing politics in Europe and its settler colonies, continued study of their intellectual roots and development is thereby amply warranted—as well as other movement features like activist strategy, aesthetic presentation, legal capability, and organizational structure. Their intellectual interest in Evola is not without precedent. As noted above, Evola was affiliated with members of the Conservative Revolution pre- and post-WWII, like Schmitt, was a contributor to and critic of fascist thought, and served as a postwar inspiration for right-wing movements from the *Fasci di Azione Rivoluzionaria* (Fascies of Revolutionary Action) to *Ordine Nuovo* (New Order).³²

The Evolian critique of modernity follows from his sweeping account of epochal decline, a metahistorical and transcultural theory of how a constitution in a Golden Age—like that of Plato’s Guardians or the *imperium* of ancient Rome—degenerates into increasingly worse forms in subsequent ages: Silver, Bronze, until the final and worst age, the Iron or Dark Age (or the Kali Yuga, the Hindu term Evola prefers). Evola outlines this theory in his 1934 magnum opus, *Revolt Against the Modern World*. The first half of the book consists of synchronic investigations of various authorities, laws, and institutions in relation to Tradition:

According to Tradition, every authority is fraudulent, every law is unjust and barbarous, every institution is vain and ephemeral unless they are ordained to the superior principle of Being, and unless they are derived from above and oriented “upward.”

The traditional world knew divine kingship. It knew the bridge between the two worlds, namely, initiation; it knew the two great ways of approach to the transcendent, namely, heroic action and contemplation; it knew the mediation, namely, rites and faithfulness; it knew the social foundation, namely, the traditional law and the caste system; and it knew the political earthly symbol, namely, the empire.³³

The Traditional constitution orients itself to sacred kingship and warrior aristocracy, institutions arising out of virile vanguards or *Männerbünde*.

Tradition Contra Vanguardism

Studying identitarian political thought, we discover problems they face as activists and an ideological vanguard. Identitarians are a miniscule minority in contemporary Europe and settler colonies like the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, a small band with (seemingly) little political power. They aim to orient themselves and their activities to Tradition, yet theorists like Evola hold out no hope that a Traditional restoration can occur so late in the Kali Yuga. Indeed, the French New Right theorist Guillaume Faye counsels strongly against “Evolianism or, even worse, Guénonism” (referencing the influential French thinker René Guénon, who had converted to Islam and removed to Egypt in pursuit of Tradition) in his activist manifesto, *Why We Fight*.³⁴ Faye fears excessive thinking on Tradition incapacitates activists and inhibits their taking concrete, vanguardist political action in the present. If decline is epochal and metaphysical, how are activists to motivate themselves? Traditionalism can be backward-looking, yet vanguardist strategy must be forward-looking—a tension, even contradiction, in the identitarian reliance on Tradition.

Despite such tensions, identitarians draw on Tradition as a resource which may yet speak to their needs as activists through the theory of a virile vanguard or *Männerbund*. Let us differentiate its constituent components. As understood in political theory, virility can function as a *conceptual* pole in an ideology: a concept of masculinity standing at or near the core of an ideology—serving as a normative standard for male bodies, minds, and spirits—marks that ideology as *masculinist*.³⁵ Until recently, scholars of the Euro-American radical Right, even of classical fascism, have rarely studied their subjects as sexed and gendered beings (i.e., men and boys) embodying unique forms of masculinity.³⁶ True, the disciplines of men, masculinity, and boyhood studies are comparatively new, but they are increasingly well-stocked with analytical tools for such scholarship.³⁷

A political movement or organization is masculinist if it cultivates and evinces a concept of masculinity as a central component of its ideology. Many ideologies ignore masculinity. Classical Marxism says little about sex and gender, for instance. But some forms of Marxist ideology situate a concept of masculinity alongside core concerns like labor and capital. Witness the

Soviet figure of the muscular and virile “hero of labor” marked by “the ubiquitous tool, pride, courage, and combativeness.”³⁸ Admittedly, however, left-wing ideologies comprise a small share of the masculinist ideological camp. Fascism, National Socialism, and many later right-wing movements, in contrast, prioritize the male body and certain forms of masculinity alongside militarism, nationalism, and race.³⁹ Here we find a clue to understanding the identitarian interest in Evola’s conception of Tradition as deeply masculinist.

Aside from its political meaning in ideological movements, a vanguard is also a *strategic* form of organization which draws its initial meaning from the martial sphere. A vanguard is an avant-garde, an advance guard tasked with dangerous preparatory work for a broader invasion. In the political sphere, vanguardism is primarily associated with left-wing politics, particularly of the Communist variety.⁴⁰ Carl Schmitt argues the Marxist-Leninist global partisan derives from Vladimir Lenin’s reading of Carl von Clausewitz’s *On War*, transmogrifying a martial concept into a political one.⁴¹ Schmitt opposes the left-wing *global* partisan with his revolutionary-conservative concept of the *telluric* partisan, inspired by the Spanish guerrillas who resisted the advance of the French republican armies under Napoleon. The telluric partisan draws strength from the land and defends the Traditional constitution of monarchy, aristocracy, and church—so rooted, can we characterize him, and his compatriots, a vanguard like others? The difficulties in conceptualizing a Traditional, as opposed to a revolutionary, vanguard begin to emerge.

We now approach the problem of reconciling Tradition with vanguardism in the Euro-American identitarian youth movements. A puzzling contradiction rests at their core. On the one hand, they appear as radical vanguardists. They publicly propound ideas and policies channeling populist discontent with the capitalist liberal-democratic status quo. They herald a revolution or new dawn. On the other hand, they often evince strong theoretical commitments to some form of transcendent Tradition—as in their recourse to the thought of Evola—which views the present as one of irredeemable decline and entropy, shuns concepts like revolution (and counter-revolution, its mere inversion), and looks askance at self-proclaimed leaders who appeal to populism, nationalism, and other this-worldly sources of (false) authority.⁴² How, if at all, do such movements square right-wing vanguardism with

fidelity to Tradition? Virile vanguards, the *Männerbünde*, provide a bridge between the two realms.

To approach this idea of a Traditional vanguard demands two further clarifications. First, one must confront the issues of temporality and change in Tradition, specifically the inevitability of decline. A follower of Tradition must abandon any and all illusions of progress. The arc of history does not bend towards justice. The optimisms of socialism, Marxism, communism, liberalism—as well as right-wing utopianisms—are lies. Our epoch is one of darkening, the rise of non-Being.⁴³ Hope, if any is to be found, comes in the prospect of victories bought at great price which stave off decline for an age, perhaps several ages. But decline and fall comes ever and always.⁴⁴ Indeed, one can hasten and worsen the decline and fall by blinding oneself to their inevitability.

Second, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a Traditional vanguard in the conventional ideological sense. Instead, Evola—along with several revolutionary-conservative thinkers like Schmitt, Ernst Jünger, and Alfred Bäumler—view the *Männerbund* as the seminal precursor to the state itself.⁴⁵ Evola describes the foundational role of *Männerbünde* in the Traditional constitution as follows:

The generating principle of the properly political communities must be traced to a context that is very different from the one typical of the family: it must be traced to the plane of the so-called *Männerbünde*.

Among several primitive societies, the individual, up to a certain age, being regarded as a merely natural being, was entrusted to the family and to the maternal tutelage, since everything related to the maternal, physical aspect of existence fell under the maternal-feminine aegis. However, at a certain point what happened, or better, what could happen, was a change of nature and status. Special rites, known as “rites of passage,” which were often preceded by a period of detachment and isolation, and which were accompanied by harsh trials, generated a new being according to a scheme of “death and rebirth” who alone could be regarded as a “man.” In fact, prior to this initiation, the member of the group, no matter what his age, was believed to belong to the same category that included women, children, and animals. . . .

In this primordial scheme we find the fundamental “categories” differentiating the political order from the “social” order. First among these

is the special *chrisma*—namely, that proper to “man” in the higher sense of the word (*vir* was the term employed in Roman times) and not merely of a generic *homo*: this condition is marked by a spiritual breakthrough and by detachment from the naturalist and vegetative plane. Its integration is power, the principle of command belonging to the *Männerbund*.⁴⁶

In Tradition, constitutional decline—which we will consider in later sections—maps onto a broader narrative of decline. Yet the *Männerbund* is a virile vanguard with a metaphysical or transcendent role in the *generation* of a Traditional constitution in the face of such entropy. Here we begin to uncover how contemporary identitarians, as activists, might escape the enervating, apolitical trap Traditional theorizing can become, of which Faye had warned.

In preparation for our discussion of virile vanguards and religion in the next section, it is worth noting how the passage above illustrates the close connection between masculinity and spirituality in Tradition: Masculinist identitarians will have to confront this link if they wish to be faithful to Tradition. Evola insists Traditional rites of initiation effect a change in the “ontological status” of a man, “grafting onto him certain forces of Being, or of the overworld.”⁴⁷ Initiation into a *Männerbund* shifts a man from the naturalistic–maternal plane to a supranatural–virile plane. The *homo*, the merely male human, becomes a *vir*, a real or true man evincing a new bond with the transcendent. This ontological transformation occurs in the threshold, the liminal space, between boyhood and manhood. However, manhood is understood by Evola not as a developmentally determined result of physiological processes (e.g., puberty) but as a rare and difficult achievement. Second, this transmutation is clearly *sacral* in character. It must be mediated by *rite*, formal sacralized practice, centered on a rigorous confrontation with death and rebirth.

Once the transformation occurred, the individual was incorporated into the *Männerbund*. It was this *Männerbund*, in which the qualification of “man”

had simultaneously an initiatory (i.e., sacred) and a warrior meaning, that wielded the power in the social group or clan.⁴⁸

In his 1937 *The Mystery of the Grail: Initiation and Magic in the World of Tradition*, originally written as an appendix to *Revolt Against the Modern World*, Evola describes the high Middle Ages as one point in Western history when such rites are known to exist. Initiation into the Knights Templar involved a rite intimately connected with death, occurring on Good Friday, the annual solemn holy day in the Church calendar which marks the Crucifixion. Furthermore, in the Templar rite as recounted by Evola, the initiand must undertake a spiritual death: “He was ordered ‘not to believe in the Crucified One, but in the Lord who is in heaven’; he was taught that Jesus had been a false prophet.”⁴⁹ Only by first passing through this test could he proceed to further levels of initiation or “rebirth.” We will return to specifically religious and Christian conceptions of the *Männerbund* below.

Virile Vanguard and Religion

Virile vanguards abound across twentieth-century figures and writers of a Traditional bent, from the classical Hellenophilia of the Stefan George circle to the Anglo-Saxon mythology of JRR Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*, an epic centered on male warrior fellowships.⁵⁰ But the foremost early twentieth-century *Männerbund* theorists are Heinrich Schurtz, who sees virile vanguards as foundational to primitive societies, and Hans Blüher, who considers classical Greek artistic and philosophical circles and the contemporary German *Wandervogel* youth movement.⁵¹ Evola credits Schurtz in his initial discussion of the *Männerbund* in *Revolt Against the Modern World*, but he adapts the concept to his own purposes. Unlike most theorists of cultural and political vanguards, Evola sees the *Männerbund* as operating on a higher, metaphysical or transcendent, “plane proper to any traditional state, which is different from the plane typical of any unity built on merely naturalistic premises.”⁵² Unlike vanguards operating at the purely ideological and partisan level to influence the political sphere, the *Männerbund* operates on both the transcendent (immaterial) plane and the naturalistic (physical) plane.

In Tradition, the *Männerbund* serves as an essential vanguard in the establishment of constitutional forms like kingship. The nature of the *Männerbund* is simultaneously deeply religious and deeply sexed and gendered, as revealed in Evola's initial theorization in *Revolt*. He emphasizes certain rites which must precede a man or boy becoming king and high priest of his people—Evola points specifically to ancient Teutonic traditions—even if his ancestor is a divine being. A transition from mere personhood to true manhood is first required, which Evola likens to mystery religions and to religious orders. Not only kingship and the high priesthood but also many other offices of nobility, magistracy, and judicature involve first “undergoing rites that were destined to transform one's innermost nature and that were often associated with hard trials and with a period of isolation,” before which “a person was not considered to be a true man but was rather seen as belonging to the same class as women, children, and animals.”⁵³

Essential is the transition from one form of naturalistic maleness to an “eminent” metaphysical maleness—a dichotomy drawn from the classical Greeks' distinction between the merely male human, *anthropos*, on the one hand, and the truly masculine figure of the *aner* on the other, a dichotomy also found in Latin between the *homo* and the *vir*. According to Evola, the latter denotes “virility in an eminent and not naturalistic sense.”⁵⁴ Evola turns for support to Giambattista Vico's 1725 *The New Science*, in which the titles of classical Roman magistrates (*duumviri*, *decemviri*), priests (*quindecemviri*), and judges (*centumviri*) all demarcate their holders as *viri*: “Thus this one word, *vir*, expressed wisdom, priesthood, and kingship.”⁵⁵ As with many other right-wing thinkers, Evola sees the classical Roman constitution as exemplary.⁵⁶ Specifically, the transcendent penetrates the naturalistic in the form of Traditional rites effecting “a regeneration that truly confers manhood,” a second birth leading to entry in the *Männerbünde*, which “enjoy power (*imperium*) and an undisputed prestige.”⁵⁷ From these virile vanguards arise Vico's Roman officials, who are simultaneously political and religious.

The sacral character of the *Männerbund* gives rise to a number of questions for Evola and followers of Tradition in terms of political theology. Evola repeatedly praises the religions of classical Greece and Rome and the pre-Christian paganisms of Northern Europe—along with paying due regard, in typically Aryanist fashion, to ancient India and Persia. Rarely, he cites Islamic tradition, differing from Guénon, who for a time believed

Catholicism to be a genuine if flawed bearer of Tradition, only to eventually despair it was too corrupted by Western modernity before becoming a Muslim convert.⁵⁸ Evola's stance toward Christianity is ambiguous. He praises medieval forms of Catholic Christianity, in particular the Crusades and Ghibelline support for the Holy Roman Emperor.⁵⁹ Yet he scathingly critiques contemporary Catholicism and many other forms of Christianity—in particular Protestantism, which he believes to be infected by, and complicit in, modernity. The stridency of his 1928/33 *Pagan Imperialism* even gave Mussolini pause: He kept Evola at arm's length while he negotiated with the Vatican.⁶⁰ Yet that work, read with care and alongside writings in the final years of his life, reveals Evola's remarkable consistency regarding the aspects of Catholic Christianity and Christendom he believes consonant with Tradition and those he castigates.

Regarding the ambiguity of Christianity on the radical Right, consider another *Männerbund* theorist who clearly influenced Evola: Hans Blüher.⁶¹ Blüher conceptualizes the origin of Christianity in precisely the *Männerbund* surrounding Christ: his first hand-picked disciples, the twelve men known as Apostles. Blüher sees the fundamental structure of early Christianity as thoroughly and radically masculinist. Eschewing the family, Christ instead forms his Apostles as a *Männerbund*, both in the sense of their initial recruitment and subsequent character development and *esprit de corps*. The first Christian *Männerbund* centers on “the love for the hero of men,” an idea he develops in his 1921 *The Aristeia of Jesus of Nazareth*.⁶² The *aristeia* of Blüher's title identifies Jesus as a new Homeric hero. Relating to *aristos*, the best—the classical Greek concept of the noble man—and *aretē*, excellence or virtue, “*aristeia* is a hero's single-handed tour de force whereby he proudly displays his fighting skills over the entire battlefield. . . . a highly ritualized agonistic game, designed partly as a display of power for its own sake and partly as a means of establishing fighting hierarchies among heroes.”⁶³ In the white heat of his *aristeia*, the hero is most like a god, and competitive agonistic display reveals which hero is most godlike. Evola emphasizes how Jesus announces in the Gospel of St. Matthew the irruption of a new sacral order through his ongoing actions and those of his men, from his forerunner St. John the Baptist to the Apostles: “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matthew 11:12, KJV). Evola considers this passage a crucial revelation

of Christ's mission, along with the "Davidic saying: 'You are gods,'" in the Gospel of St. John (10:34). But he laments such ideas "belong to elements that exercised virtually no influence on the main pathos of early Christianity."⁶⁴

In the apostolate, Blüher's work suggests, Christ inaugurates an archetypal *Männerbund* setting out to transform the world. Given his vehement criticism of primitive Christianity, Evola passes in silence over such a claim. Yet he is quite interested in how earlier Traditional forms decline and turn to perverse ends in later ages. Following the fall of Catholic Christendom, religious and then secular vanguards maintain much of the apostolic structure and pathos while inverting it for subversive ends, as Evola saw in the Protestant Reformation and subsequent democratic revolutions in England and on the Continent.⁶⁵ In his 1922 *Political Theology*, a work Evola cites, Schmitt famously argued key political concepts in European modernity are fundamentally *secularized* theological concepts.⁶⁶

The contemporary ideological vanguard appears as one such secularized theological concept: structurally similar, save for the fact—a profound fact—of now being sundered from Traditional political theology. Contemporary vanguards occupy a certain halfway point in comparison with the more radical thought of Friedrich Nietzsche, whose negation of both Christianity and Tradition is so thoroughgoing that we find his Zarathustra—his model for an alternative Christ—strangely alone in his mission, without a masculinist vanguard around him.⁶⁷ From Blüher's perspective, Nietzsche's new Christ is thus deeply incomplete; from Evola's, deeply un-Traditional. Nietzsche has the virtue of being consistent and thoroughgoing in his rejection of the vanguardist model, whereas a Traditionalist would say contemporary vanguards secularize the *Männerbund* and appropriate it for ideological rather than transcendent, state-building purposes. Indeed, Traditionalists would likely critique my initial question for being posed the wrong way round. The question is not: How do activists reconcile their vanguardism with Tradition, but how does Tradition provide the model for a true vanguard—the *Männerbund*—by rooting it in a political theology above and beyond ideology?

Christianity rests on the revelation of Christ's own male embodiment in the Incarnation, according to certain scholars.⁶⁸ For many Christians, the secular calendar begins on 1 January with the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ. The feast draws attention to male embodiment as no other, an insight

with potentially profound consequences for understanding incarnational theology. But the early Christian apostolate effects a radical break with the practice of circumcising each newborn boy and adult male convert. The Apostles ultimately reject the practice.⁶⁹ Newborns and converts will be baptized, a rite with key parallels to Traditional initiations, according to Evola.⁷⁰ Christ himself advances new conceptions of masculinity exemplified in his embodied forms of kingly, priestly, and prophetic manhood.⁷¹ In the *Mystery of the Grail*, Evola seeks to tap into this Traditional embodiment, drawing attention to how early Christianity ascribes several masculine types to the newborn Christ. The Gospel of St. Matthew recounts the visit of three magi—celebrated in the holy day of Epiphany—bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, each testament to the threefold nature of Christ’s manhood. He simultaneously embodies the three types: king, priest, and prophet.⁷² But in contrast to Blüher, Evola largely remains reserved about the Christ of the New Testament. Nor does he enter into debates about the “Aryan” Jesus which occupy the German church during the Third Reich.⁷³

What especially interests Evola are later phases of Catholic history like the Crusades. He sees the Crusades as being Christian only in a superficial sense, yet evincing lofty, even superlative, forms of Traditional spirituality. He advances an esoteric meaning in Crusader spirituality in the dual senses of both *ascetic* theology and *mystical* theology.⁷⁴ Indeed, Evola believes the military failure of the Crusades heightens the exemplarity of their ascetic spirituality.⁷⁵ For Evola, Crusaders in orders like the Knights Templar advance Tradition within Catholic Christendom as virile vanguards. To understand how such orders fit into a broader political and constitutional vision, however, we need turn to the Traditional tripartite constitution as context for Evola as a *Männerbund* theorist. Recalling that its conception of decline is simultaneously constitutional, sacral, and virile, Tradition entails a wide set of commitments to which not all identitarians may be willing to subscribe.

Virile Vanguards and the Tripartite Constitution

Evola, like other members of the Conservative Revolution, is concerned with fundamentally rethinking contemporary politics and constitutionalism—for

instance through revisiting earlier concepts like the Greek *politeia*. Such ambitions have implications for assessing contemporary identitarians when they approach the constitutional and political crises they see in Europe and America. A Traditional constitution acknowledges the superiority of spirit to body and orients the whole society to the higher rather than lower functions of humankind. Traditionalists see modern constitutions prioritizing the needs and interests of the lower functions. Higher classes of rulers and warriors in the Platonic schema of *Republic*, or the *brāhmaṇa* and *kṣatriya* in ancient India, are displaced by the lower orders: Platonic craftsmen, tradesmen, and workers or the Indian *vaiśya* or *śūdra*. This inverts the order dictated by the Traditional constitution—the very definition of injustice in Evola’s reading of Plato and Aristotle.⁷⁶ In reaction, virile vanguards, *Männerbünde*, may effect a “revolution from above” counteracting this inversion.⁷⁷

To provide perspective on Evola’s fundamental rethinking of constitutionalism, it is worth considering that of another thinker often associated with the Conservative Revolution: Martin Heidegger. Heidegger treats constitutionalism in his typically contrarian manner in his 1942–43 *Parmenides* lectures.⁷⁸ There, he argues the ancient Greek concept of truth, *alētheia*, differs radically from ancient Roman and modern European conceptions of truth. He then pivots to how radically the ancient Greek concept of *politeia* also differs, as in Plato’s political theory in *Republic*:

Plato’s most expansive “dialogue” in terms of content and range deals with the *πόλις*. The Romans say *res publica*, i.e., *res populi*, i.e., that which concerns the organized and established people, what is most their “business.” Ordinarily we call this Platonic dialogue about the *πόλις* “Plato’s Republic.” But the difference between the modern republic, the Roman *res publica*, and the Greek *πόλις* is as essential as that between the modern essence of truth, the Roman *rectitudo*, and the Greek *ἀλήθεια*.⁷⁹

The work today known as Plato’s *Republic* is entitled *Politeia* in classical Greek. *Politeia* is better translated as “constitution,” as Heidegger subsequently argues:

The thinker thinks the *πόλις* as such; he says what the *πόλις* is, what is its essence. This essence, what the *πόλις* itself is in the totality of its proper essential relations, i.e. what it genuinely is, is called *πολιτεία*. . . . So *πολιτεία*

means first, in the language of everydayness, the “life” belonging to a polis and determined by it, the dealings in it, and then correspondingly means the very structure of the polis in general, from which then can be discerned something like a “constitution.”⁸⁰

Similarly, a scholar of Aristotle’s *Politics* has translated *politeia* as “regime” or “constitutional regime.”⁸¹ Here we may follow Aristotle in distinguishing between other forms of law, *nomos*, which he says are the focus of Plato’s *Laws* (*Nomoi*), and those of the *politeia*, the focus of *Republic*, as truly constitutional law.⁸² The Greek *politeia* indicates how a constitution means more than the ordered arrangement (*taxis*) of ruling offices—including the highest offices which determine whether a city is a monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy. The ordered arrangement of the sexes and the classes, along with procreation and education, are some of the “proper essential relations” (to use Heidegger’s terminology) which constitutions establish in both Plato’s *Republic* and the work of Xenophon, a fellow student of Socrates, in his *Spartan Constitution*.⁸³ Such relations are governed by constitutional law in those works. Such legally structured relations are essential to the *polis*, key components of what a constitution *is*. Only by recognizing this expansive classical conception of the *politeia* can we approach the thinking of revolutionary conservatives like Heidegger and Evola.

We need not enter here into the details of Heidegger’s theory of the *politeia*, which in any case Evola may have ignored, judging by his rather shallow engagement with Heidegger’s thought in his 1961 *Ride the Tiger*.⁸⁴ Yet Evola, like Heidegger, immerses himself in Plato’s *Republic*. In *Revolt*, he cites *Republic* more frequently than any other ancient work save the Indian law code of Manu. *Republic* provides Evola with an ideal constitutional model, one by which the constitutions of contemporary and historical states are found wanting. In the terms of Schmitt’s constitutional theory, Evola believes in absolute and ideal (normative) concepts of the constitution, thoroughly rejecting the positivism of bourgeois constitutionalism as it emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁸⁵ To foreshadow the remainder of this section, three core features of the Traditional constitution can be flagged: First, a sacred provenance and sanction in a higher, divine law. Second, a hierarchical constitutional structure in which the productive and trading classes—representing what the Indo-Europeanist scholar

George Dumézil calls the third function—*are* at the bottom, surmounted by a warrior caste—the second function—out of which emerge ruling spiritual elites—the first function.⁸⁶ Third, a derivation from a primordial nonfamilial institution, the *Männerbund*, “the generating principle of the properly political communities.”⁸⁷

A constitution is fundamental law for the *political* sphere. But according to Evolian political theology, the constitutional law of any given state ought to accord with fundamental law more expansively conceived as that of the higher, sacred and divine, “*ὑπερκοσμία*, ‘a world beyond this world.’”⁸⁸ Evola begins *Revolt* with the Greek concept of law as “*θέμις*, or ‘law from above,’ [which] is very different from what constitutes *νόμος*, which is the political law of the community.”⁸⁹ Lawfulness in accord with the former concept is bestowed by the father and ruler of the gods, Zeus, upon earthly kings and chiefs: “In the world of Tradition, the most important foundation of the authority and of the right (*ius*) of kings and chiefs, and the reason why they were obeyed, feared, and venerated, was essentially their transcendent and nonhuman quality.”⁹⁰ Traditional constitutions evince a vertical orientation to a higher order, as in sacred kingship or the *imperium* of ancient Rome.⁹¹

In contrast, modern capitalism, economics, and the bourgeoisie operate purely in the material realm, shunning the sacred, the transcendent, and other higher points of orientation. For a Traditionalist, “The political domain is defined through hierarchical, heroic, ideal, anti-hedonistic, and, to a degree, anti-eudemonistic values that set it apart from the order of naturalistic and vegetative life.”⁹² Judged in light of the lofty *hypercosmia*, most constitutions instantiated in political life will always be substandard. European constitutional theory reached its height in Plato’s *Republic*, in the constitutional practices of ancient Rome, and (at certain times in its history) in the Holy Roman Empire. Platonic and imperial constitutions provide Evola and his followers points of orientation, along with the law code of Manu and other Aryan or Indo-European exemplars.⁹³

The institution of class hierarchy in Traditional constitutionalism is simply one of the things constitutional law *does*. Constitutions ought to uphold the legal duties, rights, and liberties of distinct classes. Evola frequently cites *Republic* at this point. Famously, Plato models class differentiation and hierarchy in relation to the constitutional structure of the self, the so-called analogy between city (*polis*) and soul (*psuche*).⁹⁴ In his discussion of castes,

Evola points to *Republic* regarding parts of the soul and their correspondence to classes in the city:

In the Platonic worldview, the castes correspond to different powers of the soul and to particular virtues: the rulers (*ἄρχοντες*), the warriors (*φύλακες* or *ἐπικουροί*) and the workers (*demiurgoi*) corresponded respectively to the spirit (*νοῦς*) and to the head, to the animus (*θυμοιδές*) and to the chest, and to the faculty of desire (*ἐπιθυμητικόν*) and to the lower organs of the body regulating sex and the functions of excretion. In this way, as stated by Plato, the external order and hierarchy correspond to an inner order and hierarchy according to “justice.”⁹⁵

Evola believes such classes or castes are foundational to “Indo-Aryan” societies. He points to ancient Indian castes as another exemplar of such constitutional law:

The activities of the slaves or workers (*śūdras*) were subordinated to the activities of the bourgeoisie (*vaiśya*); higher up in the hierarchy we find the warrior nobility (*kṣatriya*); and finally the representatives of the spiritual authority and power (the *brāhmaṇa*, in the original sense of the word, and the leaders as *pontifices*).⁹⁶

Evola also adduces the ancient Persian system: the “four *pishtra* of the Lords of fire (*athreva*), of the warriors (*rathaestha*), of the heads of the family (*vastriya-fshuyant*), and of the serfs assigned to manual labor (*huti*).”⁹⁷ Yet another example of tripartition is found in the Norse *Rigsthula*: the god Heimdall descends to mankind, sleeps with three human couples, male and female, and becomes progenitor of each caste.⁹⁸ As can be seen from these models, Traditional political theology and constitutionalism centers itself on a three-tiered class hierarchy.

To better understand how a Traditional tripartite constitution comes into being and what roles identitarian *Männerbünde* might play in the future, we need to recognize one further—and highly masculinist—element of the Platonic *politeia* as understood by Evola. Plato’s three constitutional classes are sharply demarcated between the second and the third: the warriors and the producers. Only the warriors must be “born again” thorough various

initiatory rites and rigorous pedagogies. Only warriors must give up personal property and traditional sexual relations. Thereby, they become the germ of the properly political classes, the Guardians and their Auxiliaries. The best may go on to become Philosopher Kings, intellectual and spiritual elite, the true Guardians and first class in the *politeia*. Evola interprets this demarcation in gendered terms as a virile “spiritual breakthrough” and “detachment from the naturalistic and vegetive plane” represented by the third class, which he interprets as feminine and maternal.⁹⁹

A key danger Evola emphasizes is the recurrent problem of an alliance between Dumézil’s first and third functions in opposition to the second function.¹⁰⁰ As will be familiar to readers of Nietzsche, priestly elements within the first-function class can ally with the third-function producers and together betray the second-function warrior class.¹⁰¹ Evola insists first-function figures, be they Plato’s Philosopher Kings or pagan or Catholic clerics, must maintain the highest, sacral purpose of their class, yet always stand in service of the warrior elites of the second function—out of whom emerge sacred kings and other magistrates. The classical Roman Republic and Empire serve as models, in which the sacral function definitely orients itself to the such martial and political functions.¹⁰² These historical models frequently recur in the Evolian critique of the threefold crisis of contemporary Europe—constitutional, sacral, and virile.

Feminist interpreters like Luce Irigaray, in her interpretation of the *Republic* cave myth as an extended metaphor for gestation and birth, argue this fixation on certain classes being “reborn” is a deeply masculinist appropriation of the womb, the birthing process, and motherhood.¹⁰³ Evola agrees with Irigaray’s insight but not her criticism. Rather, he praises this second birth as essential to virile differentiation from the maternal and feminine. In the political realm, Evola sees the foundation of the State itself arising from the *Männerbünde* which turn a mere male, *homo*, into a real man, *vir*, by being “born again” through dangerous, even bloody, initiatory rites—the escape from the womblike cave of merely naturalistic life. In a further Platonic parallel, virile initiations in Tradition rely on deep connections with honor, which in Plato’s tripartite psychology is the province of *thumos*, “spirit” or “heart,” the central element of the soul concerned with ambition, aspiration, and esteem—and their opposites—the psychological motivations key to the warrior class in *Republic*.¹⁰⁴ “The substance of every true and stable political

organism is something resembling an Order, a *Männerbund* in charge of the principle of *imperium*, comprising men who see loyalty as the basis of their honor (as the saying of the Saxon Code goes),” Evola avers.¹⁰⁵

In sum, for Evola the differentiation of the virile from the domination of the maternal and feminine applies not only to the development of the soul and the *polis*, as in Plato, but also to Traditional political theology:

The maternal domination, from which the political-virile principle subtracts itself, was also understood as the domination of Mother Earth and the Mothers of life and fertility. . . . The common mythological background is that of the duality of the luminous and heavenly deities, who are gods of the political and heroic world on the one hand, and of the feminine and maternal deities of naturalistic existence, who were loved by the plebian strata of society on the other hand. Thus, even in the ancient Roman world, the idea of State and of *imperium* (i.e., of the sacred authority) was strictly connected to the symbolic cult of the virile deities of heaven, of light and of the super-world in opposition to the dark region of the Mothers and the chthonic deities.¹⁰⁶

The pagan Roman state, those of the later Christian Franks and Germans, and even the Arab states during the early expansion of Islam—all evince similarly masculinist political theologies. Evola continues, “Maybe the most significant case is the Prussian State, which originated from a knightly Order (a classic example of a *Männerbund*), namely the Order of Teutonic Knights, which later on became the structure and ‘form’ of the German Reich.”¹⁰⁷ When it comes to a religion, including Christianity, Evola is primarily concerned with how well it conforms, or can be made to conform, to Traditional political theology. Even Christ needs to stand in precisely the second-function role where one would expect him to be in a divinely-sanctioned tripartite constitution: the warrior Son of a law-giving Father, surrounded by his apostolic *Männerbund*.¹⁰⁸ Only by understanding the highly masculinist character of Traditional tripartite constitutions can one approach the Evolian theory of Christianity and clerical types in relation to virile vanguards.

Virile Vanguard and the “True Counter-Reformation”

Traditionalists like Evola, prolix on remote Golden Ages and catastrophic processes of decline, have few words to say about how to restore Traditional political theology and constitutional law. Virile vanguards will clearly be essential. In *Men Among the Ruins*, the most pragmatic book of his final years, Evola speaks directly to those small right-wing cadres which remained after World War II.¹⁰⁹ He gives a handful of prescriptions for the radical Right: The book ends by invoking the need for new *Männerbünde*, small but selective, to face the dark times ahead. Given the result of the war and developments in the postwar West, Evola sharply circumscribes any broader hopes. This stance contrasts with the brio of his early *Pagan Imperialism*, which had forthrightly called for a “true counter-reformation” to overthrow the Protestant Reformation, Freemasonry, and other sinister forces of modernity.¹¹⁰

In *Men Among the Ruins*, Evola envisions just one source of hope: “The idea of an Order, whose members would act in the various nations, doing what they can to promote an eventual European unity.”¹¹¹ In accord with the tripartite constitution, he focuses first on the highest plane of sacral leadership. The Holy Roman Empire has been visibly defunct since the abdication of Emperor Francis II on 6 August 1806.¹¹² Meanwhile, as Schmitt also emphasizes, most national monarchies in Europe were either dethroned in the democratic revolutions and world wars or rendered mere “constitutional” figureheads.¹¹³ Yet Evola still looks to the remaining noble bloodlines of Europe as a bridge, not in terms of biological blood but the elitist charisma they yet bear.¹¹⁴ He readily admits most scions of such families—like the Habsburg heirs to the crown and throne of the Holy Roman emperors—do not aspire to any sort of political role today. Yet perhaps the Right can look to “awakening something in the blood that has not been entirely lost but still exists in a latent state.”¹¹⁵ He does not envision the nobility leading the contemporary Right in conventional political terms but serving as the core of new *Männerbünde*.

If scions of ancient European nobility are to serve as the center of new virile vanguards, Evola proffers only one source for the broader membership

of such bands: elite fighting men. In accordance with the tripartite constitution, the second-function warrior type is essential:

In regard to a second and more numerous section of the Order, I have in mind men who correspond to the human type shaped here and there through selections and experiences of an essentially warrior character, and through certain disciplines. . . . In the past, in some elite fighting units, today among paratroopers and analogous corps (e.g., Marines and others), some disciplines and experiences favor the formation of this human type. . . . By winning over these elements to the European cause, we would constitute, with a “force at the ready,” the most active cadres of such an Order.¹¹⁶

Yet if a handful of noblemen and a selection of elite fighting men may serve in potential *Männerbünde*, they stand today entirely alone. Traditionalists have nowhere to turn for divine sanction through rites of anointing and consecration: “Little can be done on the higher and proper plane, which is the religious one.”¹¹⁷ Evola emphasizes in the strongest terms that no help will come from “generic Christianity, since this would be weak, insubstantial and formless.”¹¹⁸ From his early political writings, Evola despises Protestantism as utterly destructive of Traditional political theology: Nothing good will come from that quarter.¹¹⁹ While the Catholic Church long evinced Traditional features, it does not now reprise its role in the late classical and medieval worlds.¹²⁰ Quite to the contrary, Evola sees postwar Catholicism careening headlong into all the democratic and liberal heresies of modernity, particularly after Vatican II: “Catholicism’s capability of providing adequate support for a revolutionary-conservative and traditionalist movement must be resolutely denied.”¹²¹ Meanwhile, considering the “Greek Orthodox Church or Eastern Churches in general,” Evola does not believe them to be relevant, for “their jurisdiction concerns people who fall outside the context of the problems” engaged in his thought.¹²²

While the postconciliar Catholic Church and other Christian bodies offer no prospect of consecrating virile vanguards to convey a “superordained principle of authority,” Evola had offered another path to such superordination in the 1930s. In *Revolt Against the Modern World*, he distinguishes between consecration and initiation. Consecration must come at the hand of a first-function religious body like the Catholic Church, but initiation may

also convey superordination and does not require a separate religious institution. Evola sees such rites as bestowing sacral right upon second-function figures like warriors. In pre- and postwar writings, he puts emphasis on the Traditional form of anointing and consecration in coronation ceremonies of European monarchs and their similarity to episcopal consecration or ordination.¹²³ But Evola stipulates that kings and warrior orders may conduct their own sacral initiations (as distinct from consecrations) into first-order functions—indeed, a separate class of priests who hold no regal or warrior power is a mark of the beginnings of decline. For instance, the Knights Templar held crucial initiatory rites on the high holy days of Good Friday and Whitsunday (Pentecost).¹²⁴ On the former, the Order hearkened to the Passion of Christ; on the latter, the descent and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the divine chrism which had transformed the Apostles—Blüher's first *Männerbund*—for their world-historical mission. But such initiations were not under the authority of the Church; rather, clerics in the Order anointed initiands and thereby directly bestowed upon them the power the Holy Ghost. This distinction may clarify how Evola sees postwar *Männerbünde* gaining some form of first-function superordination, given the low state of the Catholic Church. Virile vanguards can conduct their own initiations, without need of a religious institution, provided they have some link to a transcendent source of authority—apparently, the noblemen from ancient European bloodlines are to fulfill this role.¹²⁵ Thus, the question of how masculinists today will relate to religion is, for an Evolian, a moot one: They can build Traditional virile vanguards and endow them, through initiation, with first-function forms of superordination without the need for religious institutions of any kind.¹²⁶

Conclusion

In terms of political thought, the Euro-American radical Right is a broad church. It encompasses camps from the identitarian youth movements to various forms of populist nationalism, illiberal democracy, and postliberalism.¹²⁷ It would be inaccurate to say that there were no new developments in right-wing thinking occurring beneath or outside the hegemonic consensus of Cold War conservatism and later, in the Anglo-Saxon world, the neoliberalism

of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. One can point to innovation in the French New Right from the 1970s, certainly, and perhaps to American “race realism” from the 1990s.¹²⁸ Yet it must be said that, compared to earlier decades, the radical Right now appears generative of a number of new developments in the realms both of activism and political thought. No observer of Euro-American politics over the past two decades should blind themselves to this fact, and the study of right-wing radicalism—once a small and rather niche field—is now burgeoning. In the present work, we have delved into some understudied aspects of the radical Right: constitutionalism, masculinism, and political theology.

To return to our opening questions regarding identitarian religious commitments (or lack thereof): How can they reconcile their practical needs as activists with their Traditionalist yearnings? As of yet, they evince few signs of cultivating anything comparable to new Orders of Knights Templar or Teutonic Knights, rigorous *Männerbünde*. For what it is worth, one can note the plethora of online memes since the 2016 US presidential campaign featuring stylized images of Crusader knights and their rallying cry *Deus vult*, “God wills it!” along with similar appropriations of the *Reconquista*.¹²⁹ Steve Bannon, who once boasted of editing “the platform of the alt-right,” sought after being ousted as White House chief strategist in the first Trump administration to purchase a medieval monastery outside Rome as a “gladiator school” for training new cadres of right-wing nationalists.¹³⁰ Identitarian theorists and ideological popularizers do demonstrate intense interest in pre-Christian European and Indo-European religions, but there appear few signs of neopagan lived religion on the Right.¹³¹

With respect to Christianity, it appears identitarians and the radical Right are still attempting to conceptualize a position. Evola’s *Pagan Imperialism* emerges frequently as a site for such negotiations. Arktos, the leading European identitarian press, brought out a 2024 English translation combining the original 1928 Italian edition with the 1933 German revision.¹³² This is the fourth English translation since the millennium; one of the earlier emerged under a publishing enterprise billing itself as Wewelsburg Archives.¹³³ The publisher name references the Renaissance castle in Westphalia where Heinrich Himmler’s SS established a center for the Third Reich’s new elite, one “comparable to the Marienburg Castle of the medieval Teutonic knights in Prussia. . . . a future SS Vatican.”¹³⁴ The anonymous introduction provided

for the edition primarily devotes itself to Evola's views on Christianity. Perhaps seeking to downplay the offense the title might give to certain Christians, the author hastens to emphasize that Evola later suggested a better title for the work: *Roman Traditionality*. Then he is quoted at length from a 1967 interview:

Speaking of Christianity, I often used the expression "the religion that came to prevail in the West." In fact the greatest miracle of Christianity was succeeding in asserting itself among the European peoples, even taking into account the decadence into which numerous traditions of these peoples had plunged. Nevertheless, we must not forget the cases in which the Christianization of the West was only superficial. Besides, if Christianity has, without any doubt, altered certain European values, there are also situations where these values were revived by Christianity, by rectifying and modifying itself. Otherwise, Catholicism would be inconceivable in its various "Roman" aspects. In the same way a part of Medieval civilization would be inconceivable, without phenomena such as the appearance of the great Knightly orders, Thomism, a certain mysticism of a high level (e.g., Meister Eckhart), the spirit of the Crusades, etc.¹³⁵

We see again the care with which Evola distinguishes his position. While he never affirms the unique truth of Christianity, throughout his career he recognizes many forms of Catholicism as highly Traditional. What concerns him is the degree to which a religion and civilization evinces Traditional political theology and constitutionalism. On such terms, he provides numerous resources to identitarians who seek a "Christendom without Christ."¹³⁶

Regarding identitarian masculinists, they typically fixate on the problem of *devirilization*. Some obsess over biology and make their name promoting diet, exercise, and sun-tanning regimens in response to industrial processed foods, sedentary workdays, and lifestyles confined almost entirely indoors in climatized cocoons.¹³⁷ Others look to the more otherworldly Tradition of thinkers like Evola and, in certain cases, to religion. Yet whatever emerges from the identitarian engagement with Evolian political theology, it will likely not be Christian nationalism, but an aspiration to forms of masculinist *Traditionality* which transcend national boundaries. Evola always opposes a narrow focus on ethnicity, nationality, or biological race—while focusing

repeatedly on virility understood in highly spiritualized terms. As with Evola, identitarians appropriate a range of classical Greco-Roman exemplars and postclassical influences. In activist writings like that of the Austrian Markus Willinger, identitarians frequently reference Rome, comparing contemporary states unfavorably to its exemplary *imperium*.¹³⁸ Indeed, the valorization of the Holy Roman Empire among European identitarians could not be more overt, appearing in the color scheme utilized throughout movement aesthetics: the black and gold stands for the colors of the Empire.¹³⁹ Identitarian Traditionality will likely continue to appropriate eccentric and esoteric aspects of Latin Christendom and the Catholic Church, perhaps also of Eastern Orthodoxy and Byzantium.¹⁴⁰ But if identitarians remain true to Evola, their Traditionality must ultimately situate religion within a concrete political theology: the tripartite constitution in which kings, warrior aristocrats, and foundational *Männerbünde* are sacred in their own right—and ought never be subject to priests. After crowning the Emperor, even a pope must kneel:

The popes acknowledged the Merovingian and Carolingian kings with a recognition expressed in the formula: “*Melchisedek noster, merito rex atque sacerdos, complevit laicus religionis opus*” [Our Melchizedek, deservedly king and priest, has fulfilled the work of religion as a layman]—meaning “you are a holy people and a royal priesthood.” It is also said that after Charlemagne received the Roman crown, Pope Leo III prostrated himself before him according to ancient tradition. The *Liber Pontificalis* describes this by saying, “After the praises, according to the apostolic tradition of the ancient rulers, he was worshipped.”¹⁴¹

Obviously, this is a political theology which bears little relation to contemporary realities. We are back to our initial problem: the radical disjuncture between identitarian vanguardism and their theoretical patrimony in Tradition.

Notes

1. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).
2. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton University Press, 1957).
3. Cf. Lior Barshack, "Constituent Power as Body: Outline of a Constitutional Theology," *The University of Toronto Law Journal* 56, no. 3 (2006): 185–222, arguing for the study of embodiment in relation to constitutionalism and political theology, but without any attention to sex and gender; Josh Vandiver, "Constitutional Conspiracism: Aryans, Alpha Chads, and White Nationalists," in *American Conspiracism: An Interdisciplinary Exploration*, ed. Luke Ritter (Routledge, 2025), 212–33, recognizing the duality in right-wing thinking on the masculine "constitution" of body and state, but neglecting political theology.
4. Paul Furlong, *Social and Political Thought of Julius Evola* (Routledge, 2011); Mark Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World: Traditionalism and the Secret Intellectual History of the Twentieth Century* (Oxford University Press, 2004); Hans Thomas Hakl, "Julius Evola and the UR Group," *Aries* 12, no. 1 (2012): 53–90.
5. Quoted in Robert D. Tobin, "Queer German Roots of the Alt-Right: Ulrichs, Weininger, Blüher—and Evola," *Monatshefte* 114, no. 3 (2022): 471; cf. H. Thomas Hakl, "Julius Evola and Tradition," in *Key Thinkers of the Radical Right: Behind the New Threat to Liberal Democracy*, ed. Mark Sedgwick (Oxford University Press, 2019), 54–69.
6. José Pedro Zúquete, *The Identitarians: The Movement Against Globalism and Islam in Europe* (University of Notre Dame Press, 2018), 93, 98, 113, 275, noting Evolian influences on several European identitarian groups and thinkers; Josh Vandiver, "Alt-Virilities: Masculinism, Rhizomatics, and the Contradictions of the American Alt-Right," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 21, no. 2 (2020): 153–76, situating the American Alt-Right within the broader Euro-American identitarian youth movement; Josh Vandiver, "Masculinist Identitarians, Strategic Culture, and Eurocene Geopolitics," in *Global Identitarianism*, ed. José Pedro Zúquete and Riccardo Marchi (Routledge, 2023), 175–96, delineating a distinct masculinist strain in the identitarian youth movement.
7. Cf. Guillaume Faye, *Why We Fight: Manifesto of the European Resistance* (Arktos, 2011), ad loc., illustrating the importance of devirilization in right-wing thought more broadly.
8. Cf. Julius Evola, *Fascism Viewed from the Right* (Arktos, 2013).

9. Julius Evola, *Men Among the Ruins: Postwar Reflections of a Radical Traditionalist* (Inner Traditions, 2002), 284.
10. George Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right* (Columbia University Press, 2017); Zúquete, *The Identitarians*.
11. George J. Sieg, "Twisting the Cross: Fascism and the Misconstruction of White Christian Nationalism," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 18, no. 1 (2024): 59–118.
12. Dominic Wetzel, "The Rise of the Catholic Alt-Right," *Journal of Labor and Society* 23, no. 1 (2020): 31–55; Sarah Riccardi-Swartz, "Techno-Theologoumena and Rise of Far-Right Orthodox Internet Celebrities," *Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies* 6, no. 2 (2023): 229–55.
13. Josh Vandiver, "'Apollo Has Saved Us!' Global Ambition and Metapolitical Warfare in Alt-Right Religion," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 16, no. 1 (2022): 135–82.
14. Armin Mohler, *The Conservative Revolution in Germany, 1918–1932* (Washington Summit Publishers, 2018).
15. Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, 15, 34, 165, 230, 321, 360.
16. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 2007); Carl Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum* (Telos, 2003); Carl Schmitt, *Theory of the Partisan* (Telos, 2007).
17. Carl Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, ed. Jeffrey Seitzer (Duke University Press, 2008), § 22, recounting the religious root of a monarchical constitution: the king as "image of God"; the patriarchal root of such a constitution: the king as father; and what Evola would call the *Männerbund* root of a monarchical constitution: the king as leader of a warrior band of men.
18. Cf. Kris Kershaw, *The One-Eyed God: Odin and the (Indo-)Germanic Männerbünde* (Institute for the Study of Man, 2000); Stefan Arvidsson, *Aryan Idols: Indo-European Mythology as Ideology and Science* (University of Chicago Press, 2006), recounting the origins of the concept in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century Europe; Mathias Nordvig, "From Barbarian to Lord: The Influence of Männerbund-Theories on Alt-Right Author Jack Donovan's Literature," *Religionsvidenskabeligt Tidsskrift* 74 (2022): 743–63.
19. Markus Willinger, *Generation Identity: A Declaration of War against the '68ers* (Arktos, 2013), 27, "You've taken the manliness out of men. You've raised them to be feeble teddy bears lacking the power to act, lacking courage, lacking strength—in short, the will to power"; see generally Alice Blum, "Men in the Battle for the Brains: Constructions of Masculinity Within the 'Identitary Generation,'" in *Gender and Far Right Politics in Europe*, ed. Michaela Köttig, Renate Bitzan, and Renate Bitzan (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 321–34.

20. Vandiver, "Alt-Virilities."
21. Vandiver, "Masculinist Identitarians."
22. Alain de Benoist, *On Being a Pagan*, ed. Greg Johnson, trans. Jon Graham (Ultra, 2004).
23. José Pedro Zúquete and Riccardo Marchi, eds., *Global Identitarianism* (Routledge, 2023).
24. Willinger, *Generation Identity*.
25. Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right*; Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, 266–319.
26. Alex Krasne, "Applying the Anti-Riot Act: From Antifa to Insurrectionists," *UIC Law Review* 56, no. 1 (2022): 141–79; Austin Eggers and Jeffrey Hobbs, "Combating the Financing of Hate Groups," *Journal of Money Laundering Control* 26, no. 1 (2023): 14–23.
27. Maggie Haberman and Alan Feuer, "Trump's Latest Dinner Guest: Nick Fuentes, White Supremacist," *New York Times*, 25 November 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/25/us/politics/trump-nick-fuentes-dinner.html>.
28. Maik Baumgärtner, Ann-Katrin Müller, Sven Röbel, and Wolf Wiedmann-Schmidt, "German Identitarians Are Trying to Make a Comeback," *Der Spiegel*, 13 February 2024, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/right-wing-extremism-german-identitarians-are-trying-to-make-a-comeback-a-1fa09809-4097-4ab7-b397-7c29f3f9a33d>.
29. Willinger, *Generation Identity*, 13.
30. Willinger, *Generation Identity*, 23.
31. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 165.
32. Mohler, *The Conservative Revolution in Germany, 1918–1932*, 130, 151, 211; Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 179–87.
33. Julius Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World* (Inner Traditions, 1995), 6.
34. Faye, *Why We Fight*, 34.
35. Vandiver, "Alt-Virilities"; see generally Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford University Press, 1996), arguing for a morphological approach to the study of ideologies in which constituent concepts are identified as core, adjacent, or peripheral to an ideology.
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37. R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (University of California Press, 1995); Todd W. Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); David Buchbinder, *Studying Men and Masculinities* (Routledge, 2013); Diederik F. Janssen, "After Boyology, Or, Whence and Whither Boyhood Studies?," *Boyhood Studies* 8, no. 1 (2015): 1–14.

38. Thierry Pillon, "Working-Class Virility," in *A History of Virility*, ed. Alain Corbin, Jean-Jacques Courtine, and Georges Vigarello (Columbia University Press, 2016), 524.
39. George L. Mosse, "The New Fascist Man," in *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford University Press, 1996); J. A. Mangan, ed., *Superman Supreme: Fascist Body as Political Icon—Global Fascism* (Frank Cass, 2000); Alessio Ponzio, *Shaping the New Man: Youth Training Regimes in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2015); Jorge Dagnino, "The Myth of the New Man in Italian Fascist Ideology," *Fascism* 5, no. 2 (2016): 130–48.
40. A. James McAdams, *Vanguard of the Revolution: The Global Idea of the Communist Party* (Princeton University Press, 2017); see generally Phillip W. Gray, *Vanguardism: Ideology and Organization in Totalitarian Politics* (Routledge, 2020).
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42. Cf. Evola, *Fascism Viewed from the Right*, arguing fascism was too demotic and proletarian, save in its later phases under the direction of a figure like Heinrich Himmler and his elitist SS order.
43. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (Yale University Press, 2014).
44. See, e.g., René Guénon, *The Crisis of the Modern World* (Sophia Perennis, 2001).
45. Arvidsson, *Aryan Idols*, 234.
46. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 125.
47. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 62.
48. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 125.
49. Julius Evola, *The Mystery of the Grail: Initiation and Magic in the Quest for the Spirit* (Inner Traditions, 1994), 130.
50. Rachel Freudenburg, "Was the Stefan George Circle a Salon, a *Männerbund*, or Both? And Why the Question Matters," in *Modernist Group Dynamics: The Politics and Poetics of Friendship* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008); Melissa S. Lane, "The Platonic Politics of the George Circle: A Reconsideration," in *A Poet's Reich: Politics and Culture in the George Circle*, ed. Melissa S. Lane and Martin A. Ruehl (Camden House, 2011); Roger Griffin, "Revolts Against the Modern World: The Blend of Literary and Historical Fantasy in the Italian New Right," *Literature and History* 11, no. 1 (1985): 101–23, recounting various readings of Tolkien among right-wing Italian youth movements; Giuseppe Pezzini, "(Classical) Narratives of Decline in Tolkien: Renewal, Accommodation, Focalisation," *Thersites* 15 (2022): 25–51.

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53. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 37.
54. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 37n6.
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57. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 37.
58. Sedgwick, *Against the Modern World*, 29–38.
59. Julius Evola, *Metaphysics of War: Battle, Victory and Death in the World of Tradition* (Arktos, 2011); Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 287–301.
60. Julius Evola, *Pagan Imperialism* (Arktos, 2024); Richard Drake, “Julius Evola, Radical Fascism, and the Lateran Accords,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 74, no. 3 (1988): 403–19.
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62. Ulrike Brunotte, “Queering Judaism and Masculinist Inventions: German Homonationalism Around 1900,” in *Public Discourses About Homosexuality and Religion in Europe and Beyond* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 138.
63. Mihai Spariosu, *God of Many Names: Play, Poetry, and Power in Hellenic Thought from Homer to Aristotle* (Duke University Press, 1991), 9.
64. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 284.
65. Evola, *Pagan Imperialism*; cf. Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Harvard University Press, 1965).
66. Schmitt, *Political Theology*.
67. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody*, trans. Graham Parkes (Oxford University Press, 2005).
68. Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, 2nd ed. (University of Chicago Press, 1996); Mark D. Jordan, “God’s Body,” in *Queer Theology: Rethinking the Western Body* (Blackwell, 2007), 281–92.
69. Johan Mattelaer, Robert Schipper, and Sakti Das, “The Circumcision of Jesus Christ,” *The Journal of Urology* 178, no. 1 (2007): 31–34.
70. Julius Evola, *The Bow and the Club* (Arktos, 2018), 138.

71. Joseph H. Crehan, "Priesthood, Kingship, and Prophecy," *Theological Studies* 42, no. 2 (1981): 216–31; Gerald O'Collins and Michael Keenan Jones, *Jesus Our Priest: A Christian Approach to the Priesthood of Christ* (Oxford University Press, 2010). On such roles in relation to ecclesiology and canon law, see Edmund Gough de Salis Wood, *The Regal Power of the Church or The Fundamentals of the Canon Law* (Dacre Press, 1948), 1, "The claim of the Catholic Church to be the representative of Christ on earth, his vicegerent and instrument in regard to the spiritual and moral government of mankind, implies a claim to the possession of a threefold power. As the original functions of her Head are threefold, Prophetical, Priestly, Regal, so are her delegated functions."
72. Evola, *The Mystery of the Grail*, 45n4.
73. Richard Steigmann-Gall, *The Holy Reich: Nazi Conceptions of Christianity, 1919–1945* (Cambridge University Press, 2003); Susannah Heschel, *The Aryan Jesus: Christian Theologians and the Bible in Nazi Germany* (Princeton University Press, 2008).
74. Louis Bouyer, *The Spirituality of the New Testament and the Fathers* (Seabury Press, 1982), vii, referencing the influential formulations of Pierre Pourrat. Ascetic theology refers to the regular exercises undertaken in pursuit of spiritual perfection. Mystical theology refers to extraordinary spiritual states, including mystical union with the divine object of devotion.
75. Evola, *Metaphysics of War*, 38, "Given the initial conviction that the war for the 'true faith' could not but have a victorious result, the first military setbacks undergone by the Crusader armies were a source of surprise and dismay; but, in the end, they served to bring to light the higher aspects of 'sacred war.'"
76. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 127.
77. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 231, emphasis omitted.
78. Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Indiana University Press, 1992).
79. Heidegger, *Parmenides*, 89.
80. Heidegger, *Parmenides*, 95.
81. George Duke, *Aristotle's Legal Theory: The Politics of Nomos* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 13.
82. Aristotle, *The Politics*, ed. Stephen Everson, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Cambridge University Press, 1996), bk. II.6, 1265a1–2.
83. Xenophon, "Spartan Society," in *Plutarch on Sparta*, ed. Richard J. A. Talbert (Penguin, 2005), 194–211.
84. Julius Evola, *Ride the Tiger: A Survival Manual for the Aristocrats of the Soul*, trans. Joscelyn Godwin and Constance Fontana (Inner Traditions, 2003), 77–103.

85. Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, §§ 1–4.
86. Emily B. Lyle, “Dumézil’s Three Functions and Indo-European Cosmic Structure,” *History of Religions* 22, no. 1 (1982): 25–44; Wouter W. Belier, *Decayed Gods: Origin and Development of Georges Dumézil’s “Idéologie Tripartite”* (Brill, 1991).
87. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 125.
88. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 5.
89. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 8.
90. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 7.
91. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 68–72.
92. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 124.
93. Cf. Arvidsson, *Aryan Idols*, recounting the emergence and growth of Aryanism in Europe.
94. G. R. F. Ferrari, *City and Soul in Plato’s Republic* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).
95. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 89–90.
96. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 89.
97. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 89.
98. Jackson Crawford, trans., *The Poetic Edda: Stories of the Norse Gods and Heroes* (Hackett, 2015), 145–55.
99. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 125; cf. Morag Buchan, *Women in Plato’s Political Theory* (Routledge, 1999), 46, arguing on the basis of a comparison of *Republic* with other Platonic dialogues like *Timaeus* that the true or best soul, *psyche*, is as deeply gendered as the *politeia*: “Soul in its ‘best form,’ as Plato himself has described it, is masculine.”
100. Belier, *Decayed Gods*; Dean Miller, “Dumézil’s Trifunctionalism: The State of Play,” *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 74 (January 7, 2017): 11–19; see generally Georges Duby, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* (University of Chicago Press, 1978).
101. Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. M. Clark and A. J. Swensen (Hackett, 1998), First Treatise, recounting the so-called slave revolt of morality.
102. Andrew Lintott, *The Constitution of the Roman Republic* (Oxford University Press, 1999).
103. Luce Irigaray, *Speculum, of the Other: Woman* (Cornell University Press, 1985).
104. Josh Wilburn, *The Political Soul: Plato on Thumos, Spirited Motivation, and the City* (Oxford University Press, 2021).
105. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 131.
106. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 126.
107. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 130.

108. Cf. Andrew P. Porter and Edward C. Hobbs, "The Trinity and the Indo-European Tripartite Worldview," *Budhi: A Journal of Ideas and Culture* 3, no. 2-3 (1999), 24.
109. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*.
110. Evola, *Pagan Imperialism*, 44-52.
111. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 284; for the example of a contemporary right-wing figure envisioning the birth of new orders, see José Pedro Zúquete, "Death for a Dawn: Dominique Venner and the Vanguard of Identity," *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 19, no. 2 (2025) (this issue).
112. Cf. James Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire: A History* (Macmillan, 1875), 367n q, "In point of law the Empire was never extinguished at all, but lives on as a disembodied spirit to this day. For it is clear that, technically speaking, the abdication of a sovereign can destroy only his own rights, and does not dissolve the state over which he presides."
113. Schmitt, *Constitutional Theory*, 313-15.
114. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 284.
115. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 284.
116. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 284-5.
117. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 279.
118. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 279.
119. Evola, *Pagan Imperialism*, 47, "The Reformation promotes a consistent position, separating the Christian-pagan core represented by Catholic countries into its Christian aspect . . . and realizes a distinct type of State: the democratic state, the anti-empire, the self-governance of the sovereign mass with the simultaneous levelling of individuals in an anarchic, headless solidarity, with the semblance of rulers who are servants of servants, merely 'representatives,' dependent on and responsible to the masses, rather than the masses being responsible to them as superior leaders, maintaining the principle of absolute authority."
120. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 279, "We cannot refer to Catholicism, asking it to become the sanction and the anointer of a superordained principle of authority, first of all because Catholicism is the faith of only some European nations; second, due to the democratic and modernizing collapse of the contemporary Church; and third, due to the effects of the general processes of desacralization and secularization that have occurred in Europe."
121. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 211, "When today's Catholics reject the 'medieval residues' of their tradition; when Vatican II and its implementations have pushed for debilitating forms of 'bringing things up to date'; when popes uphold the United Nations (a ridiculous hybrid and illegitimate organization) practically as the refiguration of

- a future Christian ecumene—this leaves no doubts as to the direction in which the Church is being dragged.”
122. Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 204n44.
 123. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 66, 76; Evola, *Men Among the Ruins*, 206; cf. Daniel Lloyd, “The Coronation of Charles III from the Perspective of Liturgical Studies,” *Ex Fonte: Journal of Ecumenical Studies in Liturgy* 2 (2023): 363–445.
 124. Evola, *Revolt Against the Modern World*, 83.
 125. Evola, *The Bow and the Club*, 138, “Initiation requires the transmission to the initiand of a special force by the representative of an organization which is its holder and which is also the custodian of esoteric and initiatory teachings. . . . an unbroken ‘chain’ which refers to an original center. . . . a form which, on its own terms, presents some similarities with baptism and even more with priestly ordination in Catholicism.”
 126. In this respect—the need for sacral superordination—Evola’s Traditional conception of initiation differs markedly from that of a right-wing cult like the Order of Nine Angles, in which members “self-initiate”; see Andrew G. Palella, “Toward the Galactic Imperium: The Order of Nine Angles, Cosmic Accelerationism, and the Occult Politics of Neo-Fascism,” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 18, no. 2 (2024): 1–111.
 127. A. James McAdams and Alejandro Castrillon, eds., *Contemporary Far-Right Thinkers and the Future of Liberal Democracy* (Routledge, 2021); A. James McAdams and Samuel Piccolo, eds., *Far-Right Newspeak and the Future of Liberal Democracy* (Routledge, 2024).
 128. Michael O’Meara, *New Culture, New Right: Anti-Liberalism in Postmodern Europe* (Arktos, 2013); Jared Taylor, *White Identity: Racial Consciousness in the 21st Century* (New Century, 2011).
 129. Ashton Kingdon, “‘Memeieval’ Times: The Manipulation and Weaponisation of the Reconquista, the Crusades, and the Rurik Dynasty,” in *The World White Web: Uncovering the Hidden Meanings of Online Far-Right Propaganda* (Springer, 2024), 93–118.
 130. Benjamin R. Teitelbaum, *War for Eternity: Inside Bannon’s Far-Right Circle of Global Power Brokers* (HarperCollins, 2020).
 131. Vandiver, “‘Apollo Has Saved Us!’”; Stéphane François, “‘Our Longest Memory’: Indo-European Paganism as the Foundation of the Ethnopolitics of the French ‘Identitarian Movement,’” in *Druidism, Tengrism, Taaraim: Current Reactivations of Ancient Spiritualities and Religions, From Identity to Politics* (Transnational Press London, 2024), 63–74.
 132. Evola, *Pagan Imperialism*.
 133. Julius Evola, *Pagan Imperialism and Metaphysics of War* (Wewelsburg Archives, 2018).

134. Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke, *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity* (New York University Press, 2002), 125.
135. Evola, *Pagan Imperialism and Metaphysics of War*, 3.
136. Daniel Odin Shaw, "Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed: The Alt-Right on Building Christendom without Christ," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 18, no. 54 (2019): 79–92.
137. Josh Vandiver, "Strategic Culture and the Masculinist Right: The Popular Geopolitics of *Man's World*," *Journal of Illiberalism Studies* (forthcoming).
138. Willinger, *Generation Identity*, 62–64.
139. Zúquete, *The Identitarians*, cover image.
140. Riccardi-Swartz, "Techno-Theologoumena and Rise of Far-Right Orthodox Internet Celebrities"; Adam J. Goldwyn, "Byzantium in the American Alt-Right Imagination: Paradigms of the Medieval Greek Past Among Men's Rights Activists and White Supremacists," in *The Routledge Handbook on Identity in Byzantium* (Routledge, 2022), 424–39; for a cogent overview of three contemporary forms of esoteric Christianity, see Zane Johnson, "Late Modern Esoteric Christianity," *NEXT* 7 (2024): 23–46.
141. Evola, *Pagan Imperialism*, 191–92.