

My Kingdom for a Crown:

An Around-the-World History of the Skullcap
and its Modern Socio-Political Significance

by

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skullcap (*skúl'kap*), *n.* **1.** *A small, brimless, close-fitting cap, often made of silk or velvet, worn on the crown of the head.* **2.** *YARMULKE.* **3.** *The domelike roof of the skull [the parietal bone]....*

When the ancient mummy “Tollund Man”, thought to be around five millennia old, was found in a Danish bog in the early 1970’s, his intact leather headgear astounded archaeologists (he was not wearing anything else, anyway). Scholars believe Tollund Man was a druid- or perhaps a Mithraic- who had been granted the great privilege of being sacrificed to the god of the bogs. His skullcap is thought to be a symbol of his priesthood and social standing. After another mummy was found in the Swiss Alps, known as the “Iceman”, scientists were able to reconstruct his exact wardrobe- right down to his large fur skullcap. “Iceman” is estimated to be as old as “Tollund Man”, and probably belonged to the same culture. It is striking that both these men wore the oldest known headcovering: the skullcap.

The skullcap seems to have always had several essential functions: protection (spiritual as well as physical), symbolism, rank, identification, education/training, and commitment (i.e., as in a religious or socio-political commitment). Naturally it seems that the skullcap was born in rougher, colder climates- yet we find indigenous skullcap traditions in countries where temperatures soar into the 100’s, such as Saudi Arabia and India. There in such heat, a skullcap is really the ideal protection, just as it is in any freezing cold country. In

point of fact, we seem to find evidence that the skullcap served, from its very birth, multiple functions. But the skullcap, covering the head, was probably the greatest and most vital symbol in the world at one time. It was (and still is) a crown any and every person could wear.

It is important to note that there seem to be no skullcap traditions for a certain small number of nations, such as the Native Americans, Polynesian, Micronesian, Islander, and Aborigine. Why this is we do not know; perhaps it is a clue in the mystery of the skullcap's presence in the ancient world- perhaps due to the climates. In addition, we do not as yet know if the Neanderthals wore skullcaps; it is impossible to conjecture exactly how they might have dressed or groomed. Thus far only 1,000 distinct remains have been uncovered, and certainly none bore clothing of any kind. In the case of the recently found 3,000 year old Taklimakan Desert mummies (Caucasians found well inside Chinese borders) all their clothing was exquisitely intact. They even wore tartans and a few pointed hats were found (probably related to the Mithraic faith); but oddly, no skullcaps.

It will become clear that the skullcap was once *the* fashion of the ancients (notwithstanding the mysterious exceptions) especially in the Orient and the Old World. The skullcap retains the same basic ancient design everywhere it is worn. But every country, tradition or religion put its own unique little twists, its own functions, into it. The skullcap became the 'designer label' of the entire planet. People traveling on the Silk Road, though perhaps having trouble discerning costume, would have been able to immediately identify each other by their skullcaps or lack thereof. It is not so different today, though the skullcap is no longer the identifying badge it once was. We still know of such identifiers as the *Bluebonnet* of the Scots, the *Béret* of the Spanish and French, the *Kippah* of the Ashkenazic Jews. From its simple design sprung all other caps and most hat designs. It is well known the world over; almost every nation has its own skullcap tradition. It is seen proudly gracing the heads of scholars, rabbis, priests, doctors, martial arts masters and laborers. In the form of the Jewish *yarmulke* it is the only recognized piece of headgear that simultaneously announces religion, creed, politics, race and nation. In this particular form, it has also played a role in 20th century American Constitutional matters. It is ancient, universal, respected, loved, and sometimes outlawed.

Skullcap History

Originally, I had wanted this section to deal with the skullcap exclusively. But it suddenly dawned on me that I really could not escape the cap traditions that either were born of the skullcap or evolved side by side with it. These other caps do qualify as of the skullcap family. How, for instance, could I pass over France and not mention the béret? How could I leave Scotland and not describe the magnificent Bluebonnet of the Scots, not to mention the Tam O'Shanter? How could I not mention Georges Braque's famous creation? [See section on 'The Rest of Great Britain'.]

In any case, even with the admission that other caps are not the classic skullcap, any type cap *is* in fact a skullcap in its own right. All one need do is consider the logical difference between "cap" and "hat". The cap is not really a hat- its structure, if any, is limited, it tends to be close-fitting, and the appointments are extra frills added to the basic dome design. That said, I think this section will provide enjoyable reading for anyone interested in skullcaps or cap history in general. For the hat collector, that loveable person who will call *anything* a hat, I hope it will be absolutely intoxicating. Finally, I hope it will shed light on the age-old questions: "**Where** did Uncle Walt get that hideous headgear? What *is* it anyway?"

One can easily trace an essential history (but not a good chronology) of skullcap development, because every skullcap tradition is so well defined, very significant symbolically. We know that it started as an article of clothing, meant for protection, warmth and tribal identification. Thus the skullcap is the first hand-manufactured article to serve such a purpose. Later we will see how the consecration of the head as a sacred object *pro se* became the skullcap's one essential symbolic function- a sacred cover for that which has been consecrated. Naturally it is assumed all skullcaps come from one source, though it could as easily be said that that several adjacent cultures developed the skullcap independently. In any case the skullcap later became something of a fashion statement, and all historians know that ancient fashion statements became clerical clothing for priests and nuns- the skullcap especially. From there it is only natural that the skullcap should ultimately come to serve dozens of purposes at once, including political or nationalist endeavors.

Scholars, historians and fashion experts have guessed that the skullcap has a single Eurasian source. No one knows how it was passed around (it is guessed the Silk Road) or where it was first seen (it is thought that Babylon is the likely place), but history's movements can give us an excellent clue, if we are open-minded.

One Asian art historian at a small Illinois junior college, as an example of closed mindedness, believes more in coincidence than commerce. She has stated categorically, with confidence if without competence, that even exact similarities in tradition are no indication of common origin, or even trade!

Western fashion and Catholic Church historians tell us that the Greek *pilos* (“topper” or “head-pile”) of black felt is the mother of all skullcaps. This Greek skullcap and its name come down to us directly from the older Proto Indo-European word *p'ilo* (pronounced PEE-loh), which means “hair”. The Romans borrowed this elegant but simple cap from the Greeks, rendering it as *pilus* (pronounced PEE-loose). Its name later evolved into the Latin *pileus* (PEE-lay-oos) then *pileolus* (PEE-lay-OH-loose), finally being rendered in the Middle Ages as *pilio* (PEE-lee-oh) or some variant thereof. It is logical to assume that as the most ancient and popular headgear, simply calling it “hairy” or “hair-like” was good enough for the ancient Indo-Europeans. It was, after all, usually made of some kind of hair product.

But there is a bit more to consider. In China the skullcap is generically called *baó*, sounding very much like a Sinitic rendering of the word *pilo*- though in China it is commonly called *baó-shî*, literally, “the master’s skullcap”. The more common usage today in China is *mao-tzû*, but it is the older term which gives us the Japanese *boshi*. We might almost feel tempted to assume the ancient Chinese meaning was, “the ‘hair-cover’ of the master”. Clearly the skullcap was seen as more than just a cap. The generic names it shares in many traditions are too similar for sheer coincidence...

In the older and more conservative European languages, the words for “hair” and “skullcap” are very close, while the words for “head” much less so. The newer languages by contrast show similarity between the words “skullcap” and “head” while separately distinguishing “hair”. In the newer languages, such as the Gothic family, we have *koff*, *kopf*, *kopp*, *kappus* or *kaput(o)* to signify “head” and *kapa*, *kappel* or *kap* to signify “skullcap” (we can see where we get the English word “cap”). These words for “head” are similar to earlier I.E. words for “head”. In Greek *penne* and in Latin *capitale*, *capitalis*, *caputo* or *testa* (literally, “chamberpot”; vulgate military slang) indicate “the head”; clearly this indicates that the ancients in Europe made three related distinctions that the later tribes did not make: the head (meriting a separate word), the hair-covered head and the head wearing a skullcap (i.e., the concept of the crowned head, sharing similar words). It is as if the skullcap, being originally seen as almost a hair-substitute, were eventually seen as a sort of stand-in crown meriting a special, hair-related word to itself.

To explore this fascinating linguistic skullcap clue even further, let's compare the pertinent words and other terms:

Pilus, pileus, pileolus, pilio (Lat.)- skullcap

Pilosus (Lat.)- hairy, hair-covered or hirsuteness

Pilio (Sp.)- skullcap

Pelo/pelos (Sp.)- hair/hairs

Peludo (Sp.)- hairy

Pelón (Sp.)- bald

Pelado (Sp.)- literally, "peeled"; shaved, especially the head

Pelas (Sp.)- peelings or shavings

Pelt (Eng.)- the hairy skin of an animal

Felt (Eng.)- a material of processed wool/animal hair used mainly for hats and caps

These words give more credence to the head-hair-hairy-skullcap cycle I mentioned. Similar word lists, far too numerous to list here, confirm the theory- at least linguistically. There are two more words we will examine in a later section.

It would not be prudent to move on until the *petasós* is mentioned. It is a Greek hat, related by tradition to the winged cap of Mercury (which was a skullcap with little wings on the sides). It is the mother of all brimmed hats. Its form was very much like the *sombrero* of today, and it was usually made of straw. There are similar hats in the East, known generically as "Coolie" hats and having a conical shape. The Incas and various Inca-related Indians had a special press wherein lama wool felt was squeezed and processed into a sort of fiberboard, to form a splendid, comfortable *petasós*. I'm sure the Greek *petasós* descended from the skullcap, and in turn inspired all modern Western brimmed hats. But we should bear in mind that the *petasós*- rendered into the Latin *petasus* which literally means "a piece" (of wool or straw, presumably)- had some effects on skullcap designs. It was worn by almost everyone in Greco-Roman times; it seems to have been worn specifically as an eyeshade, and was considered rather cheap and common. I have found that often it was worn over a skullcap.

A final word: since the skullcap traditions are predominantly male, though we shall certainly address the female traditions, it will be noted that the skullcap styles and traditions are male-oriented. This I believe is

simply because the women wore veils, shawls and the like- they hardly had use for a skullcap to cover their long, luxurious hair.

The Skullcaps of the World

Let us now travel around the world and study the most intriguing skullcap traditions. Notable is the similarity of tradition and construction between them all. I am indebted to Ms. Ruth Edwards Kilgour for her delightful book, [A Pageant of Hats Ancient and Modern](#). Ms. Kilgour is a real inspiration to hat-lovers and collectors everywhere. Her book was indispensable to the writing of this paper.

United States of America

Of course the Jewish population of the Americas keeps the skullcap very much in evidence. Muslims and old fashioned Asians also wear skullcaps- but the American Indians seem to have no skullcap traditions at all. What there is among the tribes was brought from elsewhere.

But it would be disrespectful not to mention the beanie! According to Webster's Dictionary, it was also known as the "Dink" or "Dinky". Among children, all the way up to college students, the beanie, often in two or more bright colors, was all the rage from around the turn of the century until well into the late 1950's. School colors, appealing children's colors and such additions as frat pins or soda bottle caps were seen on many beanies- often they served as giveaway souvenirs. The college freshman and club beanie is well remembered- so is the horrid propeller beanie, the skullcap with the helicopter blades on top. And who can forget Little Rascal Spanky, from "Our Gang", and his indomitable beanie cap? The cartoon "Beany and Cecil" carried the beanie's popularity among children to new heights- even the Beaver wore one on television. The Brownie Scouts made the brown beanie famous, and it seems that the whole beanie tradition began when mechanics and welders took to the beanie for protection from grease, dirt and the weight of the welding masks. In a later section, we will examine the few additional skullcaps that are native to the United States.

Greece

There is no real skullcap tradition left in Greece, in spite of the fact that the *pilos* was developed here. Certainly some of the lovely ancient Greek artworks, especially the vases, show skullcaps in abundance on both men and women. A few of the fishermen might still be seen wearing a skullcap. But we might just as well address the *Greek fisherman's cap*, which goes in and out of popularity all over the world.

It is clear this cap evolved from the *pilos*. But this cap style was evidently well known to merchant marines and sailors before it was adopted by the Greeks. In America this cap was called a *sailor's hat* or *captain's hat*, all sailors owned at least two. It thus appears that the cap was borrowed by the Greeks... but wait! This particular cap looks too much like a small béret or round skullcap. In fact it *is* a béret, equipped with a visor and stiff sweatband. This shows the cap originated in Greece after all. The most important point is that the ancient and venerable *pilos* was created by and for sailors/laborers- so was the béret, and the Greek fisherman's cap.

The Greek Fisherman's Cap has a simple construction: the top is an oval to which an underpiece piece is attached. The front flares up a bit, as if to make room for a device to be pinned there, and the back has a tiny fraction of flare too. Then the sweatband is added, with braids on the outside. The sweatband is reinforced to be stiff as a board. It seems this braid was once used to pull the cap tightly to the wearer's head, like the first bérets.. It is most commonly made in black wool, though cloth and several colors are available, and it is fully lined with satin.

The closest thing to the Greek Fisherman is the much more structured military and law enforcement dress caps which obviously descend from it. But the Greek cap is fascinating for this alone: it is The First Cap, the original hybrid, being part structured hat, part cap. It is quite distinguished even from the broad-brimmed straw *petasós*, which was originally woven into shape rather than constructed. In any case, the Greek Fisherman stands on its own as an interesting member of the "Skullcap Family"- the ironic forerunner of all the caps that would eventually displace the classic skullcap.

Along with the *pilos* developed the Greek *birrus*, "Fisherman's Cap"- very unlike the classic "Greek Fisherman's Cap". The *birrus* is the same as the *pilos* but twice as tall: it was clearly designed to be folded into a sort of trim, unfolded when the ears needed protection. This trim, by the way, is a reminder of ancient times when poor fishermen had to buy leftover wool or felt strips. They would sew the strips along the edge of their

birrus to prevent it from unraveling- and also to serve as earmuffs. The modern versions are still bright red, and retain this thin, black strip along the trim. All modern “ski caps” are patterned after the *birrus*. Today “birrus” also means “red” or “flame colored”.

Mexico, South America and Spain

The beautifully hand-crafted *montera*, the bullfighter’s cap, is perhaps the least interesting of skullcap traditions. All of us have seen at least something like it; its resemblance to the head and ears (or horns) of a calf, jutting straight out the sides, reinforces the cult of the bull. We have no trouble seeing that it evolved from the Greek tradition, just as the bloodthirsty matadors evolved from the ancient Greco-Roman gladiators. Since it is representative of such a cowardly and criminal spectacle, let us leave it at that.

Jewish populations are hearty in the Americas, and nonexistent in Spain. Nonetheless, there are skullcaps to be seen everywhere- brought by the Chinese, the Muslims and even a few Hindus and Africans. Like the U.S., the Mexican and South American Indians have no real skullcap traditions of their own, except for...

The Incas of Peru

There is known among Peruvian Indians a simple but varied skullcap tradition, generically a sort of pointy affair with earflaps, originally made in leather and cloth. These can be seen among many Sherpas in Nepal today, and inspired Western “winter skullcaps”. They seemed to be cousins of the ancient European peasant’s headgear as well.

There existed at one time in ancient Peru a skullcap made of llama wool, worn by the *Chimu* people, who for all the world seem like cousins of the Chinese. Their cap bore four pounds of hair attached at the back, trailing off into a sort of cape- it was worn by high priests during religious services. The hair at the back is woven into 160 braids that hang in two tiers, one a bit less than 3’, the other 3’ 7”. Thus the long-extinct *Chimu* also add credence to the Indo-European idea of “hair-covering”: the hair attached to the skullcap was made from the hair of human sacrifices. The priests thought such a skullcap gave them power. We shall see the enormous significance given a skullcap with anything attached to it.

The Guanches of the Canary Islands (Spain)

All the native peoples of all the islands in the world lack any skullcap tradition of their own. Of course, those islands owned and populated by nations that have skullcap traditions have kept the traditions alive. Perhaps the only exception to this strange and unexplained fact is the Canary Islands of Spain. There the “indigenous” tribe, the *Guanches*, did wear leathern skullcaps much like the Greek *pilos*. Scholars who favor the “Atlantis Theory” feel that these people were stranded after the Flood, and had forgotten who they were and whence they came. The *Guanches* somehow explained that much to the first Spaniards that arrived. It is thought today that the *Guanches* were Aryans, and their language has been linked to the South Indian Dravidian languages. But the Spaniards who discovered these people had as little knowledge of who they were as the *Guanches* themselves had; in any case the Spaniards slaughtered them quickly, not being excessively interested in historical pop quizzes.

Scotland

Who can resist the rakish appeal of the famous *Bluebonnet* of the Scots? Though nothing more than a sibling of the *Béret Basque*, it is to the Scots almost as the *yarmulke* is to the Jews. Originally the *Bluebonnet* was of leather, designed to protect the Alban head in battle, as was the *pilos* for the Greco-Romans. Both examples of leathern caps evolved into the later felt or woolen caps. The Scots, ever practical, used the leathern skullcap as a porridge bowl when not fighting, using their dirks to stir their porridge! But this cap also served as a badge of identification. Sprigs and eagle feathers, pinned to the cap in various ways and combinations, identified the wearer’s clan and rank. Later the true *Bluebonnet* was born, when the head no longer required leather protection- this is the famous dark navy-blue wool cap of today. Some Scots call it simply *bonaid* (“bonnet”) and it has always been blue, the favorite color of the Scots and the Caledonians before them.

The bonnet has a red or blue pom-pom on top. This “boss” as it is called was originally the sign of the chieftain. The trim on the headband is usually tartan or at least generically checked. Finally it is adorned by two wide ribbons, hanging at the back. Incidentally, it is from the bonnet that we get the phrase “Hold on to your hat!”- it was the first command given to Scots infantrymen before battle. If anyone lost his bonnet at any time he was in danger of being killed by his own kith and kin; such was the identification value of the bonnet.

The Scots *Glengarry* is nothing but a folded *Bluebonnet*. It appeared around 1805 in the Glen of Garry, Invernesshire. It is simply creased from front to back at the top, forming what is called a “gutter”. In America, the military men wear such a cap, called the *Overseas*; American soda jerks and fast-food workers made a white version of it famous. The *Glengarry*, of course, retains the pom-pom of the bonnet, snugly nestled inside the crease. It has stiff sides to hold its shape, and is trimmed with the tartan of the Stuarts in commemoration of Bonnie Prince Charlie. As with its bonnet sibling, it has two wide ribbons at the back. Ms. Kilgour thinks that the men of the Glen of Garry invented the style because they creased their *Bluebonnets* by folding, in order to carry them more easily. She also notes that “the old-timers think [the crease] no improvement”.

We cannot leave Scotland until we address the magnificent *Tam O’Shanter*, and its very interesting symbolism. To begin frankly, the *Tam* is really a *Bluebonnet*, only with a bigger pom-pom at the top, but it does not bear any tassel or ribbon. It is of heavy, brushed wool and has tartan design coloring all over- the wool has the tartan dyed right into it. It is called the “Bonnet of Colour”, named and made popular by Burns. The *Tam* is fascinating because it hearkens to the ancient Celtic *Law of Colors*, which comes down to us from the old Irish manuscript *Ilbreácha de Tighiernmas*.

According to this law, Celts wore only the number of colors allowed by their social class; the higher the rank, the more colors could be worn. The Law, responsible for the development of the modern Tartan colors, was in effect for millennia. (It is a law oddly reminiscent of the Aryan’s Color Laws, called *Varna*. The word originally meant color but later came to mean “caste”. Of course caste was pure racist division, having nothing to do with what colors a person wore, but what color a person was.)

The Celtic *Law of Colors* is worth quoting here:

1 color was worn by servants.

2 colors by rent-paying farmers.

3-4 colors by officers.

5 colors by chieftains.

6 colors by poets, considered more important than all the above.

7 colors by kings.

8 colors by priests when engaged in Holy Office, signifying that God is superior to any king.

As Ms. Kilgour points out, our language is heavily influenced by the *Law of Colors*. We refer to our flag and pennants as our “colors”; we have team colors, such as when the jockey races under his colors, and school colors. These concepts go back to the bonnet colors identifying the wearer’s loyalty. We also can thank the Color Laws for giving us the concepts of “colorful” people, “highly colored” language, and a person “changing colors” (a traitor who is discovered). It also gives us the powerful phrase “color of authority”, and the concept of “striking the colors” (to bring down, surrender, give up or disgrace one’s flag). As an illustration of this last phrase, it is said that no American during the Revolution ever “struck the colors”, no matter what occurred. Even in the face of the worst British and Hessian attacks, the “colors kept flying”- whence “coming through with flying colors”. In modern usage we say America’s “colors never run”- meaning both permanence and bravery. Then of course we know of the sailing ships’ habit of “striking the colors” for safety or out of respect.

The Rest of Great Britain

All of the folk of the British Isles had some sort of skullcap tradition, simply because the Romans and the Celts before them introduced the skullcap. In the Dark and Middle Ages, every fellow regardless of rank owned a skullcap, and the knights and the court needed skullcaps for various reasons.

Actually, the countries of the United Kingdom have a popular cap to offer us today, though it is a French cap: the *Car Cap*, which is similar to the Greek Fisherman’s Cap and known in England generically as the *Driving Cap*. The difference is that the cap has a snap on the visor to fasten it at the front of the cap, where an insignia might normally be placed. This allows the front of the cap to be “buttoned to the brim”, giving the appearance of an aerodynamic *béret*. It is universally worn in Europe and America by older gentlemen. Lumped in along with all the other generic, round Celtic and English caps, it has replaced the ugly oversized version worn until the 1940’s.

I was intrigued to learn that French artist Georges Braque invented this particular cap, which is also known as the *casquette*, literally “little helmet” or “small cap”, originally in cloth. Yusuf Karsh, the great photographer, went to snap Braque in 1949. Karsh was not anxious to have Braque’s paintings in the background, but he was very impressed by the cap, of which Braque had two made for himself- one black and one white. Karsh’s magnificent photograph shows Braque proudly wearing the white version.

Up to the Renaissance, English men wore skullcaps of varying kinds- but none survived into the present, with the exception of the Anglican Church caps, which shall be discussed later. These skullcaps were a standard part of dress, influenced by Byzantine-Greco-Roman clothing; it is interesting to note that at the time the skullcap was worn by the English, they were also still wearing togas and other ancient cloaks. Of course, the knights retained the cloth or leather *pilus*, which in fact all Medieval European knights had inherited from the Romans.

Goths, Celts, Angles, Saxons and Jutes

It is not meet to pass over these ancient peoples who all wore and enjoyed the leathern and felt skullcap. They each generally wore the same thing- the *pilos* introduced by Rome- and used it the same way. Namely, to anchor hoods, crowns or chainmail armor-hoods, or for protection during battle, both real and practiced. The separate traditional twists each race gave to their skullcaps is in general lost to us, but several excellent Roman specimens (and Roman records) give general descriptions. There are even a few specimens resting in museums.

There was also a more crude, sort of peaked skullcap, made of roughly stitched cloth, wool or chamois leather. Of these there are abundant models and some antiquities to be seen. They are a bit like the ones worn in Peru and Nepal. In the beautiful Ridley Scott film "Gladiator" there are dozens of skullcap styles to be seen, all of this generic type.

Iceland

The women in this beautiful land wear a sort of skullcap called a *hufá* (also known as *huðá* and *hupá*) which is a symbol of good fortune. It is a pancake-shaped piece of black velvet with a large hanging side-tassel. The tassel begins as a velvet rope, which passes through a gold cylinder; the foot-long tassel hangs out the other end of the cylinder. There is a relationship between this cap and the *caul* membrane with which some babies are born, which is considered good fortune in Iceland as well as other parts of Europe. When we get to France, we shall explore this curious caul-skullcap idea at length.

Lapland

There is a delightful cap made with scalloped trimming and a huge pom-pom at the top, worn by all Lapps. Even more than the Scots bonnet or Tam, this cap is of vital importance to the Lapps. Its colors, easy to pick out in the snow, identify the wearer's tribe, village and family. The pom-pom, reminding us of the Scots bonnet, immediately identifies the region of the wearer's origin, and has saved many Lapps lost in the snow! The colors, too, have vaguely Christian meanings- but mostly retain the ancient animist beliefs of Lapland. The scalloped trim is one of the oldest fabric shapes in the world, going back 20,000 years. Those ancients cut the scalloped trim out of leather, dyed it various colors, and sewed it to the edges of their clothes. That the Lapps retain the custom to this day, on their skullcaps as well as clothing, is a marvel.

Worth mentioning is a simple Lapp skullcap with two hanging strips that cover the ears. It is a lady's cap, and up until 1850 bore a lovely horn jutting out the front. But the Christian missionaries put an end to that 'satanic' practice- leaving only the cap and sad Laplanders, who thereafter called it "Skullcap with the Devil Removed".

France

Ah, the land of good living! What joys has France given the world! Let us begin with a skullcap rarely seen anymore, and even at its height rarely seen outside France: the *Capot-Ribot*, the "Hood with Curtains" (more properly, "Hood/Cowl Ribbened"). The *Capot-Ribot* traces its ancestry back to Egypt, where the pillbox skullcap with the short cape in the back was called a *claft*. Originally made as protection against desert sun on the back of the neck and sandstorms, this unique skullcap is rather heavy, with the cape flowing either from the forehead of the cap or off the top.

It is the well-known cap seen on the heads of all ancient Egyptian rulers, and graces the head of the Sphinx. It is commonly seen among Eastern Orthodox prelates of high rank as well- yet another instance of Christians borrowing vestments from the "pagans". In this form it is called the *kamelavkion*. Napoleon is credited with bringing the Asian design back to France after his campaign in Egypt of 1798. In France, only women of rank could wear the cap, and only ladies of the court were allowed to wear velvet ones. The cap and cape are black; the lining by tradition can be red, green or violet. This style remains in use today in Guémène, Brittany (home of many weird hats).

This cap brings to mind the *cagoule* (cowl), the caul, our curious idea mentioned earlier. The *Capot-Ribot* is quite like the cowl, which was most widely recognized as part of a monk's attire. The cowl was also used in a much larger version for stormy weather; in this capacity it is most rightly known as *cagoule*. Today we call it a hood, and hooded parkas are everywhere to be seen. This illustrates the odd permutations of fashion: the skullcap, used to anchor down hoods, eventually grew a cape of its own. In this sense it became a cowl unto itself. But at the same time, long capes, pulled over the head for protection, evolved into cowled cloaks. These in turn became our modern hooded coats.

But the *caul*, the membrane covering the faces of some newborns, seems to be the deeper symbolic meaning of the hood, cowl and cowl-skullcap. Children born with the caul membrane (known as being "born with the veil") are considered by Europeans to be the favored child, one who is psychic (thus the term "seeing through the veil"). It is still customary in many parts of Europe to remove the caul and sew it into a cap or garment, to be worn by the lucky child ever after. We read in Richard Henry Dana's account of the sailor's life, his 1840 book *Two Years Before the Mast*, that the caul was a highly prized talisman among American sailors, who clung to them for luck. Sailors who carried their own cauls were seen as extremely lucky and gifted. Ms. Kilgour, in the same spirit, explains to us the following:

The French proverbial expression ***Être né coiffe*** (to be born with a hat on), is used to characterize those having persistent good fortune. There are many records of cauls being bought and sold... "I was born with a caul," says David Copperfield, "which was advertised for sale... at the low price of fifteen guineas."

Ms. Kilgour claims that the caul originally served as a pattern for the skullcap. She claims that because our word *caul* is short for the French word *calotte* (not exactly true: *calotte* means "small dome") there is in the skullcap an inherent reference to a caul. She refers obscurely to a "piece of black velvet, which looks... like a pancake... [that] symbolizes a caul and is worn on the head to bring the wearer good fortune." Ms. Kilgour states that this "velvet pancake" is the first piece she ever collected. But linguistic evidence is powerful when rightly used, and though "caul" and "calotte" might be related, "caul" and "cowl" are the same thing. The "caul"

gives us the modern hood, as I clarified before. Though I agree with a deeply imbedded cultural tradition linking the caul and the skullcap generally, I am not so enthusiastic about making any further such link with regards to the skullcap's origin.

The Béret

Now to the *béret!* We cannot move beyond France without reveling in the beautiful, world-famous Gallic version of the *Bluebonnet*. It is a cap of such magnitude that it deserves a section for itself. Of course, the béret comes to us courtesy of the Roman *pilus*, about 2,500 years ago- when it seems everyone in Rome was already sporting the béret in some form or another. It appeared as a brother to the plain skullcap. The béret is an oversized skullcap: the very first type was a huge skullcap laced through its edges with a thread or ribbon to pull it tight round the wearer's head.

The Roman béret (called *beretto*) in fact was used to identify social rank by way of its color- white was the highest; the most common, as with the original Greek skullcap, was black. In many dialects the Latin word for black, *nero*, became *pretto* or *preto* (Spanish *prieto*, meaning "darkie"), a corruption of *beretto*- the power of color is intensely obvious. Charlemagne, a béret lover if ever there was one, had a fine specimen collection numbering over 500. The first known use of the word "béret" dates to a 1461 text from Landes, France. The Carlists (supporters of King Charles) adopted a large red béret to show their nationalist feelings. The béret as symbol of the underdog fighting the good fight is well known. It was during the Carlist War that it became known as the *Béret Basque*.

Béret colors, sizes and adornments went in and out of style throughout the millennia in Europe and America, but it must be noted that as soon as Greco-Roman traders took it into the Basque Country, it finally found its permanent headquarters. Today of course the béret is properly labeled *Béret Basque* (note that it is never called "Béret Français"). True, the world sees France as the home of the béret, but one might as well accept the fact that it has several "homes". Still, béret lovers are thrilled when they can travel to France and bring one back. Thelonious Monk, having looked forward to a Paris concert with such an idea in mind, brought back expensive French bérets for all his friends.

Incidentally, the word in Spanish and Basque for béret, *boina*, is oddly like the Chinese word for skullcap, *bao*. We see a curious sort of circular linguistic procession in the generic terms for

“skullcap”: *baō>pilio>pilos> pilus>birrus>beretto>béret>boina* (“beret” was pronounced “berr-e”, with a strongly rolled r, in olden days). It certainly adds credence to the single-source origin of the cap, at least in terms of its name- and when a name for something is borrowed it is almost 100% probable that the thing in question was borrowed, too. Then we must consider the Latin words *beretum*, *biretum* (later *beretto*), *berettino*, and *biretta*, showing the Roman connection. But I wonder about the origin of the base word, *bero* or *berro*- like the word *phiro* in Syrian and *piro/pirro* in Greek, which mean “fruit”. The Latin rootword gives us our English “berry”. More about this will pop up later.

Interesting about the Basques is the nationalist fervor they immediately attached to the *béret*. A proud Basque will never, ever remove his *béret*- a sort of military salute is substituted for the removal of the hat whenever required. Many Basques will wear their *bérets* even on their deathbeds. Naturally, for everyday wear no color is acceptable but deep navy- like the Bluebonnet. Some time ago, each of the Basque Seven Provinces sported its own special color for *bérets*. Red and white are popular today for festivals and dances. In Rodney Gallop’s comprehensive study, *A Book of the Basques*, there are dozens of delightful photographs and line drawings showing Basque men wearing a staggering array of *bérets*.

The *béret* is actually made in slightly different ways and styles. The two types in circulation today are either one-piece or two-piece, lined or unlined, with or without the stiff leather sweatband. But two-piece designs, meaning one piece for the top and one for the underside, are rare. My collection is comprehensive, and all of them are of a single piece of 100% virgin wool except for the Parkhurst (see below) and a wool/rayon model I picked up at Target. Hat size differs from *béret* size in the world of *bérets*. After choosing his hat size, the potential *béret* buyer has to contend with the diameter of the *béret* itself. As one manufacturer brightly says: “You can have a small *béret* on a large head or a large *béret* on a small head!” The great Erasmus knew all about this: because his head was abnormally small and he was abnormally conscious of it, he never removed his huge *béret*. In any event, price depends upon two major ingredients: quality of material and outside diameter (which translates as *quantity* of material).

We must dwell a bit more on the *béret* because it has undergone many changes. The chief distinction is diameter. At one time *bérets* were huge- groceries could be fit into them. Then there are tiny versions barely covering the top of the head, commonly seen in the Basque country. The way it’s worn depends on the age of the gentleman wearing it: older fellows, especially the Basques, French and other Latins, will square the *béret*

firmly on the head leaving some excess jutting out a bit at the forehead. Any other manner of wearing it seems effeminate to these stalwart gentlemen- because the women wear them differently when they wear them at all. Others tilt it rakishly; Basque laborers have been known to shove it completely to the rear of the head, spilling it onto the collar, so as not to get too overheated during work. I have seen thin, small young ladies use the béret to startling effect by extending it full-size, in which case it looks a bit like a muffin. And of course it is a part of the *jai-alai* player's uniform.

The béret, which is sometimes whimsically called a "pancake", is allegedly known by other names depending on how it is worn. According to Ms. Kilgour, when it is worn off the forehead, after the style of the laborers, it is called a "halo". When worn flat on the head, squared in the traditional way, it is called either a "pie-pan" or "pie-plate". Personally I believe this is all nonsense; I have never heard the béret called anything, in *any* language, other than "BÉRET". Especially in the Basque and Latin languages, there is only one proper word for it.

Finally, there are the questions of sweatbands and stems. Many of the finest bérets have a leather, or at least cloth, sweatband. It provides stiffness, and has to be handled more like a hat. The average béret is nothing more than a fine piece of wool or cotton knit that can be folded, stuffed into a pocket or otherwise abused, with no danger of specific mechanical damage. This simpler original type is what everyone likes and wears most often. This design also most commonly bears the tiny stem at the top. This stem is clearly related to the skullcap of the Catholic Church, with its tiny loop for easy removal. Why such a stem exists on the béret, other than that it must have always existed, is a mystery. I suspect the stem represents the end of the wool-spinning process, and probably makes it more comfortable than knotting it. A béret just doesn't seem right without its little stem.

Modern bérets of interest are the military, *Hoquy* and *Parkhurst* styles. Hoquy is the finest béret in the world; it has been made by the Basque Hoquy Family for over 200 years. It is extremely well made of the best virgin wool, has a fine leather sweatband and a beautiful blood-red silk lining, stamped with the gold sigil of the House of Hoquy. It is designated as *impermeable*, which means "waterproof" (as opposed to water resistant). But it is pricey: @ \$50-\$65.

The Parkhurst of Canada/Louisiana is of interest because it is the only béret that is 100% combed cotton tricot, knitted. It is offered in 10.5" and 11.5" diameters, having a rather crisp, sleek line overall. This

particular style (Parkhurst sells others) is more of a summer item, being sold as sun protection due to its coolness and lightness. The trim is fascinating as it is rolled- it can be unrolled to yield more total cap volume. One of the small Parkhursts, with the trim completely unfurled and pulled down tightly against the head, is closely related indeed to the structure of the *pilos*. From the Parkhurst Company: "Long a tradition of individual expression and a symbol of classic style, the Parkhurst béret is offered in combed cotton.... Since 1926." Indeed, at \$12, the Parkhurst cotton béret is the best price value béret in the world.

The standard military béret is legendary, used the world over. In fact, the once-secret U.S. Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrolmen (LRRPs, called "Lirps" and also known as the "Black Berets"), made the béret popular in the U.S.- not the Green Berets (Special Forces) as is commonly supposed. After 1969, when the Black Berets were incorporated into the Army Rangers, the black béret came to be seen as an elite symbol. During the Gulf War in the early 1990's, when new units of Army Rangers attempted to adopt the black béret, the "Lirps" protested mightily. They felt that only veteran LRRP's deserved to wear the black béret as uniform. Because of this protest, the army assigned beige bérets to the new Rangers.

But as of June 19, 2001, in celebration of the U.S. Army's 226th birthday, the *entire* U.S. Army was given the black béret as standard uniform issue- what has to be the most fascist slap in the face ever given by the armed forces to its former and active members. The Army claims this addition to standard uniform is an honor to the Black Berets, and a symbol of the "excellence of the new U.S. Army of the 21st century." By way of consolation, the LRRPs and Rangers have been issued the khaki bérets to distinguish them. Prior to this, the only other unit allowed a béret besides LRRPs and Special Forces was the Special Airborne forces, who wear maroon bérets. The "Color Laws" once again rear their ugly hydra-like heads.

The béret has always been strongly tied to the spirit of the old Celtic Color Law. So many organizations around the world have borrowed the béret, each choosing a special color. Among those best known today, just to name a few, are the Maroon, Green, Black and Beige Berets of the U.S. Armed Forces; the dark blue bérets of the Finnish groups; the maroon bérets of the Israeli Army; the light blue bérets of the Mexican Armed Forces; the red bérets of the Guardian Angels (and other revolutionary movements); the ominous black bérets of the Black Panthers. The film "Jeffrey" spoofed the example, with the "Pink Panthers", a gay Guardian Angel group, jauntily wearing hot pink bérets. And the red béret most recently was adopted again as a symbol of the underdog- by the armed forces of Libya under Mohammar Qaddafi. This instance of the red béret as heroic

revolutionary badge is yawn-inspiring in its lack of originality; the red béret symbol goes back to the time of the Carlist War.

Military bérets have fine leather or thick cotton sweatbands and almost always some kind of external tightening ribbon or lace- and no stem. They tend to be made rather small in overall diameter (about 9.5”), and are always of stiff, thick wool. It is headgear that is efficient, staying out of the way but firmly anchored to the head, taking the punishment of hard battle, and will last for decades. It is especially reminiscent of the Scots bonnet. Any military surplus store worth its salt carries all manner of military-style bérets. The only hassle is its price tag: the cheapest obtainable military béret is about \$25, but well worth it.

These examples show us the elasticity of béret workmanship and design. Because of its essential simplicity, it is truly the “Silly Putty” of the cap world. When one wears a béret one can slide it all over the head, creating the appearance of a new cap each time- amply attested to in Gallop’s book illustrations and photos. With any change at all, in fact, a new style is born. Though it has been the traditional favorite of a few, it is now universally worn. Catholic priests all over Europe prefer them above any other headwear, and many Jews prefer them. Any person-about-town is perfectly suited in a béret- the most perfect skullcap adaptation there is.

Switzerland

There is a quaint and beautiful skullcap, known as the *Kuppa-unt-Hringe* (*Cup-and-Ring Cap*), worn by Swiss shepherds. It is unique because it is the only skullcap made of straw. It is trimmed with a ring of velvet around the trim and a second ring running around the middle of the cap. These rings are superimposed on one side of the cap with splashy embroidered flower sprays and leaves. At the top of this skullcap is a sort of pom-pom, with each strand radiating out from the center, representing the sun (or less likely, as Ms. Kilgour believes, the breast). Its lovely cup shape and the velvet rings give it its name. There has been idle speculation about this cap representing Neolithic fertility rites and various other ideas, due to the cup-holes with ring-like grooves engraved inside, which have been seen in many Neolithic-era stones. In fact Stonehenge has an altar-stone with such a cup carved into it, known mysteriously as the “Virgin’s Stone”.

Portugal

This country is not especially renowned for any significant skullcap tradition; however, the *Rosemary Cap*, known also as the *Guardian of Love*, is a silly skullcap worth mentioning because it seems to be the forerunner of the gnome's pointy cap. This Portugese oddity is a simple skullcap of blue felt, with a long, tapering tube jutting out the top. This tube was meant as a container for rosemary, thought to have magical powers. The cap is of course fashioned so that the rosemary is hanging directly over the wearer's head- this is believed to help in matters of love. It could be that the cap is a holdover relative of the pointy caps found with the Taklimakan Mummies, or an unfortunate sibling of the béret; sadly, it is more ridiculous than anything. In fact it gave rise to a sort of national Portugese cap, which was nothing more than an oversized, pointy béret. The sensible Portugese is seen wearing a béret Basque.

Italy

Here we are, finally in the Western cradle of the skullcap, home of the *PILUS*! Along with all its other offspring, its most direct descendant is the Roman Catholic prelate's skullcap, which to this day officially carries the permuted names *pilo*, *pilio*, *pileus*, *pileolus* or *pileolo*. This skullcap is unique because it has several other names still in use:

1. *Soli Deo* ("Only God")
2. *calotte* (the commonest generic name for any skullcap; in Italian *callotta*)
3. *zucchetto* ("baby gourd"- to cover the big gourd, and the most common term)
4. *beretino* ("mini-béret")
5. *subbiretum* (because it is worn under the priest's hat *biretta*)
6. *submitrale* (because it is worn under the bishop's mitre)

A Jewish writer, W. G. Plaut, claims a seventh name for this skullcap was used in Medieval times: *armuçilla*, or some variant thereof- which is clearly meant to represent a corrupted Spanish version of *yarmulke*. I find no evidence that such a term was ever used, but it is possible that the Sephardic or "Converso" Jews used the term. [We shall address this curious claim, and the truth behind it, in the section on Jewish tradition.]

The *pilus* or *pilius* can be said to be identical to the Jewish skullcap, but there is some small variance between styles: whereas the Jewish skullcap is made of four or six panels, the Catholic cap is made with eight and bears a stem at the top, making it look like half a pumpkin- hence its most commonly used name, *zucchetto* (pron. TSOO-KEH-toh). Truly the *pilius* is better made than the *yarmulke*. It is designed to nest on the head better, and it is certainly more sturdy, retaining a better shape. The pope, in good keeping with outdated Roman tradition, is the lucky prelate who gets to wear the white beanie. Because of the evils of history, there was at one time some difficulty between Christians and Jews that centered around the “Catholic *yarmulke*”. This we shall explore at length, later. Problems about who stole the skullcap tradition from whom seem to be beautifully reflected in the Catholic *zucchetto*.

(There is a Jewish joke about some Italian Jews who had relatives over from who knows where. They didn’t know the pope; they were taken to see him but couldn’t figure out which one was him. “The one in the white *yarmulke*!”, the foreigners were told.)

The Catholic skullcap is meant to be as rich and symbolic as the *yarmulke*, though no one realizes this. No one but ordained priests can wear it. The higher prelates were allowed to wear any form of silk or cloth, and the lower priests could wear broadcloth or wool. But the highest ranking prelates once had the privilege of a thin chamois leather lining to help the skullcap keep its shape. These leather linings, too, were color coded, harkening back to the Color Laws. Thus the pope wore a white skullcap lined with red; cardinals, red lined with red or green; cardinals in tropical countries, white trimmed with red piping and lined with white cloth; all bishops, violet lined with purple or red; and non-episcopal prelates wore purple with red piping and red lining, or black with purple piping and purple or red lining. The simple parish priest wore black with a black lining.

Anglican priests also adopted the plain black skullcap, and the Anglican Brotherhood of St. Gregory has a brown *zucchetto* listed in its *customary* (habit rules). But Brother Thomas, B.S.G., has told me that the order hasn’t gotten around to ordering the skullcaps! In any case, the Anglicans also use a large 6-paneled *yarmulke* with a button on top (which they call simply “skullcap”). The *zucchetto* is often found on the heads of choirgirls, and is known as the *Juliet Cap*.

The Catholic *camauro* is a fascinating skullcap that is no longer seen. Worn primarily by the popes, it was a red velvet skullcap lined and trimmed with ermine- suitably royal- and covered the ears rather like a modern ski cap. This was worn until early in the 20th century- St. Pius X was the last pope to wear it. The

camauro was sometimes seen on the cardinals of the church, but not often- and they didn't merit the visible ermine trim. (Pope Pius II granted the scarlet skullcap to cardinals in 1464, anyway.) The shape of this skullcap is significant because it brings to mind simultaneously the caul, the cape, the hood, and the skullcap- several headpieces in one. But it fit basically like a helmet, and was meant to represent the headgear of "the armor of God"- reminiscent of the leathern pilos the gladiators once wore.

That some bishops lust after the "red hat", i.e., the cardinalate, is a well known subject among Catholics. After all, these "princes of the church", heirs apparent to the old Roman senators, wield all the true power and have almost full autonomy. They run the church and elect popes. Thus it is a major event when a cardinal is created by the pope. The pope orders the bishop to kneel as he proffers the red skullcap. The pope will then press the skullcap onto the bishop's head and intone: "You are created cardinal priest [or cardinal bishop, or cardinal deacon], in the title of St. [whichever chosen saint's name is inserted]." It is an event dramatically portrayed in the 1968 movie "Shoes of the Fisherman".

It is not common knowledge that the pope often consecrates bishops and creates cardinals in secret; the new bishop in question, due to whatever complicated canonic law, must then keep his appointment a secret. He may never wear the vestments of his rank, and no one ever knows about it other than the pope and a few others. This unusual and little-known facet of the Church is represented by the secretly upgraded cleric not being privileged to wear, sometimes not even receiving, a skullcap from the pope. For a cardinal it is different.

This secretive and complicated business, represented by the awarding of the skullcap, must be investigated more closely where cardinals are concerned. The pope nominates cardinals at a secret consistory. That afternoon the nominees meet in secret at the pope's apartment, where they are given the scarlet red *zucchetto*. This is the truly symbolic moment, when the pope hands them the skullcap. Once in possession of it, they are in effect cardinals. At the next public consistory the new cardinals are officially created and initiated, where they receive the red *biretta* hat- it is the pope's choice whether to actually wait until this public ceremony to give them their skullcaps. But usually by this time they are already wearing the red *zucchetto*, as cardinals, and the awarding of the red hat is merely for public announcement.

If the nominee resides away from Rome, a dramatic pre-ceremonial process takes place: a noble guard of the pope visits the prelate, bearing the red skullcap along with the good news. Upon receiving the red

skullcap, the bishop swears his oath to go to the pope within the year to be initiated formally. Then of course, in keeping with all the secrecy business Catholics love so much, the pope often makes secret selections of bishops that he wants to create cardinals. Known as *in pectore*- “in the breast” because the pope has chosen them in his heart but not in public- the nominee must have his name publicly put forth before the pope dies. If this is not done, the nominee will not be recognized as a cardinal by the succeeding pope. There are occasions when the pope has personally given the secret nominee a red *zucchetto*, to keep for the future. This, too, is a deeply symbolic gesture again represented by the skullcap.

The Catholic color key, obvious in the present day, is: priests- black for celibacy; priests granted special privilege through office- deep purple; bishops- violet (called ‘official Church violet’ or ‘fuchsia’ by manufacturers, but properly known as “amaranth red”) for suffering and authority over priests; cardinals- scarlet (or “blood”) red to signify willingness to shed blood for the faith; and the pope’s white is for purity and authority. Below we shall see something of the evolution of the color key. Today much simpler skullcaps are used and all the prelates wear silk or cloth skullcaps (depending on the weather) with a simple cloth lining the same color as the skullcap. Prior to the 16th century most of the formal portraits of higher prelates do not show them wearing the plain beanie-style skullcap, though we know from frescoes, bas reliefs and documents that they were worn since the 13th century.

Too, back in the ages when the *camauero* was worn by the pope, the cardinals wore the white *zucchetto*. Thus prior to the 16th century, the pope was never portrayed wearing the white *zucchetto*. The violet skullcap was originally intended for cardinal priests, violet being the color then identified with blood. It was during the Middle Ages when the orange-tinted scarlet red was adopted, and the papal approval for violet skullcaps to be issued to bishops was formalized in the very early 19th century.

At all events, gone are the days when lucky lay people, worshipping Pope Pius XII, managed to swap skullcaps with him as a souvenir. They would go to Gamarelli, the ecclesiastic tailors in Rome, purchase a white skullcap and then simply wait for His Holiness along the procession line. It became a sort of tradition. Pius XII went through more skullcaps than anyone could ever imagine. To view a collection of all the swapped skullcaps would be marvelous- but if Pius is canonized, these will be second-class relics and as such remain hidden.

I have long suspected that the size and mode of wearing the *zucchetto*, especially by the pope, has a deeper, secret meaning. Many of the Catholic hierarchy wear skullcaps that are large and generous in size, perched at the back of the head. But some wear much smaller caps, which in fact look too small for them. Others tend to square the skullcap on the top of the head, as though it were a hat. Perhaps the mode of wearing the skullcap merely communicates the prelate's religious society affiliations; perhaps it represents no more than a matter of personal taste- or a bad skullcap fit.

Etiquette is elaborate though not complicated, but it can get that way if too many things are happening at once around the pope. All prelates must remove their skullcaps upon first greeting the pope, though cardinals may put theirs back on; lesser prelates may not. Any prelate greeting a superior must doff his skullcap when greeting and leaving a superior. None may wear a skullcap in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament; all must remove their skullcaps during Mass from the Sanctus until after communion, with the lesser prelates removing their skullcaps a bit earlier. The pope is included in the skullcap-removing rules, and follows the same "doffing schedule" as the cardinals. Unlike the others, however, the pope must never doff his skullcap to any person- but if he is a good man, he will do so at every opportunity. Anyway it is easy to see how the skullcap etiquette was primarily developed to offend and annoy the Jews.

Because of the other headgear mentioned, the *biretta* is worth mentioning. This large box hat, which follows the color key of the skullcaps, was a rather short-lived model hat (roughly 17th century until mid 20th) of the Roman Catholic clergy. It was worn over the skullcap, and examples can still be found and purchased. What is so fascinating about it is that it is none other than the Roman *birettum*, which in essence is the Latin word for *béret*. Though the skullcap came to be called the *subirettum*, "sub-béret", I would not be surprised to learn that the skullcap was originally called *birettum* or *biretta*. In fact today in Italy the skullcap is sometimes called *biretta in forma di callotta emisférica*.

The *Italian Skullcap*, most properly known as the *Cap of Enoch*, is by far one of the most exciting of all skullcaps. Comprised of four panels of ribbon-silk, it is identical to the *yarmulke* in almost every way: Italians, aware that their skullcap was basically Jewish, named it "Cappo di Enoch" after the Jewish patriarch Enoch. But one of the differences is the little loop of cord at the top of the *Cap of Enoch*; beneath it, attached to the inner side of the cap, is a cross. Thus the cap is the only skullcap in the world that bears an Egyptian *ankh*. It was, indeed, worn by Egypto-Greco-Roman priestesses, and like the *Capot-Ribot*, it had a cape. The men

wore it without the little cape. Today it is most commonly worn by women on the Isle of Capri, though men wear it as often.

The other major characteristic of Enoch's Cap is the coloring. Woven into the cloth in horizontal bands we find the colors that are collectively known as *Greek Key*, also called *Meander*. It is an ancient and immediately recognized color scheme. It is quite intimately related to the Celtic Color Law, probably having the same origin. The key is as follows: blue for sky (heaven), yellow for sun (light- and life-giver), silver for moon (mysticism), red for blood (human life and sacrifice), and green for earth (sustenance and growth). The horizontal bands, arranged in the shape of a square around the circumference of the Cap of Enoch, give a striking effect. To quote Ms. Kilgour: "...[T]he ancients did not decorate their headgear in a meaningless way. The colors and symbols... truly represented basic and powerful life forces." I suspect the Meander scheme as one of the major influences on the Catholic Church colors. But the Cap of Enoch did not spread very far. In fact it is probably the least known of all skullcaps.

Gladiators and athletes, Roman, Goth, Celt, and Greek alike, used the leathern *pilos* while training and in battle. It is in this sense of protection that the skullcap found its nobility: it was worn under a crown or helmet for comfort. Modern pilots also wear them beneath the helmet for comfort. Sometimes it was the foundation of a crown, and was often worn in place of the unwieldy crowns of ancient times. It is worn today by Catholic prelates in place of their ecclesiastical "crowns" and to cover the tonsure. The skullcap was also worn to anchor the cowl's hood to the head. All these traditions sprang from Rome. Finally, it is the basic *pilos* that gives us Westerners our modern knit skullcap, called a *Watch Cap* or *sailor's knit*.

Yugoslavia

For the sake of expeditiousness, I have retained the old name for a vast region of Europe. The two Yugoslavian skullcaps of interest are of the pillbox-style skullcap, which is sometimes called the *Bokhara*, after the region in Turkey where it was created. First there is the *Kapa*, a pillbox skullcap that is the forerunner of our graduates' mortarboards. It is comprised of a flat, hard circle of crimson, on which there is stamped a gold sigil of some type. The edges of the cap are black satin or silk, and are attached by coming up and over the edges of the stiff circle. This cap is beloved by the Montenegrins, and is another example of nationalist feelings

expressed in headgear. Incidentally, the black sides of the cap are in commemoration of the War of Kosovo (Kossovo), fought long ago.

The other cap is technically not Yugoslavian. The *Dalmatian Cap* comes from the region of Dalmatia, where once lived the Dalmatians, a Latin people. Sadly, these people, their culture and language were extinct by the mid-19th century. But their caps, with the unfortunate link to blood-feuds, live on, still worn by Yugoslavians living in Dalmatia. It has black tassels, is basically crimson in background color, and has lovely yellow and blue zigzags complemented by silver embroidery. It is called the Bachelor's Cap, or Bachelor's Lifesaver, because in the past it was worn by men who had "sold out", meaning they had been paid to drop out of the blood-feuds. No active feuder would hassle such a cap-wearer because they were originally worn by unmarried men uninvolved in feuds. It was by wearing this skullcap that many murderers got away.

Russia

The infamous *Shapka*, also called the *Cossack's Cap*, is nothing more than a fur skullcap. Everyone has seen the erstwhile Muscovites on television and in the movies, wearing the gigantic-sized version to help fend off the Russian winters. Lately this fur hat has made something of a splash in the West; we do not yet have the taste for the largest versions, measuring more than 2 feet by 2 feet- but the English palace guards wear them. These are traditionally made completely of lambskin, with the shaggy side out.

Much more interesting is the *Cap of Friendship*, also called the *Bokhara-Rug Cap* because the earliest versions were identical to the famous Bokharan carpets from Turkey. The skullcap is known in the Bokharan language as the *Tuibitaka*, also known as the *Tartar Cap*. This is essentially a pillbox with a pointy top, due to its construction. The edges of the slightly more modern *Tuibitaka* still bear resemblance to the rugs, but the majority of the cap is richly made and elaborately embroidered. Bokhara is already famous for its unique, carpet-like pillbox *yarmulke*, which is called simply *Bokhara*, as mentioned before. But the Friendship Cap is a symbol of adopted kinship. The idea comes from India, where two moghuls exchanged caps as a sign of friendship. In Russia, rulers adopted this custom, becoming blood brothers for life via the cap exchange.

Syria

The priests of the Syriac Orthodox Church wear a fascinating pilos called a *phiro* or *piro* (sound familiar?), which means “fruit”. Interesting, since the skullcap reminded the Catholics of a vegetable. Though we can see that our word “berry” actually comes from this word by way of the Romans, I’ve wondered if the name of this skullcap is not also somehow related to the Spanish word for dog, *perro*. Linguists have long wondered about this mysterious non-Indo-European Spanish word, the etymology of which cannot be ascertained. I make the link because the skullcap was originally mostly worn by peasants in the ancient world. They were dirt-poor and I wonder if they had to use dogskin to make their felt and leathern skullcaps. I believe that due to this, the abovementioned “hair” and “skullcap” link in the other European languages came to be rendered as a “dog” and “skullcap” link in Spain, through the good offices of the Celtiberians (and possibly the Visigoths).

In any case the *phiro* is always black in color, made of seven sections to represent the priesthood, and has black-on-black embroidered crosses at the top. All priests must wear the *phiro* at public services. It is also used to anchor down the *Eskimo* (pronounced es-KEE-moh), the liturgical hood that is worn over it (and is very sinister looking). The hood is reminiscent of the Caped Hat mentioned in our France section. But it is directly descended from the Zoroastrian and Mithraic fire-worshipper’s hood. The whole etymology question strikes me as funny: whether “dog” or “fruit”, the skullcap concept and words have certainly gotten around!

Africa and Egypt

Without prejudice, I will pause here to mention some trouble in the modern world with the symbolism, or rather the perceived message, of the Islamic skullcap. Four Middle Eastern Islamic terrorists, working under the fugitive Afghani terrorist leader Osmar bin Laden, are awaiting sentence at this time (30 May, 2001). They bombed two U.S. embassies in Africa, killing several people. Thirteen of these terrorists, including bin Laden, are still at large. Most disturbing to others who have a skullcap tradition is the insistence of these terrorists on wearing their round white skullcaps, especially in court- as though their religion entitled them to commit such horrid offenses. There is most certainly a danger that the skullcap will come to signify terrorism- it could even trigger an outlash against any skullcap. It is one thing for a skullcap to stand for beliefs- it is quite another when they are associated with terrorism and murder.

Going on to our pleasant subject at hand: the plain skullcap has made the rounds in Africa, though not all the nations wear it. But one cannot resist the *Fez*, (in Arabic called the *Tarbush* or *Tarboosh*) though it is not technically a “rounded” skullcap- in fact it is a tall cylindrical skullcap. The fez calls to mind the *muezzin*, priests of Islam, who have an interesting rule about hat-wearing: they are not permitted to wear anything that might obstruct their view of Heaven, so they use only brimless caps. We see many of them wearing Bokharan-style pillboxes or what I call “chubby cake-mold” skullcaps, since they seem to be shaped like chubby cakes. The chubby cake is a common design for Muslim skullcaps.

But the fez! What an elegant elaboration on the skullcap. Taller and more regal than the tallest pillbox, erect and either black or red as a fire engine, the fez conjures many romantic visions of the *Casbah*. But it has serious functions: it is cool in desert conditions due to its height; it anchors the veil for protection against the desert; it is also the most secure cap for all the bowing done in the Mosque, where headgear must remain firmly in place. The fez has a tassel, of dark blue or black silk, properly worn hanging at the back. The tassel, too, is functional- what is better to keep the famous flies of Egypt away? Actually, the tassel is a holdover of the old Islamic custom of shaving the entire head save for one flowing lock, by which Allah pulls the believer into Paradise. The fez can be made of any material, though the most commonly used is felt. The fez originated in Assyria millennia ago, so it is a close cousin to the *pilos*.

In Morocco, where throbs Fez City after which the fez was named, even Jews wear it. In most countries, the fez traditionally has a turban wound around it at the bottom. Interestingly, in Egypt a man may remove his fez on a hot day, but will *place it back on his head* out of respect for anyone who passes by. It is like the Basque, Oriental and Jewish customs, the opposite of Western custom. What is utterly ironic is that the fez is worn by more men in America than anywhere else: it’s probably the only distinctive feature of the Shriners!

Actually a simple skullcap appears in the oldest Egyptian tomb paintings. The Muslims of Egypt do wear a sort of common, everyday type skullcap, usually made of cloth and occasionally crocheted. The Coptic (Egyptian) Orthodox Church, which is the oldest Christian sect in the world, has adopted for its priests a sort of short, broad fez- actually more of a pillar shape with a lip jutting out around the entire circumference of the top. All Orthodox Church prelates and monks use similar headgear- and let us not forget the *claf*, born in Egypt

and worn by pharaohs, priests and priestesses. Actually, many shapes and sizes of caped skullcaps were once the norm in ancient Egypt. They also are seen on tomb paintings and in the hieroglyphs.

Naturally the Northern Countries have skullcap traditions of their own- obscure traditions that in any case are related to the Jewish and Mediterranean traditions. Most prominent is Libya, with a sort of saucer-shaped pillbox much in evidence in the cities. In Tripoli almost all the men wear them.

Most other African nations have a sort of stiff *Glengarry*. It is not known how this style came to be adopted by so many African peoples; they are distinctive only because they are two-piece, rather stiff and beautifully colored or embroidered. These are presently seen a great deal in America, proudly worn by African Americans endeavoring to commemorate their ancestry. Also commonly seen among African nations is the simple pillbox, though like in the West, it seems to be Islamic and is intended mainly for women. The stiff *Glengarry* of Africa is most commonly seen on men. It seems the *Glengarry* style has gotten around famously- there will be one last stop on our global tour where we will once again encounter it.

Israel

We shall skip over the Jewish skullcap tradition for the present, as it will be thoroughly addressed in the second section- though there is a fascinating tradition here, independent of the Jewish tradition. We shall address that in the section titled "Chameleons: the Druze".

Iran (Persia)

There is a sparkling white fez that is traditional in Iran. That said, the other Muslim traditions hold the most sway in terms of skullcap styles. Also we know something of the tall skullcaps of the mysterious Mithra cult, or Mithraics, who predated the Zoroastrians in Persia though they spread over the face of the Old World, and who were sadly wiped out by Christianity. (But not before they, along with the mysterious Druze, influenced Freemasonry among enlightened Europeans.) Mithraics had a well known skullcap tradition that somehow rubbed Christians the wrong way- so well known that St. Augustine referred to the cult members as the followers of the "man in the cap". Augustine wrote in his John I. Disc. 7, "I remember that the priests of the fellow in the cap used at one time to say, 'Our Capped One himself is a Christian.'" (Melchizedek, Baltazaar

and Gaspar, the Three Magi, are said to have been Mithraic and Zoroastrian priests.) Their book of scriptures is the Avesta.

It is the case that the Mithraics, having deeply influenced the early Christian Church, naturally became anathema and seem to have shared solidarity with the Gnostics. Their priests, striving to rise through six additional levels of priesthood, seem to have had skullcaps and pointy caps (sometimes called “Phrygian Caps”-perhaps pointy “witch” hats, skullcaps or mitres) in various colors, representing their rank. The colors were linked to animal symbols- all these totems were confiscated by the Christians. Mysteriously, any Mithraic who committed a sin was condemned, among other things, to wear a *pigskin* skullcap! Their prophet, Mithras, wore a skullcap and hood-like cap alleged to have been of Phrygian design, and it was he who originally showed all the attributes of the Christ. But unlike the Christ, Mithras emerged from a rock, stark naked and as gorgeous as a sunrise, wearing his skullcap proudly. With the Zoroastrian god showing all the characteristics of the One True God, and the Jews hard alongside, the early Christians had their hands full, indeed!

Iranian Zoroastrians have a surprisingly Judaic-like skullcap tradition of their own. In the mountains of Iran, at Chak Chak, is the Temple of Zoroaster. Allegedly around 1,000 B.C. Zoroaster (a.k.a. Zarathushtra), was the first person to teach a doctrine of one almighty god, a savior born of a virgin, and the battle between good and evil. The peace-loving Iranian Zoroastrians go to the temple, where a wood fire that Zoroaster himself started has been burning continuously for two and a half millennia. After purification, in their beautiful white pillbox skullcaps, they gather in a circle round the fire to commune with *Ahura-Mazda*, the “Lord of Wisdom”. They do not dare enter, or even look upon the fire’s light, with their heads uncovered. Zoroastrians (who call themselves “Zarathushtris”) have a very Judaic, very tenacious grip on the skullcap tradition. Their sacred writings are called the Gathas.

Zoroastrians encourage the skullcap even more than the Jews. (Their immediate, if cryptic, reply to St. Augustine’s snide comment about the Mithraics was, “*Our* prophet wore the cap too!”- what did the cap represent? The “true” god? The “true” Christianity, its priesthood and its crown?) Zoroastrians believe, among other things, that the skullcap keeps harmful cosmic rays away from the pineal gland; to their credit, they mostly see the skullcap as a symbol of keeping bad thoughts out of their minds. But they are just as serious about cosmic rays. Thus they recommend a white cotton skullcap- though most commonly seen is a rather

Christmas-like skullcap, striped red and white. Zoroastrian scholar Dr. Hoshang Bhadha writes that the skullcap “is the foundation of all our religious practices.”

I think the Zoroastrian skullcap represents more: they will not marry outside their faith, having racial purity motivations like the Hindus, and they loathe converts- attributes we shall see the Druze also share. Their skullcap tradition represents these above all. While it is true that Zoroastrianism is essentially a twisted fire-worshipping cult, making it seem extremely ancient, no one has any idea when this religion was founded. It obviously has borrowed from Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism as well as ancient pagan Persian/Mesopotamian beliefs. (They did not borrow anything from the Muslims because the Zoroastrians suffered pogroms under Islam.) As to borrowings, there are these elements to consider about the Zoroastrian skullcap tradition that link to other traditions:

1. It should be worn for identification (Mithraic, Judaic, Christian).
2. It protects the center of creative thought (Buddhist, Mithraic).
3. It “alchemizes” physical acts into spiritual reality (Taoist).
4. It warms the head- which is always healthy (Hindu, Buddhist).
5. It protects the head in all ways (Christian).

If their tradition is so vital to them, it is clear that either long ago they borrowed and cobbled together several skullcap traditions just so they could have one of their own, or they originated all the traditions as we know them. Cobbling together borrowed traditions is common among insecure pagans- and the first Zoroastrians were definitely that. Remember that these people were the first to settle among the oil fields- what must they have thought the first time lightning struck the oil? Thus the fire worship- the skullcap being adopted soon after, probably to protect the hair from singeing! Yet they are so shrouded in mystery, so timeless, that they could indeed have created the skullcap traditions of the world. The Greek name for their prophet, *Zoroaster*, meaning “he who dwells among the stars”, is at least more flattering than the Persian name his own followers gave him: *Zarathushtra*, meaning “he who seeks camels”. Perhaps they should have named him *Zaraskullcap*.

Iraq (Sumero-Babylon)

Today the Iraqis maintain the usual Muslim skullcap styles. But their ancestors, the Sumerians and Babylonians, had some interesting skullcaps of their own. Made of hand-woven straw, silk, knitted yarn, wool felt and cotton, these two “founders of civilization” probably had the very first skullcaps ever made. There is much statuary, bas relief and even painted evidence to show us that these founders of civilization were the founders of well crafted headgear, too. It was likely they who inspired the later Indo-Iranian and Chinese skullcaps and straw Collie hats.

Afghanistan

As we saw in the section “Egypt and Africa”, Afghanistan is in deep trouble. The headstrong Muslim Taliban Government, ruling with an iron fist, is torn between its own repressive practices and its need to speak out to the world. The desolate beauty of Afghanistan is spoiled over and over every day. The people suffer horribly- there are so many mines left by Russian and British forces that every day someone is killed by stepping on one. Anything that could be considered normal human pleasure and freedom is outlawed. Lately the United Nations abandoned Afghanistan, knowing that America planned to aim actual strikes against the country in retaliation for bin Laden’s activities.

The Afghanis are a brave, gentle and hospitable people, notwithstanding their fierce reputation. In spite of the entire country being a sort of ghost-town, there is life and liveliness in abundance. Every known variety of skullcap can be seen everywhere in Afghanistan- it is the most “skullcapped” nation on the planet. True to Muslim teachings, Afghanis are also the most hospitable of Muslims. Interestingly, because Afghanistan is the gateway to the Hindu Kush, the doorway to India overland, it once enjoyed some of the oldest Buddhist monasteries and statues in the world. A millennia ago, artists began to carve the Buddha in the form of a man, and Afghanistan essentially launched the Buddha we recognize today. Sadly, the government has destroyed them all, following the proscription of graven images.

This nation, which has lost so much and given so much, which has found itself sandwiched again and again between two or more great rival powers, which follows the Islamic faith to the letter and yet knows when to break the rules, which has suffered so much human loss and government sanctions, bears the skullcap

tradition proudly, stubbornly and colorfully. Because the skullcap- perhaps the only truly lasting Afghani symbol- finds its modern cradle in Afghanistan.

Chameleons: the Druze

I have inserted this unusual tradition here for two reasons: the Druze, a mysterious 'esoteric protestant Muslim' religious cult, seem to have a solid skullcap tradition- they all wear a skullcap of some kind, with deep meaning- but no one knows what it is. Secondly, the Druze are scattered all over the world, apparently comprising a separate culture- but are so xenophobic and secretive that no one knows who they are. Though today many Druze are coming out of this spiritual closet, and violently like other Muslims, many conservative Druze refuse to be open about their practices. Though deeply courteous to all others, they nonetheless think only they will ultimately escape punishment for sins. It is thought that the Druze might even be a separate culture, as they carry within their populations incredible numbers of blonde-haired, blue- and green-eyed people. Their appearance, practices and possible origins lead many Europeans to superficially copy them- thus were born the first Freemasons.

The Druze (also called Druse or Druses), are known as *Durûz* in Arabic (singular is *Durûzi*), but call themselves the *Mowahhidûn* ("monotheistic ones"- singular is *Mowahhid*). Their priests are called the *uqqal*, "sages"; the laity is called "the ignorant ones" and know next to nothing about their own faith. The Druze are centered in Lebanon at the base of Mt. Hermon and in the mountains behind the cities of Beirut and Sidon. In northern Israel they occupy the towns of Galilee and Mt. Carmel. They are in the Golan Heights and Syria as well, and many communities exist all over the world. The total number of Druze may in fact be in the millions- and all these facts make them perfect dupes for other fanatic Muslim terrorists.

Though the Druze are an 11th century offshoot of Islam originating in Egypt, they do not acknowledge any link with any religion. They have been said to be descendants of Europeans from the time of the Crusades, and many Europeans pitied them as lost, neither Muslim nor Christian, but sharing dual parentage. Druze believe they have their roots in India, and as they share India's original concepts of One-Almighty-God (no trinities for them) and reincarnation, they think they may be part of the original Indo-Aryan race. Certainly they present the appearance of an ancient and separate people with a unique faith. Still it is possible they are related to, or at least influenced by, the Zoroastrians and Mithraics as well as the Muslims- they could also be

an ancient faction of Muslim Gypsies. The Druze lost a land war with a Christian sect in Lebanon and Syria in the 1920's, and many secret Druze scriptures were discovered- thus outing them in an unpleasant fashion. The Druze were also in a way responsible for the Crusades- they were destroying everything Jewish and Christian in the Holy Land, reclaiming it as Druze-owned. And the upshot of all this was that supposedly many Crusaders remained, evolving into the Druzes!

They permit no converts, in or *out* of the faith (quite a trick); they are very secretive and prejudiced. Though they show a bit more pride today, they disguise themselves as members of whatever religious majority surrounds them, in an effort to "protect" their faith. They camouflage themselves, and pray, in Jewish synagogues, Christian churches, Zoroastrian fire temples, and Muslim mosques. This is practiced by some other Muslim sects, especially the Sunnis and Shi'ites, and is called *taqqiyah* ("dissimulation"- the opposite of simulation). Those who practice it follow the customs and religion of their surroundings, but keep their true faith alive in their hearts. Since they believe so heavily in reincarnation, it is not a problem to practice such deception- after all, one will be reborn as a Druze again, anyway! In fact they seem to present us with a very Mithraic-like philosophy, and here the lines separating the Middle Eastern faiths are extremely blurred. But where Muslims practice *jihad*, "holy war" against infidels, and publicly bear witness, the Druze do not.

A tiny minority of Jewish supply companies offer Druze skullcaps. I have seen these, and they appear to be of cotton cloth, in white or ivory ideally- they are simply called either "Druze kippot" or "Druze yarmulkes". Many of the Druze skullcaps in Israel are colorful but with muted, autumnal colors. It is also common to see Druze wearing skullcaps of the Muslim, Hindu and Zoroastrian faiths. I am surprised they do not wear a zucchetto once in a while- probably they do. Since the Druze are so secretive we don't know to what extent their skullcap tradition is original, nor do we know what the skullcaps are called by the Druze themselves, other than "Druze".

China

Americans are very familiar with the traditional Chinese silk skullcap- the *bao* (also called the *bao-shi* or *mao-tzû*, the "master's cap" or "priest's cap"). It is always deep black in color (white is reserved for funerals), and has a topknot. On the black *bao*, the knot at the top can be white to signify mourning or red to signify marriage. Its appearance is similar to the Jewish skullcap; it is comprised of 6 large panels, and its trim is two-

piece, meant to be turned back up against itself, making a very handsome headband trim. It differs from typical skullcaps in that it is worn at the level of a regular hat rather than at the back- some Chinese men wore it over the ears. It was used in ancient China to keep the men's long hair from slopping across the forehead. The great bebop composer and musician Thelonious Monk made the Chinese skullcap as popular as he made the béret- and it earned him the sobriquet "High Priest"; he looked exactly like an Ethiopian Jewish patriarch with his cap and beard.

The Buddhist priests of China also wear a Glengarry-type skullcap, often bearing designs or symbols on the front. These are not seen very much these days; a similar cap, along with a cloth sort of pillbox, is found in the Japanese traditions. It is interesting to note that although Buddhism has a tradition of Catholic-like mitre headgear, they don't generally have a tradition of wearing skullcaps beneath their mitres.

The Rest of Asia

In most Asian countries there are Muslim populations who wear their own little round skullcaps; interesting is the fact that in Asia, the sacred Muslim color green is less evident than in other parts of the world. In Japan there is the pillbox (based no doubt on the Chinese skullcap and called *boshi*); in the southeast there is no tradition at all other than a simple cloth *Glengarry*, the climate being of the sweltering sort, and the people being inclined toward nakedness. Whatever isolated skullcap traditions extant throughout small pockets of Asia came from elsewhere, some being brought millennia ago.

In the Buddhist tradition, as mentioned above, there are skullcaps to consider. There is a sort of plain pillbox, and then there is the Glengarry-type. Some of the Glengarry-type skullcaps bear the Chinese character *Fu* ("Buddha") at the front, while others bear the *savastika*, the counter-clockwise swastika that represented peace and friendship for millennia until Hitler got hold of it.

India

One of the most beautiful skullcaps in the world is the *Kulah*, originating in Delhi and the Punjab. It is composed of two parts, an upper and a lower. The upper half is made of cut, sewn velvet that is gold-wired (viz., embroidered with gold-coated silver wire), and the lower half is red cloth, commonly covered by a turban. Men from these parts of India wear the *Kulah* everywhere. A major feature of beauty in this cap is the

“goldwire” embroidery; only the Hindus seem able to achieve this delicate and astonishing art. A smattering of gold is taken and burnished on a slender rod of silver. The rod is then passed through rubies and diamonds that have tiny holes drilled into them for the purpose. This spreads out the gold into a fine, flat tape-like wire that is the thinnest known gold product. Once the optimum thinness is achieved, the flat “gold-wire” is wrapped solidly around the finest thread of yellow or orange silk, giving the appearance of a solid thread of pure gold- which in fact it is, on its surface. Once embroidered onto the skullcap, the light caught by the gold-wire embroidery is of incomparable beauty.

It is important to note here that almost all skullcap traditions in India are used as a sort of anchor for the turban- just as in other traditions it was once used as a foundation for a crown. It has been noted that wherever a turban is wound about the head of an Indian, there is a skullcap beneath it. This is quite fascinating when recalling the other traditions of consecrating the head by covering it with a skullcap, especially the Jewish and Zoroastrian traditions.

The other popular cap style in India is none other than the *Glengarry*. Commonly called *Gandhi’s Cap*, *the Symbol of the Congress Party*, this “Indian Glengarry” is the only known cap that is not only named after a person, but also symbolizes a political party. Though available even to the poorest of Indians in a wide range of colors, its alleged place of origin is in western India, where Gandhi was born. They are most commonly seen in plain white homespun cotton. Prime Minister Nehru, who wore a cap like this all his life, made it world famous.

Indians also wear what I call the “furry Gandhi Cap”, closely related to the *Shapka*. This seems a specialty in states such as Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab. The well-dressed Indian gentleman will wear this cap even in the searing, triple-digit Indian summer. The caps acquire a sort of greasy luster after having been deluged with years of sweat. It is very interesting to note again that this particular cap in the cloth version, like the Indian kilt, is believed to have originated in India- and is available in native Indian tartan. Thus the link between the ancient Russians, Aryans and their Scots cousins is blatant in the tartan kilts and *Glengarry* skullcaps native to India.

The Jewish Connection

The Shekhina, God's Presence, resides above my head. [Kiddushin 31a.]

-Rabbi Honah ben Joshua, explaining why he “never walked four cubits with his head uncovered”.

The Babylonians were the people who originally covered their heads with skullcaps. The Jews borrowed this custom, and wore the *mitznefet*, also called the *mig ba'at*. These words translate roughly as “wrapping” or “applied covering” for the head, and even Talmudic scholars are not sure if it meant a turban or a classic skullcap. Jewish scholars translate the term as “mitre”, but it could just as well have meant a skullcap.

The Jewish skullcap is most readily known by its Balto-Slavic name, *yarmulke*, also rendered as *yalmurka*. (A few semi-literate manufacturers are spelling it *yamuka* these days; but as a journalist once joked, this is bad because people would confuse it with *Yamaha*.) This word is said to come from the Hamito-Semitic phrase *Yara melekh-ka*, “to tremble beneath the king”, which translates into the Hebrew *Yare Me-Elohim*, “to stand in awe of God.” Going back to the *armuçilla* mentioned in the section on Italy, author Abram Kanof tells us about the origin of the word *yarmulke*:

Plaut [W.G. Plaut wrote “The Origin of the Word ‘Yarmulke’”, HUCA, vol. XXVI (1955)] suggests that the word [*yarmulke*] was derived from a common mispronunciation of the [Latin]... *almucella*... [a diminutive] of the Latin...*almucia* [almice or almuce, the Catholic clerical vestment].

Plaut, according to Kanof, reverses the situation described in our section about the Roman tradition—instead of *armuçilla* being a mispronunciation of *yarmulke*, it turns out that *yarmulke* is a mispronunciation of *armuçilla*! It is clear that the most logical and probable version of the story is that *yarmulke* is simply a Hamito-Semitic phrase.

The Jewish skullcap is more properly known by its Hebrew name, *kippah*; the plural is *kippot*. There is a curiously German sound to the term: in Yiddish, as in German, the *yarmulke* is called *kappel*. This word in turn is curiously reminiscent of the words we saw earlier meaning “crown” or “head”. The later Hebrew word *kippah*

is claimed by some Kabbalist and Messianic Jews to have a secret meaning. Let us have a look at it: The first letter of the Hebrew word for skullcap, *kippah*, is the letter *kav*. Now the word *kav* can mean “cloud” but more importantly it signifies the “palm of the hand”. The Jews have always had a beautiful metaphor of the clouds in the sky being the palms of God, outstretched and blessing His people. Further, Moses was wrapped in clouds while in the Divine Presence; the Divine Presence also descended wrapped in clouds. These lovely images suggest God wrapping Moses in His palms, and later wrapping Himself, to protect humans from His unbearable Glory.

In the Psalms there is a verse about God not forgetting us even if our own mothers could- because he has *covered us with the palm of His Hand*. Now, the Jews bear this in mind every morning upon rising, and join their palms together to show submission before God. In turn, God covers them with His protecting Palm- His *Kav*. So the *kippah* is representative not only of the Presence of God and the submission to God, but most importantly of the *Protection of God’s own Divine Hand*. It is a beautiful, mystical and rich symbolic tradition- even if most Jews are not aware of it.

(There is a cute joke about a little boy who had to cover his brother’s head with his hand, since it was Passover and the brother for some reason had no *kippah*. When the boy grew tired he drew away his hand- his grandfather said, “Hey, keep your hand on your brother’s head!”

Whereupon the exasperated boy said, “What? Am I my brother’s *kippah*?”)

We know that the early Jews, originally an Oriental people, had the Oriental custom of covering the head as a sign of social and religious respect- thus it was a custom already in place for the general populace. Very early it was already an acceptable emblem of voluntary religious piety, and during the 13th century the Jews adopted the habit of never removing it. Further, the wearing of the cap came to be ordained in the Shulhan Arukh, (Orah Hayyim 2:6, 151:6, 282:3). In any case, the Jews felt the Divine Presence always above them- thus they covered their heads out of respect for the Unbearable Glory of God Above.

Reporter Ari L. Goldman tells us the official history as he understands it:

...[T]he *kippah* is not based on any biblical or rabbinic law. It is a custom first recorded in the Talmud by [Rabbi Honah ben Joshua]. The *kippah* did not become normative... until the seventeenth century, when... [scholar] David Haley of... Ostrog [in Russia] declared

that Jews should cover their heads during prayer to differentiate Jewish prayer from Christian worship.

Clearly there is a big error on Goldman's part, about the 17th century. But it is true that it was not worn daily in the household until around the 17th century. Eventually, the skullcap was accepted as an identifier. The Jews, not unlike the Quakers three centuries later, would come to be ostracized as "those who never uncover their heads." This has always been the sore point in the West. Very soon after the Jews were identified almost solely by their skullcaps, the Roman Catholic Church stole the idea- though this isn't certain. Perhaps the Jewish skullcap was retained by the first Christians. But it was at the same time that the Catholics made their version of the yarmulke very prominent. Naturally the Catholics doffed their caps constantly, making quite sure the Jews took note.

This solidified the tradition that the yarmulke could be removed in certain situations, *but only for God*. This is expressed in the Hebrew spirit of *Kiddush ha-Shem*, "sanctification of God's name"- also the spirit in which the Jew never removes the skullcap. Not long after this, the Catholics developed their present elaborate ritual of doffing their skullcaps to their superiors- the wrong thing to do, in Jewish eyes. The Jews have always removed their skullcaps for mealtime prayers and other solemn occasions, when they thought that God would be directly above them. The Catholics doffed their skullcaps at every person and inanimate object that represented the Catholic God. It had always been important, and at one time absolutely necessary, for Jews and Christians to maintain totally separate identities. This both religions did with gusto and mutual contempt. For centuries they carried on: watching each other very carefully, each making sure to practice the opposite custom of the other. But it must never be forgotten that above all for the Jews, the skullcap is a sacred thing, and wearing it is for the Glory of the Lord, in sanctification of His name.

For today's Jew, the skullcap is so deep and meaningful that outsiders can scarcely comprehend just how much. An interesting opinion I read recently says that more is expected from the Jewish layperson than from the *clergy* of any other religion. The underscored idea is that all Jews are called to a sort of personal ministry, and this is one of the symbols of their skullcap. We don't really see many classic skullcaps today, but what everyone sees and recognizes most often is the Jewish skullcap. In America there has been a generations-long conflagration regarding the Jewish skullcap tradition, from simple arguing between the Jews

to state supreme court cases and a major United States Supreme Court case. Here we shall deal with the Jewish skullcap tradition at length, probing all the areas of this most famous of modern skullcaps.

The Jewish *kippah* (which we shall call yarmulke henceforth) has the simplest of all skullcap designs. Usually, 4 or 6 chevron-shaped pieces of fabric are sewn together to form the bowl-shaped cap; there may be a small button at the top and a lining. The fabrics vary unbelievably- there is no limit to color or fabric choice, although Orthodox and old-fashioned Jews stick to black velvet, satin, felt or cloth. Suede and leather ones are popular with the young. The yarmulke may be worn underneath a hat, so that Jewish and Western customs both may be given equal treatment. It is a source of pride among older Jews to wear worn, sweat-stained yarmulke, clearly bearing the imprint of the hat worn over it, showing that in their devoutness they have *never* removed it. Some wear it to bed, and some wear it even on their deathbeds, very much like the Basques with their *bérets*.

The Jewish skullcap design is more or less dictated by tradition. An exception is the beautiful *Tasseh*, a silver-wire skullcap. The wire is finer than human hair, and is beaten flat to create designs such as the *Mogen David*. Then the front half of the yarmulke is dipped in a pure gold wash, which is the part of the skullcap that remains visible. The rest of it (the silver half) is covered by a veil or shawl. Though worn by women, I suspect that the *Tasseh* was once universal among the Hebrews. Note its relationship not only to a ruler's crown, but also to the *Capot-Ribot*, in that it is used not only as an accent but also as an anchor for fabric worn atop the head. There are no new *Tasseh*, because the art of manufacturing the miraculously fine wire is a lost one. Fine lace or lightly crocheted white yarmulkes are the rule for women.

The second exception to the rule is the beautiful white Polish yarmulke. White yarmulkes are worn on high holy days by everyone; this particular model dates from the 18th century. It is a normal yarmulke but has a wide trim, beautifully emblazoned with Hebrew prayers and generously embroidered. This was worn by the men only, of course; the women in the East almost always wore veils. The exception to this is the *tasseh* already mentioned.

The attention given to the yarmulke, its quality and physical condition is interesting. On the one hand, the wearing of it is supposed to symbolize the equality of all Jews as well as their piety and devotion. But on the other hand, many Jews complain that the skullcap is the most obvious class-segregator, since the rich

Jews have beautiful, expensive skullcaps- and the poor Jews don't. This is what may have led the Reformists to do away with the skullcap, because the ultimate Jewish symbol of personal piety was more often a malapropos show of wealth. Yet Judaism itself has urged all followers to dress well and with pride; doesn't the idea apply to the yarmulke? For instance, many Jews scowl at the unfortunate fellow who has a skullcap that shows creases- evidence that it is more often folded and put away than worn. But perhaps this unlucky fellow is being singled out simply because likes to rotate his skullcaps to preserve and take care of them! But it wasn't meant to be such a picky subject.

In his beautiful book 9 ½ Mystics: The Kabbala Today, Rabbi Herbert Weiner writes about one of his masters and mentors, the great Ukranian-born Rabbi S. Z. Setzer. Rabbi Setzer was a sort of unconventional but saintly man, once powerful and influential in Jewish circles. He had published countless writings and books, in addition to being one of the original rabbis who re-instituted the use of Hebrew as a daily language; his name had been universally known. Broken down, old and poverty-stricken when Rabbi Weiner met him, Rabbi Setzer had not given up his studies nor sharing his knowledge- even as he did his work in a borrowed office throughout the night. But let us hear Rabbi Weiner's words:

Once, a bearded rabbi of the neighborhood walked into [Rabbi Setzer's] office in error, and noticed that Setzer was bent over the sacred text of the Zohar and was not wearing [a yarmulke]. Rebuked by the rabbi for handling so sacred a text without proper respect, Setzer exclaimed: "You- you are the one who should be ashamed, not me. You come in and see somebody sitting alone and studying Torah for the honor of Torah. You don't think to yourself how good it is that in these days it is still possible to find a man who sits alone at night and studies the holy word. *All you can think about is a hat.* [Italics mine.]

What a story! In any case, within the various Jewish communities troubles began brewing. Around the early 19th century the Reformists, a new Jewish sect, began causing a stir. In an effort to minimize and "Westernize" Judaism, they eschewed all old traditions, customs and religious paraphernalia. They issued their battle cry: *Off with their yarmulkes!* For the Reformists, Judaism had become stagnant, rank with ridiculous old practices, superstitions and paraphernalia that no one really wanted to understand anymore. The poor skullcap

ultimately came to symbolize the hard feelings between sects- probably an extension of the abovementioned problem between poor and rich Jews. More than ever, the Orthodox Jews retreated under their worn black velvet skullcaps. The Reformists declared the skullcap anathema. Orthodox Jews, upon mistakenly entering Reformist “centers” thinking they were regular synagogues, would immediately be confronted by the demand that they remove their yarmulkes.

Soon a new movement popped up, the Conservative Reformists (or “Conservationists” as I like to call them). This new sect agreed that Jewish practices and paraphernalia had grown stale, but felt there was merit in rediscovering ancient roots. This philosophy, of course, came ultimately to be symbolized in the skullcap again. The Conservatives wore the skullcap, sometimes. By this time a new group, the *Lubavitcher Hassidim*, made its appearance. Ultra-conservative in their orthodoxy, the Hassids fully brought back the skullcap tradition; soon they earned a position which offered relief to the Orthodox, little comfort to the Conservatives, and a huge headache (and embarrassment) to the Reformists. Now no one could ignore the yarmulke and its implications.

Early in the 20th century, with the Zionist Movement rapidly growing, the yarmulke acquired a whole new dimension in socio-political significance and symbolism. By this time even the most progressive of Reformists wore them. There are some charming photos of Einstein, the atheist, playing his violin at a Berlin synagogue with a huge black skullcap firmly anchoring down his unruly hair. Soon, skullcaps were available in many colors, fabrics, and sizes. They had come to represent exactly where the wearer stood in matters of sect, orthodoxy, and Zionism. After the Second World War, the yarmulke-as-symbol issue escalated. Even the newest sect, the Messianic Jews (“Jews for Jesus”), held steadfastly to their special yarmulkes bearing the embroidered Hebrew phrase *Y’shua ha-Messiach*, “Jesus is the Messiah”. Soon, gay Jews were wearing rainbow-colored and tie-dyed skullcaps. The skullcap was also steadily shrinking in size, to half its original diameter.

The most defiant of all the earlier Jewish skullcap innovations was the one adopted by the young: jet black, crocheted or knit, the size of a small coaster and held in place by special clips or bobby pins. They were called *kippah serugah*, “knit skullcap”. These tiny things clearly broadcast one message: *I am a Jew but I have no desire to associate with you*. These yarmulkes were called “Pepsi Cap” yarmulkes because they seemed to have been traced from a pattern of the bottom of a Pepsi can, or because they were thought bottle cap-sized.

The other sects were disgusted with these young upstarts, except for the delighted Reformists. But now there were plenty of innovations to thrill the senses. Even the Sephardic Jews, who have no skullcap tradition at all, borrowed it proudly. Orthodox rabbis and the *Lubavitcher Rebbe* himself were wearing more daring designs (for them, at least). Once again, positivity of spirit prevailed, and the skullcap came to represent the pure joy of Jewish spirituality.

It was during this time, from the 1950's onward, that many generations of Jews were donning skullcaps for the first time in their lives; it had been chosen as a special symbol among the Jews who survived (and suffered losses) in the *Shoah*- the Holocaust. The yarmulke came to represent the resistance against the pogroms. During this period, even the elderly were pleased to see *any* kind of skullcap on the heads of the young- any skullcap was better than none. This sigh of relief ("Ahh, a young person wearing a yarmulke!") was sorely needed in Judaism.

Here again, let us see what Ari Goldman states about this:

The size and shape and even the color [of the yarmulke] give a clue to the beliefs and practices of the wearer. Large black felt *kippot* are worn by [Hassids and other Orthodox Jews]... Large knit *kippot*, in muted blues or browns, are worn by... ardent... Zionists... Smaller knit *yarmulkes* with bright colors or small suede ones, some decorated with action heroes, are worn by the modern Orthodox.

Goldman is right on the money with the "action heroes" remark- though the Reformists are the ones who embrace newer designs more readily than the Orthodox. In any case, what constitutes a "newer" design is already in question. Suede, cloth and leather yarmulkes bear every conceivable sort of design, from basketballs and baseballs to cartoons. I have recently seen Pókemon yarmulkes; it's all in an effort to get the kids to wear them happily. Here again we have an example of Jewish flexibility and practicality- a yarmulke is not too good for sports, Scooby Doo or Casper the Ghost. Ah, America!

But the freedom of America would soon prove that the different Jewish sects could not handle freedom well, another sad fact sadly made manifest by the skullcap. Shouts from the ultra-orthodox side, that the Reformist and Conservative Jews were not Jews at all, would rankle and resonate for generations. The

development of hatred among Jews for the Messianic Jews would grow steadily- new laws would be created to include the “offenses” committed by these so-called defecting Jews. The changes in philosophy and practice would reach a pitch. A Canadian rabbi managed to sum it up optimistically: “My grandchildren’s Judaism... will be different than mine, as mine is different from that of my grandparents. But I hope to share in the Judaism of my grandchildren.”

The State De-caps the Masses

Happily the Government of the United States... gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance.

-President George Washington, writing

to the community at Touro Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in America

Too often the state proves the paranoia of its most alienated citizens.

-Ellen Goodman

At the peak of such jubilation, and in the midst of all the nasty shouting, yet another tall, horrid shadow fell upon the Jewish faith: the United States Supreme Courts. Case after case, complaining about 1st Amendment rights violations pertaining to the yarmulke, went before district courts- which almost always ruled in favor of the Jews. But each case was reversed by the state supreme courts with two exceptions- one in which the state court reversed a lower ruling in favor of the yarmulke, and one in which the petitioner lost in the U.S. Supreme Court after the usual state reversal of his district case triumph. We shall shortly examine all these.

These 1st Amendment yarmulke cases center around three places: schools, courthouses and military grounds, the true shrines and temples of America. In all cases but the one favorable case, the rulings determined the following:

1. That a skullcap is too dangerous to wear under the circumstances in question.
2. That the skullcap is a religious “preference” and not “obligatory” (which depends on how one interprets what is “obligatory”).

3. That in any case, it is not any state, public, civil or military institution's place to support 1st Amendment issues.

It is important to notice the caution of these decisions: separation of church and state is eminent, and the courts worked toward not favoring the Jewish religion. But as we shall see, these decisions were in fact clear constitutional violations. *None* of the cases involved the constitutional danger of preferring a particular religion. In fact, finding that no state institution need protect 1st Amendment rights is the obvious attempt by the courts to justify their un-Constitutional rulings. Let us begin with the case that is considered the primary standing case-law. It is the only United States Supreme Court ruling on skullcaps thus far, and has been called a sanctioned fascist decision.

This is the case of *Rabbi S. Simcha Goldman v. Caspar W. Weinberger, Secretary of Defense, et alia* (1986). Rabbi Goldman was an Air Force lieutenant serving as a military base psychologist. He insisted upon wearing his yarmulke on duty, and was repeatedly told to remove it because he was "out of uniform": regulations stated that only military police could keep their heads covered while indoors. Rabbi Goldman was ultimately court-martialed after openly refusing to comply. He saw that it is fine for *Christian* chaplains and Catholic priests in the military to retain the primary symbol of their religious beliefs. The rabbi brought suit and won, only to be reversed by the state. He then obtained a *writ de certiorari*, the right to be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court, and sued then-Secretary of Defense Weinberger and the entire Air Force.

To keep a long miscarriage of justice short: in the majority opinion Chief Justice William Rhenquist wrote that the court had to give "great deference" to the military; that the military is under no constitutional mandate to uphold or protect 1st Amendment rights; and that in any case there was no infringement upon the rabbi's rights. Rhenquist further ruled that the "[military] has no business drawing distinctions based on religious differences." We see the earlier three points common to these cases brought to fruition by the ignorant Chief Justice, who basically ruled that *no military member has or deserves 1st Amendment protection*.

To their credit, the minority judges wrote a scathing dissenting opinion of great depth and beauty. It said that the court had failed to protect and guarantee Rabbi Goldman's 1st Amendment rights, because it would have been a harmless concession to allow him to wear his yarmulke as part of his uniform. The dissenting judges also demanded to know how the Air Force could justify its stance that a skullcap "interfered... with... discipline and uniformity." Thus throwing out the bogus majority opinion fear of mingling church with state and

preference of a particular religion, the dissenters cut to the heart of the matter: *How can a yarmulke be a violation of anything?* In a footnote, one dissenting judge wrote about the ancient and powerful symbolism represented by the skullcap, but to no avail. Even after all the compelling evidence in favor of the rabbi, the court rendered a decision many Jews characterized as a typical ruling by “Reagan’s Fascist Court”. This decision stands unchallenged to this day. Also due to this case, the armed forces of Great Britain have since issued standard military skullcaps to all Jewish members who wish it. Leave it to the English to teach us a thing or two about true democracy!

The earlier, equally seminal cases concerning the wearing of yarmulke are:

1. *Ronald Harris v. New York State Athletic Commission (1977)*- In reversal of Queen’s County Supreme Court, which had granted pro boxer Harris the right to wear his yarmulke during matches, the NY State Supreme Court ruled that “[those who ordered Harris to remove his skullcap were] prompted by safety reasons... [which was] proper exercise of the state’s police powers, and did not infringe upon [Harris’] freedom of religion.”

2. This is the only positive ruling regarding the wearing of yarmulkes: *Close-It Enterprises, Inc. v. Mayer Weinberger (1978)*- Westchester County Supreme Court held a trial in June, 1977. Rabbi Weinberger, defendant in the case, was ordered at the trial to remove his skullcap because it would interfere with impartiality- an excuse often used to exercise intolerance. Of course he refused, and opted to be excluded from the proceedings which directly affected him. (Legend has it that the rabbi “stormed from the courtroom”.)

The NY State Supreme Court later criticized the situation, ruling that “the defendant should not have been placed in the situation of having to choose between [either] protecting his legal interests [or] violating an essential element of his faith.” The state supreme court further ruled that a yarmulke would have had no effect on the trial at all. There was no reason to suspect that Rabbi Weinberger was attempting to appear as anyone other than himself, which is the only reason a court has for issuing such an order. Therefore a fair trial could have been held without ordering the rabbi to divest himself of his most important religious symbol. (This ridiculous scenario actually stemmed from an earlier case in which an attorney, who was a defrocked Catholic priest, insisted on wearing clerical garb in court!) Amazingly, this positive ruling is never cited in any yarmulke cases, and it had absolutely no weight in *Goldman*.

3. *Murray Bitterman v. Secretary of Defense, et alia (1982)*- Sergeant Bitterman, an air traffic controller in the Air Force, filed suit after requesting and being denied permission to wear a yarmulke while on duty. He had not worn one before due to the prohibitions in AFR 35-10 (Regulations of Dress), though he finally decided to ask permission because it would not in any way have interfered with his job performance. Several witnesses were called to testify in this extraordinary case, offering absurdly negative viewpoints on the impact of wearing a skullcap. A general even testified about the danger of a yarmulke. The court found that it was “intrusive” and “undermining of morale” to allow Sgt. Bitterman to wear his yarmulke while in uniform.

What is truly pathetic about this ruling is that the court went so far as to cite a minor Illinois case to force their point. Some years earlier, an Illinois high school sued and lost to the state high school association, because the basketball team members were not allowed to wear their yarmulkes during games. In fact the team had been ordered prior to a game to remove their yarmulkes as a safety move (sound familiar?). The court ruled that the right thing had been done, because allowing skullcaps to be worn in the heat of a sports event would be extremely dangerous- it could even open the school system to lawsuits.

Following the lead of this ridiculous Illinois case, the court in *Bitterman* ruled that his yarmulke was a “danger” and in any event a “personal religious preference” and not a “requirement” of faith. (Note the flimsy language- the same language used in *Goldman*.) As ever, the emphasis was on the religious importance of wearing a skullcap. Clearly the courts do not think a skullcap counts for much in the Jewish religion, and is not worth protecting.

The Adventures of Baruch Cohen, Attorney-at-Law

There are some awful yet exciting skullcap-related events, though not court cases, experienced and documented by Attorney Baruch Cohen of California. His colleague, a litigator called Mr. Fried, was ordered to remove his yarmulke in a Houston, Texas court. Fried was there to testify as a witness for the defense; not wanting to jeopardize the case, Fried complied. Later, after Fried filed a complaint against the judge with the Texas Judicial Council, Cohen filed a formal complaint as well. Cohen writes eloquently in his internet article about the whole experience, and about the beauty of the yarmulke. He also states that *he* has never been

hassled about it at the bar since beginning his practice. Sadly, the Judicial Council in Texas did nothing about the complaints.

Mr. Cohen is passionate about the yarmulke because of some significant experiences he has had- and also because he considers wearing the yarmulke *Kiddush ha-Shem* ("Sanctification of God's Name"). A young Jewish fellow in Ojai, California, after reading Mr. Cohen's article, was inspired to rediscover himself- and he put on the yarmulke. He contacted Mr. Cohen to tell him about his first enlightenment coming as a direct result of Mr. Cohen's article. One day in court, the young man was brusquely ordered by the bailiff to remove his yarmulke. The fellow ran to the phone, first to call Atty. Cohen, then to call his mother. After some activity, the upshot came when Atty. Cohen contacted the judge to inform him of the event. The judge told Mr. Cohen, "Consider the matter resolved." The judge allowed the young man his yarmulke and reprimanded the bailiff- a win-win situation, Mr. Cohen would say. Sadly, the other result of this event was that Mr. Cohen had a small altercation trying to keep the media away!

Mr. Cohen's other adventures have been less pleasant. Once, Mr. Cohen was before a judge, seeking a writ. The judge not only wore his own yarmulke proudly on the bench, but was in fact the first judge Mr. Cohen had ever seen doing so. Mr. Cohen, with his yarmulke firmly in place, was told by the judge, "Don't think you're going to get this writ just because you're wearing a yarmulke." Offended that the judge thought he was trying to pull a fast one by wearing the yarmulke, Mr. Cohen promptly gave the judge a good lecture; later he reported the judge for misconduct. The judge tried to apologize, even going so far as to call Mr. Cohen's rabbi- but Mr. Cohen is a tenacious man.

When Mr. Cohen was in his last year at law school, he was granted an interview which carried with it an incredible offer. (Mr. Cohen says he could not fathom how he'd gotten it.) He went to the dean, who told him to leave his yarmulke at home- the firm was very WASP and the yarmulke could cost him the offer. Mr. Cohen left off his yarmulke, went to the interview, *and there was the interviewer wearing a yarmulke*. This experience deeply stung Mr. Cohen. One can see why.

Obviously this vicious chapter in American history is far from being completed. The arguments in schools, the military, civil services and courts continue *ad nauseam*. Now fewer and fewer Jews are capitulating with orders and requests to remove their yarmulkes, and a good fighting spirit has emerged because of all this buffoonery. Jews everyday are facing intense but cleverly sheathed anti-Semitism, and

often it ends up being represented by the skullcap. Like the asinine judge in Atty. Cohen's account, the worst of the anti-Semites are professional people who know better because they work with Jews. In many situations, Jewish professionals themselves are responsible for the bother.

What Attorney Cohen (and I) did not know is that long ago all the major rabbinical councils decreed that the skullcap can be put off in the workplace if there is a danger or risk of some kind involved in wearing it. But this ruling is not exactly popular or well known. Still, as the minority opinion writer stated in *Goldman*, we must not fail to perceive the venerability and gloriousness of the skullcap tradition- a tradition as noble, vital and important as any. Once we have imprinted firmly upon our minds the richness of the skullcap as a powerful symbol, it can never leave us. Humility, self-discipline, scholarship, royal stature, fear of God, respect, protection, meekness- all are included in the language of the skullcap. When we can understand that it is not only a Jewish custom but a universal one, the skullcap leaves the landscape of our parallax views and takes its proper place as a metaphysical as well as social symbol. It is not only a symbol of 'religiosity' *per se*; it is the embodiment of the suffering, movement, and history of humankind- especially Jewish humankind.

A Few Observations and Comments on Sizes, Buying and Wearing a Skullcap

Almost anywhere in the world, a skullcap is appropriate. No one wearing a skullcap would be viewed as an eccentric, and this is important- though in most countries the wearer *would* be thought to be Jewish.

Skullcaps are not yet entirely out of the modern eye. Though the classic skullcap seems almost entirely gone from present Western fashion (outside the Jewish faith), it remains well known and commonly seen- albeit in altered forms.

Motorcycle gang folk have made a new industry out of skullcaps (they charmingly call them "do-rags"), which originated in the biker world as a kerchief or bandana tied around the head. They did this, of course, to protect the head in general, and in some cases to identify their gang affiliation. At the close of the year 2000, young black men adopted a very sheer, tight-fitting skullcap made of ladies' nylons. This habit began the 1970's, when shower caps were all the rage in black fashion. This trend in turn led to the snipping and re-shaping of ladies' nylons into skullcaps. It became so popular that store-bought skullcaps of this type are common. The general theme here seems to be to protect the hair, or at least the hairdo.

Another short-lived skullcap fashion popped up in the mid-1990's, which was no more than a cloth baseball cap *sans visor*. It sported colorful trims made of ribbed knit material. These charming caps, though never gaining wide popularity, were very attractive, and evidently the style was introduced by the hip-hop scene. I suspect the cap never caught on because it is just as easy to buy a baseball, golf or fishing hat and trim off the visor or brim. But as of mid-2001, the beanie is coming back. Unfortunately with today's ignorance, "beanie" could signify a beanie, or it could mean a knit sailor's cap or Watch Cap.

We have all seen the pope, his bishops and cardinals on television and have noted their skullcaps. We have at least heard of the Jewish yarmulke, if not seen one, and they are much in evidence. A famous photo of the year 2000 vice presidential candidate Joe Lieberman shows him proudly wearing a small, bright violet skullcap. (During the campaign, white leather yarmulkes imprinted with the Gore/Lieberman campaign logo were briefly popular. Lieberman was later castigated- by Jews- for taking advantage of his religion to win an election.)

Then there is the favorite story about Einstein vacationing in the Bahamas. He was caught out on the beach one day and realized he had forgotten his favorite sun hat. In an instant of brilliant thinking, he pulled out his handkerchief, knotted the four corners- and presto! He had fashioned a skullcap. The people who were with him never forgot this interesting and amusing scene, and there are several charming photos of Einstein wearing his home-made skullcap, looking out pensively toward the sea. So not only the Grunge scene but the bikers, too, owe Einstein a debt.

What if the Average Joe or Suzy Q wants a skullcap? Today, the most commonly available commercial skullcap is the Jewish yarmulke. There are dozens of stores and manufacturers; it is only a matter of finding the appropriate size. The average diameter near the top of the skull (where a skullcap would be worn) is roughly 6½". The average modern yarmulke size depends on two qualities: whether the spirit behind it is traditional, and what the material is. The more traditional caps, made of satin, velvet and moiré, run between 6"- 6 ¼" in width. The new-fangled ones are a mere 5", and are pancake-shaped. This type has to be held on the head with "yarmulke clips"; suede and leather models especially are notorious for such microscopic proportions. Most companies offer proper-sized models, but never in suede or leather. It is best to call and ask about size availability.

There is another good reason for calling: sometimes manufacturers reveal only the overall diameter of the skullcap instead of its “cap-size” measurement- and they don’t bother to point this out unless pushed. But if so, a good rule of thumb is to go with a minimum 9” overall diameter, which will measure 4 ½” from top center to trim edge. This is just over 6” in cap-size diameter, which the manufacturers call the “width”. Some manufacturers offer extra large skullcaps called “skullcaps” due to their shape, which are designed to be pulled down squarely onto the head like an ordinary hat. The famous photo of Einstein in the Berlin synagogue shows him wearing such a cap.

Hat and Head Measurements

There is one and only one quick, easy way to determine hat size, and that’s to go to a store and try on all the hats. Then note the size of ones that fit. But the *proper* way to determine hat size is almost as easy: take a soft tailor’s tape and measure all the way around the head, about ½” above the ears. This gives the head’s *circumference*- that’s where a normal hat or cap would sit. Then divide this measurement by 3.145 (that’s pi rounded up to the highest thousandth decimal place- I call it “Hatter’s Pi”). The result, which is the *diameter* of the head, gives the hat size. Of course this number will have to be converted to inches, then rounded up to the nearest eighth of an inch if necessary. This is how it’s done in America.

I find that it is very smart to use a tape that shows metric next to the inches. The average circumference of the head is 58cm, and this translates to hat size 58. But in America, it is something of a battle: for instance, my head is 22 7/8” in circumference and that’s exactly 58cm; this is expressed most accurately as 22.8”. Divided by Hatter’s Pi it is 7.25”, which is 7 ¼”- and that’s my hat size. But see all the converting I had to go through? And I lucked out because my head size falls exactly into a certain hat size; some are not so lucky. For those having lots of trouble, just find a hat size chart, get your circumference measurement in centimeters and find out what that equals in American hat sizes. But BEWARE: hat companies are notorious for inaccurate charts, which is why I suggest you spend some time on the math and do it all yourself. But whichever way you obtain your hat size, you will then be ready to judge which size skullcap works best.

One last point on hat sizes: there are four hat sizing systems in use today. *Know your hat size equivalent in all these size systems.* What we discussed above, head measurements in inches, is American

style. The British use a slightly skewed hat size system- it's about 1/8" smaller than U.S. Then there is the rest of the world, which generally uses the metric system. Thus they simply require the customer's head circumference (not diameter) in centimeters. Finally there is the *Punti* system, used in Great Britain by Hats UK, and originating in Italy. It seems this system was used for hoods and cowls- but even the English manufacturer who once used it doesn't know a thing about it. The kind Mr. Paul Bennett, director of the excellent Hats UK website, sent me an e-mail telling of how the gentleman at the hat company showed him a ruler with American hat sizes and the corresponding *Punti* sizes. *Punti* is Italian for "point", and this system cannot be jibed with all the other hat sizing systems. For example, I know my hat size (7 ¼) is 5 ½ in the *Punti* System. All I have discovered about *Punti*, at least where my size is concerned, is that my size in that system is exactly the same as the measurement from the crown of my head down to where my hatline is. Also I discovered that *Punti* appears to employ *pi*-plus-one (4.145) in its calculations.

A final piece of advice: be sure to call any hat company to find out whether they are one of the many dastardly companies that use their own random hat sizing system.

To return to our main topic: the only discomfort in buying a yarmulke is the mild embarrassment that arises when the dealer discovers *you ain't Jewish* (assuming you aren't in fact Jewish- if you are, go find your Great-Uncle Schlomo's yarmulke). What I have found in research is that, though the Jewish community may be a bit wary, no Jew objects to Gentiles wearing yarmulkes- so long as there is no attempt at impersonation or fraud. There is quite a bit of concern in the Jewish communities over precisely this issue: they have no tolerance for the Messianic Jews, who insist upon having their cake and eating it too. In fact this sect, like the first Christians, is exclusively Jewish in origin. But the Jews do not want these people calling themselves Jews or wearing the yarmulke *as Jews*. Of course, no Gentile should run around trying to pose as Jewish- and the Jews see the Messianic Jews as doing precisely this. But I do not see this as any kind of problem anywhere in the world; Gentiles aren't lining up around the block to pose as Jews. *Anyhow, I say this is America, and we can wear what we like!* To their credit, Jews are also very much against forcing Gentiles to wear a skullcap at any function. It is very rude for a Gentile to go, head uncovered, into *schul* (synagogue)- but if he or she is against the skullcap, Jewish laws say he or she must not be forced to wear it.

The average person will find NOTHING off-the-shelf, unless there's a Jewish religious supply store nearby. So, a fun alternative is to make one's own skullcap. There are cloth and crochet patterns available on the internet, and it's worth a try to get a cheap cap and chop off the brim/visor. I heartily DO NOT recommend trimming back a regular knit cap- they are not made to take such abuse, and the result of any trimming will be a useless rag. (I've tried it.) Too, an adventurous spirit might try his or her luck in a Chinatown, where many shops offer the traditional black silk Chinese skullcap. Costume shops carry the Chinese *bao* every now and then.

The only other alternative is the Catholic *zucchetto*. In America there are a few dealers, but any Catholic supply store should be able to provide one via special order, in either black, purple, red or white. Catholic dealers couldn't even imagine the horror of a layperson ordering priest's vestments, but there is no law (outside Catholic Canon Law) preventing it. But out of plain respect for the Church hierarchy, attempting to buy a zucchetto is really not so easy, unless it can be bought directly from the dealer with no questions. This in spite of the abovementioned story about Catholic faithful purchasing white skullcaps in order to swap with Pope Pius XII. But then, this was a special case, and the ecclesiastical tailors didn't mind the business. I will mention again that the Catholic "yarmulke" is much better made and fitted than the Jewish types. It is comprised of 8 panels, is well-tailored and well-lined, with a cute loop of cord in top for putting it on and removing it. The zucchetto is offered in small, medium and large sizes, which pretty much cover any head size. It holds a good shape and looks dynamite- just check out the pope next time he's on television.

The Circle (Hemisphere, That Is) of Life

There is much to be explained about the actual construction of the skullcap in its modern form. Though this section might seem boring, or a bit "out of left field", it will be abundantly surprising to learn about the difficulties involved in manufacturing skullcaps. Here will be addressed the basic shape and construction, and more details on how the different traditions part ways.

A skullcap is a three dimensional hemisphere. Common geometric knowledge tells us that to construct one, for instance out of cloth to make a skullcap, we must attach several rounded triangles (known in the business as *chevrons*) to each other, beginning at the apex, and down one side. We keep attaching them until

the hemisphere is closed, and PRESTO!- a skullcap. Geometry also tells us that the more triangles we use for this, the more perfect the hemisphere. The less triangles we use, the less perfect the hemisphere. If we use only four large triangles we have a pyramid- not a hemisphere! Its bottom is square and the top comes to a point- not a very flattering or well-fitting skullcap.

Many *yarmulkes* are made in the four-part form. And they look it- yuck! But many are made in the six-part form, looking and fitting much better; the old American beanies and the Chinese skullcap use the six-part form. The Syrian Orthodox skullcap is made in seven parts (reminiscent of the Mithraic priesthood levels). The Roman Catholic *zucchetto* is made of eight-parts; it is the nicest looking and best fitting available. Imagine what a beautiful skullcap would result from using *eighteen* parts! Of course, it would have to be sewn with a needle the thickness of a human hair....

Another bad feature of the *yarmulkes* is the poorly made lining. It is usually a smaller skullcap made in four parts and simply sewn into the trim- the only place where it is attached. Often these linings are ill-fitted and they deform the skullcap shape. The Catholic skullcap at least has the lining attached to every individual triangle before they are all sewn together, forming a good, stiff, tight lining. The other lining used is a chamois leather, which gives an even stiffer look to the finished skullcap.

So, the average head is about 22 $\frac{7}{8}$ " in circumference, which is about a size 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ (that is, 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ " in diameter). A skullcap will sit a bit higher, so it will have a circumference of about 20"-21", giving its diameter-size at roughly 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". From the top center to the trim it will be about 5"; its overall diameter will be about 10"-10 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". This in turn means that the triangles that make up the skullcap will have a length of over 5"; how many triangles used will give the needed measure of the base of each triangle. Allowances have to be made for seams and hemming the trim, of course- and the apex never comes to a sharp point, but is slightly flat. Then the triangle edges should overlap in the order they are applied. Too often this isn't done- bad move.

Where Exactly Does It Perch?:

How a Skullcap Is Worn

All Jews who wear the *yarmulke* follow a simple rule: *wear the skullcap such that it can be clearly seen by observers, from any angle.* This seems like a generally good rule of thumb when trying out skullcaps,

because once a skullcap has been obtained or made, the subject of wearing the skullcap, or rather, its best position, is in order. There is some argument about where exactly the “crown” of the head is. Let us first consider the bones involved: starting at the forehead is the *frontal* bone, which runs up to the exact top-center of the skull. Next is the *parietal* bone, which runs all the way back down to the middle of the back of the head, and is commonly called the “skullcap” (hint) or “brain-pan”. The last quarter of the head, running to the base of the skull, is the *occipital* bone. Ideally a skullcap will cover the parietal bone, which comprises roughly one third of the skull. In a few cases the cap covers a bit of the frontal bone. Thus the parietal bone is the true “crown” of the head. Since there are varying sizes of skullcap, it is really up to the skullcap to let the wearer know where it will sit best.

The ideal shape of the skullcap is “head-shaped”! The skullcap basically should have a bowl or dome shape to it, so that it can nest on the back or top of the head. Larger caps are worn over the entire head like a regular hat; the smaller ones have to be perched at the back or any slight gust will carry it away. A shaved or closely cropped head, of course, will encounter less trouble from skullcaps than a hirsute head. As stated, the only difficulty a wearer will encounter is with the traditional Reformist yarmulke- it is as small and flat as a silver dollar pancake, and requires special clips or bobby pins to keep it on. I mean no disrespect, but only Jewish folk with an axe to grind will wear this flimsy *flap* of material that doesn’t deserve to be called a skullcap.

In ancient times, the skullcap was formed out of a single piece of cloth material, or two to three pieces sewn together. It was simple enough to achieve a more or less proper fit. As we know, skullcaps soon came to be made of several sections, sewn together to form a hemispherical shape. In this method, chevron or triangle shapes are sewn to each other, beginning at the apex and down one edge. When the last triangle is sewn on, the two open ends are joined and sewn. The Chinese, Jewish and Catholic caps are made this way. Knit or crocheted caps basically start life as doilies, then are simply made larger and larger until finished. They too offer a potentially good fit.

However skullcaps are made and worn, the skullcap really is an interesting *objet d’art*, and a beautiful history lesson. If one has the privilege to own a skullcap, putting it on makes one feel almost magically transported backward in time. And any contact with history, with our roots, is good. There is a beautiful Mexican Catholic hymn, *Yo tengo una corona en el Cielo*, “I have a crown awaiting me in Heaven”. It never

fails to bring tears to my eyes, and to many others. I like to think there *is* a crown awaiting me in Heaven: a glorious, shining skullcap.

Glossary of Skullcap Names and Terms

Yes, I am including a glossary of skullcap terms- a nice overview for those who might wish for one. It didn't seem that so many names would crop up during the research for this paper- yet there they are. As I mentioned, it is perhaps the greatest testimony to the venerability of the skullcap that it has so many names and reference terms. Unfortunately I cannot generally include the names for the skullcap in all the languages- that is for a language dictionary.

Armuçilla- An alleged Medieval Judeo-Spanish term for the skullcap. Actually it is a corruption of "almucella", the diminutive of the Latin "almucia", which means "almuce (almice)". It actually has nothing to do with the yarmulke at all. See Yarmulke.

Bao-shi- The Chinese skullcap. Known also as the Mao-tzû; in Japanese it is Boshi.

Beanie- The American Skullcap, popular among children, college students and even some adult male lodges. Sometimes beanies bore a propeller at the top. The word, coined sometime around the nineteen-teens, was clearly meant to be a humorous evolution of the term "bean", American slang for the head. Known also among early 20th century children as the Dink or Dinky Cap.

Beretino (Bereto)- Latin for "mini-béret", used to designate any generic cap. "Biretta" was also a term for skullcap.

Bill (Visor, Peak, Eyeshade)- The short, rounded semi-brim piece that juts from the front of some caps. Used for protection from glare. All caps that are billed are skullcaps.

Birrus- Greek for “red”, a red skullcap common to Greek sailors.

Bluebonnet (Bonáid)- The “béret of the Scots”, worn in battle and used for identification. Navy blue in color.

Boina- Spanish, Basque, Catalán, Provençal and Portugese word for béret. Also traditionally navy blue.

Bokhara (Bukhara)- Region in Turkey, which has given its name to both the carpets and pillbox skullcaps made in that region.

Calotta Emisférica- Literally, “hemispherical calotte”; Italian for “skullcap”.

Calotte- French for “small dome”, a generic term for skullcap both in Europe and America.

Camauro- A special skullcap worn mainly by the pope until the early 20th century. This was made of red velvet, lined and trimmed with white ermine, and covered the ears. Cardinals wore untrimmed red, but more often wore the white skullcap until the pope reserved it to himself.

Capot-Ribot- The French version of the cleft, a caped skullcap.

Cappo di Enoch (Cap of Enoch, Italian Skullcap)- Small, colorful Italian skullcap worn chiefly on the Isle of Capri.

Car Cap (Driver’s Cap)- See Casquette.

Casquette- Invented in 1949 by Georges Braque, this is a visored skullcap which has the feature of being able to fasten the front of the cap down onto the visor. Now world-popular.

Caul (Cagoule, Cowl)- Originally a French term for the veil of tissue sometimes found growing over the face of a newborn. A great symbol of fortune, it is said to have inspired the skullcap shape, and later evolved into the hood/cowl.

Chevron- Basic triangular or shield shape which, when sewn together in a series forms the skullcap.

Church Violet (Fuschia)- The “official” Roman Catholic skullcap color for bishops. It is specified as a particular shade of red called amaranth red, technically a reddish-purplish scarlet. See Roman Colors.

Claft- Original word for Capot-Ribot, caped skullcap; term is of obscure origin.

Dalmatian Cap (Bachelor’s Cap)- Yugoslavian cap worn by the Dalmatian people. It was designed to identify a non-feuding male.

Diameter, overall- The measurement of the skullcap over the top, from trim edge to trim edge.

Diameter, width- The actual hat-size of the skullcap, viz., the width of the hole. See *Width*.

Do-rag- A skullcap popular among bikers, usually made of a tied bandana or kerchief.

Druze- A skullcap belonging to the secretive and xenophobic Druze religion. It appears to be no more than a type of yarmulke, in the form of a cylinder or pillbox, in white or multiple dark colors.

Eskimo- Syrian, pronounced “es-KEE-moh”; a satin or silk hood worn over the skullcap by the Syrian Orthodox prelates. It is something of a skullcap/hood combination, falling approximately a foot down the back.

It is certainly borrowed from the Zoroastrian priest’s so-called “Fire Hood”.

Fez (Tarbúsh)- Arabic/Moroccan Islamic tall, cylindrical skullcap. Used through out Middle and East Asia.

“Fire Hood”- A caped skullcap/hood worn by Zoroastrian priests during special ceremonies and in the presence of the Sacred Fire. The name was coined by Ruth Edwards Kilgour. Same as the Syrian *Eskimo*.

“Furry Gandhi’s Cap”- Coined by me, used to designate the Shapka-style fur Glengarry worn in Northern India, said to be native to the Punjab.

“Gandhi’s Cap”, Symbol of the Congress Party- A Glengarry, said to be of Indian origin, bearing a plaid design and symbolizing Indian democracy.

Glengarry- A Bluebonnet that has been creased in half and is worn thus.

Gorra, Gorro- Spanish for skullcap. Seems related to the Phiro-Birrus family of words. See Perro.

Hat Sizing Formula- The circumference of the head is divided by 3.145, then the result is rounded up to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ ". The resulting number gives the hat size as used in America. In all other countries, the circumference of the head in centimeters is used as the hat size number.

“Hatter’s Pi”- Coined by me. It is 3.145, which divides the circumference of the head and gives the diameter and hat size. It is the number π (pi) rounded up; it is the number used to obtain the diameter of a circle.

Hufá (Hupá, Huthá)- An Icelandic women’s skullcap, more like a pancake, made of velvet with a tassel.

Juliet Cap- A version of the zucchetto, worn by choirgirls. See Zucchetto.

Kamelavkion- The tall, caped cylindrical skullcap seen in the Orthodox religions. See Capot-Ribot, Claft and Fez.

Kapa- A Montenegrin skullcap, worn as a nationalist symbol and to commemorate the Battle of Kossovo in

Yugoslavia.

Kappa (Kappel, Kap)- German/Yiddish for “cap” and “skullcap”.

Kiddush ha-Shem- Hebrew, “sanctification of God’s name”, used to describe the spirit behind the wearing of the Jewish skullcap. It is contrasted with “Chillul ha-Shem”, “desecration of God’s name”- a term Orthodox Jews use to describe the absence of a skullcap.

Kippah (Kipah, Kipa; plural Kippot, Kipot)- Hebrew for “skullcap”; literally “head-covering”. This word is said to contain a hidden meaning about the sublime sanctity of wearing a headcovering. See Serugah.

Kulah- Punjabi Indian gold-wired velvet and cloth skullcap.

Kûppa- Ancient Gothic word for both “skullcap” and “cup”. It is related to the Goth words for “head”.

Kûppa-unt-Hringe (Cup-and-Ring)- The only straw skullcap known; of Swiss origin.

Man-in-the-Cap- Derogatory Catholic term for Mithras, the founder of Mithraism, and includes Zoroaster. It is unknown why the “cap” was of such significance to all these faiths regarding the question, but certainly it references a type of skullcap.

Mechanical Damage- Normal “wear and tear”, especially to garments such as skullcaps which are handled frequently. Mechanical damage to skullcaps includes stretching, threadbaring, creasing, crushing and soiling. It is an auspicious sign among traditional, skullcap-wearing Jews, who pride themselves in never uncovering their heads.

Mithraism- Religious sect founded by Mithra, near Rome. His wearing of a certain skullcap seems to have irked

the Catholic Church at the time; a natural fear reaction since the early Church had stolen many Mithraic ways, vestments and customs. All Mithraics wore the special skullcap. See Phrygian Cap.

Mitznefet (Mig ba'at)- The original Hebrew words for the head-covering. Historians are unsure if these terms refer to a skullcap or a turban, since they both translate merely as “applied head-covering”. In the Bible it is stated that Aaron and all the Kohanim (Jewish priests) were instructed to “apply coverings for the head”; it is thought that this inspired the later tradition of the Jewish skullcap.

Montera- The bullfighter’s skullcap.

Parietal Bone (Brain-pan)- The “skullcap” portion of the human skull; where a skullcap is worn.

“Pepsi Cap”- Nickname given to the tiny yarmulkes used by the more liberal Jewish men; the name refers to a Pepsi bottle cap.

Perro- Spanish for dog. The etymology of this ancient word is a mystery, but I believe it relates to “skin” or “dog-skin”, therefore skullcap, as the word seems intimately linked with the terms Phiro, Birrus, Piro *et al.*

Phiro- Syrian (Greek Piro or Piros), literally “fruit”; word for skullcap. Worn almost exclusively by the Syrian Orthodox priesthood at all public functions. It is the only cap made of 7 parts, representing the sacredness of the priesthood. Gives us the modern word “berry” by way of the alternate Greek terms Birrus, Pirros and the Latin Birros.

Phrygian Cap- A tall, pointed and brimmed skullcap much like today’s “witch’s hat”- but a bit droopier. This hat was found with the Taklimakan Desert mummies in China, and Mithras was said to have been born wearing one. The Phrygian people, who were Indo-European, originated somewhere near Eastern Europe.

Pileus (Pileolus, Pilio, Pilios, Pilus, Phiro, Piro, Piros)- Latin, “hair-cap”, word for skullcap.

Pⁱlo- Proto Indo-European word for skullcap; literally, “hair-topper”. Also root word for “hair”.

Pilos- Greek rendition of *Pilo*.

Pocket- Depth of a skullcap.

Punti- An esoteric hat measuring system, originating in Italy and sometimes used in the UK. Its origins are shrouded in mystery, but we know it was used for determining skullcap, cowl or hood size.

Rabbi Honah ben Joshua- The 13th century rabbi who would not go anyplace with his head uncovered. Credited with establishing the Jewish skullcap customs.

Roman Colors- Called Roman Scarlet and Roman Purple (Fuschia or Violet). The official Catholic Church skullcap colors, scarlet red for cardinals, amaranth red (purple) for bishops, deep purple for priests with special privileges.

Rosemary Cap (Guardian of Love)- Portugese; large pointed cap whose tip was stuffed with rosemary.

Savastika (Swastika)- Symbol of peace, friendship and good fortune; of Indian origin. It often appears on the traditional Glengarry-type skullcaps of various Buddhist sects.

Scarlet Red (Church Scarlet, Blood Red)- The official color for cardinals’ skullcaps since the Middle Ages. This color, too, is specified carefully by church laws; it must be bright but specifically “scarlet”- not just red, with the slightest orange hue.

Serugah- Hebrew, “knitted”. This is applied to the term Kippah to describe a knit or crocheted skullcap.

Shapka (Cossack’s Cap)- Fur skullcap, usually made of one entire piece of animal hide, fur-side out. This is

the famous Russian hat, though all the ancients living in cold climates had a version.

Skullcap With the Devil Removed- A skullcap/bonnet of the Lapps and Finns that once bore a horn at the forehead.

Skullcup- A deep-pocketed skullcap, made for larger heads, in the Jewish tradition.

Soli Deo- Latin, "Only for God"; Catholic term for skullcap. See Zucchetto.

Subirettum- Latin, "Under the biretta"; Catholic term for skullcap. See Zucchetto.

Submitrale- Latin, "Under the mitre"; Catholic term for skullcap. See Zucchetto.

Tam O'Shanter (Cap of Colours)- A Scots bonáid with tartan colors dyed into the wool. Made famous by Burns.

Tasseh- Jewish metal skullcap for women.

Tonsure- The act of shaving the head to represent the taking of religious vows or orders. Practiced by pagans, Buddhists and Christians alike, the tonsure in turn needed protection- one of the major reasons the skullcap came to be worn by religious clergy the world over.

Tuibitaka (Cap of Friendship)- Tartar/Russian pillbox skullcap with fur at the trim and a slight point. Used as an exchange gift among leaders in ancient and Medieval times. Said to have begun as a custom among Indian rulers.

Width- "Hat size" of skullcap, viz., measurement across hole from trim edge to trim edge. The average is 6", or 15 ½ cm.

Yarmulke (Yalmurka, Yamuka, Yamaka)- Yiddish term for skullcap. Said to come from earlier Assyrian and Hebrew sources. See Armuçilla.

Zucchetto (Zuccetto, Zucheto, Zuchetto, Zuquéto)- Medieval Italian; literally, “little gourd”. Most common term for the Catholic skullcap. This is the only skullcap made of 8 parts.

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