

IN MEMORIAM FRANÇOIS SECRET (1911-2003)

On Wednesday, August the 6th, 2003, F. Secret peacefully died in his sleep at his home in Paris. Born in Savoie (South-East of France) in 1911, he completed his college studies in Paris, then left for Viet-Nam (still part, at the time, of the French colonial Empire), to pursue the trade of journalism. While overseas, he was lent by a friend a copy of P. Vulliaud's seminal study *La kabbale juive* (Paris, Nourry, 1923, 2 vol.), which made a durable impression on him. Back in France in 1946, Secret settled in Paris where he met P. Vulliaud (who eventually died in 1950), and was "encouraged" with these words: 'I must warn you that the pursuit of these studies requires a lot of leisure'.

Working full-time (he had a family by then) in a minor educational capacity, Secret nonetheless regularly found his way into the Ms. Reading Room of the French National Library, where he embarked on what was ultimately to become his edition of the *Schechina* and *Libellus de litteris hebraicis* by Cardinal Giles of Viterbo (Rome, 1959, 2 vol.), still to this day the most important texts by this remarkable Renaissance scholar to have been made available by anyone. Singled out, during the completion of this work, by G. Vajda (then curator of the Oriental Ms. Dept., still conflated at the time with the Western Ms. Dept.), Secret later spent a few years as a researcher for the C. N. R. S.; it was then that he wrote his (unpublished) dissertation on Claude Duret, under A. Chastel's supervision, at the École pratique des Hautes Études. Attending A. Chastel's and G. Vajda's seminars at – respectively – the IVth and Vth Sections of the E.P.H.E., invited by the former to participate in the activities of E. Castelli's famous "Istituto di Studi Filosofici", he got acquainted with some of the foremost specialists of the history of ideas in the Renaissance (R. Klein, C. Vasoli) and of kabbalistic studies (N. Séd). Very soon afterwards (1964), he published his pioneering *Les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance* (Paris, Dunod) and was appointed "Directeur d'études" at the E.P.H.E. (Vth Section), in the Chair just vacated by A. Koyré and renamed "Histoire de l'ésotérisme chrétien".

There, until his eventual retirement in 1979, when he was succeeded by A. Faivre (and even late afterwards), he published a great many articles and books on most of the major and minor christian kabbalists (a monograph on P. Ricci was even definitively lost in the mail!), on 16th and 17th century alchemists (in *Ambix* or *Chrysopoieia*) and on his beloved Guillaume Postel, on whom he was undisputedly the world's foremost expert.

Very much a text editor, immensely attentive to historical *minutiae* and

dedicated to pinpointing discreet connections between apparently isolated or little-known authors and works, thus prone to the closest scrutiny of letters, prefaces, dedicatory poems and introductory epistles, Secret appeared sometimes less immediately concerned with the large-scale history of ideas and/or the detailed developments affecting different tenets. Such elements he of course never ignored, but frequently dispatched in a seemingly detached manner, within a condensed number of lines, thus rendering them decipherable only to the most seasoned *conoscenti*. Indeed, he was sometimes reproached for his lack of interest in general synthesis, but nonetheless always remained skeptical of an approach which, in his discipline, seemed to him (and not entirely without justification) somewhat premature.

His last lectures at the *École pratique*, Secret devoted to early modern christian theurgy (Libanius Gallus and Trithemius, in ms. texts taken up again since by J. Dupèbe and C. Gilly), but none of his students or friends will ever forget the almost daily “informal seminars” of the National Library, where he freely bestowed upon us all the combined treasuries of his immense erudition, kindness, humour and refreshing unpretentiousness.

Only a severe illness kept him, in his very last years, from yet adding more to his impressive series of scholarly publications, leading from his classic *Le Zohar chez les kabbalistes chrétiens de la Renaissance* (Paris, Durlacher, 1958) to *Postel revisité – nouvelles recherches sur G. Postel et son milieu* (Paris – Milan, S.E.H.A. – Archè, 1998; there remain some unpublished text editions and materials). To this pioneer and master of the study of Western esotericism, a *Festschrift* was presented, on his 90th birthday, by his students and friends (*Documents oubliés sur la kabbale, l'alchimie et Guillaume Postel...* [S. Matton ed.], Geneva, Droz, 2001; cf. *Aries* 3:2, 257-261). Secret was married twice, and had one daughter.

Jean-Pierre Brach

EINE DEUTSCHE ALCHIMIA PICTA DES 17. JAHRHUNDERTS:
BEMERKUNGEN ZU DEM VERS/BILD-TRAKTAT *VON DER
HERMETISCHEN KUNST* VON JOHANN AUGUSTIN BRUNNHOFER
UND ZU SEINEN KOMMENTIERTEN FASSUNGEN IM
BUCH DER WEISHEIT UND IM *HERMAPHRODITISCHEN SONN- UND
MONDS-KIND*

JOACHIM TELLE

Das *Hermaphroditische Sonn- und Monds-Kind*, ein 1752 in Druck gelangtes Werk, gehört zum Bestand deutscher Text/Bild-Traktate alchemischen Inhalts. Im Unterschied etwa zur *Atalanta fugiens* von Michael Maier (1617) oder dem *Viridarium chymicum* von Daniel Stoltz von Stolzenberg (1624) geriet freilich diese *Alchimia picta* allenfalls beiläufig in das historiographische Blickfeld¹. Sie kam zwar etlichen Lesern von C.G. Jungs wirkmächtigem Werk *Psychologie und Alchemie* (1944) in Gestalt mehrerer Bildwiedergaben unter die Augen², – zu einiger Bekanntheit verhelfen ihr aber erst französische Liebhaber der alchemischen Tradition: Diese neuzeitlichen “amateurs de la science” feierten in dem Text/Bild-Traktat einen ‘*précieux petit livre qui résume l’Art hermétique tout entier*’³, ja entrissen den “*précieux petit livre*” mittels eines reprographischen Nachdrucks und einer neufranzösischen Übersetzung 1985⁴ den Furien des Vergessens.

Zwar war nun die Präsenz des *Sonn- und Monds-Kinds* auf dem modernen Büchermarkt gesichert, seine literar- und alchemiehistorischen Eigenarten aber hüllten sich weiterhin weitgehend in Dunkel. So ließ man außer acht, daß das Text/Bild-Werk nicht nur im *Sonn- und Monds-Kind*, sondern auch in eigenständiger Überlieferung und im *Buch der Weisheit* greifbar ist, und blieben

¹ So beispielsweise bei Ferguson, *Bibliotheca chemica*, Bd. 1, 388f. In einschlägigen Studien zur Emblemataliteratur blieb das Werk unerwähnt; siehe z.B. Landwehr, *German Emblem Books 1531-1888*, 174: ‘Books by alchemists, rosicrucians and astrologers’.

² Jung, *Psychologie und Alchemie*, Abb. Nr. 3, 123, 198, 229, 256 (ein *Sonn- und Monds-Kind*-Exemplar, 1752, befand sich in Jungs Besitz). – Wohl nach Vorlage der Wiedergaben in *Psychologie und Alchemie* fanden *Sonn- und Monds-Kind*-Bilder z.B. Eingang in Baker, *The Diary of an Alchemist*, 11, 25 (kolorierte Nachzeichnungen); Oesterreicher-Mollwo, *Herderlexikon Symbole*, 11. – Siehe auch Van Lennep, *Alchimie*, 445, Abb. 65-66 (zwei Bildproben); Hornfisher, *Löwe und Phönix*: Wiedergabe von dreizehn Bildern; dargeboten zu ‘Meditationszwecken’ (!).

³ Matton, ‘Introduction’, 7.

⁴ *Sonn- und Mondskind* (Anhang III, Nr. 3).

selbst alle Urheberfragen ungeklärt. Indes läßt sich diese ‘obscurité’⁵ um die deutsche Alchimia picta *Von der hermetischen Kunst* ein wenig lichten.

Über die Urheber des Traktats *Von der hermetischen Kunst*⁶ herrschte bereits im 18. Jahrhundert beträchtliche Unsicherheit. Charakteristisch sind die Angaben des Monogrammistens L.C.S., eines Traktatkommentators, nach dessen Auffassung das von ihm erläuterte ‘Wercklein’ von ‘zweyen Adeptis componiret’ worden sei: Die dreizehn “Emblemata” (Rundbilder) und “Paragraphi” (deskriptiv-deutende Vers-“Erklärungen” zu den Bildern) seien Schöpfungen eines Anonymus; und in den “Canones”, den auf Bild und “Paragraphus” jeweils folgenden Versen, erblickte L.C.S. Dichtungen eines ‘Northon oder Hautnorthon, von Geburt ein Schwed’ und ‘Schwieger-Sohn des Welt berühmten Pohnischen Adepti Sendivogii’⁷. Verstrickt im Legenden-gestrüpp um den “Filius Sendivogii” alias “Hautnorthon” hielt man auch in der neuzeitlichen Historiographie dafür, daß dieser ominöse “Filius Sendivogii” (hinter dem sich in Wirklichkeit der böhmistische Theoalchemiker Johann Hartprecht verbirgt) an dem Text/Bild-Traktat literarisch beteiligt gewesen sei⁸.

Gegenüber allen solchen Erwägungen und Behauptungen bleibt aufgrund eines Kopistenvermerks⁹ und knapper Angaben in einem frühen Traktatkommentar, dem *Buch der Weisheit*¹⁰, festzuhalten, daß die Vers/Bild-Serie *Von der hermetischen Kunst* von Johann Augustin Brunnhofer geschaffen worden ist. Dies scheint umso glaubwürdiger, als auch Hermann Fictuld, im-

⁵ Matton, ‘Introduction’, 12.

⁶ Der Text/Bild-Traktat besitzt in den bislang bekannten Überlieferungen keinen Werktitel (siehe Anhang). Unsere Titelgebung erfolgte im Anschluß an den Kommentator L.C.S., ‘Vorrede’, 5.

⁷ L.C.S., ‘Vorrede’, 4f. - Die Angabe von Matton (‘Introduction’, 7), L.C.S. habe im *Sonn- und Monds-Kind* das Werk von drei Urhebern erblickt, ist unzutreffend.

⁸ L.C.S. konfundierte den im Text/Bild-Traktat *Von der hermetischen Kunst* (Erklärung/ Paragraphus Nr. 4) erwähnten ‘Northon’ (nämlich Samuel Norton) mit dem ‘berühmten Schwedischen Adepten Northon’ (Titelbl.) bzw. mit dem “Hautnorthon” genannten “Filius Sendivogii”. Seine platte Konfusion wurde arglos von Ferguson (*Bibliotheca chemica*, Bd. 1, 389) fortgeschleppt: ‘The Swedish adept Northon here [im *Sonn- und Monds-Kind*, 1752] mentioned is J.F. Hautnorthon’; Ferguson wieder wurde von Matton (‘Introduction’) kolportiert. - Zur Identität dieses von L.C.S. (1752), Ferguson (1906) und Matton (1985) irrig zum Verfasser der “Canones” des Vers/Bild-Traktats *Von der hermetischen Kunst* erklärten “Filius Sendivogii” siehe Telle, ‘Zum “Filius Sendivogii” Johann Hartprecht’, 119-136. Die folgenreiche Konfusion, die von dem Monogrammistens L.C.S. in der Urheberfrage angerichtet worden ist, wurde kürzlich fast noch übertroffen: Der Monogrammist L.C.S. erhielt von Schütt, ‘Der alchemische Hermaphrodit’, 50, den Familiennamen “Maynz” und wurde unter Zitat von Textproben aus den Canones Nr.2 und 12 zu einem deutschen Dichter emannt, der 1752 Reime über den alchemischen Hermaphroditen geschrieben habe.

⁹ Anhang, I, Nr. 1.

¹⁰ Anhang, II.

merhin ein intimer Kenner des alchemischen Schrifttums seiner Zeit, zu berichten wußte, daß J.A. 'Brunnhoffer' ein 'Tractätlein mit Figuren und in Versen oder in gebundener Rede' geschrieben habe¹¹.

Nähere Kenntnisse über Brunnhofers Lebensgang sind uns verwehrt. Der Beginn der bislang bekannten Überlieferung um 1700¹² macht jedoch unzweifelhaft, daß Brunnhofer noch dem 17. Jahrhundert angehört und sein Werk in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts entstanden ist.

Nun kann H. Fictulds knappe Notiz leicht den Eindruck erwecken, die Versdichtungen stammten allesamt aus Brunnhofers Feder. Dieser Eindruck trägt, denn Brunnhofer schuf nur die Vers-“Paraphraghi” bzw. “Erklärungen” zu den Bildern, nicht aber die “Canones”: Bei den “Canones” Nr. 1-11 handelt es sich um den *Sermo philosophicus*, eine im 16. Jahrhundert entstandene deutsche Lehrdichtung eines unbekanntes Dichteralchemikers (gedruckt seit 1605), und “Canon” Nr. 12 bietet das *Güldene Gedicht* (“Carmen Apollineum”) des Theoalchemikers Raphael Egli (1559/1622), das seit 1606 mehrmals zusammen mit dem *Sermo philosophicus* publiziert worden ist¹³. Die “Canones” verfaßte also nicht Brunnhofer, geschweige denn “Hautnorthon”, sondern wurden von Brunnhofer – und zwar vermutlich nach Vorlage eines gemeinschaftlichen Abdrucks beider Dichtungen im *Theatrum chemicum* (Bd. 4, 1613 und 1659)¹⁴ – in seine Vers/Bild-Serie *Von der hermetischen Kunst* übernommen.

Gelehrt wird eine auf Sol, Luna und Mercurius gegründete Alchemie, die eine Coniunctio von “Mann” (Sol) und “Weib” (Luna) einbegreift und auf den Gewinn einer materiellen Reichtum, körperliche Gesundheit und langes Leben versprechenden Universalmedizin zielt. Darstellerisch prägend sind Reihungen und lockere Verknüpfungen ererbter Sinnbilder. Von Chemisierungen des parabolisch gefaßten Lehrgutes, wie sie bei der Rezeption allegorischer Alchemica im 17. Jahrhundert eine zunehmende Bedeutung erlangten, zeigt sich Brunnhofers Werk unberührt.

Im barocken Alchemicameer war eine Vielzahl alchemischer Sinnbilder präsent. Aus ihrer Fülle findet man in Brunnhofers Bilderserie die geläufigsten erneut dargestellt: Den Anfang machen Visualisierungen des Metalls/Planeten “Sol” (Bild Nr. 1) und einiger alteingeschliffener Decknamen für die umrätselte “Materia”, nämlich “Drache” (Bild Nr. 2), “Löwe” und “Hermaphrodit” (Bild Nr. 3). Auf diese Standardfiguren im Mundus symbolicus frühneuzeitlicher Alchemiker folgen schemaartige Bilder, die aus geometrischen Figuren (Kreis,

¹¹ Fictuld, *Des Probier-Steins Erste Classe*, Nr. 32, 56f.

¹² Anhang, I und II.

¹³ Telle, ‘Der “Sermo philosophicus”: Eine deutsche Lehrdichtung’ (mit Edition des *Sermo* und des *Gülden Gedichts* von R. Egli).

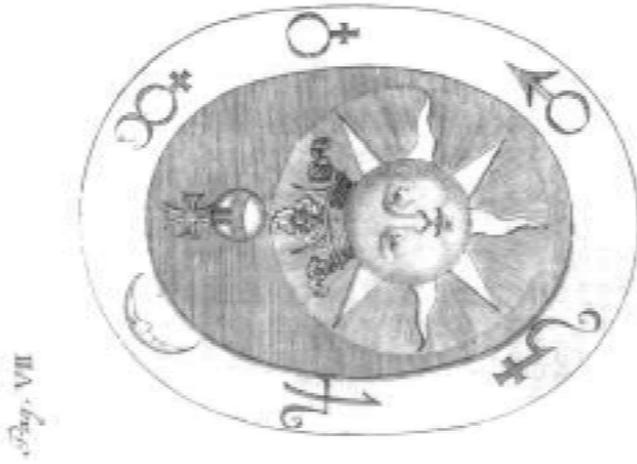
¹⁴ Siehe ebd., Überlieferungsverzeichnis, Nr. 15.



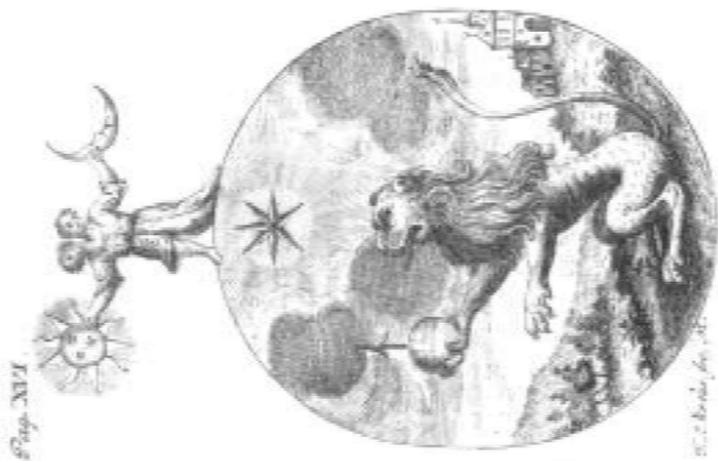
Sonn- und Monds-Kind, 1752, Nr. 1 (Titelkupfer). – Garten mit Brunnen; Sol- und Lunasybol.



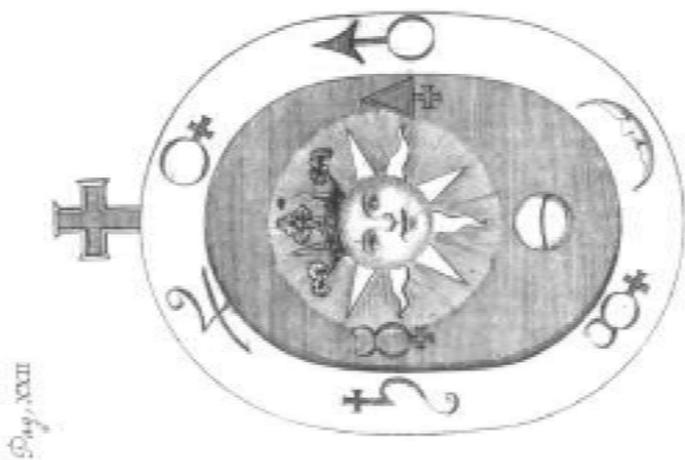
Sonn- und Mondskind, 1752, Nr. 3 (zu S. 11) –
Feuerspeiender Drache.



Sonn- und Mondskind, 1752, Nr. 2 (zu S. 7) – Sol/Sonne/
Gold-Symbol; Betwerk: Zeichen für die sechs Planeten/
Metalle Luna/Silber, Mercurius/Quecksilber, Saturn/Blei,
Venus/Kupfer, Mars/Eisen, Jupiter/Zinn und für Antimon.

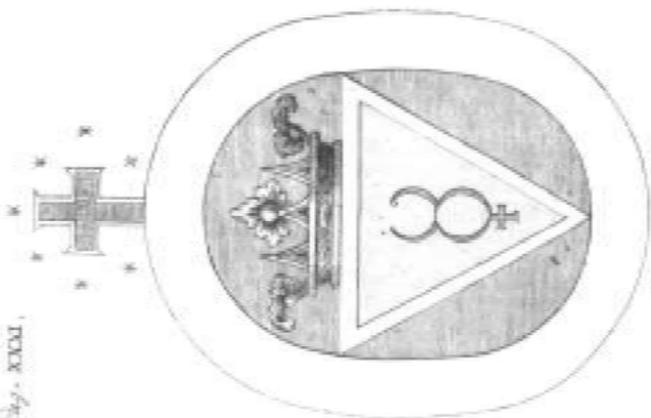


Sonn- und Monds-Kind, 1752, Nr. 4 (zu S. 16) – Löwe mit Eisen/Mars-Zeichen. Beiwerk: Hermaphrodit mit Sol- und Lunasymbol.



Sonn- und Monds-Kind, 1752, Nr. 5 (zu S. 22) – Sol/Sonne/Gold, umgeben von den Zeichen für die *Tria prima* Sulphur/Mercurius/Sal. Beiwerk: Zeichen für sechs Planeten/Metalle.

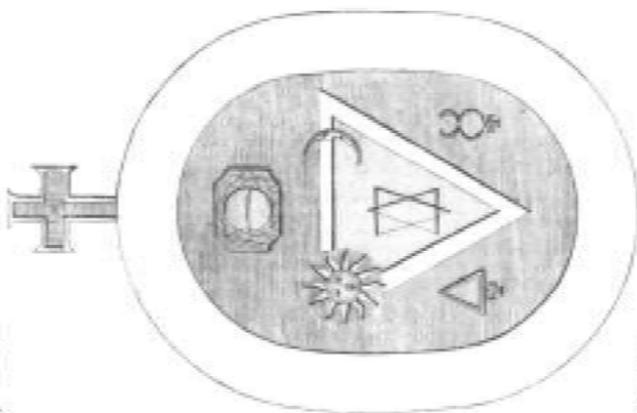
Plat. XXXI.



Plat. XXXI.

Sonn- und Monds-Kind, 1752, Nr. 7 (zu S. 31) – Bekröntes Dreieck (Zeichen für Wasser), darin ein Mercuriuszeichen. Betwerk: Kreuz mit sieben Sternen.

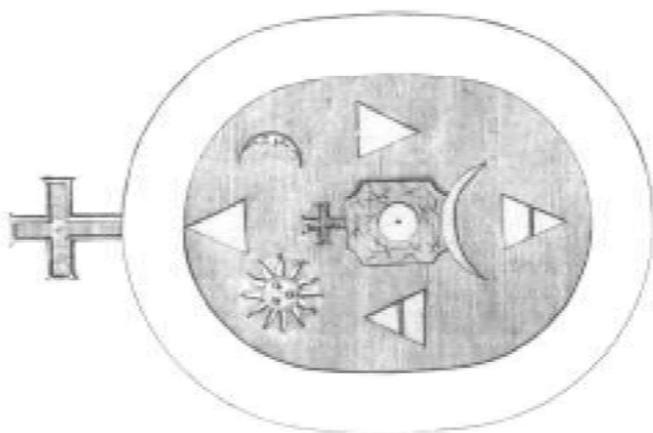
Plat. XXXIII.



Plat. XXXIII.

Sonn- und Monds-Kind, 1752, Nr. 6 (zu S. 28) – Dreieck (Zeichen für Wasser) mit Sol- und Lunasymbol und einem aus Feuer- und Wasserzeichen gebildeten Elementsymbol; umgeben von den Zeichen für die Tria prima Sulphur/Mercurius/Sal.

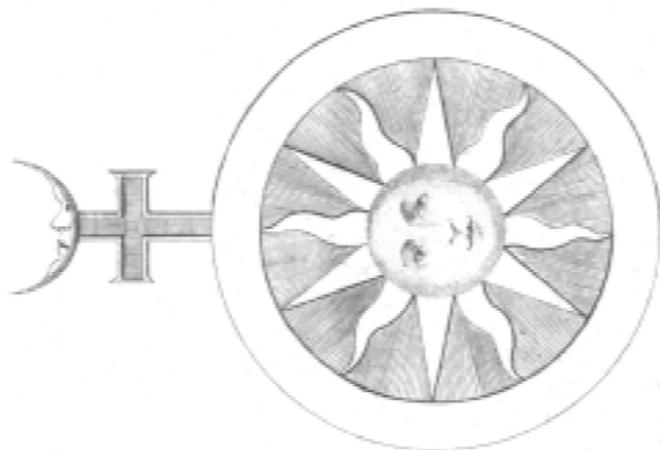
Fig. XXXIX.



W. G. Schenk, 1752.

Sonn- und Monds-Kind, 1752, Nr. 9 (zu S. 39) – Mercuriuszeichen; umgeben von einem Sol- und Lunasymbol und den Zeichen für die vier Elemente.

Fig. XXXV.



W. G. Schenk, 1752.

Sonn- und Monds-Kind, 1752, Nr. 8 (zu S. 35) – Sol/Sonne/Gold. Beiwerk: Kreuz mit Lunasymbol

Tab. XXXIII.



W. B. Kneller del. 1752.

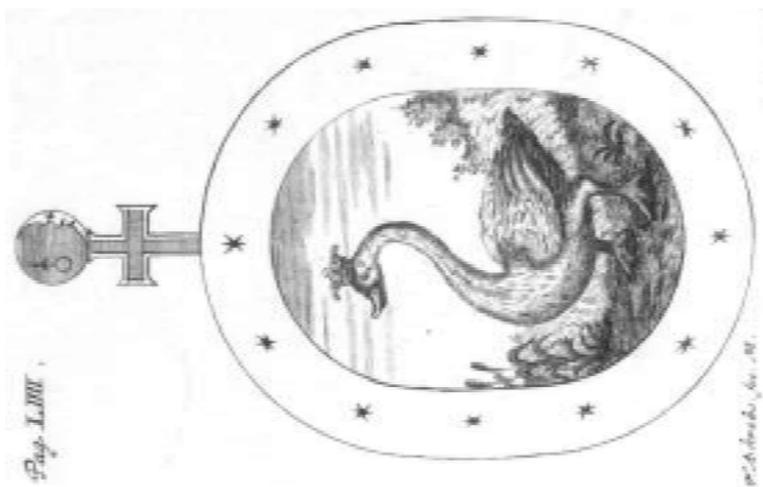
Sonn- und Monds-Kind, 1752, Nr. 10 (zu S. 44) –
Bekrönter Adler mit Szepter und Reichsapfel; Sol- und
Lunasybol.

Tab. XXXVIII.

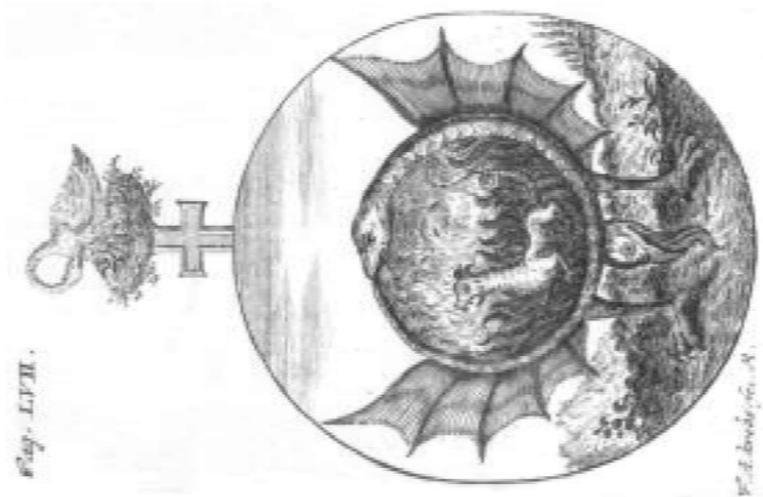


W. B. Kneller del. 1752.

Sonn- und Monds-Kind, 1752, Nr. 11 (zu S. 48) – Sonne
und auf der Erde sitzender Rabe. Beiwerk: Pfau.



*Sonn- und Monats-Kind, 1752, Nr. 12 (zu S. 54) –
Bekrönter Schwan. Beiwerk: Lunasymbol und Eisen/Mars-
Zeichen.*



*Sonn- und Monats-Kind, 1752, Nr. 13 (zu S. 57) – Ein geflügeltes
Vogelmonster. Im Ouroboros ein von Flammen umgebener
Drache. Beiwerk: Kreuz mit Pelikan, der sich die Brust öffnet.*

Dreieck) oder aus einem siebenzackigen Stern bzw. einer siebenstrahligen Sonne und aus chymischen Zeichen kombiniert worden sind (Bild Nr. 4-8), dann graphisch simpel ausgeführte Tierbilder, die nichts als konventionalisierte Decknamen für Phasen und/oder Zustände der Arkanmaterie während des "Großen Werkes" visualisieren: Adler (Bild Nr. 9), Rabe und Pfau (Bild Nr. 10), Schwan (Bild Nr. 11), Salamander und Pelikan (Bild Nr. 12). Beschlossen wird Brunnhofers bildkünstlerisch schlicht und uneinheitlich gestaltete Serie mit einer Brunnendarstellung ("Brunnen der Weisheit", Bild Nr. 13).

Allen Res pictae wurden deskriptiv-deutende "Erklärungen" beigegeben. Diese Verstexte sind anfänglich in Rollengedichtform gefaßt ("Erklärung" Nr. 1-4) und statuieren in bildgesättigter Schreibart den Sensus alchemicus der "Figuren". An die Bilder herangetragen wurden markante Lehren aus dem *Maria-Aros-Dialog*¹⁵, aus der *Visio Arislei*¹⁶ und der Fontina-Parabola des Bernardus Trevisanus (*De chemia*, Buch 4)¹⁷, also aus Schriften, die allesamt im 17. Jahrhundert im allegorisch akzentuierten Flügel des alchemischen Fachschrifttums vielerorts tradiert worden sind. Ferner findet man Hermes und den englischen Dichteralchemiker George Ripley zitiert¹⁸.

Die jüngsten Autoritäten Brunnhofers sind zwei englische Autoren: "Northonus" (dessen Nennung grobe Fehlurteile über Text- und Bildurheber nach sich ziehen sollte)¹⁹ und Nortons vermeintlicher Schüler "Philaetha"²⁰.

¹⁵ Brunnhofer, *Von der hermetischen Kunst*, Erklärung Nr. 4. - Verarbeitet wurde die bekannte Lehre der Maria Prophetissa (Maria Hebraea) von den zwei Räuchen, bildlich dargestellt bei Maier, *Symbola*, 57.

¹⁶ Brunnhofer, ebd., Erklärung Nr. 7 (zit. nach dem Überlinger Ms. 181: Anhang, II, Nr. 2): 'Gabritius und Beia müssen werden ein leib'. - Eine bildliche Darstellung dieser oft kolportierten arabischen Allegorie von der Vermählung des Königssohnes Gabritus/Gabricus (<arab. kibrit, Schwefel) mit seiner Schwester Beida (<arab. baidā, die Weiße/Mercurius) bei Maier, *Symbola*, 319.

¹⁷ Brunnhofer, ebd., Erklärung Nr. 3: 'In mir [dem im Bild dargestellten Löwen] verborgen liegt Bernhardi Fontinlein'.

¹⁸ Brunnhofer, ebd., Erklärung Nr. 3: 'Luna hat mich [die im Bild personifizierte Luna/Silber] Hermes genant' [in anderen Überlieferungen: "Sol" und "Luna"]/Riplaus den grünen lewen wohlbekhant'.

¹⁹ Brunnhofer, ebd., Erklärung Nr. 4: 'Northonus der Adept hat mich [das im Bild dargestellte Sprecher-Ich] also abgemahlt [d.h. beschrieben]'. - Der Verdacht, genannt sei der englische Dichteralchemiker Thomas Norton (15. Jh.), ließ sich anhand seines auch im deutschen Kulturgebiet bekannten Lehrgedichtes *Ordinal of alchemy* nicht erhärten.

Fehlgeleitet von einer gewissen Namensähnlichkeit, identifizierte L.C.S. ('Vorrede', 4) den hier genannten Adepten "Northonus" umstandslos mit "Hautnorthon" und erblickte in diesem vermeintlichen Schweden und "Filius Sendivogii" den Autor der "Canones"; seiner Falschangaube folgten Ferguson (*Bibliotheca chemica*, Bd. 2, 141) und Matton ('Introduction', 8-12). Zum anderen beruhte auf der Brunnhoferschen Erwähnung Samuel Nortons die nicht minder abwegige Feststellung, die Bilderserie habe ein Adept Nortonus nach Vorlage der "Canones" gemalt (!); so Dimitz, 'Zur Geschichte der Alchemie in Krain', 93f.

²⁰ Brunnhofer, ebd., Erklärung Nr. 2: 'Wie mich [der im Bild dargestellte Drache] Philaetha

Beider Nennung kann angesichts der lebhaften Aufnahme, die gerade die Traktate von Samuel Norton (1558/1604), insbesondere aber die Schriften des Ripley-Kommentators und *Introitus*-Verfassers Eirenaeus Philaletha im deutschen Kulturgebiet des 17. Jahrhunderts gefunden hatten, nicht überraschen.

Unsere Musterung des Text- und Bildbestandes macht sichtbar, daß der Vermutung, Brunnhofers *Alchimia picta* biete eine *Donum Dei*-Version²¹ bzw. leite sich zusammen mit dem *Donum Dei* von einem unbekanntem ‘common ancestor’ ab²², aller Anhalt fehlt. Auch die Behauptung, es bestünden ikonographische Zusammenhänge mit der *Hermetischen Philosophie*, einem Vers/Bild-Werk von Federico Gualdi (17. Jh.)²³, hält keiner näheren Prüfung stand. Vielmehr ergibt sich aus Vergleichen mit *Donum Dei*- Fassungen und anderen im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert verbreiteten Text/Bild-Werken, dazu auch mit Schriften S. Nortons und E. Philalethas, daß Brunnhofers *Von der hermetischen Kunst* zu keinem bestimmten Werk in enger gespannten Abhängigkeitsverhältnissen zu stehen scheint, also eine relative Unabhängigkeit beanspruchen darf. Brunnhofer speiste seine *Alchimia picta* zweifellos aus allegorischen *Alchemica*, ja vereinte wohl ausnahmslos nur literarisch und/oder ikonographisch bereits vorgeprägte Sinnbilder. Zugleich aber präsentierte er das vorgeprägte Text- und Bildgut in konstellativ variierte Form, besitzt sein collageartiges Gebilde in kompositioneller Hinsicht durchaus nur ihm eigentümliche Züge. Eklektisches Verfahren, Transposition alchemischer Prosa in deutsche Verse und analogisch-assoziativ erfolgte Text- und Bildzuordnungen sorgten dafür, daß das vorgeprägte Text- und Bildgut zu einer opaken Einheit *sui generis* verschmolz.

Die von Brunnhofers Eklektik gestifteten Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Ikon und “Erklärung” wurzeln jeweils in Analogiedenken und assoziativem Kombinationsvermögen. Ihren vielleicht markantesten Ausdruck fanden diese Hauptmerkmale allegorisierender Alchemiker in der Tatsache, daß Ikon und “Erklärung” mit Fremdtexen, den aus *Sermo* und *Gülden Gedicht* bestehenden “Canones”, umstandslos in eine vermeintlich wechselseitige Erhellung versprechende Konkordanz gebracht, mithin innerlich Disparates und weitgehend zufällig Verknüpftes als ein äußerlich scheinbar einheitliches und diskursiv-kohärentes Lehrgefüge dargeboten worden ist. Erstrebt wurde mit dieser

hat hier abgemahlt’; Nr. 3: ‘Also befihts Philaleta der Adept/ der mein natur [die “natur” des im Bild dargestellten Sprecher-Ichs] mit Mercur hat zusammen verkehzt [!]’; Nr. 4: ‘Northonus der Adept [...] der den Philaletha hat instruiert in diser kunst’.

²¹ Witten/Pachella, *Alchemy and the occult*, 547, 744.

²² Ebd., 549.

²³ Ebd., 740

patchworkartigen (aufgrund losester Konnexionen und allenfalls punktueller Berührungen in Wort und Sache erfolgten) Kombination heterogenen Text- und Bildgutes eine sinnerschließende Erläuterung der mehrdeutigen Res pictae und "Erklärungen", kurz: eine Enträtselung der hinter allegorischen Bollwerken verborgenen Alchemie. Erreicht wurde dieses Ziel freilich nicht: H. Fictuld urteilte, Brunnhofer habe 'nach der Manier der Alten die [alchemische] Wahrheit gar sparsam vorgetragen', sei mithin nur erfahrenen Alchemikern verständlich²⁴, und durchaus gleichsinnig hielt auch L.C.S. fest, Brunnhofer habe seine Lehre 'gar zu compendius [gedrängt] und etwas starck hyeroglyphisch' gefaßt²⁵. Beider Äußerungen bekunden beträchtliche Verständnisnöte unter einstigen Lesern/Betrachtern und zeigen, daß die Obscuritas von Ikon und "Erklärung" durch deren Kombination mit den "Canones" keineswegs aufgehellt worden ist.

Brunnhofers ängmatisches Sinnbildensemble gab sich zwar einem alchemiekundigen Rezipienten unschwer als eine Beschreibung des "Großen Werks" zu erkennen, doch erzwang sein rigoroser Allegorismus den Verzicht auf eine auch nur begrenzt versteh- und in der laborantischen Praxis anwendbare Mitteilung alchemischer Sachverhalte, ja kann sein metaphorischer Fiktionalismus heute an alogische, "hermetisch"-dunkle Dichtungen des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts gemahnen. Seine inhaltliche Dunkelheit und "surrealistischen" Züge wirkten sich aber keineswegs rezeptionshemmend aus. *Von der hermetischen Kunst* fand manche Tradenten und rief sogar zwei Alchemiker auf den Plan, die nun Brunnhofers in 'metaphorischen Schriften' und 'cabalistischen Figuren' verborgene 'hermetische Wissenschaft' (Alchemie) zu dechiffrieren und 'ohne alle Metaphora zu beschreiben' suchten.

Mit einer Chemisierung des Vers/Bild-Traktates *Von der hermetischen Kunst* einen Anfang machte ein Anonymus aus dem katholischen Alchemikerlager, der vielleicht in einem bayerisch-österreichischen Naturmystiker- und Hermetikerkonventikel zu situieren ist und im ausgehenden 17. Jahrhundert das *Buch der Weisheit* schuf²⁶, eine Schrift über die Präparation von alchemischen 'Medizinen' für Menschen und Metalle (Bl. 1v-25r), über das Verhältnis zwischen 'Partikulartinkturen' und dem 'Universal' (25v-31r) und über verwandtes Lehrgut (46r-60r). Allenorts verraten seine Darlegungen einen stark schriftgebundenen Verfasser, der den Universalinktur-Begriff von (Ps.-)Paracelsus, Basilius Valentinus und J. de Monte-Snyder anfocht (28r-

²⁴ Fictuld, *Des Probier-Steins Erste Classe*, 57.

²⁵ L.C.S., 'Vorrede', 5.

²⁶ Die folgenden Angaben nach der *Buch der Weisheit*-Überlieferung im Cod. 377, Heiligenkreuz (Anhang, II, Nr. 1).

31v) und dabei zahlreiche Autoritäten, Morienus, Geber latinus, Arnald von Villanova, G. Ripley, J.A. Augurellus, J. Pontanus, S. Norton, N. Flamel, M. Sendivogius, J. d'Espagnet, E. Philaletha, in den Dienst seiner metalltransmutatorischen Lehren stellte. Den fachlich bedeutsamsten Autor aber erblickte der Anonymus im 'deutschen Adepten' J.A. Brunnhofer: Er bezeichnete Brunnhofers Traktat als 'Grundsäule' seiner 'philosophischen Werkschrift' (41r) und deutete ihn in den Bahnen einer Alchemie, die sich auf die drei klassischen "species" der abendländischen Transmutationskunst: auf "Sol", "Luna" (hier: 'unser Mercurius, id est unser Regulus Antimonii'; 48r) und "Mercurius" (hier: 'unsere Luna philosophica'; 48r) sowie auf ein arkanes "Antimonium" (auch: 'giftiger Wurm', 'Drache', 'Löwe', 'Hermaphrodit'; 46v) gründet (31r-46r).

Manche operativ-praktischen Anweisungen oder ein offenkundlicher Abschnitt (23r-25r) zeigen, daß es sich bei dem *Buch der Weisheit*-Verfasser um einen laborantisch orientierten Brunnhofer-Rezipienten handelte. Gleichwohl führte im *Buch der Weisheit* kein nüchtern chemisierender Empiriker die Feder, sondern ein assoziativ verfahrenender Allegorist, der im Traktat Brunnhofers eine willkommene Folie für eigene Lehren erblickte und auf das traditionelle Schweigegebot für Alchemiker pochte, etwa die 'eigenen Namen' der Arkansubstanzen "Sol", "Luna", "Mercurius" und "Antimonium" willentlich verschwieg (46v, 52r). Zwangsläufig hüteten vor solch einem erklärten Allegoristen die 'wunderbaren', 'tiefsinnigen Figuren' (auch: 'Emblemata') und 'metamorphosischen Reden' Brunnhofers ihr alchemistisches Geheimnis.

Ein ähnliches Bild ergibt sich, mustert man den Kommentar von dem Monogrammist L.C.S., einem biographisch verschatteten 'Lehrjünger der Natur' und glanzlosen Verfasser alchemomedizinischer Schriften (*Drey Geheime Tractätlein von denen Geheimnissen der Natur*, Mainz 1749), durch den Brunnhofers Werk 1752 in Druck gelangt ist. Wie schon der *Buch der Weisheit*-Verfasser, so zielte nun auch L.C.S. darauf, mittels einer 'teutschen Verdollmetschung' den 'innern und mystischen [d.h. alchemischen] Verstand' der 'ohnvergleichlichen' und 'die Practic der gantzen [hermetischen] Kunst' vorstellenden 'Emblemata', 'Paragraphi' und 'Canones' zu erläutern²⁷. Doch sein Vorhaben mißlang. Da er Brunnhofers Sinnbilder und figürliche Rede mit Verba metaphorica kommentierte, brach L.C.S. keineswegs ihren allegorischen Bann.

Im 18. Jahrhundert gelangte Brunnhofers Werk *Von der hermetischen Kunst* in ärztliche Hand²⁸ und kursierte unter alchemisch tätigen Dominikanern²⁹. Daß

²⁷ L.C.S., 'Vorrede', 5.

²⁸ Anhang, II, Nr. 5.

²⁹ Anhang, I, Nr. 1; auf Verbreitung unter Ordensgeistlichen deutet auch II, Nr. 1.

es in den Besitz eines H. Fictuld geriet³⁰, eben jenes Erzhermetikers, mit dem der vielleicht namhafteste Anwalt einer Theologie im Gewande experimentierender Alchemie und einer Alchemie im Gewande emblematischer Theologie, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702/82), in brieflichem Austausch stand, weist auf seine Verbreitung unter alchemiegeneigten Radikalpietisten. Schließlich haben es “Gold- und Rosenkreuzer”, bald nach der Jahrhundertmitte Hauptvertreter der traditionellen Alchemie, zu ihrem literarischen Rüstzeug gezählt³¹, ja hat man unter Gold- und Rosenkreuzern die Ansicht vertreten, daß das ‘ganze Lehrgebäude’ einer ihrer Grundschriften, der *Aurea catena Homeri* (1723), aus dem *Buch der Weisheit* mit Brunnhofers *Von der hermetischen Kunst* übernommen worden sei³²: Auch als ein aufklärerischer Empirismus triumphierte und im Allegorismus kein taugliches Instrument der Naturerkenntnis mehr gelten ließ, besaß die unter deutschen Alchemikern seit der hochmittelalterlichen Rezeption griechisch-arabischer Alchemica durch die Zeiten heimische und vom Renaissanceplatonismus aktualisierte Vorstellung, tiefste Naturgeheimnisse könnten nur unter Verhüllungen zum Ausdruck gelangen, im Lager christlicher Naturmystiker und Alchemiker des 18. Jahrhunderts eine ansehnliche Anhängerschaft.

Anhang: Überlieferungsverzeichnis

I J.A. Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Traktat *Von der hermetischen Kunst* ohne Prosakommentar

Nr. 1

München, Universitätsbibliothek, 8° Ms. 360, Bl. 120r-131v. – *Von der hermetischen Kunst* in einer Kopie des Landshuter Dominikanerpaters Joachim Gregorii (18. Jh.). – Vorlagenlieferant: Pater Felix Weymiller (recte “Weymiller”? Siehe II: Verschollene Überlieferungen, 2). – Unter Berufung auf F. Weymiller wird das Werk einem ‘Adepten’ namens ‘Augustinus Brunnhofer’ (Bl. 131v) zugesprochen. – Dreizehn Vers/Bild-Einheiten; ohne Werktitel.

Bild Nr. 1: Sol-Darstellung (Rundbild).

Verskommentar “In der Ersten Figur” (10 vv.):

Inc.: Vnter den siben Planeten bin ich Sol genannt
der spize meiner Cron gar wohl bekannt

Expl.: bis leztlich der Sohn der Sonnen prangt heruor
mit rothen wangen [zum offenen Tor]

³⁰ Anhang, II, Abschnitt über verschollene Überlieferungen.

³¹ Anhang, II, Nr. 4 und Nr. 14; III, Nr. 2.

³² Von Linden, *Catalogus manuscriptorum*, 66.

“Canon” Nr. 1 (14 vv.):

Inc.: Ihr Gottesfürchtige frome und Lieben
die sich in Kunst und Tugend yben

Expl: all metall müssen sich vor [mir] dukhen
Erwisch ich sie sie müssen zu stukhen

Bild Nr. 13: Rundbild mit Mercurius-, Sulphur- und Sal-Zeichen.

Verskommentar “Zu der 13. Figur” (12 vv.):

Inc.: Der Baum [recte: “Brunnen”] der weißheit stehet alhier
und gibt dem Reichthumbgarten schöne Zier

Expl.: Dise Rosen mit ihres gleichen wasser thue eintrenckhen
und an der arbeit der öfftern widerhollung gedenken

II J.A. Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Traktat *Von der hermetischen Kunst* im *Buch der Weisheit*

Nr. 1

Cistercienser-Stift Heiligenkreuz, Stiftsbibliothek, Cod. 377, Anhang (60 Bl.).

– Das *Buch der Weisheit* in einer spätestens um 1700 erfolgten Aufzeichnung³³. Zu seinen Aufbauteilen zählt Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Traktat (Bl. 31r-46r), der sich aus dreizehn “Figuren” (Rundbilder), dreizehn “Erklärungen” zu den Bildern Nr. 1-13 und zwölf “Canones” zu den Bildern Nr. 1-12 zusammensetzt. – Zwischen Bild Nr. 12 und “Canon” Nr. 12 ein Prosakommentar (Bl. 41r-44r), in dem der *Buch der Weisheit*-Verfasser die “Canones” als ein Werk ‘unsers in gott ruhenden teutschen Adepti und mitbruders Johan Augustin Prunhoffer’ bezeichnet (Bl. 41r). – Im Anschluß an Bild Nr. 13 (Brunnenbild) ein Prosakommentar (Bl. 44v-46r) mit Figur Nr. 14 (Pietà als Sinnbild des ‘kurzen Wegs’). – In einer ‘ferneren Erleütterung’ des Universal-Werks (Bl. 46r-60r) gelegentliche Rückbezüge auf Brunnhofers *Von der hermetischen Kunst*.

Nr. 2

Überlingen, Leopold-Sophien-Bibliothek, Ms. 181, Bl. 1r-50r. – Das *Buch der Weisheit* in einer Abschrift des 18. Jahrhunderts, die nach Ausweis textkritischer Marginalien (Bl. 5v, 10v, 13r, 13v) vom Kopisten mit zwei weiteren Überlieferungen verglichen wurde. – Das *Buch der Weisheit* gliedert sich in die Teile I-IV; dazu Vermerk (Bl. 50r): ‘Johann Augustin Brunhofer Author librorum 4tuor sapientiae’.

Den Kernbestand von Teil I bildet Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Serie *Von der hermetischen Kunst*:

³³ Zur Handschrift siehe Gsell, *Verzeichniss der Handschriften in der Bibliothek des Stiftes Heiligenkreuz*, 209: nur Pauschalhinweis auf einen ‘alchemischen Traktat mit vielen Abbildungen’.

Bl. 4r-13v: Die Vers/Bild-Serie, bestehend aus dreizehn "Figuren" (Rundbilder; Deckfarbenminiaturen) und Verskommentaren; mit Text/Bild-Verlusten: es fehlen Vers/Bild-Einheit Nr. 5, Bild und "Erklärung" Nr. 6. – Der Verskommentar zu den Bildern Nr. 1-12 setzt sich jeweils aus einer "Erklärung" und einem "Canon" zusammen. Bild Nr. 13 begleitet nur eine "Erklärung".

Bl. 14r-16v: Prosakommentar. Der Anonymus verknüpft die 'Hermetischen Canones' mit dem Namen 'vnsers in Gott rühenden Teutschen Adepti und Mitbruedern Johann Augustin Prunhofers' (Bl. 14r) und verleiht sowohl Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Serie als auch seinem Brunnhofer-Kommentar folgenden Titel: Das *Geheimbe buech der Weisheit, der Gesundheit und des reichthums* (Bl. 14r); auch: *Buech der weißheit zum langen leben und vohlkommenen reichthum* (Bl. 16r).

Bl. 16v-17v: Bild Nr. 14 und 15 und "Erklärung" (112 vv.).

Inc.: Sieh hier steh ich ganz wunderbar

In dieser Figur doch Sonnenklar

Expl.: Sondern wart doch bis zum Ferment

Da hat die Sach von selbst ein End

Nr. 3

Überlingen, Leopold-Sophien-Bibliothek, Ms. 178, 50 Bl. – Das *Buch der Weisheit* in einer Abschrift des 18. Jahrhunderts. Auf die Prosavorrede folgt Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Serie (Bl. 4v-17r); dreizehn Text/Bild-Einheiten.

Nr. 4

Erlangen, Universitätsbibliothek, Ms. B 246: 'Ein Wahres Manuscript eines Roßenkreuzers, welches die Emblemata unterschiedener Chymischer wahrhafter Autorum erklärt, Und darinnen demonstrirt, wie aus der Minera Antimonii das Universal durch den trockenen Weeg kan bearbeitet werden' (Bl. 1r). – Das *Buch der Weisheit*, Teile I/II, in einer Abschrift des 18. Jahrhunderts, die zum Bestand der markgräflichen Bibliothek Bayreuth gehörte³⁴. Teil I besteht aus folgenden Abschnitten:

Bl. 2r-v: Prosavorrede. – Bl. 3r-13v: Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Serie, zusammengesetzt aus dreizehn Vers/Bild-Einheiten und unterbrochen durch einen Prosakommentar zum "Canon" Nr. 12 (Bl. 11r-13r). – Zuschreibung der "Hermetischen Canones" an den verstorbenen 'Mitbruder Augustin Brunhaffen' (Bl. 13r). – Bl. 14r-v: Prosaschluß.

³⁴ Zur Handschrift siehe Pültz, *Die deutschen Handschriften der Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen*, 151: Das *Buch der Weisheit* unklassifiziert erfaßt.

Teil II (Bl. 15r-34v): Kommentar zum Vers/Bild-Werk des ‘Mitbruders Augustin Brunhaffen’ (Bl. 15r) im Teil I.

Nr. 5

Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. alch. 675, Bl. 147r-251r. – Die *Clavis Sapientiae oder Das geheime Buch der Weißheit zum Langen Leben und vollkommenen Reichthum* (Bl. 47r) in einer Abschrift des 18. Jahrhunderts. Aus dem Besitz des Arzthalchemikers R.J.F. Schmid (1702/?61). – Die Vers/Bild-Serie *Von der hermetischen Kunst* bestreitet den ersten Buchteil (Bl. 149r-177v) und ist mit dem Namen von ‘Johann Augustin Paurhoffer’ (Bl. 170r) verknüpft. – Dreizehn kolorierte Zeichnungen und Verskommentare.

Nr. 6

New Haven/Connecticut, Yale University Library, Mellon Ms. 94, Bl. 2v-96r. – Abschrift des 18. Jahrhunderts (um 1735). – Das *Buch der Weisheit* wird von Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Serie eröffnet; dreizehn Text/Bild-Einheiten (Bl. 2v-22r). Im Prosateil zwei weitere Bilder (Bl. 51r, 62v)³⁵.

Nr. 7

New Haven/Connecticut, Yale University Library, Mellon Ms. 108, Bl. 5r-42r. – Abschrift des 18. Jahrhunderts. – Sechzehn Bilder, die Bilder Nr. 1-14 mit Verskommentar; alle Vers/Bild-Abschnitte mit Prosakommentar³⁶.

Nr. 8

Prag, Nationalmuseum, Ms. Add. XI E 70, 112 Bl. – Das *Buch der Weisheit zum langen Leben und vollkommenen Reichthum* in einer dreiteiligen Fassung, aufgezeichnet im böhmisch-mährischen Gebiet während der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts (1779). – Teil I (Bl. 1r-50v) birgt vierzehn Abbildungen und die Dichtungen; die Teile II/III geben sich als Kommentar zum Teil I³⁷.

Nr. 9

Prag, Nationalmuseum, Ms. Münchengrätz 48. – Eine Handschrift aus der Waldsteinschen Schloßbibliothek zu Dux (Böhmen), die 1920 in das Schloß Münchengrätz gelangte und heute unter der Verwaltung des Prager National-

³⁵ Angaben nach Witten/Pachella, *Alchemy and the Occult*, 545-549 (mit Reproduktion von Bl. 2v und 3r).

³⁶ Vgl. Witten/Pachella, ebd., 622-636 (624: außerhalb der Sammlung Mellon ‘unidentified’ [!]; mit Reproduktion von Bl. 5r).

³⁷ Angaben nach Scotti, *Catalogo dei Manoscritti alchemici*, unpaginiert.

museums steht. – *Das geheime Buch der Weisheit* in einer Aufzeichnung des 18. Jahrhunderts; mit kolorierten “Figuren”³⁸.

Nr. 10

Wien, Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 11391, Bl. 65r-107r. – *Das Buch der Weißheit Zum Langen Leben Vnd Vollkommenen Reichtumbs* in einer Abschrift des 18. Jahrhunderts. – Bl. 66r-79r: *Von der hermetischen Kunst*; ohne Bilder; mit Hinweis auf ‘Johann Augustin Brunhoffers Hermetische Canones’ (Bl. 79r).

Nr. 11

Darmstadt, Landesbibliothek, Hs. 3259, Bd. 5, 2 (203 S.). – *Das Buch der Weisheit* in einer bildlosen Abschrift des 18. Jahrhunderts.

Nr. 12

Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, Cod. Don. E II (olim: Donaueschingen, Fürstlich-Fürstenbergische Hofbibliothek, Ms. E II, 2), S. 1-100. – *Das Buch der Weisheit* in drei Teilen in einer Aufzeichnung des 18. Jahrhunderts. – S. 1-21: *Von der hermetischen Kunst*; S. 19: Zuschreibung der ‘Hermetischen Canones’ an ‘unsern in Gott ruhenden Mitbruder August[in] Braunhafen’; ohne Bilder.

Nr. 13

New Haven/Connecticut, Yale University Library, Mellon Ms. 132, Bl. 1r-116r. – Eine Abschrift aus dem ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert. – *Der Buch der Weisheit*-Teil II birgt dreizehn ‘Figuren oder Emblematen’ und ‘Rythmische Erklärungen Johannis Augustini Prunhofers’ (Bl. 53v-79v)³⁹.

Nr. 14

New Haven/Connecticut, Yale University Library, Mellon Ms. 133, Bl. 1r-178v. – Eine Abschrift vom Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts, entstanden im rosenkreuzerischen Milieu⁴⁰. Um 1827 schenkte sie Herr ‘von Breitemann [?]’⁴¹ bzw. ‘von Breitenau’⁴² einem Monogrammisten ‘V.’, wohl dem Arzt, Botaniker und Chemiker Lorenz Chrysanth von Vest (1776/1840); 1861 befand sich die Handschrift im Archiv des historischen Vereins für Krain.

³⁸ Antonín, ‘Alchemie des Glücks’, 52 (Bildprobe). Auch erwähnt in *Opus Magnum*, s.v.

³⁹ Vgl. Witten/Pachella, *Alchemy and the occult*, 734-740 (mit Reproduktion von Bl. 1r, 53v, Fig. 3 und Fig. 10).

⁴⁰ Zur Handschrift vgl. Dimitz, ‘Zur Geschichte der Alchemie in Krain’; Witten/Pachella, *Alchemy and the occult*, 741-744 (mit Reproduktion von Bl. 2r, 13r und 41r).

⁴¹ Witten/Pachella, ebd., 742.

⁴² Dimitz, ‘Zur Geschichte der Alchemie in Krain’, 94.

Das *Buch der Weisheit* ist in vier Teile gegliedert. Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Serie bildet den ersten Buchteil (Bl. 4v-61v); dreizehn Einheiten.

Verschollene Überlieferungen:

1. Eine handschriftliche Überlieferung vom *Buch der Weisheit* befand sich 1746/49 im Besitz des Würzburger Fürstbischofs und Alchemikers Anselm Franz von Ingelheim (1683/1749, Fürstbischof seit 1746)⁴³.

2. Im 18. Jahrhundert befanden sich folgende *Buch der Weisheit*-Überlieferungen in der Waldsteinschen Schloßbibliothek zu Dux (Böhmen)⁴⁴: "Catalogus" (1788), Nr. 60: Das *Buch der Weisheit*, zwei Teile. – Nr. 102/1: vier Teile. – Nr. 175: Exzerpte aus Teil 4. – Nr. 266/1: vier Teile; mit zwölf "Figuren" (44 Bl.). – Nr. 373: Quartms. (13 Bogen); mit "Figuren"; wie im Münchner Ms. 360 (I, Nr. 1) verknüpft mit dem Namen des 'wohlehrwürdigen Pater Felix Wegmüller Eremiten bei Razenhofen'.

3. Ms., in Oktav, 307 S.: *Das geheime Buch der Weisheit und zum langen Leben und vollkommenen Reichthum* in vier Teilen; mit dreizehn Bildern (Aquarellmalerei). – Die Handschrift wurde 1948 dem Antiquar Heinrich Hinterberger aus Familienbesitz zum Kauf angeboten⁴⁵.

Vermutlich wurde Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Traktat *Von der hermetischen Kunst* ins Lateinische übersetzt. Darauf deutet eine Traktatfassung, die in der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts von einem Freunde H. Fictulds, wohl 'D[oc]tor?]. Hub.', aus dem Lateinischen ins Deutsche (rück-)übersetzt und Fictuld 'verehrt' worden ist⁴⁶.

III J.A. Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Traktat *Von der hermetischen Kunst* im *Sonn- und Monds-Kind*

Nr. 1

Hermaphroditisches Sonn- und Monds-Kind, Das ist: Des Sohns deren Philosophen natürlich-übernatürliche Gebährung, Zerstörung und Regenerirung oder Vorgestellte Theorie und Practic den Stein der Weißen zu suchen und zu machen. Durch einen unbekanten Philosophum und Adeptum in 12. emblematischen Figuren und so vielen Paragraphis. Mit Applicir- und Beyfügung so vieler Canonischen Versen des berühmten Schwedischen Adepti Northons: aus einem alten manuscript gezogener praesentiret. Nun aber nach dem

⁴³ Brater, 'Alchimie in Würzburg', 343.

⁴⁴ Von Linden, *Catalogus manuscriptorum*.

⁴⁵ Hinterberger, 'Zusatz zu E.F.', 6.

⁴⁶ Fictuld, *Des Probier-Steins Erste Classe*, 57.

mystischen Verstand und innerem Weesen expliciret [...] durch [...] L.C.S.
Mainz: Elias Peter Bayer für Johann Friedrich Krebs 1752.

Brunnhofers Vers/Bild-Serie in einer kommentierten Ausgabe von L.C.S.
Vorlage: Eine kommentarlose Vers/Bild-Abschrift.

Bildbestand: Zwölf "Figuren", gestochen von Friedrich Anton Krebs
(Mainz; gest. 1774). – Als Titelpuffer erscheint das *Buch der Weisheit*-Bild
Nr. 13 ("Brunnen der Weisheit").

Textbestand: Zwölf "Paraphi" und "Canones". – Bild- und Textreihung
entsprechen der Abfolge im *Buch der Weisheit* (Tl. I). Jedem Bild, "Paragra-
phen" und "Canon" jeweils angeschlossen sind deskriptiv-deutende Prosa-
"Erklärungen" von L.C.S.

Paraphus Nr. 1 (10 vv.):

Inc.: UNter den 7. Planeten werd ich Sol genannt

Mein Cron-Spitz ist mir wohl bekant:

Expl.: Bis zu letzt erscheint der Sonnen-Sohn

Geziert mit Purpur in seinem Thron.

Canon Nr. 1 (14 vv.):

Inc: IHR Gotes frommen, und ihr lieben

Die sich in Kunst und Tugend üben:

Expl.: Alle Metall thun sich vor mir bücken,

Ergreif ich sie, so gehen sie in stücken.

Paraphus Nr. 12 (18 vv.):

Inc.: ES ist in unser Kunst gewiß,

Das aus dem Schwanen kommen ist,

Expl.: Sieben Eintränckungen zeigens klar,

Daß Salamander werde offenbahr,

Canon Nr. 12 (20 vv.):

Inc.: EIn Ding der Welt für Augen steht,

So in sich nimmt des Golds-Secret:

Expl.: Fahr fort, zuletzt da wird es roth,

Bekommst du das, so dancke GOTT.

Nr. 2

Das hermaphroditische Sonn- und Monds-Kind. In: *Hermetisches A.B.C. derer ächten Weisen alter und neuer Zeit vom Stein der Weisen.* Tl. II. Berlin: Ch.U. Ringmacher, Nr. XIII, S. 301-348. – Abdruck der zwölf Vers-"Paraphen" und "Canones" nach Vorlage der Ausgabe von L.C.S. (Nr. 1); eine Bildwiedergabe unterblieb.

Faksimile-Ausgaben: Berlin 1915 und 1921; Schwarzenburg 1979.

Nr. 3

Hermaphroditisches Sonn- und Mondskind. L'Enfant Hermaphrodite du Soleil et de la Lune. Traduit de l'allemand par Yann Lauthe et présenté par Sylvain Matton. Paris 1985. – Reprographischer Nachdruck der Ausgabe von L.C.S. (Nr. 1); mit einer neufranzösischen Übersetzung.

Nr. 4

Amsterdam, Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Ms. M 184. – Das *Sonn- und Monds-Kind* in einer Replik, entstanden ca. 1970/75; Urheber: Heinz Dobrovolny; Auftraggeber: Joost R. Ritman (geb. 1941). – Vorlage: Der Druck Mainz 1752 (Nr. 1).

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Die Wiedergabe der 'Figuren' im *Sonn- und Monds-Kind* (1752) erfolgte nach Vorlage eines Exemplars der Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica (Amsterdam). Für ihren liebenswürdigen Beistand schulden Verfasser und Herausgeber den Mitarbeitern der Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica verbindlichen Dank.

A German Alchimia Picta of the 17th Century: Notes on the Verse/Image-Tract Von der hermetischen Kunst by Johann Augustin Brunnhofer and to his annotated editions in the Buch der Weisheit and in the Hermaphroditisches Sonn- und Monds-Kind.

Scholars of the history of alchemy and lovers of early modern emblematic literature are generally familiar with the richly illustrated treatise *Von der hermetischen Kunst* (Of the Hermetic Art) in an annotated version in *Hermaphroditisches Sonn- und Mondskind* (Hermaphrodite Sun- and Moonchild) by the monogramist L.C.S. (1752). The present study is the first to give a complete survey of the tradition of this German Alchimia picta in manuscripts and prints from the 18th to the 20th century. It also identifies the hitherto unknown author: Johann Augustin Brunnhofer, an alchemist working in the second half of the 17th century. Brunnhofer used two treatises for his alchemical pictorial *Von der hermetischen Kunst*: 1) a German doctrinal poem of the 16th century on Mercurius philosophorum, titled *Sermo philosophicus* (in print since 1605), and 2) the *Göldene Gedicht* (Golden Poem)/*Carmen Apollineum*“ (in print since 1606), written by Raphael Egli, a theo-chemist. Brunnhofer teaches in parabolic depiction an alchemy based on Sol, Luna and Mercurius. Brunnhofer's strict allegorism provoked two other alchemists to “chemicalise” his metaphorical alchemy, resulting in two treatises: 1) the *Buch der Weisheit* (Book of Wisdom), a work that has come down to us only in manuscript form but was widely read in Rosicrucian circles during the 18th century, and 2) the *Hermaphroditisches Sonn- und Mondskind* of L.C.S. (1752). It is these works that secured a place for Brunnhofer's *Von der hermetischen Kunst* in the alchemical writing of the 18th century.

THE PLACE OF KABBALAH IN THE DOCTRINE OF RUSSIAN FREEMASONS*

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Masonic lodges first made their appearance in Russia in the mid-18th century and, by the end of that century, probably involved several thousand people¹. Members of lodges were for the most part statesmen, aristocrats and intellectuals: dignitaries, career soldiers, officials, writers and scientists, churchmen, etc. Masonic views are known to have had a considerable influence on the ideology of that time but, although the history of Russian masonry has been well studied², masonic ideology has until now received little scholarly attention. There is a long tradition in Russian science of scepticism concerning the main constituents of masonic tradition: mysticism, alchemy and Kabbalah. During the late 19th–early twentieth centuries, Russian scholars paid little attention to this topic, mainly because of their extreme positivistic views. In the Soviet period, the topic was taboo.

Moreover, there are a number of objective difficulties in studying masonic teachings. Most masonic texts have not yet been published. Significant parts of masonic documents were destroyed by the masons themselves, or were lost as a result of government persecution. In addition, the masons themselves often masked their involvement in Kabbalah and alchemy³. Thus the available materials are scarce and often encrypted. There are many rough copies of masonic texts without any consistent description of the topic. All this has im-

* We are especially grateful to Dr. Zhanna Shuranova (Moscow) for her invaluable help in preparing English translations of the difficult masonic texts, to Prof. George Gerstein (Philadelphia), Dr. Torsten Rütting (Hamburg), and Prof. Rashid Kaplanov (Moscow) for the corrections they proposed to make in the final version of the article.

¹ At present, more than 3100 eighteenth-century Russian masons have been identified. It is suggested that the ca. 150 masonic lodges of the Catherinian age contained no less than 8000 members (A. I. Serkov, personal communication). For detailed biographical data on Russian masons see A. Serkov's *Lexicon Russian Masonry*. See also Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 124-26, 375.

² See, for example, Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 44-70, 94-98; Pypin, *Masonry in Russia*; Longinov, *Novikov and the Moscow Martinists*; Serkov, *The History of Russian Masonry in the 19th century*; Melgunov and Sidorov (eds.), *Masonry in its past and present*. See also Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*.

³ See, for example, materials of the Novikov case (1792): Longinov, *Novikov and Moscow Martinists*, 478-518, esp. 517.

peded study, so that some researchers insist that Russian masons were not concerned with Kabbalah and alchemy at all.

In a thorough investigation of manuscripts in Moscow archives⁴ we discovered dozens of texts related to Kabbalah, including both translations from different languages (probably including Hebrew) and original compositions. This paper is an analysis of the kabbalistic constituent of masonic teaching. Special attention is paid here to individuals interested in Jewish mysticism; we describe some Russian masons who have read, translated and used in their practical life not only the texts of the Christian kabbalists but also original Jewish writings. In addition, we attempted to find possible intermediaries who participated in transmission of this knowledge to their Russian masonic brothers.

In our view, the question of the role of Kabbalah in masonic tradition is extremely important⁵. Below we try to describe the kabbalistic concepts which were especially interesting to Russian masons and contributed greatly to their social and political thinking.

Historical introduction

Three main periods are normally discerned in the history of Russian freemasonry during the 18th century. In the first, from the 1740s to the enthronement of Catherine the Great in 1762, freemasonry was ‘merely a fashionable thing borrowed from the West without any criticism’. In the second period, which lasted up to the early 1780s, freemasonry was ‘the first moral philosophy in Russia; three first degrees of “St. Jones”, or “symbolic” freemasonry prevailed’⁶. The third period, when the “higher degrees”, especially the Rosicrucians, dominated in Russia, covers the 1780s⁷. The government per-

⁴ We refer mostly to the MS documents which are contained in the Division of Manuscripts (DMS) of the Russian State Library (RSL), in the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (RSAAA), and in the Russian State Historical Archive of Moscow (RSHAM). For further details, see: Burmistrov and Endel, ‘Kabbalah in Russian Masonry’; Burmistrov, ‘Kabbalistic Exegetics and Christian Dogmatics’.

⁵ By “Masonic tradition” we have in mind a complex system of theological, philosophical and mystical ideas which penetrated masonic teaching, propagated among the masons according to their rules and traditions, and was used in practice when carrying out masonic works. Thus this notion includes not only a set of concepts but also a specific system of their treating, learning and interpretation. For a review of the Russian mason’s practices, see Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, 30-52.

⁶ That is these lodges comprised only three Masonic degrees, accepted in the Craft from the very beginning: Pupil, Apprentice and Master.

⁷ See Semeka, ‘Russian Masonry in the Eighteenth Century’, 125.

secutions in the early 1790s put an end to the expansion of freemasonry. The masons began to recover gradually their activity only after the death of Catherine II and the enthronement of Paul I. This process continued at the early 19th century, up to 1822 when Alexander I prohibited every freemasonic activity in Russian.

Two principal trends may be identified in Russian freemasonry of the late 18th–early 19th centuries: rationalistic (deistic) and mystical. The trends were strongly interrelated. Rationalistic freemasonry reached its acme in the 1760s–70s. In their outlook, literary preferences, social and political views, these masons were almost identical with Russian Voltairians⁸, zealous supporters of the ideas of Enlightenment, natural law and physiocracy. Encouraged by the “enlightened” Empress Catherine II, Russian Voltairians sought to elaborate a new morality based on reason but not on Christian ethics⁹. To create this new morality, it was necessary, however, to establish a tightly-knit secret organization for, in Voltaire’s view, to allow common people to reason tended to result in destroying the whole job. In the 1770s the centres of the novel “religion of reason” became lodges of the first Russian masonic union in St. Petersburg, headed by Ivan P. Elagin (1725–1793)¹⁰. These lodges were characterized by weak discipline and liberalism. It is obvious that any interest in mystical matters in such a milieu was next to impossible. Curiously, the leader of the masonic union, Elagin, studied kabbalistic teachings and used them in his own writings. At first, he was also a Voltaire enthusiast but later, having “recovered” from Voltairianism, he broke away from rationalistic freemasonry¹¹.

The second trend in Russian freemasonry of the 18th century, the “mystical” masons, involved stronger discipline in the lodges and unconditional submis-

⁸ Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 500, noted that properly speaking ‘Masonic lodges of the 1770s were Voltairian institutions’.

⁹ On the Russian Voltairian movement, see Mikhailov and Stroiev (eds.), *Voltaire and Russia*; Karp, *French Enlighteners and Russia*.

¹⁰ On the relationship between Russian Masons and Voltairians, see also Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 140–56 (Ch. 2, Pt. 2: ‘Masonry and Voltairianism’); Semeka, ‘Russian Masonry in the Eighteenth century’, 132–49.

¹¹ Elagin wrote later: ‘I was attracted by godless writers who converted Christian faith into blasphemy and Holy Scriptures into mockery, scoffs, and sneer [...] I became acquainted with atheists and deists [...] Boulanger [...] Voltaire, Rousseau, Helvetius [...] This reading corrupted my soul [...] and misled me [...] But the Actual Grace did not want my complete perdition; it did allow neither to Voltaire’s writings nor to those of other so-called new philosophers and encyclopaedists to convert my soul entirely [to their faith]’. See Novikov, *Freemasonry and Russian Culture*, 228–29. A similarly critical attitude to Voltairianism was evinced by the head of Moscow “mystical” masons, Professor Johann Schwarz, and masonic activists such as Ivan Lopukhin and Aleksey Kutuzov. See Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 158, 263 et al.

sion to their chiefs. Two great masonic systems are discernible within this trend. The first was the so-called “Knighthood”, a masonic union of the Swedish system with “Capitulum Phoenix” at the head, founded in the late 1770s¹². Splendid rituals were typical of this freemasonry; its members belonged mostly to the high life. The Grand Prefect of the Capitulum and the Grand Master of the Great National Lodge (Swedish system) was Prince G.P. Gagarin (1745–1808), and their Grand Secretary was one of the most authoritative Russian masons I.V. Beber (1746–1820)¹³. The Swedish lodges in Russia consisted mostly of noblemen who were strongly involved in political intrigues and had only little interest in mystical matters. Their leadership, “Capitulum Phoenix”, comprised, however, devoted mystics and theosophers. They studied Kabbalah, magic and alchemy, founded secret “theoretical” lodges, and dreamed of being members of an “invisible universal Capitulum” which, as they believed, governed all the world¹⁴. Working in the deepest secrecy (most of its members were unknown to the government and even to the ordinary masons), “Capitulum Phoenix” strongly affected almost all masonic activity in Russia in the late 18th–early 19th centuries.

At the same time, in the 1780s, the teaching of the Order of Gold and Rosy Cross came to Russia from Germany and became the second movement of Russian “mystical” freemasonry. Let us briefly consider the history of this Order. The Order of Gold and Rosy Cross emerged in Germany in the mid-1750s. There are several versions of its appearance. The Rosicrucians themselves believed that the Order had been a successor of the ancient Rosicrucian tradition which arose in the fourteenth century and was manifested openly in the early seventeenth century (in turn, they claimed that this tradition descended from the Primordial doctrine, granted to Adam)¹⁵. In the early 18th century, there appeared some writings on the teaching and main structural principles of a Rosicrucian Order. In 1710 Samuel Richter, a Silesian minister, published a

¹² See Sokolovskaia, *Capitulum Phoenix*.

¹³ Born in Weimar, Beber was a Lutheran; he taught physics and mathematics in the higher schools at St. Petersburg, and was a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Beber had a passion for numerology, Kabbalah, and Swedenborg’s teaching. He possessed a rich collection of books and manuscripts on the secret sciences. See Sokolovskaia, *Capitulum Phoenix*, 49–50.

¹⁴ See Sokolovskaia, *Capitulum Phoenix*, 53, 58, 75–77.

¹⁵ On the history of the Rosicrucian tradition, see Yates, *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment*; Waite, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross*; McIntosh, *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason*, 23–37. See also Schick, *Das aeltere Rosenkreuzertum*; Arnold, *Histoire des Rose-Croix*, Paris, 1955; id., *La Rose-Croix et ses Rapports avec la Franc-Maçonnerie*.

treatise entitled *Theo-Philosophia Theoretico-Practica*¹⁶, which contained a strictly elaborated plan of a secret Rosy and Cross Order.

Under the influence of freemasonry in the mid-18th century, an explosion of Rosicrucian groups and circles in Germany and Austria occurred. Numerous Rosicrucian centres were scattered throughout southern Germany, Austria, Hungary and northern Italy. In Germany, “new” Rosicrucians “debuted” first in Sulzbach, in 1755-56; then the centre of their activity moved to Berlin¹⁷. Among the leaders of the movement were Bernhard J. Schleiss von Löwenfeld, Johann G. Schrepfer, Friedrich J. W. Schröder and Johann Ch. von Wöllner. These were the real creators of the famous secret organization known as the Order of the Gold- and Rosy Cross.

The Order was founded by Bernhard Joseph Schleiss von Löwenfeld (1731-1800), a physician to the ducal house at Sulzbach who later received an earlship and became a councilor of the duke¹⁸. He took an obvious interest in Kabbalah as if following the traditions of the Sulzbach Christian Kabbalah of the late seventeenth century. Curiously, in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Sulzbach had become a centre of Christian kabbalistic studies. Under the aegis of Prince Christian-August (1622-1702), the Duke of Sulzbach, lived and worked Christian Knorr von Rosenroth (1636-89), known for his translations of kabbalistic texts and the compiler of the anthology *Kabbala Denudata*¹⁹.

It is no wonder that several decades later Schleiss reproduced the ideas of Knorr, Francis Mercury van Helmont (1614-98), and other Christian kabbalists of that group, and taught in his own writings how to regain a true spiritual teaching, the “authentic Kabbalah”, from the alphabet of Nature. The most important concepts of the Order had their source in Kabbalah: the idea on the

¹⁶ Sincerus Renatus [S. Richter], *Theo-Philosophia Theoretico-Practica*, 30-36.

¹⁷ On the history of the Order, see *Der Signatstern oder die enthüllten sieben Grade der mystischen Freimaurerei*, Bd. V, S. 329-335; Schuster, *Secret Societies, Unions and Orders*, Vol. 2, 63-78; Le Forestier, *La franc-maçonnerie templière et occultiste aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles*; Grassl, *Aufbruch zur Romantik*; McIntosh, *The Rosy Cross Unveiled* (ch. 7, 8). For the most detailed analysis of the history and ideology of the order, see McIntosh, *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason*.

¹⁸ See his Rosicrucian works: Schleiss von Löwenfeld, B.J. (Phoebron), *Geoffenbarter Einfluss in das allgemeine Wohl der Staaten* (Russian printed translation: Moscow, 1816); id., *Der im Lichte der Wahrheit strahlende Rosenkreuzer* (Russian MS translation: DMS RSL, F 147, N181). See also McIntosh, *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason*, 96-100.

¹⁹ See Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century*, 100-52; Kilcher, ‘Lexikographische Konstruktion der Kabbala’, 67-126; id., ‘Hebräische Sprachmetaphysik und lateinische Kabbalistik’, 63-108; id., ‘Synopsis zu Knorr von Rosenroths *Kabbala Denudata*’, 201-20; Burmistrov, ‘*Kabbala Denudata* Rediscovered’, 25-75; id., ‘Die hebräischen Quellen der *Kabbala Denudata*’, 341-376.

Tree of ten *Sefirot*²⁰, doctrines of mystical numbers and *Adam Kadmon*²¹, the teaching on the “Primordial Language”²² and a prophetic interpretation of the Scriptures, and many others²³. Jewish elements played an important role in Rosicrucian rituals²⁴. It is noteworthy that all the abovementioned kabbalistic ideas adopted by this Order were later incorporated by the Russian masons²⁵. The ultimate goal of the Order is described as follows: ‘To awake hidden forces of nature, to liberate the natural light which was deeply buried under the dross after the damnation, and to kindle in every brother a burning torch that would help him to see easy the concealed God [...] and thus to join more closely to the primeval Source of Light’²⁶.

The history of the Order was described in detail in the book *The Compass of Wisemen*, which was extremely popular in the masonic milieu²⁷. The book

²⁰ *Sefirah* (Heb., pl. *Sefirot*) – literally “number”. The concept of Sefirot has the central place in the theosophy of Jewish Kabbalah. Sefirot are conceived as ten stages of emanation from *Ein-Sof*, the Infinite, God Himself. Each Sefirah denotes a certain aspect of God as a Creator. The ten Sefirot together form the Tree of Sefirot, the universal structure of the whole creation. This Tree is considered a dynamic unity where the Divine manifestation is unfolded. At the same time, they are ten attributes of the Creator: 1. *Keter* (“Crown”); 2. *Hokhmah* (“Wisdom”); 3. *Binah* (“Intelligence”); 4. *Gedullah* (“Greatness”), or *Hesed* (“Love”, “Charity”); 5. *Geburah* (“Power”), or *Din* (“Judgement”); 6. *Tiferet* (“Beauty”); 7. *Nezah* (“Victory”, or “Eternity”); 8. *Hod* (“Majesty”); 9. *Yesod* (“Foundation”); 10. *Malkhut* (“Kingdom”). See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 96–116; Hallamish, *An Introduction to the Kabbalah*, 121–166. For example, the instructions for the Fifth Grade of the Order contain a description of the Tree of Sefirot, corresponding them to ten stages of the alchemical process. See Beyer, *Das Lehrsystem der Gold- und Rosenkreuzer*, 210.

²¹ *Adam Kadmon* (the Primordial Man) – the first emanation of the Divine light as well as the ensemble of worlds of light, developed on the first stage of emanation. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 137–142, etc.

²² On this concept see Coudert (ed.), *The Language of Adam. Die Sprache Adams*; Kilcher, *Die Sprachtheorie der Kabbala als ästhetisches Paradigma*; id. ‘Hebräische Sprachmetaphysik und lateinische Kabbalistik’.

²³ For further details see McIntosh, *The Rosy Cross Unveiled*, 82–94.

²⁴ Schuster, *Secret Societies, Unions and Orders*, Vol. 2, 75.

²⁵ See the main documents of the Order: *Tabula mystica* (1777), a statutory act for the members of the Order, and *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer aus dem 16ten und 17ten Jahrhundert* (1785–88), the main theoretical manual for Western and Russian Rosicrucians (see its Russian translations: DMS RSL, F. 14, N 180, 181, 182, 190, F. 237, N 65). A number of hermeneutic and numerological practices borrowed from the Christian Kabbalah mentioned and used in these texts. See also Longinov, *Novikov and Moscow Martinists*, 82–85; Pypin, *Masonry in Russia*, 194–231.

²⁶ See ‘Eingang zur ersten Classe des preiswürdigsten Ordens vom Goldenen Rosen Creutze nach der letzten Haupt- und Reformations-Convention’, in: Bode, J.J. (ed.), *Starke Erweise aus den eigenen Schriften des hochheiligen Ordens Gold- und Rosencreutzer*, Russian translation: *Vkhod v perviy klass Dostokhval'neishego Ordena Zlato-Rosovogo Kresta*, DMS RSL, F. 147, N 294, f. 10.

²⁷ Ketmia Vere (pseud.), *Der Compass der Weisen*. The doctrine and rites of the Order are also considered in Magister Pianco (Hans Heinrich von Ecker und Eckhoffen), *Freimaurische*

contains many variously transformed kabbalistic concepts and references to some kabbalistic sources. The author was apparently Johann Christoph von Wöllner (1732-1800)²⁸, one of the greatest German masons and an ideologist of the Order. A set of right-wing political and religious thinkers belonging to the German intellectual establishment gathered around Wöllner, who was known for his ultra-conservative religious views.

In the 1780s the Rosicrucians gained considerable influence at the Prussian court. One of their leaders, Johann Rudolph von Bischofswerder (1741-1803), convinced Prince Friedrich-Wilhelm (1744-1797), the Prussian heir apparent, to join the Order and in 1781 Friedrich-Wilhelm became a member (his Order name was Ormesus Magnus). Following his enthronement, the Rosicrucians began to make internal and external policy in Prussia; Wöllner and Bischofswerder were appointed to ministerial posts and became intimate advisors of Friedrich-Wilhelm. Wöllner, the head of the Department of religious affairs, established a religious censorship, "Immediat-Examinations-Kommission", a kind of Lutheran inquisition (1791), and persecutions of the enlighteners began. The political power of the Order in Prussia came to end in 1797, following the death of Friedrich-Wilhelm II.

In the south too, the Order was suppressed. After interdiction of alchemy in Austria (1785), it continued to work illegally. In 1790 it again rose to the surface for a while, under Leopold II (1747-1792), the Holy Roman Emperor from 1790 to 1792. He was one of the most capable of the 18th-century reformist rulers known as the "enlightened despots" and took a deep interest in alchemy and Kabbalah. Following his death in 1792 the new emperor, Francis II (1768-1835), banned the Order once again²⁹.

Wöllner, as well as Johann Ch. A. Theden (1714-1797), and their envoy in Moscow, Baron Heinrich-Jacob Schröder (1757-c.1797)³⁰, were the chiefs of the Moscow Brothers and the main source of masonic information and mystical literature. Russian masons had already known about the Rosicrucians in the mid-1770s³¹; the Order began to act in Russia, however, only after Johann

Versammlungsreden der Gold- und Rosenkreutzer des alten Systems (Russian translations was published in the secret Masonic typography, Moscow, 1784).

²⁸ See Schuster, *Secret Societies, Unions and Orders*, Vol. 2, 64. According to another version, its author was Schleiss von Löwenfeld.

²⁹ See McIntosh, *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason*, 113-131 (ch. 7: 'A Rosicrucian on the Prussian Throne').

³⁰ See about him: Barskov, *Correspondence of the Russian Masons of the 18th Century*, 215-234 (excerpts from Schröder's diary); Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 905; Serkov and Reizin (eds.), *Letters of N.I. Novikov*, 295.

³¹ On the penetration of Rosicrucian ideas to Russia see Gilly, 'Rosicrucians in Russia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', 54-64.

Georg Schwarz (1751-1784), one of the most prominent Russian masons, met in 1782 Wöllner and Theden during a visit to Germany. He received from them an appointment as ‘the only Supreme Director’ of the Rosicrucian Order in the Russian Empire, acts of the “Theoretic Degree”³² and permission to begin the work in Moscow³³. The influence of the Order was so great that after 1780s two parallel and almost independent trends existed in Russian freemasonry: the traditional masons and the Rosicrucians³⁴. The strongest interest in Jewish Kabbalah was manifested among the Russian Rosicrucians. The centre of their activity was the Moscow circle of Johann Schwarz and Nikolay I. Novikov (1744-1818). Having revised the ideas of ancient and medieval Christian mystics, alchemists, Christian kabbalists as well as European mystics of the 17th–18th centuries, they elaborated their own doctrine. Their social and political views were imbued with conservatism and religious enthusiasm. Inspired by the ideas of Louis-Claude de Saint Martin (1743-1803)³⁵ and German Rosicrucians, they considered religion and the masonic movement instruments to preserve the political system and social stability. They pondered over an ideal masonic state ruled by a mystical Order, under the sovereignty of the “Holy King”. The Rosicrucians approached the conservative party of Counts Nikita I. Panin (1718-1783) and Peter I. Panin (1721-1789) seeking contacts with Crown Prince Paul (in their view, the putative future “Holy King”)³⁶. This activity resulted in persecution of Russian masons, who fell into disgrace with the government in the late 1780s-early 1790s.

Below we concentrate only on masonic circles whose members were deeply involved in studying theoretical facets of European mysticism, alchemy and Kabbalah and who sought to embody their knowledge in their own compositions, in their practices of God-knowing, mystical contemplation and praying. It is noteworthy that we mean a rather small group of individuals

³² One of the higher masonic degree, the so-called “Theoretic Degree of Solomon Sciences”, introduced by the German Rosicrucians.

³³ See Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 102-104; Ryu, ‘Moscow Freemasons and the Rosicrucian Order’, 209-210.

³⁴ Serkov, *The History of Russian Masonry in the 19th century*, 37. See also Fajonato, ‘Novikov’s Rosicrucian circle: promulgation of a new ethic ideal and lifestyle’, 38–50; Kwaadgrass, ‘Freemasonry and Its Relationship with the Rosicrucian Doctrine’, 51-62; Ryu, ‘Moscow Freemasons and the Rosicrucian Order’, 198-232; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, 107-111.

³⁵ On Saint-Martin and his doctrine, see: Matter, *Saint-Martin, Le philosophe inconnu*; Jaques-Chaquin, ‘La Philosophie de la Nature chez Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin’, 314–332. On kabbalistic elements in the views of Saint-Martin and his teacher, Martines de Pasqually, see Scholem, ‘Ein verschollener jüdischer Mystiker der Aufklärungszeit, E. J. Hirschfeld’, 254-259.

³⁶ On them and their masonic activity see: Ransel, *The Politics of Catherinian Russia*; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, 24-26.

(mostly Rosicrucians and the members of the Theoretical Degree) different to a great extent from both the most Russian and European Brothers who considered freemasonry something like an affinity group, or a political institution, or a salon for amusements. They were a minority in Russian masonry (about 2-3%) but had a great authority and influence. There is almost no evidence concerning any interest for Kabbalah in the main masonic Rites working in Russia in the late 18th - early 19th centuries: Ecosais Rectifeé, Strikt- and Laxe-Observanz, the Templers, etc. The structure of masonry in Russia was rather flexible: some lodges and unions could fiercely fight with each other but after a while they united together (as it happened in the 1770s with Elagin's English union and Reuchel's Swedish-Berlin lodges). Besides, the same masons are known to have belonged to several Rites simultaneously and even to have held there the leading offices. The doctrines of Western masonry were perceived by the Russian Brothers with great criticism. Therefore it is difficult to define the things they truly believed when analyzing official documents of this or that masonic system they belonged to. In our opinion, the interest in Kabbalah and other secret sciences in Russian masonry was characteristic not for certain Rites, Orders and Degrees, but for the individual spiritual and intellectual quest of some Russian mystics. For example, among the main enthusiasts of Kabbalah was Ivan Elagin, the chief of the first masonic English union in Russia (see below), but his lodges did not deal with Kabbalah and other occult teachings at all. It is also important to emphasize the strong influence exerted to the mystical strivings of the Russian masons by Russian Orthodoxy. Most of the Russian Rosicrucians and "theoretic" masons were true Orthodox Christians well-read in patristic literature. The Byzantine and Russian Orthodox spiritual traditions (St. (Pseudo)-Dionysius Areopagita, St. Maximus the Confessor, St. Simeon the New Theologian, St. Gregory Palamas) which were extremely important for them, define to a great extent the originality of their masonic views.

It is necessary also to discriminate masonic documents such as statutes, theoretic manuals, catechisms, etc. from manifold writings which comprised the "circle of reading" of the Russian masons (a great bulk of translated and original texts including patristic literature, books of Catholic and Protestant mystics, pietists, theosophers, alchemists, and some treatises on historiosophy and theology written by the Russian Brothers). In masonic documents as such, it is hardly possible to find any references to Kabbalah; even if this term is used there it has only a "metaphorical" sense.³⁷ On the contrary, the "circle of

³⁷ See on this "metaphorical" Kabbalah Kilcher's *Die Sprachtheorie der Kabbala als ästhetisches Paradigma*.

masonic reading” contains dozens of texts relating to Christian and Jewish Kabbalah (see below).

Thus we can treat the kabbalistic interests of some Russian masons not as a peculiar “intramasonic” phenomenon caused by their European mentors but as an original trend in the history of Russian thought that emerged due to a number of different factors.

The spiritual image of Russian masons

First, we try to present a brief description of the spiritual image of those who felt themselves to be members of the Rosicrucian Order. Their Weltanschauung is commonly considered as a reaction to Voltairianism, and as a Russian phenomenon of the 18th century, the so-called “freethinking”³⁸. In a broader context, however, their views may be regarded as an attempt to overcome the deep religious and intellectual crisis suffered by Russian society in the 18th century. As was noted by G. Florovsky, the Russian theologian, ‘All the historic importance of the Russian freemasonry resided in the fact that it represented psychological ascesis and reintegration of the [Russian] soul. In freemasonry, the Russian soul goes back to itself after a long period of dissipation [...] This was spiritual awakening from a dead faint’³⁹.

In the last quarter of the 18th century, a specific “mystical” sub-culture, with a definite set of stereotypes and symbols and an inevitable taint of mystery and feeling of selectivity, was developing. An extremely intensive spiritual life focused on a continuous search for the true path, with all its doubts and disappointments, was typical of those who belonged to this subculture⁴⁰. Russian masons were eclectic in what they read and in their religious exercises; it is difficult to imagine how they could combine Orthodox piety with alchemic works and kabbalistic practice. In all their doings, we feel an enormous and astonishingly forceful longing for a faith-cure of the world and for the transfiguration of man.

This should explain the highly active social position of many masons during the age of Catherine the Great. For example, a great role in Russian enlightenment was played by a publishing house established by the best-known Russian mason of the age, N. I. Novikov. Due to his work, in addition to special masonic editions, hundreds of books were translated and published. They included writings by Oriental and European Christian mystics as well as com-

³⁸ See, for example, Semeka, ‘Russian Masonry in the Eighteenth century’, 134.

³⁹ Florovsky, *Paths of Russian Theology*, 115.

⁴⁰ See Serkov and Reizin (eds.), *Letters of N.I. Novikov*.

positions in the fields of history, ethics, philosophy and fiction. Very typical of Russian masons was charity work, such as free distribution of bread in meagre years, establishment of a number of free homes and public schools throughout Russia, rendering assistance to poor brothers, etc. Furthermore, Moscow masons were seriously occupied with pedagogical activity. Thus they played an important role in the establishment of Moscow University and a number of scientific and student organizations. The development of Russian theatre, of the pharmacy in Russia etc. also are linked to the names of outstanding masons. Many of them held high positions in state and military services. It is noteworthy that they were concerned not only with the best organization of society and nature as a whole but also with their own farming and agronomy; thus they nursed their estates, and their mystical experience correlated well with their economic activity.

Moscow Rosicrucians were also deeply involved in political activities; the well-known official persecutions of Russian masons in the 1790s were caused by suspicions that they had plotted a take-over. Behind this social activity was a fundamental concept of the world and the human race, reflecting a masonic version, rooted in gnosticism, of the biblical myth of the fall of man. Masons collected ideas and concepts coherent with this basic view within various philosophic and religious systems. An important element of their search was Kabbalah. The main sources of knowledge in the field were original kabbalistic texts and those of Christian kabbalists. Some works of Protestant mystics and pietists of the seventeenth century also served as important sources. In turn, Protestant mystical concepts of universal salvation and readjustment of the world can be traced back to the doctrine of *Tikkun ha-olam* in the Lurianic Kabbalah⁴¹. In addition, a number of transformed kabbalistic ideas were borrowed from European mystics of the 18th century such as E. Swedenborg, F. Oetinger, L.-C. de Saint-Martin; some Russian masons were known to be acquainted with them personally.

⁴¹ This kabbalistic school was established by Isaak Luria (Ha-Ari) in Safed in the 1570s. On the influence of Lurianic doctrine on European mysticism see: Coudert, *The Impact of the Kabbalah in the Seventeenth Century*, esp. 120-132; Burmistrov, 'Kabbala Denudata Rediscovered'; id. 'Kabbalah in European Culture'. *Tikkun ha-olam* (Heb., "Improvement of the Universe") – in Lurianic Kabbalah, the process of universal restoration and reintegration of the primeval harmony, destroyed by the general cataclasm of the "breaking of vessels" (*shevirat ha-kelim*). A special task in *tikkun* is entrusted to man who is to make the improvement of the lowest regions of the universe and to liberate the sparks of light imprisoned there by means of his personal illumination and cleaving to the Holy One. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 140-144.

Masonic tradition and Kabbalah

Kabbalah underlies masonic theosophy, cosmogony and hermeneutics and follows the initiate at all three stages of his ascent to the Truth. At the first stage, it teaches him to possess the light of the perennial, supernal Being, *Adam Kadmon*, and he should strive toward His perfection. At the second stage, it offers him the integrated image of the kabbalistic world of ten *Sefirot* and four *Olamot*⁴². This is especially important at the third stage when Kabbalah becomes necessary for understanding the “spiritual language” of the Scriptures and this by use of Kabbalistic hermeneutics. It is not strange that precisely the rules and methods of kabbalistic hermeneutics were so important for Russian masons; we can find their description in almost all masonic manuscripts devoted to kabbalistic matters.

Notwithstanding all the differences and the diversity of the masonic systems, one may discern some basic concepts, or models, of comprehension underlying the masonic Weltanschauung, or, more strictly, of masonic epistemology which determines, to a great extent, the masonic outlook. The attitude was formulated in brief by N. I. Novikov in his ‘Notice to readers’ in the masonic magazine *Vecherniaia zaria* (1782). Speaking about the aims of his new magazine, he writes:

When the wise Creator of the universe made the visible world, to give light upon it, He fastened on the firmament countless number of glittering lights. Within the small world, i.e. man, for enlightening his ways, He fired the light of mind which was so great at the beginning that there was no secret so deep that he could not penetrate it. But not for long could man use this light; he appropriated it, and reflected back the Divine beams, and became gloomy. Darkness covered his previous enlightenment⁴³.

In fact, the concept of the perennial man, Adam Kadmon, his Fall and his Return, is the very heart of the masonic system. It is precisely this idea which underlies their doctrine of the primordial unity of mankind which has been destroyed and is to be repaired. The mason himself is likened here to Adam, that is to one who has possessed, from the very beginning, numerous virtues and true knowledge. This symbol is very important for masonic myth. It is highly syncretic: it includes elements drawn from biblical, apocryphal, hermetic, Gnostic, Christian and kabbalistic texts. The teaching about two Adams plays a special role here. The first Adam has the features of *Adam before the Fall*, with the universalism of Adam Kadmon, the perennial supernal being in

⁴² On these kabbalistic concepts see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 96-116.

⁴³ (Anon.), ‘To the readers’, *Vechernyaya Zarya (Evening Glow)* 1 (1782), 2.

whose image man and the world were created and whose soul contained souls of all people, and of *perennial Jesus-Messiah*. The second Adam, or Jesus incarnated, is considered a manifestation, or Hieroglyph, of the first Adam⁴⁴.

The writings of Russian masons belong to a Christian (probably heterodox) tradition, but Adam Kadmon is interpreted here in accordance with kabbalistic views. Thus in discussing the problem of the manifest and non-manifest God, an author notes:

In order to make these emanations and images of Divine features and powers, the infinite Primitive Cause, infinite Spirit or infinite Light emanated [from itself] the fundamental First Principle through which come further emanations. It is *Adam Kadmon*, i.e. archetypal perennial Man (*Urmensch*). This first-begotten Lord's [Son] was revealed in ten kinds of emanation, or in ten images, and produced outwardly the same number of sources of lights: they are called *Sefirot*, *Sefirs*, primordial figures, figures of things (*Urzahlen*)⁴⁵.

For masonic myth, the concept of the Fall which was identical with the loss of wisdom, perennial Knowledge, and Light by Adam, is of extreme importance. All masonic activity is aimed at restoring this lost wisdom. Like Christian kabbalists of the fifteenth–sixteenth centuries, the Russian masons often considered Kabbalah the perennial knowledge granted to Adam in Eden. For example, in the same masonic text one may read:

The kabbalists say that God declared this secret knowledge to Adam, but Adam, because of his fall, tore away from the Kingdom of God and the Lord's Anointed, and because of this he lost this wisdom, realized the importance of his loss, again returned to the source of felicity, and passed this truth on to his posterity. There is nothing here that we could not accept. But in Kabbalah (excluding many additions filled with lies), this is expressed in the language of images. Kingdom (*Königreich* = *Malchut*) here is the most inferior *Sefirot* [i.e. *Sefirah*] in which is concentrated the light of all the *Sefirot* emanated from the infinite Source of Light through Archetypal Man (*Urmensch* = *Adam Kadmon* = Son of God). By its Almighty Power, It [i.e. Light] leads man and all the creatures out to their Beatitude. Inasmuch as Adam had a desire to be his own lord for himself, or to be equal to God, he tore away this *Sefirot* [i.e. *Sefirah*], i.e. the Kingdom of God, and together with it tore away the Leaf, or the Twig from the Tree of *Sefirot* (tore away Nature from the influence of the Heavenly Light), and after that he was covered with shame by the sensation of the death that he attracted to himself by his tearing away from the Tree of Life and from the Light which is the Heavenly Man⁴⁶.

It is suggested that one may attain great wisdom due to the process of self-knowledge; this is considered to be the cognition of both Nature and the Crea-

⁴⁴ See Saint Martin, *On Errors and Truth*, 35, 70.

⁴⁵ DMS RSL, F. 14, N 992 ('A Short Notion on Kabbalah', the early 19th century), f. 14-14r.

⁴⁶ DMS RSL, F. 14, N 992, f. 3r-4.

tor, because of the isomorphism of the macrocosm (“the universe”) and microcosm (“the small world”, “man”). As it is said in a masonic song, ‘While trying Nature in myself, / the Creation and the Creator shall I comprehend; / striving to penetrate into myself, / I can know Him by my soul’⁴⁷.

Florovsky notes reasonably that ‘dogmatically freemasonry was, in essence, a revival of Neoplatonic and Gnostic doctrines, renewed since the Renaissance. The most important thing was the idea of the Fall, “a spark of light” captured by the darkness. Not so much a strong feeling of sin as a sensation of impurity was typical of the masons. And it is resolved not so much by penance as by abstinence’⁴⁸.

It is interesting that self-knowledge, at least in its first stage, presupposes that the man involved is frightened by his sins and chooses the way of improvement. Masonic mystical knowledge, mystical illumination, up to the union with the Godhead, is possible only for ‘bearers of spirit’ who, by way of moral self-correction, ‘developed in themselves abilities that, after their full revelation, raise him up to the lower regions of the realm of angels’⁴⁹. Preaching about personal self-perfection and mysticism are tightly connected here with each other, ‘for the truth is a mystery that may be revealed not by mental efforts but by moral great deeds of the will [...] one can know everything only by overcoming the sinfulness of human nature’⁵⁰ and with the attainment of the knowledge and light that were lost by the first man, Adam. As mentioned above, Adam is an archetype for the mason, who is sinful, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, has the opportunity to return to the previous sinless and perfect condition. This condition can be attained after numerous trials whose first preparatory stage is moral self-correction.

Also we are not deprived of this light, it is present within us, but it is obscured and suppressed by our wicked deeds. It shines also in Nature but as it does not shine within ourselves we could not see it outside. And so the true sages of the ancient and modern times declare self-knowledge the first exercise of the man [...] Self-knowledge ought to begin with perception and improvement of our moral acts, and after that we can learn the intrinsic mysteries of human nature’⁵¹.

In fact, at the next stage, ‘when our spirit is prepared in such a way, and the light within us is unveiled, then we can put our attention to the external things or the nature, and to recognize the great perfection, skills, and the greatness of

⁴⁷ Published in: *Magazin svobodno-kamenshchicheskiy (Free-Masonic Magazine)* 1:1, 142.

⁴⁸ Florovsky, *Paths of Russian Theology*, 119.

⁴⁹ Kiesewetter, ‘Moscow Rosicrucians of the Eighteenth Century’, 116.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁵¹ (Anon.), ‘To the readers’, 3.

its Architect in its marvelous construction. Finally, who desires to see the great wisdom in its full brightness, let him start to read Holy Writ ardently and zealously; he will find there all the mysteries of the Divine and Natural explained by the spiritual language'⁵².

Therefore the masonic theory of knowledge requires the initiate to pass through three stages. In the first stage, he is occupied with moral self-correction and knowing the mysteries intrinsic to man. In the second stage, he must come to know Nature. In the third stage, the mysteries of Nature and God are understood at a higher level using the "spiritual language" of the Scriptures⁵³. This three-stage path is considered the return to that time when 'the book of nature was opened for human understanding, and man could comprehend all its mysteries by his mind'⁵⁴. This return is possible, however, due to mastering the knowledge Adam possessed in Paradise. The masons believe that after his fall he

kept everything in his memory [...] and through his memory, he taught his descendants the sciences that he had known in Eden about nature and its Ruler. Afterwards, some of them kept these teachings of wisdom and transmitted them by word of mouth to the next generation [...] One may claim with great confidence that the teachings of our forefathers were transmitted to posterity with great accuracy [...] However because of the multiplication of the human race over the surface of the Earth, and their dissemination throughout the world, the precepts about knowledge and truth taken from the First Man *were* transformed into fallacies [...] that is why they have been kept in all their previous power and perfection in but a few people⁵⁵.

Thus, an ancient and authentic tradition was necessary to save this knowledge. When Russian masons travelled throughout Europe, studying the works of Western mystics, alchemists and Christian kabbalists, masonic and Rosicrucian documents, they sought just this tradition. In this way, they had the greatest respect for Kabbalah.

⁵² Ibid., 3-4.

⁵³ Similar reasoning can be found in several MSs for example in *Besedi iz Teoreticheskogo Gradusa Solomonskih vedeniy (Conversations from the Theoretic Degree of Solomon Cognizances, DMS RSL, F. 14, N 250, f. 93-93r)* we read: 'You are sufficiently learned that God teaches us in three ways: (1) He points us at the Nature as the manifested Wisdom Divine; (2) He gives to us the rule for Improvement of our Manners; (3) through all this, He guides us to True Innermost Theology, or to living cognition of the Divine Word. And this threefold teaching we must transform thoroughly in our activity, in order that it came, day by day, in our life, and our inner man was fed on this, grew and strengthened in God'.

⁵⁴ From (Anon.), 'The Condition of Man Before the Fall', 235.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 238.

The true Kabbalah

Russian masons considered the “true Kabbalah”⁵⁶ an essential part of the primordial Wisdom, which is required for the fallen man to return to “Eden”. ‘When people began to forfeit these gifts [those of primordial Wisdom], they were forced to transmit their knowledge about the nature and God Himself to their offspring by means of “inscriptions” or hieroglyphs’⁵⁷. And it is just the Kabbalah which contains those hieroglyphs, that ‘represent attributes of things in the world’⁵⁸. Moreover, up to the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, Kabbalah was the only source of the primeval Light and primordial Wisdom Adam had taken out of Paradise.

Similar views are expressed in the works of Ivan Elagin, one of the most outstanding Russian masons of the 18th century:

Kabbalah is a symbolic or formative doctrine of Divine mysteries received and accepted from God, which is essential and useful for the holy God-seeing. Therefore, this teaching is considered the true knowledge of allegories, symbols, and hieroglyphs of the Divine words [...] [Solomon] bade to extract sense and understanding from the law of Holy Scripture on grounds of kabbalistic doctrine. Thus the main essence of Kabbalah is to leave the external and literal sense of Holy Scripture and word of God, and to penetrate the interior thoughts of the Holy Ghost⁵⁹.

In the opinion of J. Schwarz, the leader of Moscow Rosicrucians in the early 1780s, masonry was a secret science whose first adepts were Jewish sectarians. The principle underlying the doctrine of Rosicrucians is the concept of a “spark of light” transferred from one wise man to another through the chain of Tradition. “Thus this mystery [i.e. the primordial doctrine, received by Rosicrucians] passed to the religious Jewish sects of Essenes and Therapeutes which existed in the days of Christ and were renowned for their virtuousness [...] Just from these Essenes was derived a glorious Order of Rosicrucians who received the “spark of light”, together with the virtue of

⁵⁶ A conditional term denoting a special masonic version of Jewish Kabbalah based on its interpretation by Christian kabbalists of the fifteenth–seventeenth centuries. As a rule, the “true Kabbalah” was identified with the “theoretic” Kabbalah (*Kabbalah iyyunit*), which was contrasted with the “practical” Kabbalah (*Kabbalah ma’asit*, or “Jewish magic”). See DMS RSL, F 14, N 1116, f. 2, 5r; N 992, f. 1-2r; *Onomatologia curiosa artificiosa et magica, or the Dictionary of Natural Magic*, Vol. 1, 376-377. See also Burmistrov and Endel, ‘Kabbalah in Russian Masonry’, 33-36.

⁵⁷ (Anon.), ‘The Condition of Man Before the Fall’, 238.

⁵⁸ Therefore the words “hieroglyphic” and “kabbalistic” are sometimes considered synonyms.

⁵⁹ RSAAA, F. 8, N 216, Pt. 6, f. 54-54r.

their ancestors'⁶⁰. In such a way, according to Russian masons, was the fundamental masonic tradition established⁶¹.

Tikkun ha-olam: the aims of masonic activity and Kabbalah

Masonic activity was not reduced however to self-knowledge, knowledge of Nature, and God. Its underlying principle was a kabbalistic and alchemical impulse for the improvement and salvation of the world fallen with Adam. The process of universal improvement (*tikkun*) is described in some masonic texts. The clearest exposition is contained in the treatise "An Oration of the Man of *Eziless*"⁶². The necessity of *tikkun* is caused by a disruption in the process of creation that resulted in serious structural alterations in the world. Like medieval kabbalists, masonic authors, however, were sure that this disruption was an inevitable stage on the way of transformation, or "softening" of the Divine attribute of Judgment (Sefirah *Din*), which is intrinsic to the very nature of God. Indeed, 'as God is omniscient, He could not help knowing what happened with His creation; and as He is omnipotent, He could have built in such a way that no corruption would happen afterwards'⁶³. However, the art of Creation is similar to the work of a goldsmith, in whose arms 'gold [...] is transformed in different ways, needless parts are detached and gathered again, they are purified and become better than they have been before'⁶⁴. The amendment and improvement of the creation, i.e. the transformation of the force of Judgment into the force of Charity, is likened also to the alchemical transmutation of Copper (=Judgment, Sefirah *Din*) to Silver (Charity, Sefirah *Hesed*)⁶⁵. Anyway, it is man who must purify and amend the spheres of the Universe accessible to him; special groups of elected initiates, i.e. masons, played a pivotal role in the process.

⁶⁰ Semeka, 'Russian Rosicrucians and the works by Catherine II against Masonry', 350.

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, 358. It is noteworthy that one of the masonic pseudoepigrapha, *Letter of the Rabbi of Lisbon to the Rabbi of Brest* (1817; originally written in Polish), states that the Craft (or "Hafshim Goderim" Society) has been established by the biblical characters; masonry itself is considered there a secret Jewish order whose members, inter alia, acknowledge Christianity. See DMS RSL, F. 147, N 287, f. 29-33r.; *List Rabina Lizbonskiego do Rabina Brzeskiego z dyalektu rabinsko-talmudycznego przetłumaczony*. P. 1-8.

⁶² DMS RSL, F 14, N 1655. P. 487-523. This text is a paraphrase of a part of "Ma'amar 'Adam de-'Azilut", an anonymous kabbalistic work of the seventeenth century, where 'the basic tenets of Lurianic Kabbalah are systematically and originally presented' (Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 143). *Eziless* is a distorted spelling of *Azilut*, the highest of the four worlds-*olamot* of kabbalistic cosmology. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 137.

⁶³ DMS RSL, F 14, N 1655. P. 506.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 510.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 511.

For the mason, personal salvation is possible only in the course of overall harmonization and salvation of nature and man, of universal *tikkun*, and every mason ought to participate actively in this process. Just this impulse induced the masons to work for charitable causes, in the field of public education and amendment of manners, and at the same time to carry out alchemical experiments aimed at the “improvement” and “salvation” of gross metals and their transmutation into gold.

Kabbalistic hermeneutics

Biblical hermeneutics and kabbalistic methods of interpretation played an essential role in the masonic system. Masons believed that by unveiling the hidden meaning of the Scriptures they would be able to comprehend the depth of the universe, to establish an intercourse with the spiritual world and to discover the ways for emendation of the fallen world including human society and human nature. With this end in view, some of them studied Hebrew and tried to read and interpret the Hebrew Bible while turning to kabbalistic symbols and methods (*gematria*, *notarikon*, *temurah*). We cite below an excerpt taken from a private letter where an active Rosicrucian, prince Nikolay N. Trubetskoi (1744-1821)⁶⁶, explains to a mason of a higher initiation, Aleksey A. Rzhovski (1737-1804)⁶⁷, the importance of Kabbalah for masonic work. This text is especially significant for our discourse for it reflects the real interests and everyday problems of Russian masons. In the beginning, its author writes about ‘the importance and necessity of Hebrew’ for masonic art⁶⁸. Then he argues that you should not study kabbalistic interpretations of the Scriptures (i.e. “spiritual matters”) until you have comprehended the science of nature (i.e. “material matters”).

I guess that the mysterious sense of Mosaic writings is conceivable not by calculation, or creation of a new word from each letter; for the words as Moses has written them are not the same now as they were at his time [...] The direct way to the achievement of truth is that of Abraham who, at the beginning, had known a slave and engendered with her Ishmael, and afterwards he got Isaac from Sarah. For this science [i.e. Kabbalah] not only unveils spiritual things but we may say that it is spiritual by itself; but how can a mortal know about the spiritual matters until he has known about the material ones [...] Those who practise this science

⁶⁶ He was one of the most active and devoted Rosicrucians, a member of the Friendly Learned Society and masonic “Typographic Company”. See Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 811.

⁶⁷ A. A. Rzhovski – a member of the Rosicrucian Order, writer and translator. See Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 696; Serkov, A.I. and Reizin, M.V. (eds.), *Letters of N.I. Novikov*, 283; Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, Index.

⁶⁸ Barskov (ed.), *Correspondence of the Russian Masons of the 18th century*, 235.

expect correctly that ‘all the lower things represent the higher ones, and what occurs in lower things that also occurs in higher ones’. Therefore, Moses himself could not attain spiritual matters when he was completely unfamiliar with the material ones. This is why I conclude that the meaning of [what Moses has said] is going from mouth to mouth up to our times, and that this mysterious meaning is contained not in letters but in the words themselves. For example, in the first chapter of Genesis, the word “et” (“eth”, in Hebrew) indicates the clearest essence; but also it is the conjunction “and”, therefore it was translated as “and the earth”; it is still possible to translate as “essence of the earth”. However if somebody had previously an experience in studying the material matters in nature and has some knowledge of Hebrew, then he is able easily, without calculation, to recognize the true meaning of Moses’ [words...] And one who knows the true sense of the [word] *Elohim*, the acting person in the first chapter of Genesis, will understand easily that the material matters should be conceived before the spiritual ones... I hope however for your modesty, venerable Brother, that after reading you will tear this letter into pieces, and will not discuss its content with anybody...⁶⁹.

Referring to the masonic tradition as a whole, we can conclude that Russian masons used Kabbalah, firstly, as a basis for their cosmogonic system, explaining the hierarchical construction of the heavenly world, and for communication with this world. Secondly, Kabbalah provided the keys for interpreting the Scriptures and discovering the deepest and secret layers of the biblical text. It is possible to discern, moreover, behind the masonic soteriology some adapted kabbalistic concepts, and first and foremost – the concept of *Tikkun ha-olam*⁷⁰. For the masons, Kabbalah contains the true knowledge about God, the world, and man and not only facilitates the process of universal amendment but also determines its paths and ways.

Kabbalistic texts in the literature of Russian masons

As we have also mentioned above, we managed to discover in Moscow State archives a significant number of masonic MSs which indicate a deep interest in and a good acquaintance of Russian Brothers with Jewish Mysticism. We have divided these texts into three main groups⁷¹.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 236-237. This letter is dated from the mid-1780s.

⁷⁰ This kabbalistic concept was adopted and expressed distinctly in the doctrine of the mystical school, established by Martines de Pasqually and his pupil L.C. de Saint-Martin. Their writings and ideas enjoyed great popularity among Russian Brothers. See Van Rijnberk, *Un Thaumaturge au XVIIIe siècle*; Le Forestier, *La franc-maçonnerie occultiste au XVIIIe siècle & l'ordre des Elus Coens*; Waite, *The Life of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, the Unknown Philosopher*.

⁷¹ We discuss this issue in detail in Burmistrov and Endel, ‘Kabbalah in Russian Masonry’, 23-33.

The first group comprises translations of real kabbalistic texts or their fragments. It should be stressed that masonic translations are hardly similar to translations in the strict meaning of the word. They are rather mixtures of translations and commentaries, loose translations and expositions, with additions made by the translator or interpolations from other texts. Therefore, it is very difficult to identify the different layers in these texts and comprehend all the transformations made from the original texts.

Russian masons of the late 18th century were familiar with one of the basic texts of Jewish mysticism, *Sefer Yezirah* (*The Book of Creation*, 3–6 centuries C.E.), a short cosmogonic treatise about the creation of the universe and man by means of Hebrew letters and numbers⁷². At least two Russian translations of this text are kept now in MSs collections⁷³. Also in several writings one can meet long quotations from *Sefer ha-Zohar* (*The Book of Splendour*, 13th century)⁷⁴ which appears to have been the most important and well known kabbalistic text for Russian masons⁷⁵.

We also found a very interesting translation of the famous treatise *Shaare Orah* (*The Gates of Light*) by Joseph Gikatilla (the 13th century)⁷⁶, with numerous quotations from the classic commentary to this text written by Mattityahu Delacrut, a Polish kabbalist of the 16th century. In the same MS codex there is an abridged version of *Ma'amar 'Adam de-'Azilut*, an anonymous text belonging to Lurianic Kabbalah⁷⁷. These texts seem to be a direct translation from Hebrew, but they contain so many interpolations that it is reasonable to conclude their translator was a true Christian kabbalist⁷⁸.

⁷² This text is very popular in the Jewish tradition; many Jewish mystics and philosophers have commented it. See Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 23-30. This work was also very important for the Christian kabbalists who translated it to the Latin and other European languages. See re-edition of the Latin translation made by G. Postel (1552): *Sefer Jezirah* (in the Introduction, the role of this text in the Christian Kabbalah is elucidated). See also Schmidt-Biggermann, 'Das Buch Jezirah in der christlichen Tradition'; Burmistrov and Endel, 'Sefer Yezirah in Jewish and Christian Traditions'.

⁷³ DMS RSL, F. 14, N 676. P. 46–52 (this translation is published in: Burmistrov and Endel, 'Sefer Yezirah in Jewish and Christian Traditions', 63-71); see also Gilly, 'Iter Gnostico-Russicum', 56. See also about the Russian translations of "Sefer Yezirah" made from the Latin edition (S. Rittangelus, Amsterdam 1642) – State Archive of Russian Federation, F. 1137, I, N. 118, Section X.

⁷⁴ On *Sefer ha-Zohar* see Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 213-243; Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar*. See also about the interpretations of the book in Christian Kabbalah: Secret, *Le Zôhar chez les Kabbalistes Chrétiens de la Renaissance*.

⁷⁵ See, for example, DMS RSL, F. 14, N 676. P. 3-34.

⁷⁶ On him and his treatise see Idel, 'Historical Introduction', in: *Sha'are Orah. Gates of Light*; Blickstein, *Between Philosophy and Mysticism*; Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 409-411.

⁷⁷ See DMS RSL, F. 14, N 1655; F. 147, N 208.

⁷⁸ For further details see Burmistrov and Endel, 'Kabbalah in Russian Masonry', 26-29; Endel, 'On a kabbalistic manuscript in Russian Masonic literature'; id., 'Original Kabbalistic Concepts in the Masonic Codex "On the Sefirot" (Late 18th century)'.

Thus, despite our scarce knowledge of the intellectual world of the Russian masons, these texts point to their intended effort to organize an existing tradition of deep contact and exchange with kabbalistic texts and concepts. In our opinion, texts like these demonstrate their knowledge of Hebrew and quite possibly their acquaintance with Kabbalists who possessed an oral tradition.

The second group comprises translations into Russian of the works of European Christian kabbalists and researchers of Kabbalah. It is represented by translations made mostly from German and Latin. In this connection such works as *True and Right Kabbalah* by Wilhelm Kriegesmann, *A Short Version of the Kabbalistic Teaching* by Jacob Brucker, and *The Jewish Kabbalah* by Caspar Schott should be mentioned⁷⁹. The authors of these writings based their knowledge of Kabbalah on the works of Pico della Mirandola, Johannes Reuchlin, Pietro di Galatino, Athanasius Kircher and other Christian kabbalists of the 15th-17th centuries; they used many quotations taken both from these works and from the kabbalistic texts, first of all, from *Sefer ha-Zohar*. In these texts, kabbalistic concepts are described in detail: for example, the teachings on the Sefirot, the Names of God, the mystical meaning of Hebrew letters, the kabbalistic exegetical methods (*gematria*, *notarikon*, *temurah*), and the so-called “astrological Kabbalah”.

In our opinion, the most interesting is *the third group* that contains original writings of Russian masons devoted to kabbalistic matters⁸⁰. Only these texts allow us to reconstruct masonic views related to Kabbalah. It seems very important to find out who were the putative authors or translators of these texts.

As we mentioned above, the “kabbalistic” texts belong not to the “intra-masonic” writings but rather to the “circle of masonic reading”. This means that the Russian masons were not obliged to share the concepts contained in these texts. Besides, the number of the texts was relatively small – several dozens versus several thousands of extant masonic manuscripts⁸¹.

⁷⁹ See DMS RSL, F. 14, N 1613, or F. 147, N 193 (original text: Kriegesmann, *Die wahre und richtige Cabalah*, Frankfurt, Leipzig 1774); DMS RSL, F. 14, N 1644, Pt.5. P. 19-26 (extraction from Brucker, J., *Historia critica philosophiae*, Vol. II, Leipzig, 1742); Caspar Schott – DMS RSL, F. 14, N 1646 (205 ff.), brief and more old version – F. 147, N 204; F. 14, N 987. It should be noted that in almost every manuscript, data about the author and source are lacking. Besides, they could also be influenced by “primary sources” of the Christian Kabbalah, e.g., the famous book *De Occulta Philosophia* by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim (the first complete edition – Cologne, 1533): see DMS RSL, F. 14, N 705, N 1625-27.

⁸⁰ The principal concepts presented in these texts are reviewed in Burmistrov and Endel, ‘Kabbalah in Russian Masonry’, 33-43. Ibid. (P. 44-55) one of the most representative texts of the kind is published (with English translation).

⁸¹ See e.g. unpublished A.N. Pypin’s “Masonic Bibliography” in the State Archive of Russian Federation, F. 1137, I, N 117-119 (Section X: “Mystics, Theosophy, Kabbalah”), or in the Catalogue of V. Arsenyev’s masonic collection: DMS RSL, F. 14 (comprising about 2,000 manuscripts).

Ivan Elagin and Kabbalah

One of the most outstanding masons in the age of Catherine the Great was Ivan Elagin, senator, famous statesman, and writer. The head of the Palace chancellery, he played an important role in political life⁸². It is known that Catherine herself sometimes jokingly signed documents as “Chancellor of Mr. Elagin”. Joined to the Craft in 1750s, in 1770 he had been elected Grand Master of the Grand Provincial Lodge of Russia under the auspices of the Berlin Grand Lodge, “Royal York”. Thus he became the chief of the first masonic union in Russia. On February 26, 1772 he received from the Great Master of the United Great Lodge of England the certificate of the first Provincial Grand Master of the Empire of Russia in Russian history. In the middle of the 1770s, Elagin’s System included not less than 14 lodges and maintained contacts with many European lodges⁸³. The new stage in his activity began in the late 1780s, when he established a renewed masonic association and became its Grand Master. In the closing stages of his life, he wrote a voluminous composition *A Treatise on Russia (Opit povestvovaniya o Rossii)*, an uncompleted work on Russian history, where his masonic views were presented⁸⁴.

In the Introduction to one of his unpublished writings, Elagin described in detail his spiritual biography. He joined masonry in his youth but did not find anything attractive there and soon left the lodge. After a short period of enthusiasm for Voltaire and Helvetius he returned to masonic activity with much more serious intentions. He looked for the teachers who could initiate him into the mysteries of Divine knowledge, he was ready to learn and to teach this knowledge all his life. By his own words, it was his high position in masonry that impelled him continuously ‘to strive hard to solve [i.e. to understand] this mysterious and numinous teaching’⁸⁵. For, as he writes in the same Introduction, ‘my sincerity did not allow me to lead my Brothers in the way unknown to myself. Therefore I began with all my thoroughness to spend vast sums of

⁸² On Elagin and his masonic system see Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 44-70, 94-98; Semeka, ‘Russian Masonry in the Eighteenth Century’, 139-149; Pypin, *Masonry in Russia*, 96-137; Pekarski, *Supplements to the history of Masonry in Russia in the Eighteenth Century*, 50-55; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, 104-105. Biographical data see also in Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 323; Serkov and Reizin (eds.), *Letters of N.I. Novikov*, 289.

⁸³ For further details see Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 44-52.

⁸⁴ The first volume of the treatise was published in Moscow in 1803; other MS materials devoted, in particular, to some religious and philosophic problems are contained in the Manuscript Department of the Russian National Library (St. Petersburg). See Artemieva, *Russian Historiosophy of the Eighteenth Century*, 82-93.

⁸⁵ RSAAA, F. 8. N 216. Pt. 3. f. 6.

money trying to collect everything related to masonry'⁸⁶. The result of these expenses was, however, an understanding that it is impossible to buy truth for money, and that 'for real [i.e. common] gold' you can receive but 'the search for imaginary gold'. Thus at the end of 1770s Elagin was disappointed in the English system of masonry which was taught in Russian lodges when he had been their Head. In despair, Elagin immersed himself in reading the Old and New Testaments and Fathers of the Church. Then he began to feel the necessity of studying Greek and Hebrew.

On this new path, the most important role was played by his acquaintance with Baron Johannes George von Reuchel (1729-1791)⁸⁷. Baron von Reuchel was the Head of lodges that worked according to the Swedish-Berlin system of Johann Wilhelm Ellenberger (von Zinnendorf) (1731-1782), known as the "System of Relaxed Observation" ("Laxe Observanz")⁸⁸. Von Reuchel's masonic union, established in St. Petersburg in 1771, was in fact an opponent to Elagin's masonry, and therefore rather complicated relations were established between them. At the same time, von Reuchel became Elagin's mentor on his spiritual path. In the words of Elagin, this 'respectable brother, initiated in the true masonry', explained to him 'an ancient mysterious knowledge called the Sacred Wisdom'⁸⁹. There is some evidence that Reuchel also was interested in Kabbalah and Talmud⁹⁰. It was Reuchel who provided Elagin with various mystical MSs and explained their secret and symbolic meaning. He gave him many masonic texts and for many years (at least, from 1777 up to 1786) he induced Elagin 'to read the books which he had earlier disdained as stupid'⁹¹. In Elagin's archive, one can find various MSs related to von Reuchel. In our opinion, von Reuchel facilitated Elagin's interest in "secret knowledge", including Kabbalah; but this interest developed to the full extent due to his acquaintance with another mentor.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ 'Reuchel was sent in Russia by the National Lodge of Berlin (working after Zinnendorf's System) "to break the absolutism of Englishmen". He headed in Russia the so-called "Reuchel's" masonic system. By the way in 1776 this system and "English lodges" headed by Elagin joined together'. – Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 65-70; see also Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 690; Serkov and Reizin (eds.), *Letters of N.I. Novikov*, 339.

⁸⁸ Ellenberg-Zinnendorf, a physician, since 1765 was appointed the head of the Prussian Medical Department. An active mason, he spread the rite of Swedish masonry in Germany and established the Grand Lodge of Germany. See Pertsev, 'German Freemasonry in the Eighteenth century', 86-91.

⁸⁹ Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 184.

⁹⁰ An anonymous German diary is contained among Elagin's MSs. His author mixed with Reuchel and disapproved of '[Reuchlin's] insane fabrications on Kabbalah and Talmud'. See Pekarski, *Supplements to the history of Masonry in Russia in the Eighteenth Century*, 80.

⁹¹ Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 186.

Stanislaus Eli

In the late 1770s Elagin became acquainted with a person who not only gave him invaluable help in learning Hebrew, but also involved him in serious study of Kabbalah. The gentleman spoken of is a certain Stanislaus Pines Eli (or Ely) who, in the words of Elagin, ‘was an expert in our science, in the art of healing, and in Hebrew and Kabbalah’. For many years, Eli taught him ‘everything what is necessary and needful for comprehension of mystical sense and outlandish sayings which are so plenty in the writings of Moses and other prophets’.⁹² Considering the name of this man, and his knowledge of Hebrew and Kabbalah, we may suggest that he was a converted Jew. He was a native of Kolin (Bohemia) who received medical education at Berlin and Frankfurt-am-Oder. In 1778 (or 1776)⁹³ Eli arrived in St. Petersburg where he got a certificate for medical practice⁹⁴. About that time he met Elagin and became his mentor. He also was able to cure his pupil from a fatal illness.

Elagin reported that Eli was the author of a masonic book *Fraternal Admonitions to Some Brethern Free Masons written by Br. Seddag (Bratskiye uveshchaniya k nektorim brat'yam svbdn kmnshchkm. Pisani bratom Seddagom)*⁹⁵. In Pypin’s opinion, this book was ‘a typical example of Rosicrucian nonsense, with its false depth and theological and alchemical inventions’⁹⁶. It was very popular among Moscow Rosicrucians. It is written in symbolic and rather abstruse language and contains some elements that may definitely relate to Jewish mysticism. Thus one finds there a lengthy discourse on the great mystical power of the Tetragrammaton, with its numerical interpretation. The author also teaches his Brothers how to study the Scriptures in a specific “kabbalistic” way:

Read, my brother, read the Holy Creation, read its gradual consequences, read it by the clear inner eye ‘of sages whose eye is in their head’ as overwise Solomon

⁹² RSAAA, F. 8, N 216, Pt. 3, f. 8r. See also Pypin, *Masonry in Russia*, 132.

⁹³ See Barskov, *Correspondence of the Russian Masons of the 18th century*, 310.

⁹⁴ In 1778 he examined and described a sulpho-chalybeate fount which had been found by him in Schklov (Mogilev District), one of the most important Jewish centres in those days, and sent a sample of water to the Medical Board. See (Barskov, J.L.), ‘Ely S.’, 214; Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 925. It should be noted that in the 1780s in Schklov a Russian masonic lodge was active. See Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 375.

⁹⁵ This treatise was written originally in German: *Brüderliche Vermahnungen an einige Brüder Freymaurer von dem Bruder Seddag*, Philadelphia (St. Petersburg?), 1781. It was translated into Russian by F.B. Obolduyev and published in Moscow in 1784. A copy of the German edition is known, which contains an interesting handwritten inscription: ‘The editor of the German original was ... D[octo]r Eli, a converted Polish [sic] Jew who lived in Petersburg’. See Guberti, *Materials for a Russian Bibliography*, Vol. 2, 142.

⁹⁶ See Pypin, *Masonry in Russia*, 132.

has said [...] read truly, and from the very beginning. If you wish to read the history of the Creation then read the first verse: 'Bereschith bara Elohim eth haschamajim weeth haaretz', and read it for several years, and only after that read further [...] When you have read this and that profoundly, then read there where nothing is written yet⁹⁷.

Novikov mentions Eli among the members of Elagin's lodges⁹⁸. In 1786 Eli was appointed (probably with a help of Elagin) to the position of head of the Economic Chancellery at the Medical Board; he was also a member of the Free Economic Society⁹⁹.

This is almost all the information available about Dr. Eli who appears to be one of the most important figures relevant for our topic.

Kabbalistic studies of Elagin

We can estimate the results of Elagin's kabbalistic studies by the content of his manuscript collection, and especially by two of his own works. He planned to write a large composition devoted to the history of masonry and mystical doctrines from ancient times up to the end of the 18th century: *Doctrine of ancient philosophy and divine knowledge, or knowledge of Free Masons and diverse makers, profane, ecclesiastic, and mystic, collected and presented in five parts by I.E., the Grand Master of the Russian provincial lodge*¹⁰⁰. He began to write the book in 1786 but two years later, in 1788, he had finished only a part of what he planned¹⁰¹. Thus we must judge about his design taken in its entirety by an extant project. It is noteworthy that in the project (in the 2nd book) there were a chapter 3 titled *About Talmud and Targum*, chapter 5 *About kabbalistic Art. On Sefirot, on the Names of God*, and chapter 10 *About the 32 grades and the 50 gates for the great wisdom*¹⁰². In the course of work the project was, however, changed significantly. The 1st book contains *Histori-*

⁹⁷ Seddag, *Fraternal Admonitions to Some Brethern Free Masons*, 134.

⁹⁸ Popov, 'New Documents on the Novikov Case', 146.

⁹⁹ The title of his dissertation is *De opobalsamo et oleo-balamno* (1770); he wrote also the book *An exposition of the reliable and durable income of sheep farms* (St. Petersburg, 1796). See (Barskov, J.L.), 'Ely S.', 214-215.

¹⁰⁰ *Ucheniye drevnego lyubomudriya i bogomudriya, ili nauka svobodnih kamen'shchikov i raznih tvortsov svetskih, dukhovnih i misticheskikh, sobrannaya i v pyati chastyah predlozhennaya I.E., Velikim ross. provintsial'noy lozhi masterom.* – RSAAA, F. 216, N 8, Pt. 3, 26–29. A rough copy (an autograph) written by Elagin.

¹⁰¹ As Douglas Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, 215 notes, this work was meant 'to be read only to members of the secret governing body of his Second Elagin Union'.

¹⁰² RSAAA, F. 216, N 8, Pt. 3, f. 2. See also P. Pekarski, *Supplements to the history of Masonry in Russia in the Eighteenth Century*, 96-97; Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 186.

cal review of Masonry since Adam, Noah, and Abraham up to the Knight Orders of the Middle Ages and “systems” of recent times. In the 2nd book, instead of Talmud, there is a description of the first two degrees of masonry. The 3rd book contains an explanation of two other degrees of masonry. The 4th book that was devoted to the 5th–7th degrees is missing, and only some sketches devoted to “the confirmation of the Existence of God and Incarnation” remain of the 5th book¹⁰³. In the available MS, there are, in particular, twelve pages all devoted to the interpretation of Hebrew words. Thus the composition does not correspond to its earlier plan, and speculations on Kabbalah and Talmud are presented there only fragmentarily.

The second of Elagin’s compositions, named *Explanations of the mysterious meaning [of the text] about Creation of the Universe in Holy Scripture, which is a key for understanding of the Book of Truth and Errors* is mostly devoted to his kabbalistic studies (unfortunately only some parts of this composition are available)¹⁰⁴. The text represents an extensive kabbalistic commentary to the main points of the masonic doctrine: God and Creation, elements and Divine names, etc. On the basis of Holy Scripture – using the kabbalistic concepts *Ein-Sof*, emanation of the *Sefirot*, *Adam Kadmon*, four worlds-*Olamot*, as well as the hermeneutic techniques of *gematria*, *notarikon*, and *temurah* – Elagin developed a kabbalistic version of the masonic cosmogony. This composition is especially interesting for another reason: one can see here a discerning and decoding of the kabbalistic subtext in the book *Des Erreurs et de la Vérité* (Lyon 1775) by Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin which is absolutely unclear for uninitiated readers. The kabbalistic and non-Christian interpretation of the New Testament in Elagin’s text appears to be especially strange. Thus Elagin treats Jesus Christ as the perennial man, Adam Kadmon, whilst he looks upon the historical Jesus from Nazareth as a mason and one of the “hieroglyphs”, or “effective images” of the Perennial Jesus.

Elagin is an outstanding phenomenon that shows to us how strong was the interest in Kabbalah among educated Russian people in the late 18th century. Though he was a prominent statesman and Orthodox Christian, he devoted most of his life to the study of a tradition that seemingly was very distant from the Russian life of that time. However, when we try to understand the reasons for this strange interest, and consider the influence Jewish thought had on the Weltanschauung of people similar to Elagin, we get a chance to better under-

¹⁰³ The Introduction to the work has been published twice. See Elagin, ‘Doctrine of ancient philosophy and divine knowledge’; Novikov, *Freemasonry and Russian Culture*, 223-235.

¹⁰⁴ *Obyasneniya tainstvennogo smisla v Bozhestvennom Pisanii o sotvorenii Selenniya, sluzhashcheye klyuchom k razobraniya Knigi istini i zabluzhdeniy*. – RSAAA, F. 216, N 8, Pt. 6, f. 41-70r.

stand their social activity and the peculiarities of their political, economic, and religious views.

The Moscow Order of Rosicrucians

As mentioned above, Kabbalah also was very significant for the members of the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross¹⁰⁵. The tradition of perception, interpretation, and transmission of kabbalistic texts established by these people existed for almost a century and a half, from the 1770s through the 1920s. They translated a truly great number of writings of European mystics, alchemists, natural philosophers, and Christian kabbalists: all in all, hundreds of volumes. In addition, they created many original mystical texts. When masonry was prohibited in Russia in 1822, masonic activity continued, but without the Lodges; and only after the communist revolution did it completely cease.

The great bulk of the texts were composed in the late 18th - early 19th centuries in the circle of Moscow “theorists” (or “theoretical masons”). The most prominent members of the group were Johann Schwarz, Nikolay Novikov, Semion Gamaleya (1743-1822), Nikolay Trubetskoi, and, in the early 19th century, Joseph A. Pozdeev (1746-1820), Ruf S. Stepanov (1745-1828) etc. These people were members of the Order of Gold and Rosy Cross and had higher masonic degrees known as the Theoretical Degree of the Solomon Sciences and Rosicrucian degrees. Most of the texts available now were kept in the collection of a masonic “dynasty” Arsenievs (DMS RSL, F 13-14 – V.S. Arseniev’s stock) which included a considerable part of the manuscripts belonging to the Moscow “theorists”¹⁰⁶. It should be noted that the Arsenievs not only kept the old MSs: during the whole 19th century these texts were continuously studied and commented, and new translations and original works were added to this Library.

¹⁰⁵ On this Order see also Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 102-120; Tukalevsky, ‘N. I. Novikov and J. G. Schwarz’, 213-218; Eshevsky, ‘Moscow Masons of the 1780s’, 524-531; Nezenenov, *Nikolay Ivanovitch Novikov, Editor*, 107-109; Kiesewetter, ‘Moscow Rosicrucians of the Eighteenth century’, 96-124; Ryu, ‘Moscow Freemasons and the Rosicrucian Order’, 198-232, etc. See also numerous Russian translations of the principal Rosicrucian document “The Theoretic Degree of the Solomon Sciences”, for example DMS RSL, F. 14, N 221, N 227.

¹⁰⁶ The history of this collection can be traced to one of the spiritual successors of Novikov and Gamaleya – V. A. Levshin (1746-1826); it was finished in 1922 (100 years after the formal prohibition of masonry in Russia), when the last representative of the Arsenievs masonic dynasty, Ioann Arseniev (1859-1930), prior of the Church of Christ Redeemer in Moscow, was exiled. See Serkov, ‘A History of Masonic Collections in Russia’, 59-66. See also Craven, ‘The First Chamber of Novikov’s Masonic Library’, 401-410.

Among the members of the Order were prominent social activists and top-level officials such as the curator of Moscow University, the famous poet Mikhail M. Kheraskov (1733-1807), and senator Ivan V. Lopukhin (1756-1816) as well as people possessing an extraordinary spiritual authority (though they might have no special social status), such as Semion Gamaleya¹⁰⁷. Their activity was concentrated around Moscow University, the biggest Moscow publishing houses and printers, and magazines. All these people differed from each other in many respects but were united due to the rite of Rosicrucian initiation.

The Rosicrucian hierarchy was divided into nine stages, or “degrees”. The first one, an introductory “Junior” degree, followed immediately the fourth degree of regular masonry (“Scottish Master”). Then came the “Theoreticus” (the “Theoretic degree of Solomon Sciences”), and everybody who attained this degree became a Rosicrucian. The next seven degrees were named the higher degrees¹⁰⁸. It is known that in Russia only about two dozen people possessed these higher degrees. The most advanced among them were J. Schwarz, G. Schröder, N. Novikov and N. Trubetskoi¹⁰⁹. Each degree implied study of certain secret sciences and some practical activity (in the field of magic, theurgy, alchemy, etc.). In the seventh degree, *Adeptus exemptus*, initiates got familiar with the stone of wisdom, Kabbalah, and natural magic; those who attained the ninth degree (*Magus*) ‘knew everything and mastered everything like Moses, Aaron, Hermes’¹¹⁰. The Order’s works were wrapped in deep mystery, so that lower-ranking Brothers not only were unfamiliar with the works carried out on more higher degrees, but also often did not know the superior Brothers and the names of their chiefs. Unfortunately, the documents available do not allow us to state with confidence that some Russian masons were initi-

¹⁰⁷ S. I. Gamaleya was one of the most influential spiritual leaders of the Moscow masons, the “Chief Supervisor” of the Theoretic Degree in Moscow. He translated some 200 mystical and alchemic writings. See *Register of MS books translated by S. I. Gamaleya from different languages*, DMS RSL, F. 14, N 549). See about him Dovnar-Zapol’ski, ‘Semion Ivanovich Gamaleya’, 27-37; Nezenenov, *Nikolay Ivanovitch Novikov, Editor*, 174-179; Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 219.

¹⁰⁸ They were “Practicus”, “Philosophus”, “Minor”, “Major”, “Adeptus exemptus”, “Magister”, and “Magus”. See *Der Signatstern oder die enthüllten sieben Grade der mystischen Freimaurerei*, Bd. V, 334; Lenning, *Encyclopaedie der Freimaurerei*, Bd. 3, 246; Ryu, ‘Moscow Freemasons and the Rosicrucian Order’, 199.

¹⁰⁹ Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 112. Since 1787 A. M. Kutuzov (1749/52-97) was the messenger of Moscow Rosicrucians in Berlin. He was to keep them informed of the Rosicrucians’ activity. He was an alchemist and might be initiated into the higher degrees. See Tarasov, ‘The Moscow Society of Rosicrucians’, 18-22; Vernadsky, *Op. cit.*, 111; Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 451.

¹¹⁰ Kieseewetter, ‘Moscow Rosicrucians of the Eighteenth century’, 113-114.

ated into the higher degrees which implied studying of Kabbalah¹¹¹. They themselves might deny this for fear of being accused of conspiracy. Thus, the Head of the Order, Novikov, answered during examination that the Brothers did not have such a possibility; the archive materials available allow us however to be strongly suspicious of his words. The content of masonic archives, and translations of kabbalistic texts as well as original compositions of Russian masons devoted to Kabbalah which we discovered in the archives are indicative of their deep acquaintance with this tradition. It seems obvious that they tried to use their knowledge in practice, though they themselves tried to look like “pure” theorists. As a scholar noted, ‘the Brothers of Gold and Rose Cross were selected among the selected. The Rosicrucians strove to reach a super-natural state, to converse with God, to invoke spirits, to command them and having known all the secrets of the nature, to become the lords of their own destiny [...] Many Rosicrucians bore witness that it is impossible to describe the blissful and immortal state of body into which they sunk when striving to attain an ecstatic experience’¹¹².

Johann Schwarz

Let us consider in detail an outstanding figure, Johann G. Schwarz (1751-1784)¹¹³ who was the founder of Moscow branch of the Order and the spiritual leader and preceptor of Russian masons. He was one of a few Brothers who

¹¹¹ For example Semeka suggested that ‘Russian Rosicrucians did not carry out alchemic experiments because they did not go beyond the “Theoretic Degree of the Solomon Sciences”’. See Semeka, ‘Russian Rosicrucians and the works by Catherine II against Masonry’, 365-366. This sceptical view is based mainly on the confessions of masons themselves made during examinations. Thus the leader of Moscow “theorists” N. Novikov answered investigation officer S. I. Sheshkovsky: ‘Neither of us could practise Magic and Kabbalah, having attained only lower degrees, and I do not know anything about these sciences except their names’. Longinov, *Novikov and Moscow Martinists*, 517. See also a detailed description of the “Novikov case” in Popov, ‘New Documents on the Novikov Case’, and answers of N. Trubetskoi, I. Lopukhin, I. Turgeniev in the investigation – RSHAM, F. 16, N. 29, # 64. Meanwhile we can hardly rely on confessions obtained in prison.

¹¹² Sokolovskaia, ‘Brethern of the Gold and Rosy Cross’, 90. There is every reason to believe that some Moscow Rosicrucians were occupied with practical application of the masonic tripartite doctrine – “Magic-Alchemy-Kabbalah”. As Kiesewetter notes, ‘Lopukhin, Trubetskoi and Kutuzov were highly interested in the art of Rosicrucian Alchemy and dreamed that they would attain higher degrees. For this aim Kutuzov was sent to Berlin to practise alchemy near the very fount of Rosicrucian wisdom’. – Kiesewetter, ‘Moscow Rosicrucians of the Eighteenth Century’, 103-104. On Rosicrucian interest in alchemy, see McIntosh, *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason*, 74-90 (ch. 5: “The Alchemy of the Gold- and Rosenkreuz”).

¹¹³ On Schwarz see Tukalevsky, ‘N. I. Novikov and J. G. Schwarz’, 191-220; idem, *The Quest of Russian Masons*, 32-37; Tikhonravov, ‘Professor J. G. Schwarz’, 60-81; Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 888; Ryu, ‘Moscow Freemasons and the Rosicrucian Order’, passim.

wrote original theoretical compositions on masonry¹¹⁴. He created his own, rather eclectic, system based on the works by Jacob Boehme and other European mystics.

According to N. Novikov, Schwarz was a native of Transylvania. He received a law degree at Jena University, and spent some time in Asia as official of the Dutch United East Indian Company. After his meeting with a Russian mason, Prince I.S. Gagarin (1752-1810)¹¹⁵, he arrived in Mogiliov (Russia) in 1776. He settled in Moscow by 1779 where he had various positions at Moscow University (in particular, he was appointed “professor in ordinary in philosophy”). He had great authority with the students of the University. In addition, he initiated the establishment of the Pedagogic and Translator seminaries, the first Russian student society, “Association of University Alumni”, and the “Friendly Learned Society”. These institutions became centers of the intellectual life of the time¹¹⁶. It is known that Schwarz gave lectures not only at the University but also at home, where he discussed the most “esoteric” themes¹¹⁷. Among his listeners were many masons who later became famous Rosicrucians, e.g. A.F. Labzin (1766-1825)¹¹⁸ and M.I. Nevzorov (1762-1827)¹¹⁹.

In his writings, Schwarz refers to Kabbalah many times. Thus when discussing the problem of the creation of the world he says that ‘the first three chapters of Genesis are written “in a kabbalistic manner”’, and ‘to understand them, we should work incessantly and try to interpret them with God’s help’¹²⁰. At the same time, repeated mention of the term “Kabbalah” must not lead us into error: often, there were typical examples of inversion, i.e. the term “Kabbalah” means here every knowledge of the Divine matters (e.g. this is

¹¹⁴ He was the author of a number of articles in masonic periodicals “Moscow Monthly Edition” and “Evening Glow”. Numerous copies of his writings are contained in MS collections. See, for example, DMS RSL, F. 14, N 685; F. 147, N 142.

¹¹⁵ I. S. Gagarin (1752–1810) joined the Craft in 1785; a member of the Friendly Learned Society. See Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 213.

¹¹⁶ See Krasnobaev, ‘Eine Gesellschaft Gelehrter Freunde am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts’, 257-70; Smith, *Working the Rough Stone*, 83-84.

¹¹⁷ See Kiesewetter, ‘The Moscow University (A historical sketch)’, 47-52.

¹¹⁸ A. F. Labzin (1766–1826), one of the most outstanding Russian masons in the age of Alexander I. He was a pupil of Novikov and Schwarz and an active proponent of the Rosicrucian doctrine. He joined the Craft in 1783. He was the editor of some masonic periodicals, an active member of the Biblical Society, Vice-president of the Academy of Arts. See about him: Sokolovskaia, ‘The Revival of Masonry under Alexander I’, 153-155, 169-184; Serkov, ‘Novikov’s “Nephew” A. F. Labzin’, 20-33; Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 454-455.

¹¹⁹ See about him: Kuhlman, ‘Mikhail Ivanovich Nevzorov’, 203-25; Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 580.

¹²⁰ Semeka, ‘Russian Rosicrucians and the works by Catherine II against Masonry’, 361.

true for his treatises on the “kabbalistic light of the soul”) but not that specific set of Jewish mystical ideas and practices whose description can be found in other masonic MSs. Nevertheless, the real Kabbalah pervades, without any doubt, all his teaching; but, akin to the works of Saint-Martin, Eli, etc., it is hidden there on the sub-text level, it is never mentioned directly, and needs to be deciphered.

Kabbalah in masonry in 1792-1822

In 1792, the Russian government destroyed the circle of Moscow Rosicrucians; afterwards, many masonic lodges gave up their activity. The lodges remained and were reopened but existed secretly and were in fact illegal. The most interesting among them was “the Lodge of Neptune” opened in Moscow in 1798. Its members continued Rosicrucian activity, read and translated the works of European mystics, and collected a great library of mystical books¹²¹.

At the beginning of the 19th century, some small circles of “theorists” functioned in St. Petersburg (under the guidance of A.F. Labzin) and in Moscow (guided by I.A. Pozdeev)¹²². Even after the official legalization of masonic activity in 1803, they continued to work inconspicuously. Taking into consideration the extant part of Pozdeev’s library, the members of his lodge had interest in Kabbalah. In this collection, there are some kabbalistic books that belonged formerly to the voluminous library of a mason Ivan Filatyev.

An interesting mystical Illuminati society “The New Israel” (or “The People of God”) was founded in 1785 by a Polish nobleman Tadeusz (Thaddeus) Leszczyc-Grabianka (1740-1807) at Avignon and moved in the early 19th century to St. Petersburg¹²³. The first Russians were incorporated into this organi-

¹²¹ Sokolovskaia, ‘The Revival of Masonry under Alexander I’, 155-158. On Rosicrucian activity in the age of Paul I, see Serkov, *The History of Russian Masonry in the 19th century*, 44-53.

¹²² I. A. Pozdejev joined the Order in 1784 and afterwards became one of the leaders of “theoretical” masonry of the age of Alexander I. See Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 649-50.

¹²³ Grabianka was a member of the secret society *Academi des Vrais Maçons*, established in 1780s by the mystic and alchemist Benedictine abbé Dom A. Pernety (1716-1796). The *Academie* was especially active in Avignon, Lion and Montpellier. This body probably was a continuation of the *Académie des Sages* (dating back to the second half of the seventeenth century), which had branches in Avignon, Montpellier, Douai and Mohilev (Ukraine). See Bricaud, *Les Illuminés d’Avignon*; Meillassoux–Le Cerf, *Dom Pernety et les Illuminés d’Avignon*; Ligou, *Dictionnaire de la franc-maçonnerie*, 917-922. On Grabianka see Ujejski, *Krol Nowego Izraela*; Danilewicz, ‘“The King of the New Israel”: Thaddeus Grabianka (1740–1817)’, 49-73; Rolle, K., ‘T. Grabianka’; Longinov, ‘An Eighteenth-Century Magician’, 579-603; Vernadsky, *Russian Masonry in the Reign of Catherine the Great*, 120-124; Pypin, *Masonry in Russia*, 323-332; Sokolovskaia, ‘The Revival of Masonry under Alexander I’, 171-174; Serkov, *The History of Russian Masonry in the 19th century*, 59-62; Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 266.

zation at the end of 1780s (e.g. Vice Admiral S.I. Pleshcheyev and Prince N.V. Repnin) but after his arrival in St. Petersburg (in August, 1805) Grabianka found numerous admirers among the aristocracy (meetings of the society took place in the Marble Palace, in the rooms of the crown-prince Konstantin Pavlovich). Among the members were almost all eminent Russian Rosicrucians; they predicted that ‘by God’s order, the Second and near Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His glorious reign on the earth’ would occur in 1835. A select part of the members of the society constituted a “Council of Prophets” and had “correspondence with heaven”¹²⁴. The prophesies were accomplished in an ecstatic state, and the preparation to this experience required keeping the fast and solitude. Grabianka, the “King of the New Israel”, is known to have had a keen interest in Jewish mysticism; he was a pupil of the abbé Louis-Philibert de Morveau (Brumore) (?-1786), a famous mason, alchemist and kabbalist, ‘a wiseman “who had a voice [i.e. the gift of prophecy]” through the science of numbers, or Kabbalah’¹²⁵. M. Longinov suggested that ‘Grabianka had to read the Bible very assiduously, and studying it he expected to attain an understanding of the higher magic that was promised to him due to kabbalistic computations’¹²⁶. His prediction of the Second Advent was probably based on these “computations”¹²⁷.

Another outstanding figure within masonry of the early 19th century was Johann A. Fessler¹²⁸, the well-known reformer of masonry who established his own “scientific system” (“sientificheskuyu sistemu”) in which central attention was concentrated on the moral principles of the masonic teaching. He came to Russia in 1809 in order to be the head of the Hebrew Chair at St. Petersburg Ecclesiastical Academy. Around him, a circle of scholars including authoritative masons was assembled. He probably taught the masons interested in Kabbalah the language of the Old Testament.

Kabbalah after the official prohibition of masonry (1822)

It is clear from archive materials that after the official prohibition of masonry in 1822, masonic activity in the Theoretical Degree continued for about a cen-

¹²⁴ Sokolovskaya, ‘The Revival of Masonry under Alexander I’, 172.

¹²⁵ Longinov, ‘An Eighteenth-century Magician’, 581; Danilewicz, ‘The King of the New Israel’, 52.

¹²⁶ Longinov, ‘An Eighteenth-century Magician’, 582.

¹²⁷ In 1807 Grabianka was arrested and soon died in prison; his society decayed.

¹²⁸ J. A. Fessler (1756-1839), a native of Hungary, for many years lived in Russia. From 1807-1810 he was the Master of the Polar Star lodge in St Petersburg. See Sokolovskaia, ‘The Revival of Masonry under Alexander I’, 174-176; Serkov, *The History of Russian Masonry in the 19th century*, 70-76; id., *Russian Masonry*, 832.

ture. Ruf Stepanov, one of the most respected Russian masonic elders¹²⁹, taught in secret masonic meetings, that though ‘external lodges have been closed [...] nobody can prohibit [us] to work in our internal lodges; and though Freemasonry may be exterminated, the Order’s goal can not be abolished’¹³⁰. At the same time, the number of people who were involved in this activity was rather small, hardly exceeding 80 members¹³¹. In addition, some “theoretic” masons belonged to the “interior” Rosicrucian Order, whose meetings occurred four times a year¹³².

The meetings did not include any rites (except for initiation ceremonies); the Brothers were occupied with reading mystical works and commenting on them. All their activity was directed to self-correction and restoration of the primeval pure nature in the soul.

They continued to pay special attention to translations of various works on mysticism, alchemy and Kabbalah. In particular, in the MSs collection of Arseniev’s family there are several very important compositions written in the 40s–50s of the 19th century ‘by the hand of A.A. Filosofov’¹³³. In all probability, the author had a knowledge of Hebrew; his notes on Hebrew, and mystical meaning of Hebrew letters are indicative of his acquaintance with the language. Within his papers we find a relatively correct translation of *Sefer Yezirah*, some fragments of *Sefer ha-Zohar*, *Sefer ha-Temunah*, and other kabbalistic texts.

At the same time, “theoretical” masons continued their public activity and cherished plans of social and moral amendment in Russia. In the mid 19th century, their main bases were Moscow University, Moscow governor general Chancellery, Moscow and Tula Clubs of the nobility, and Moscow departments of the Senate. Masonic influence on the Orthodox Church and ecclesiastical censorship was especially strong¹³⁴. An additional center of masonic ac-

¹²⁹ A special category of the most authoritative spiritual mentors in Russian masonry, which has no analogues in Western masonry. The most eminent “elders” were S. Gamaleya, I. Pozdejev, R. Stepanov, Father S. Sokolov, etc. See, e.g., Arseniev, *From the family archive*.

¹³⁰ See Serkov, *The History of Russian Masonry in the 19th century*, 247.

¹³¹ Most of them belonged earlier (before 1822) to the Moscow lodge of Seekers after Manna. Their meetings were frequent; e.g., in 1823–1834 there were 169 meetings. *Ibid.*, 265, 270.

¹³² Its chiefs in the 1820s–1910s were V. A. L’ovshin, V. D. Kaminin, S. P. Fonvizin, V. A. Bibikov and V. S. Arseniev.

¹³³ Alexander A. Filosofov (1829–1900?) – mason, and member of the Theoretic Degree of Solomon Sciences.

¹³⁴ In the 1840s–1850s one of the spiritual leaders of the “theoretic” masons was Father Simeon I. Sokolov (1772–1860). He had influence on a “theorist” S. D. Nechayev, the attorney-general of the Holy Synod; on the famous philosopher, professor of the Moscow Ecclesiastical Academy, Father F. A. Golubinsky; on a member of the Holy Synod V.I. Kutnevich, etc. A number of priests and abbots also were among the “theoretical” Brothers. The masons maintained close relations with St. Sergius Trinity Lavra and some Moscow monasteries. See Serkov, *The History of Russian Masonry in the 19th century*, 276–277; *id.*, *Russian Masonry*, 759–760.

tivity was in the Imperial Moscow society for Agriculture, where many “theorists” participated (a Rosicrucian S.P. Gagarin was its chairman, a mason S.P. Shipov its vice-chairman). The Society became a stronghold of Russian liberal noblemen, whose belief in social reforms was based on the masonic outlook. These people had a certain influence on the abolition of serfdom in 1861¹³⁵. It is noteworthy that one of the main proponents of the reform was S.S. Lanskoj (1787-1862)¹³⁶, one of the heads of Russian masonry and Minister of Interior, who had close relations with the Brothers, the members of this Society¹³⁷.

The Secretary of the Society was S.A. Maslov (1793-1879), one of ideologists of the “theoretical” masonry and a Rosicrucian of higher initiation¹³⁸. He also founded *The Agricultural Magazine (Zemlyedel'cheskiy Zhurnal)* where his ‘translations [of the articles] on agricultural problems’ were printed. At the same time, Maslov translated into Russian the fundamental work *Philosophie der Geschichte oder über die Tradition (Philosophy of History, or On Tradition)* by Christian kabbalist F.J. Molitor (1779-1861). It is noteworthy that Molitor had a high masonic degree and was historiographer of the masonic Order of the Asiatic Brethren which was tightly connected with the Rosicrucian movement. The doctrine and rites of this Order are known to be deeply influenced by kabbalistic and Frankist ideology¹³⁹. Molitor’s bulky work is devoted to a detailed analysis of Christianity and Judaism and a comparison between Jewish and Christian mysticism. In G. Scholem’s opinion, Molitor was the last Christian kabbalist who had a deep comprehension of the Jewish mystical tradition, ‘he revealed [...] an insight into the world of Kabbalah far superior to that of most Jewish scholars of his time’¹⁴⁰. Molitor’s book also had an essential effect on the views of Scholem himself¹⁴¹. It is remarkable

¹³⁵ Serkov, *The History of Russian Masonry in the 19th century*, 2760-2777, 279-280.

¹³⁶ Count Sergey S. Lanskoj, senator, member of the Council of State, joined the Craft in 1810s and occupied key positions in the Grand Provincial Lodge of Russia, Capitulum Phoenix and some other lodges. In the mid-19th century he was the head of a secret “theoretic” lodge in St. Petersburg. See Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 462.

¹³⁷ Lanskoj’s Stock in the Russian State Library (DMS RSL, F 147), as well as the above-mentioned Arseniev’s one, contains most of the kabbalistic Alex.

¹³⁸ See about him: Krasnopevkov, *Memoirs on Stepan Alekseevitch Maslov*; Sovetov, *S.A. Maslov. In memoriam*; Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 527-528.

¹³⁹ For a detailed description of the history and teaching of the Order of Asiatic Brethren, see Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe, 1723-1939*, 26–53. An analysis of kabbalistic elements in the teaching of the “Brethren” is in Scholem, ‘Ein verschollener jüdischer Mystiker der Aufklärungszeit, E. J. Hirschfeld’, 247-278. See also McIntosh, *The Rose Cross and the Age of Reason, 161-177*; Burmistrov, ‘Kabbalah in the Teaching of the Order of Asiatic Brethren’, 42-52.

¹⁴⁰ Scholem, *Die Erforschung der Kabbala von Reuchlin bis zur Gegenwart*, 19; id., *Kabbalah*, 201.

¹⁴¹ See Schulte, “‘Die Buchstaben haben... ihre Wurzeln oben.’ Scholem und Molitor”, 143-164; Biale, *Gershom Scholem, Kabbalah and Counter-History*, 31-32, 75-76, 99, 121, 215-216; Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, 284.

therefore that this book was very popular in Russia of the 19th century¹⁴². A MS of this book translated into Russian in 1861 is in Arseniev's archive.

Gradually, activity of "theoretic" masons was fading away. Regular meetings continued up to the 1870s, and the last case of reception occurred in early 20th century when V.S. Arseniev (1829-1915), the Supreme leader of the Order and a preserver of masonic heritage, initiated into the Order his son and grandson¹⁴³. It is worthy of note that the last representative of this tradition, Father Johann Arseniev, studied in the first years of the 20th century the same treatise by Samuel Richter *Die wahrhaffte und vollkommene Bereitung des philosophischen Steins der Brüderschafft aus dem Orden des Gülden und Rosen-Creutztes* (1710) from which, as a matter of fact, began the history of the "new Rosicrucians"¹⁴⁴.

Conclusions

It is obvious that the interest of Russian masons in Jewish mysticism was far from superficial, as might seem to be the case at first glance. They looked on Kabbalah as a tradition that preserved invaluable grains of ancient wisdom, true knowledge which had been granted to mankind through revelation. In addition, Kabbalah, *pari passu* with Magic and Alchemy, was an integral part of the masonic doctrine. It elucidated the structure of divine and terrestrial worlds and the relationship between them, and assisted in revealing the hidden sense of the Scriptures. Moreover, masonic enthusiasm for Kabbalah was aimed at rather practical purposes. Kabbalistic concepts of the universal man (*Adam Kadmon*) and global improvement (*tikkun ha-olam*) served as an ideological basis for the masonic program of radical reformation of social, political, moral and religious conditions in Russia.

It is known that the masonic teaching, in general, and its kabbalistic elements, in particular, played a significant role in Russian literature, and not only in the writings of "masonic" authors like M. Kheraskov and S. Bobrov but also in the work of V. Odoyevski, N. Gogol, A. Stepanov, D. Begichev, etc.¹⁴⁵.

¹⁴² Molitor's ideas were circulated not only in masonic circles; among his readers was, e.g., a Russian writer and Romanticist V. F. Odoyevski. See *Catalogue of V.F. Odoyevski's Library*, 368 (N 3101).

¹⁴³ See about Arseniev's masonic dynasty Serkov, *Russian Masonry*, 69-71.

¹⁴⁴ A copy of this rare book with handwritten notes made by V.S. and I.V. Arsenievs is kept in the Russian State Library for Foreign Literature, Moscow.

¹⁴⁵ See first of all Michael Weiskopf's groundbreaking study of Masonic-Theosophic background of the Russian Romantic literature: Weiskopf, *Gogol's Subject: Mythology, Ideology, Context*. See also Baehr 'The Masonic Component in Eighteenth-Century Russian Literature', 121-139; Baehr, *The Paradise Myth in 18th Century Russia*. In our opinion, L. Leighton's book

Even more important was the influence of masonic ideology on the Russian public conscience. Thus, social and politic concepts of mystical masonry became an ideological basis for 18th century Russian conservatism. In the early 19th century when rationalist masonry was expanded anew, the Rosicrucians typified the conservative ideals. Their religious and political views exerted a great influence on the development of Russian Romantic philosophy and social utopianism in the first half of the 19th century as well as of the Slavophile movement¹⁴⁶. Obviously enough, these ideas remained very important in Russian religious philosophy of the late 19th-early 20th centuries (V. Soloviev, S. Bulgakov, P. Florenski, N. Berdyaev)¹⁴⁷. Thus, as a component of masonic outlook, Kabbalah has become an important factor in Russian history and culture.

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The Esoteric Tradition in Russian Romantic Literature is mostly based on unreliable data about Jewish Kabbalah. When trying to reveal the elements of "masonic" Kabbalah (similar to A. Kilcher's "metaphoric" Kabbalah) in the writings of Russian Romantics of the first half of the 19th century, Leighton draws sometimes ill-founded conclusions.

¹⁴⁶ See Sakulin, *From the History of Russian Idealism: Prince V. F. Odoyevski*, Vol. 1:1; Kamenski, *The Moscow Circle of "Lyubomudrs"*; Fedorov, *European Mystical Tradition and Russian Philosophical Thought*; Pustarnakov, V. (ed.), *Schelling's Philosophy in Russia*; Kolyupanov, *The Biography of A. I. Koshelev*, Vol. 1.

¹⁴⁷ Burmistrov, 'Vladimir Soloviev and Kabbalah', 7-104; id. 'Kabbalah in Russian Philosophy', 37-70.

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Die Stelle der Kabbala in der Lehre der russischen Freimaurer

Die Aufgabe des Artikels ist eine "kabbalistische Schicht" in der Lehre und Literatur der russischen Freimaurer am Ende des 18.–Anfang des 19. Jahrhunderts zu erforschen. Die Untersuchung ist auf die große Menge der Handschriften die sich in russischen Archiven befinden und auf die wenig bekannten Veröffentlichungen in russischen freimaurerischen Zeitschriften begründet. Die russische Freimaurerei war augenscheinlich die einflußreichste geistige, gesellschaftliche und politische Kraft am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts. Die synkretische freimaurerische Lehre kombinierte die Elemente von verschiedenen religiösen und esoterischen Traditionen, darunter waren die jüdische Kabbala und ihre christlichen Auslegungen. Der Artikel analysiert kabbalistische Äußerungen in der Lehre der freimaurerischen Logen und geheimen Orden. Die Entstehung der russischen Logen und ihrer Verbindungen mit den geheimen Gesellschaften in Europa betrachtend, versuchen die Autoren die wichtigsten esoterischen Strömungen am Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts, die die russischen Brüder (vor allem, Rosenkreuzer und Martinisten) zum Erlernen der Kabbala trieben, zu ermitteln. Die russischen Rosenkreuzer waren die hauptsächlichsten Anhänger der Kabbala. Sie haben den Hauptanteil der kabbalistischen Texte übersetzt. Und viele Werke, unter Verwendung jüdisch-mystischer Konzepte, geschrieben. Alle diese Texte sind unveröffentlicht und sind nur als Handschriften vorhanden.

Es wird argumentiert, daß das Interesse der russischen Freimaurer am jüdischen Mysticismus nicht oberflächlich war. Sie betrachteten die Kabbala als eine Tradition, die unschätzbare Samen der uralten Weisheit bewahrt hatte – Wissen das der Menschheit durch Offenbarung geschenkt worden war. Außerdem war die Kabbala, wie Magie und Alchemie, ein Bestandteil der freimaurerischen Lehre. Sie erklärte den Aufbau der göttlichen und irdischen Welten und ihrer Beziehungen, und sie half den verborgenen Sinn der heiligen Schrift zu enthüllen. Die freimaurerische Begeisterung für die Kabbala hatte auch eine praktische Richtung. Die kabbalistischen Konzeptionen der universellen Menschheit (Adam Kadmon) und der allgemeinen Verbesserung (tikkun ha-olam) waren ideologische Grundlagen des freimaurerischen Programms zur radikalen Reformation des gesellschaftlichen, politischen, moralischen und religiösen Lebens in Rußland.

THE ESOTERIC USES OF ELECTRICITY:
THEOLOGIES OF ELECTRICITY FROM SWABIAN PIETISM TO
ARIOSOPHY

NICHOLAS GOODRICK-CLARKE

Intrinsic to the Western esoteric tradition since its European revival in the Renaissance is a dialogue between natural philosophy and religion. Antoine Faivre has identified the key notions of Western esotericism in correspondences between the macrocosm and the microcosm, a living nature, intermediaries and the transmutation of the soul¹. Based on these “forms of knowledge”, esotericism is necessarily directed towards the relationship between man and the universe, and the interconnections between all parts of nature. In particular, the idea of a living nature predisposes esotericism especially towards concepts of energy as an origin of divine power; a means for the communication and transference of this power throughout nature; and the spiritual illumination or inspiration of man.

Throughout history light typically fulfilled this role as an intangible, ubiquitous and life-enhancing form of energy. During the Middle Ages, a metaphysics of light governed cosmology, epistemology and even Gothic architecture. However, the discovery of magnetism and electricity supplied a new metaphor for the presence of divine power in the world from the seventeenth century onwards. The invisible power of magnetism and electricity, the attraction of opposite poles, and its dramatic manifestation in the form of lightning suggested a mysterious, powerful and awesome symbol for God.

Paracelsus (1493-1541) and Rudolf Goclenius (1572-1621) had offered early evaluations of magnetism as a mysterious force of nature and referred to the remedial effects of the magnet. The most comprehensive work on magnetism in the seventeenth century was written by Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680). His book *Magnes sive de arte magnetica opus tripartitum* (1643) comprised three books. The first book treats of the nature and characteristics of magnetism; the second deals with its practical application in various areas of technology. The third book depicts magnetism as an elemental force of nature. Kircher understood magnetism as one of the elemental forces that holds the world together. A significant change in Kircher's conception of God occurred as a result of his interest in magnetism. Impersonal aspects in his idea of God began to

¹ Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 10-15.

prevail over an orthodox notion of an individual personal deity. Through his work on magnetism, Kircher regarded God as an all-pervasive, radiant power, which gives life, forms and sustains everything. One detects a shift from the idea of the divine magnet to that of a magnetic, all-pervasive power. This shift in emphasis becomes manifest in the pansophical theology of nature and signals an early stage in the transition to the Romantic philosophy of nature.

Ernst Benz was the first scholar to identify the “theology of electricity” amongst a group of 18th-century Swabian Pietist theosophers. Benz was also concerned with the interrelationship of the religious and scientific consciousness. In particular, he proposed to show that the ‘discovery of electricity and the simultaneous discovery of magnetic and galvanic phenomena were accompanied by a most significant change in the image of God’. He also claimed that these discoveries led to a ‘completely new understanding of the relation of body and soul, of spirit and matter’². The purpose of this paper is to trace the transformation of the theology of electricity from its Swabian Pietist origins through 19th-century scientific occultism by examining its role in the Theosophy of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and the racial esotericism of Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels.

1. *The Theology of Electricity in Swabian Pietist Theosophy*

In the creation story in the Book of Genesis, the Lord first creates Light, and three days and three nights are said to pass before he creates the sun, the moon and the stars. What then is this first Light? The interpretation of the first light in Genesis was a concern of Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-1782), the leading Swabian Pietist, whose interests embraced the theosophy of Jacob Boehme, alchemy, the Kabbalah, and the visionary revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg³. It was in mid-18th century Germany, among Protestant Pietist theologians and scientists, that a self-conscious Theology of Electricity was elaborated as an esoteric doctrine relating to cosmology, anthropology and scriptural exegesis. Besides Oetinger, its other leading figures were Prokop Divisch (1696-1765) and Johann Ludwig Fricker (1729-1766). Ernst Benz has extensively documented this particular group of theosophers and their speculations on electricity, while Antoine Faivre has since provided detailed commentaries on their work in the context of natural magic and *Naturphilosophie*⁴.

² Benz, *The Theology of Electricity*, 2.

³ On Oetinger see Weyer-Menkhoff, *Friedrich Christoph Oetinger and Benz, Swedenborg in Deutschland*.

⁴ Benz, *The Theology of Electricity*, 27-44; Faivre, *Philosophie de la Nature*; Faivre, ‘*Magia Naturalis*’; Oetinger, ‘*Extraits*’; Rösler, *Commentaire*.

It is significant that these theologians were also practising scientists, actively contributing to the discovery of electrical phenomena. Born in Moravia, Prokop Divisch became a member of the Premonstratensian Order, which encouraged his studies in natural science. Later, as the Roman Catholic priest of Prendiz near Znaim (Znojmo) he studied meteorology and wrote his work on meteorological electricity. He also invented the first lightning conductor. Fricker had studied theology and natural sciences at Tübingen. As a Protestant pastor in Württemberg, he continued his mathematical studies and helped construct an astronomical clock, which displayed the movements of the solar system. A frequent visitor to Oetinger's parsonage at Walddorf, Fricker joined in the latter's chemical researches. Oetinger combined his theological interests with a knowledge of the latest developments in astronomy, geology, botany and zoology. He pursued his own experiments in alchemy and electricity. In 1770 he published a work on the links between metaphysics and chemistry. Wishing to exploit the salt deposits of the district, Duke Karl Eugen of Württemberg favoured his appointment as prelate and abbot of Murrhardt Abbey in view of his scientific knowledge.

The new philosophy of life, which Oetinger developed and based on his theory of electricity, involved a new interpretation of the story of Creation. Oetinger believed that the divine word of the Bible presents a document of the self-realization of God. In his introduction to Divisch's famous work, *Theorie von der meteorologischen Electricité* (1765), Oetinger set about an interpretation of Genesis Chapter One with reference to the first light. What was this light and what became of it? His enquiry led to a new understanding of the relationship between spirit and matter, God and nature. Benz has commented at length on Oetinger's conclusions as follows. Firstly, Oetinger asserts that the first light of the first day is the "electrical fire", which spreads out over chaos as a stimulating, warming and form-giving life principle. It penetrates all matter and finally fuses with matter itself. Secondly, the electrical fire, added to matter itself, is the life principle that repeatedly generates new forms, that wants to manifest itself again and again in new living shapes. Thirdly, it is no less than the principle of evolution that was part of Creation from the beginning and that manifests itself as a principle of "natural creation". Next to the "first creation" in the genesis through the will of God comes the "natural creation", whose seed was laid in the lap of matter by God Himself and which contained the subsequent creation of all forms of life. Benz sees this idea as the birth of the idea of evolution in modern European thought⁵.

Oetinger identifies the light of the first day as the *Spiritus mundi* or the

⁵ Ibid., 45-46.

electrical fire⁶. Oetinger's view of nature is thus quite distinct from the Aristotelian concept of matter. From the dawn of creation a new life element is added to matter, containing within itself the cause of all future creation. 'All physical beings have within them spiritual forces which can be stimulated so that they emanate and make themselves known'⁷. The point was underlined by Fricker: 'There is in nature a self-movement that we cannot reproduce: it is in the electrical and elementary fire'⁸. Life has been embedded in matter as a secret concealed impulse. As an embedded principle it will determine all future developments. Oetinger considered what happened to this first light when the sun was created on the fourth day. Divisch's answer was that the first light was sunk into matter itself, was blended with it, was enclosed in it. Oetinger commented that 'the almighty Creator squeezed ... the light into those elements ... like a soul or spirit [...] The old universal sages recognised this spirit of nature, some of them gave it the name "elementary fire", others "electrical fire", several called it "primeval" and "spirit of the world"⁹.

In earlier correspondence (27 February 1755) with Divisch, Oetinger made reference to the kabbalistic doctrine of the *Sefiroth*, or the "reflections", "emanations" or "forces" of God, citing the incidence of the *Chasmal* (flash of lightning) in Ezekiel and the Apocalypse whence emerge living beings, souls or intelligences. It should be recalled that Oetinger had a life-long interest in the Kabbalah. On his visit to Frankfurt in 1729 he was given a copy of Christian Knorr von Rosenroth's *Kabbala denudata* (1677-1684) and then pursued further studies with Coppel Hecht, a learned Jew, who directed his attention to parallels between the Kabbalah and Jakob Böhme. In 1763 Oetinger published a major work about the famous kabbalistic painting commissioned by Princess Antonia, which hangs in the Church of the Holy Trinity, Bad Teinach.¹⁰ Divisch followed Oetinger's references to the Kabbalah. In his book he took over this theory of the *Chasmal*, saying such innermost radiance as the purest source of all living, animate and organised beings is rendered "*species electri*" by the translators. From this he inferred that the electrical fire is really the subtle fiery principle and life-source of things, demonstrating its special effects in the clouds, storms and lightning¹¹.

Oetinger's discovery of electricity as the secret fire of nature already mixed with matter indicated a new view of man. Traditional scholastic anthropology

⁶ Oetinger, in Divisch, *Theorie von der meteorologischen Electricité*, 45.

⁷ Oetinger, *Biblich-Emblematisches Wörterbuch*, 204.

⁸ Fricker, 'Anhang zu der Theoria Electricitatis' in Divisch, *Theorie*, 122.

⁹ Divisch, *Theorie*, 4-6.

¹⁰ See Betz, *Licht vom unerschaffenen Lichte*, 13-14.

¹¹ Benz, *Theology of Electricity*, 50-52.

had stressed man's rational faculties: man was an image of God solely in regard to his ability to think. Man was thus isolated from the rest of Creation, especially animals, and there was no continuity of being with the natural order. With Oetinger, man is no longer viewed as a being quite distinct from pre-human life forms by virtue of his intellect but rather a creature intimately connected with the mineral, plant and animal realms through his soul which originates in the first light that created an animate universe.

The first man was made from dust, even so the natural soul was his already concealed in dust. The first forming of man from the dust of the earth was already filled with electrical fire: God did not make a dead human image, but during its formation the machine already received its psychic soul in a concealed manner. Paul therefore says: 'The psychic or soul-like was the first, the spiritual the second'.¹²

Fricker endorsed Oetinger's view, stating that man possessed not only a rational but also an "animal" soul: 'Man has a psychic, earthly or animal soul in addition to the lofty light of reason ... this lesser life sustains itself and spreads farther through a natural, orderly, slow, and imperceptibly progressing electrization'¹³. The electrical theologians considered it blasphemous to assume that God had created an inanimate lump of clay and subsequently breathed the spirit into it. To them, the electrical fire was already inherent in the matter of the clay from which God created man; the lump of clay already possessed a sensitive soul. The inhalation of spirit is not identical with the act of the first inspiration. It rather constitutes a subsequent second act: man's endowment with the faculty of thinking, with reason.

Given its ensouling force and evolutionary potential, Oetinger's notion of the electrical fire of nature is an outstanding historical example of Western esotericism. As Benz has shown, Oetinger further emphasised this by identifying electricity and its application as a form of magic. Oetinger was convinced that magic was a legitimate endowment of mankind viewed as the collaborator of God in the sense of an insight into the innermost secrets of nature with control over their powers. Oetinger believed that the patriarchs of the Old Testament had knowledge of a "divine physics". Not only did this enable him to rediscover the most modern findings of physics, electricity and magnetism in the Bible, but it also allowed him to posit that this knowledge had been lost through people turning away from God, and that it would be rediscovered in the final epoch in the history of mankind¹⁴.

¹² Oetinger, *Biblisches und Emblematisches Wörterbuch*, 401 (in article "Leben")

¹³ Fricker, in Divisch, *Theorie*, 92.

¹⁴ Benz, *Theology of Electricity*, 95-103. On electricity in Swabian Pietism, see also Faivre, 'Magia naturalis, 1765', and Faivre's editions of Oetinger ('Extraits') and Rösler ('Commentaire').

2. *Electricity in Modern Theosophy*

Antoine Faivre has emphasised the significance of late 19th-century occultism as a modernizing and modifying influence on the esoteric traditions of theosophy and German *Naturphilosophie*. Occultism typically proclaims its hostility towards the shallowness of materialism in an age of positivism. However, the penchant of occultists for phenomena and demonstrations show the extent to they are inextricably involved in a dialogue with the materialist assumptions and discoveries of modern science¹⁵. It is unsurprising that modern Theosophy, as presented in the seminal texts of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891), should thus assimilate electricity into its metaphysical and esoteric discourse. Her view of electricity has certain similarities to the speculations of the 18th-century electrical theologians but there are also important distinctions. By contrast with the 18th-century electrical theologians, Blavatsky was not a scientist, but assimilated her knowledge of electricity through wide reading and general knowledge.

In the first place, Blavatsky's idea of electricity was influenced strongly by Mesmerism, which had become strongly associated with occultist currents in the 19th century. Her description of the animal soul of nature, as an "electric vital fluid" recalls the ideas of Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), famous as the founder of "animal magnetism" for the therapeutic treatment of illness. Mesmer and animal magnetism feature extensively in Blavatsky's thought and writings. Mesmer actually regarded himself as a Newtonian, concerned to discover the mechanical laws that operated in the universe. Pondering the cause of universal gravitation, Mesmer had written his doctoral dissertation *De influxu planetarum in corpus humanum* (1766), in which he posited the existence of an invisible, universally distributed fluid that flows continuously everywhere and serves as a vehicle for the mutual influence between heavenly bodies, the earth and living things¹⁶. Irrespective of Mesmer's own desire to found a new rational science, his theory is manifestly rooted in esoteric traditions. His "fluid" is a modern expression of long-standing speculations about "subtle" agents such as *pneuma*. Theories of subtle matter typify Western esotericism, especially in its view of a living, animate nature. The basic sympathy between this tradition and Mesmerism guaranteed the latter many supporters among 19th-century occultists. Blavatsky quotes verbatim the first eight of Mesmer's twenty-seven propositions concerning the universal fluid and ani-

¹⁵ Faivre, *Access to Western Esotericism*, 88.

¹⁶ Buranelli, *The Wizard from Vienna*, 36.

mal magnetism contained in his *Mémoire sur la découverte du magnétisme animal* (1799)¹⁷.

If occult Mesmerism supplied a mystique to magnetism, electricity was emerging as an energy source of great potential in the 1870s. While important work on electrical current and conduction had already been undertaken by Michael Faraday in the 1830s and 1840s, new theories linking electromagnetism and other forms of energy such as light had been advanced by James Clerk Maxwell and Hermann von Helmholtz in the 1860s. By the time Blavatsky arrived in New York in 1873, electricity was already beginning to impact on public awareness. Its first application had been in communications with the discovery of the telegraph by Samuel Morse in 1840. Invented in 1872, the Xenobe Gramme dynamo converted mechanical energy into electrical energy. This process led to the installation of the first central power station at San Francisco in 1879. Thomas Edison's carbon filament lamp, patented in 1880, stimulated major developments in the generation, distribution, and utilization of electrical energy. Blavatsky's notion of electricity was at least partially inspired by its contemporary high promise.

Blavatsky's interest in electricity as an animating soul-like force or fluid was also linked to the notion of "ether", widely discussed by scientists at the time she founded the Theosophical Society. In *Isis Unveiled* she frequently referred to *The Unseen Universe* (1875) by B. Stewart and P.G. Gait, which developed the idea of the universal ether as a parallel, invisible universe of force:

Now is it not natural to imagine, that a universe of this nature ... connected by bonds of energy with the visible universe, is also capable of receiving energy from it? May we not regard the Ether, or the medium, as not merely a bridge between one order of things and another, forming as it were a species of cement, in virtue of which the various orders of the universe are welded together and made into one? In fine, what we generally called Ether, may be not a mere medium, but a medium *plus* the invisible order of things, so that when the motions of the visible universe are transferred into Ether, part of them are conveyed as by a *bridge* into the invisible universe ... when energy is carried from matter into Ether, it is carried from the visible into the invisible ... when it is carried from Ether to matter it is carried from the invisible to the visible¹⁸.

She related these authors' views on ether to the idea of electricity as an intelligent force of formation. In another context she refers to the electricity produced by the cerebral pile of man: 'this *soul-electricity*, this spiritual and universal ether ... is the ambient, middle nature of the metaphysical universe, or

¹⁷ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 72, 168, 172-173.

¹⁸ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 187-188.

rather of the incorporeal universe ... [and] has to be studied before it is admitted by science, which ... will never know anything of the great phenomenon of life until she does'¹⁹

These scattered references to the all-pervasive, intelligent nature of ether or electricity were presented in the form of a cosmology in Blavatsky's later work *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). This book is conceived as a commentary on the Stanzas of Dzyan, a secret work of Tibetan wisdom-literature she allegedly received from masters in the Himalayas. In the fifth stanza occurs an enigmatic reference to a cosmogonic agent called Fohat. She writes:

[Fohat] is that Occult, electric, vital power, which under the Will of the Creative Logos, unites and brings together all forms, giving them the first impulse which becomes in time law ... Fohat produces nothing yet by himself; he is simply that potential creative power in virtue of whose action the NOUMENON of all future phenomena divides ... Fohat, then, is the personified electric vital power, the transcendental binding Unity of all Cosmic Energies, on the unseen as on the manifested planes, the action of which resembles –on an immense scale – that of a living Force created by WILL ... On the earthly plane his influence is felt in the magnetic and active force generated by the strong desire of the magnetizer. On the Cosmic, it is present in the constructive power that carries out, in the formation of things – from the planetary system down to the glow-worm and simple daisy – the plan in the mind of nature, or in the Divine Thought, with regard to the development and growth of that special thing. He is, metaphysically, the objectivised thought of the gods; the “Word made flesh”, on a lower scale, and the messenger of Cosmic and human ideations: the active force in Universal Life. In his secondary aspect, Fohat is the Solar Energy, the electric vital fluid, and the preserving fourth principle, the animal soul of Nature, so to say, or –Electricity²⁰.

In her commentary on the sixth stanza, Fohat is described as being behind all such manifestations as light, heat, sound, adhesion as well as being the “spirit” of electricity, which is no less than “the LIFE of the universe”. As an abstraction it begins with the one unknowable causality and ends as omnipresent mind and life immanent in every atom of matter. In a characteristic jibe at materialism, Blavatsky remarks that ‘while science speaks of evolution through brute matter, blind force and senseless motion, occultists point to *intelligent* law and *sentient* Life, and adds that Fohat is the guiding Spirit of all this’²¹. Blavatsky clearly identifies electricity as a primary agent in the cosmogony of Theosophy. Like Divisch, Fricker and Oetinger, Blavatsky sees electricity in terms of an emanationist ensoulment or animation of matter as a first act of the Creation. However, while their speculations were engendered and confirmed by

¹⁹ Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, I, 322.

²⁰ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 109-112.

²¹ Blavatsky, *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 139.

Biblical exegesis, she prefers a colourful spectrum of references to ancient Egyptian and Greek mythology, Jewish Kabbalah, and Tibetan Buddhism in support of her idea of an ancient wisdom-tradition. However, the idea of electricity possessing a formative power and inherent containment of all future evolutionary forms is noticeably common to both Blavatsky and the electric theologians.

Given its contemporary impact on culture and society, electricity was henceforth firmly established in Theosophy. Alice A. Bailey (1880-1949), the founder of the Arcane School, an important offshoot of the Theosophical Society, made electricity an important part of her revelation. First introduced to Theosophy in America in 1915, she swiftly rose to a leading position in the American section of the Society. From 1919 she claimed to be in contact with a Master she called the Tibetan and subsequently wrote some two dozen books based on channelled teachings. Bailey laid particular emphasis on the notion of seven rays or forms of energy which inform all existence. In her major work, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (1925), she made extensive reference to the role of electricity in cosmology and anthropology. She identified seven forms of electricity in the solar system, corresponding to the seven planes of consciousness, and also equated the “fire of mind” corresponding to *Manas* (the fifth principle of man in Theosophy) with electricity. Interestingly enough, she used the term “Electric Fire” to denote the vitality or the will-to-be of an entity²². However, her work is chiefly derived from Blavatsky. Bailey’s ideas have had a seminal influence on New Age religion. While notions of “energy” feature prominently in New Age metaphysics and therapies, the intensive application of electricity and electronics in late twentieth-century society have led to some negative evaluations (e.g. “electro-pollution”).

Electricity has played a significant role in emanationist cosmology and related theologies of creation and redemption, but it can also be combined with dualist and manichaeic cosmologies. In this case, the divine inspiration of the electrical fire is not available to all creation, thereby engendering a Fall with consequent sin and suffering. According to the particular doctrine, those cosmic powers devoid of the electrical fire posit a negative, evil principle, which interferes with the cosmic plan, so that divine assistance or intervention is necessary for the recovery of order and the redemption of creation.

Blavatsky’s articulation of Theosophy contained a streak of such gnosticism. *The Secret Doctrine* presents a drama of cosmic Fall and redemption, where “falls” were understood as phases of the periodic “descent of spirit into matter”. The fall of man is not seen as the consequence of an act of mortal man,

²² Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire*, 310-316.

but rather is the ‘Fall of Spirit into generation’ (I, 192). History begins with the descent to earth of the “Gods”, who incarnate in mankind, and ‘this is the Fall’ (II, 483). Once landed on and having touched this planet of dense matter, no angel can remain immaculate nor any avatar be perfect, because every avatar is ‘the fall of a God into generation’ (II, 484). This fall became irreversible at the time of Blavatsky’s third successive race on earth, the Lemurians, who “fell” into matter and began to procreate sexually rather than create spiritually. Significantly, Blavatsky described this event in terms of miscegenation or interbreeding: ‘And those which had no spark took huge she-animals unto them. They begat upon them dumb races ... Monsters they bred. A race of crooked, red-haired-covered monsters, going on all fours. A dumb race, to keep the shame untold’. A footnote identified these monsters as the “missing link”, a contemporary term for primitive lower man (II, 184). The idea of a “sparkless” creation, an evolutionary descent without the animating power of electricity, could serve theologies that sought to distinguish God’s chosen people from others.

3. *Electrotheology in Ariosophy*

This hint was later elaborated by Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (1874-1954), the founder of a heterodox racialist religion with sources in Christianity, natural sciences and Theosophy at Vienna in the early 1900s. In the first concise presentation of his doctrine of “theo-zoology”, later called “Ariosophy”, Lanz placed considerable emphasis on the spiritual nature of electricity.

Lanz’s new religion was rooted in his political concern at the democratizing, egalitarian trends of modernity. He was especially preoccupied with the political ascendancy of the erstwhile subject nationalities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Slav and Latin subjects of the large multinational empire were increasingly demanding political, ecclesiastical, cultural and linguistic representation. The resulting politics of identity led to a pan-German and *völkisch* movement among the German middle-classes of Austria who wished to maintain the traditional preeminence of German culture and authority in the state. Lanz would ultimately buttress his political convictions with sacred legitimization. He articulated an ethnic religion which made a soteriological distinction between the higher “blond” Aryan races (with which he identified the Germans) and the inferior “dark” races of the Slav, Balkan and Mediterranean peoples²³.

²³ On Lanz von Liebenfels, see Goodrick-Clarke, *The Occult Roots of Nazism*, 90-122; Daim, *Der Mann, der Hitler die Ideen gab*, passim; Friedrich Buchmayr, ‘Lanz von Liebenfels’, *Biographisch-Bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon* 16 (1999), Sp. 941-945.

Lanz had entered the Cistercian noviciate at Heiligenkreuz Abbey from 1893, but harboured heretical ideas concerning the literally bestial nature of sin, an idea suggested to him by a tombstone relief showing a knight treading on strange animal. Convinced that Christianity had betrayed its original racial doctrines, he left the order in 1899 and immersed himself in contemporary anthropological studies relating to the Aryan race. In 1903 Lanz published a long article 'Anthropozoon biblicum' in a periodical for biblical research. From his analysis of mystery cults described by Herodotus, Euhemerus, Plutarch, Strabo and Pliny, Lanz concluded that the ancient civilisations had practised an orgiastic cult involving sexual intercourse with small beasts or pygmies. Reliefs excavated at Nimrud in 1848 by the British orientalist Sir Austen Henry Layard allegedly showed such beasts (*pagatu, baziati, uđumi*) being sent as tribute to the Assyrians. According to Lanz, the writings of the ancients, the findings of modern archaeology, and substantial sections of the Old Testament corroborated this terrible practice of miscegenation²⁴.

Lanz accordingly elaborated a theology in which the Fall denoted the racial compromise of the divine Aryans due to wicked interbreeding with lower animal species, which came from the earth and had no soul. These persistent sins, institutionalized as satanic cults, led to the creation of several mixed races, which threatened the sacred and legitimate authority of the Aryans throughout the world, especially in Germany, where the Aryans were still most numerous. In 1905 Lanz published his fundamental statement of gnostic doctrine as *Theozoologie oder die Kunde von den Sodoms-Äfflingen und dem Götterelektron*, which again combined traditional Judaeo-Christian sources with the new life-sciences: hence theo-zoology. As a work of scientific occultism, Lanz's work uses the discoveries of modern science to support his esoteric reading of scripture and culture.

Lanz had already assimilated contemporary academic work on anthropology and racial evolution. Lanz also took an informed interest in recent discoveries in the fields of electromagnetism and radiology. The first of these was the thermionic emission of electrons from hot bodies as observed by Blondlot and called N-rays in 1887. Within a few years Wilhelm Röntgen had discovered X-rays, for which he received the Nobel Prize in 1901. The Curies had meanwhile discovered radioactivity in 1898, subsequently isolating the source elements polonium and radium in 1902 and receiving the Nobel Prize. Following the work of Marconi and Hertz, radio communication was developed between

²⁴ Lanz-Liebenfels, 'Anthropozoon biblicum', *VfB* 1 (1903), 317-328, 351-355.

1898 and 1904. These newly discovered forms of energy and communication were also adopted by Lanz in his esoteric anthropology²⁵.

The first section of *Theozoologie* presented the evil realm by examining the origin and nature of the pygmies. The first pygmy, called Adam, formed by God from mere earth, spawned a race of beast-men (*Anthropozoa*), which gave rise to the various species of apes in the world. Quite distinct in origin were the earlier and superior god-men (*Theozoa*). Following Euhemerus and Saxo Grammaticus, Lanz believed that these superior forms of life were gods²⁶. It was at this point, in his description of the gods, that Lanz introduced his own variety of electrotheology. Impressed by recent scientific discoveries in electromagnetism and radioactivity, Lanz saw electricity as a form of divine revelation and inspiration. He attributed to *Theozoa* extraordinary sensory organs for the reception and transmission of electrical signals. These organs bestowed powers of telepathy and omniscience upon the *Theozoa*²⁷. True religion in Lanz's view consisted in endogamous cults of racial purity in order to maintain these divine powers and to counter the temptations of lecherous acts with the bestial apelings, pygmies and their crossbreeds, all descendants of the lower, animal creation.

Lanz's exegesis of the Old Testament led him to conclude that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was just such a prehistoric electrical being, who regularly manifested as a cloud, fire and lightning. The electrical nature of the Ark of the Covenant was evident, while 'God has both properties of electrical rays, he enlivens and he kills, he heals and he makes ill'²⁸. By contrast, the heathen deities of Israel were all throwbacks to the evil cults of bestiality. Moving on to the New Testament, Lanz also identified Christ as an electrical being, who came to redeem a fallen mankind from bestial miscegenation through a revival of the gnostic racial religion. Lanz followed Arius in asserting that Christ was the Logos, a creature above all other creatures but not God. Lanz identified Christ as one of the last god-men or an angel. Christ's miracles and magical powers and the Transfiguration confirmed his electrical nature. Lanz substantiated this view with quotations from the Gospels, the *Pistis Sophia* and other Gnostic texts²⁹.

²⁵ Lanz's first mention of N-rays in 'Anthropozoon biblicum', *VfB* 1 (1903), 455n. His first mention of radium-rays in *ibid.*, 2 (1904), 332. He discusses these theories in *Theozoologie*, 83-85.

²⁶ Lanz-Liebenfels, *Theozoologie*, 75.

²⁷ Lanz-Liebenfels, *Theozoologie*, 85.

²⁸ Lanz-Liebenfels, *Theozoologie*, 97.

²⁹ Lanz-Liebenfels, *Theozoologie*, 113-122.

In place of the originally distinct species of *Theozoa* and apes, there had developed several mixed races, of which the Aryans were the least corrupt. The marvellous electrical organs of the *Theozoa* had atrophied into the supposedly superfluous pituitary and pineal glands in modern man owing to miscegenation. Throughout all recorded history, the apelings and pygmies had sought to destroy the Aryans by dragging them down the evolutionary ladder by means of their promiscuity. The history of religion recorded a constant struggle between the bestial and endogamous cults. Besides Lanz's citation of Gnostic sources, his racial religion also betrays gnostic features. '[The gods] once walked physically on earth. Today they live on in man. The gods slumber in the racially degraded bodies of men, but the day will come when they arise once more'³⁰. The entrapment of the divine electrical spark within racially inferior bodies transposes gnostic ideas into the modern discourse of electricity, physical anthropology and eugenics. Lanz claimed that a universal programme of segregation and breeding could restore these divine powers to the Aryans as the closest descendants of the god-men.

In his early text *Theozoologie*, electricity seemed an opportunist assimilation of contemporary science to Lanz's doctrine of a cosmic manichaeian struggle between the divine, blond Aryan race and their inferior, dark and bestial antagonists. Although electricity was identified as a characteristic of divinity and divine powers, the attribution was typical of scientific occultism: a modern phenomenon was invoked, buttressed by citations from science journals, to lend credence to a radical and unorthodox sectarian world-view. Scant attention was given to the ontological status of electricity, nor to its role in Creation and its evolution, save for Lanz's quotations from Deuteronomy 4:24 and Hebrews 12:29 which call God a consuming fire, to which he added the comment that God was living, electrical "fire"³¹. His dominant idea was that only the *Theozoa*, the proto-Aryans or Gods on earth, were endowed with the spark of ensoulment or animation; the other dark races, descended from the earth-made Adam and having no electricity, represented an acosmic principle of degradation, gnostic entrapment and disorder.

However, once Lanz had founded his Ordo Novi Templi (ONT) in 1907, a neo-Templar order intended to revive Ariosophy through religious devotions supported by racialist liturgy and eugenic practice, he produced a series of doctrinal works on "electrotheology", which amplify and qualify his conception of electricity as a divine attribute and as sacraments within his reformed

³⁰ Lanz-Liebenfels, *Theozoologie*, 91.

³¹ Lanz-Liebenfels, *Theozoologie*, 101.

“Ario-Christianity”. Seven electrotheological works are extant, comprising: *Elektrotheologie von Ritus und Liturgie* (Ritual and Liturgy) in two parts; *Elektrotheologie des Sakraments der Taufe* (Baptism); *Elektrotheologie der Sakramente der Firmung, Buße und Krankenölung* (Confirmation, Penance, and Last Unction); *Elektrotheologie des Sakraments der Eucharistie, Messe und Graftsfeier* (Eucharist, Mass and Celebration of the Grail) in two parts; *Elektrotheologie des Sakraments der Ehe und Priesterweihe* (Marriage and Orders). Bibliographically, these booklets present a certain problem. The first four are numbered Nos. 44 to 47 in Lanz’s later “Lehrbriefe”, published from 1933 onwards under various series-titles (*Ariomantische Briefe*, *Luzerner Briefe*, *Briefe an meine Freunde*, *Geistwissenschaftliche Schriften*), while the last three have a separate numbering as *Handschrift E* Nos. 1 to 3. However, all the booklets, with the exception of No. 44 (dated Szt. Balázs, 1930) carry a composition date of Burg Werfenstein, 1908. It is quite possible that Lanz backdated the works in order to spare himself difficulties with the authorities during the Third Reich.

Supposedly written at his newly-acquired ONT priory at Burg Werfenstein near Grein in 1908, *Elektrotheologie des Sakraments der Eucharistie, Messe und Graftsfeier* contained a detailed discussion of the origins and nature of the Christian eucharist and mass. Deploying some far-fetched etymology combined with wide-ranging excerpts from Classical mythology, Lanz claimed that the eucharist derived from the putative prehistoric practice of eugenic coupling of Aryan congregations with divine “electrotheonic” beings. The word “eu-charist” literally meant “(the mystery) of the good Charity”: the Charities were also known as the Roman graces³². A welter of improbable references supported Lanz’s claim. According to Greek mythology, the graces were the daughters of Helios (the nordic sun-god also identified with Baldur and Apollo) and the Hesperidean-Atlantean woman Aigle; another account made them the daughters of Zeus and the nixie Eyrnyme. The Logos, Lanz claimed, was identical with the winged Hermes or Amor, often represented as a “small angel” or “Amorette”. Similarly, Agape (pure love) was the offspring of Nereus and Doris (Homer, *Iliad* 18:92) or a daughter of Kadmos and the spouse of Echion, who was himself a son of Hermes (the Logos) (Hesiod, *Theogony* 976). Kadmon was the husband of Harmonia (Germania) and the brother of Europa, thereby the representative, ancestor and protector of the European, ario-heroic race (pp. 2-4). By means of these myths of divine couplings, Lanz further sought to show how the gods had consorted with humans,

³² Lanz von Liebenfels, *Elektrotheologie des Sakraments der Eucharistie I. Teil*, 1.

thereby procreating a semi-divine descent that led to the Aryans or Germans in the present.

Lanz identified these “electrotheonic” beings as the graces of the Romans and the valkyries of the ancient Germans, furthermore as angels, muses, norns, light-elves, and winged grail doves, all divinities who originally resided in special wall niches in the altar area of the churches. The sacramental act of (sexual) communion was consummated under a tabernacle, ciborium, baldachin or tent-like canopy within full view of the other members of the congregation. Lanz showed how this once public act of eugenic regeneration with divinities on earth had since become obscured by the symbolic substitution of bread and wine, covertly prepared by the priest with his back to the congregation (p. 5). However, the eucharist is still kept in portable or fixed chests (“Armaria”) or “Pastophoria”, which Lanz derived from the word for “bridal bed” or “litter” (p. 6). Once the Baroque period witnessed the erection of enormous, ornate painted altars, the host was kept in altar containers (tabernacles), no longer recalling the prehistoric presence of the “electrotheonic” beings in wall niches or ciboria. Wooden figures and statues substituted for the once living “Electrotheones”; small effigies of the Virgin replaced the actual presence of norns, graces and valkyries. Monstrances imitating a radiant sun retained the memory of the electrotheonic grail dove and its surrounding gloriolate (pp. 8-9, 12).

Lanz also recruits the symbol of the Holy Grail for his electrotheology. He asserts that “Grail” derives from the Latin *cratalis* or *cratus*, meaning a cup, but interprets it to signify an ancient, electrotheonic pre-human being, known as *Panto-Krator* in Graeco-Roman culture and as St. Pancras, the patron saint of knight esquires, solemn oaths and loyalty to one’s own kind. Differing accounts refer to the Grail as a stone, cup and bowl, which has been brought down from heaven by angels and which Christ used at the Last Supper. It was also used by Joseph of Arimathea to catch the blood of Christ at his Crucifixion. According to legend, the Grail is the most precious and marvellous thing on earth. However, Lanz detects its “electrotheonic” nature in several references. Each year on Good Friday, according to Grail legend, the heavenly dove comes to revivify the Grail with its rays. Wolfram von Eschenbach describes the Grail as “lapis electrix” in his work *Parzival*. The Grail notably possesses all the miraculous powers which were otherwise attributed to the electrotheonic beings in old texts, legends and myths. It confers the highest knowledge and happiness both physically and spiritually; it heals the sick, gives eternal youth and beauty; feeds and refreshes by virtue of its rays of light, sweet fragrance and energy. Lanz concludes that the Holy Grail is nought else but the electrotheonic angel, valkyrie, light-elf, the theonic charity or grace of early Christianity (p. 11).

The ritual sexual intercourse between the “electrotheonic” norns, valkyries and angels and the ancient Aryan ancestors was a form of divine “sacrifice”. The gods descended to the level of men and matter in order to raise the racial stock from its racial degeneracy caused by interbreeding with beasts. This sacramental sacrifice of holy, spiritual love with the “electrotheonic” beings thus matched Christ’s act of sacrifice in the Crucifixion (p. 2). The electrotheonic beings merged with the blood and flesh of heroes in order to raise mankind to higher racial nobility. In describing this drama, Lanz uses a gnostic terminology of descent and extinction, ‘an unspeakably great and painful sacrifice upon the cross of lower matter and corporeality, which led to the death of the angels and gods, in order to enable the resurrection of a new, divine heroic race of men’. Quoting Mark 14:22 and Luke 22:19, Lanz recalls Christ’s sayings to his disciples at the Last Supper: ‘Take, eat, this is my body’ and, again, ‘This is my body which is given for you’. The verses of John 6:26, 35 and 51 are likewise interpreted to mean that Christ offers his flesh and blood as a form of eugenic salvation: ‘Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life ... I am the bread of life ... I am the living bread which came down from heaven ... Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life’. Lanz views this sacrifice as the price of Aryan redemption from the karmic guilt of primeval orgiastic miscegenation and the expectation of the Kingdom of Heaven in the ‘bioelectric and theoelectric Age of Uranus’ (pp. 14-15).

However, certain passages in Lanz’s electrotheology suggest an ascetic retreat from physical sexuality, which seems to jar with his sexual-eugenic interpretation of the ancient eucharist. In the second part of *Elektrotheologie des Sakraments der Eucharistie, Messe und Gralsfeier*, Lanz speaks of a ‘divine, pure love’, the binding and transubstantiation of sexual energies and transmutation of glands and hormones, so that pure-blooded Aryans may again become like the “electrotheonic” beings of prehistory. Just as the Aryans were once lost in body, matter and sexuality, so they shall return to God through the miraculous effect of pure love and eugenic breeding³³. And again: the “electrotheonic” nature of the eucharist offers ‘the means of purifying and perfecting the human race not only through generation, that is breeding, but also to transmute it creatively through the constant effect of bioelectric rays’. This creative transmutation will transform humans into “electrotheonic” beings, raise them up to the prehistoric status of angels and valkyries, thereby conjuring up the ‘bioelectric Uranus man of the coming Aquarian Age’, who will be

³³ Lanz von Liebenfels, *Elektrotheologie des Sakraments der Eucharistie II. Teil*, 20.

endowed with inconceivable knowledge and omnipotent magical and supernatural powers (p. 32).

Lanz's "electrotheonic" beings, angels, norns and valkyries are readily identifiable as intermediaries characteristic of imaginaries in Western esotericism. These beings form a ladder of ascent to a higher spiritual gnosis. Located in special holy places within churches, the "electrotheonic" beings offer humans the possibility of transmuting themselves into higher states of grace. Lanz's extraordinary contribution to esotericism consists in his interpretation of these intermediaries in both a spiritual and carnal context, whereby their sexual relations with humans will assist the evolution of Aryan mankind into superior and spiritual forms. Lanz articulates a modern biological form of esotericism, whereby eugenics is described in sacramental terms of spiritual intermediaries and transmutation.

Since Lanz regarded sexual passion as the chief cause of eugenic degradation, he anticipated a future in which sexual relations would play no part in human reproduction: man and woman had to become more alike, loving each other more spiritually. He quoted Matthew 22:30 that there was no marriage in the resurrection but that man and woman are angels of god in heaven. In a future eugenic paradise Lanz thought humans would no longer be conceived through carnal union but perhaps through radiation. Lanz also discussed the possibility of fertilising female eggs through electromagnetism, parthenogenesis, and female conception through a "heavenly beam", or even a glance from the "electrical" Christ³⁴. One must imagine that, once humans attained "electrotheonic" status, the ritual communion with heavenly intermediaries no longer took place at a carnal level but by means of reciprocal electromagnetic radiation between the partners. Lanz's Aryan paradise would thus witness the universal practice of electrically immaculate conception.

In the work *Elektrotheologie des Sakraments der Ehe und Priesterweihe*, Lanz compared the sacrament of marriage with that of orders (ordination of clergy and consecration of bishops). Bestowed by the priest but realised only in consummation, the sacrament of marriage is the sacrament of the physical conception of heirs, the propagation of a blood nobility. By contrast, the sacrament of orders Lanz defined as the sacrament of the conception of spiritual heirs, the propagation of an aristocracy of blood and spirit by means of an "electrotheonic" and creative transference of energy. He regarded the laying on of hands and the anointment of the fingers by the presiding priest or bishop as a conductor for the *od*, *odyl* or spiritual current, the hypothetical force responsible for magnetism, light and hypnotism discovered by Karl von

³⁴ Lanz-Liebenfels, *Theozoologie*, 153, 88, 121.

Reichenbach (1788-1869). This sacrament streams into the new priest's body through a closed, unbroken chain of priestly consecrating hands leading back to the "electrotheonic" light-elves and angels in ancient times³⁵.

This electro-spiritual current of *od*, inherited over generations from the "electrotheonic" beings identifies and legitimises the "ario-heroic" priesthood as the authentic servants of God. For who else were the original Christian priests but the favourites, servants and attendants of the "electrotheonic" angels, their confidantes and playmates, whose task was to interpret their divine instructions? Lanz added that they were mostly the blood (i.e. physical) descendants of these beings, but in any case their spiritual sons, as they received more *od* through their dealings with the gods than the laity. These priests had not only profound, scientific and technical knowledge but also a magical power and authority. Their rule was challenged by the demonic clergy which fostered the cults of bestiality and racial mixing, and whose sway in the modern world is now all but universal. Only by returning to racial purity can the electrical spirit be regained and Aryan mankind redeemed (pp. 15-16).

This comparison of theologies of electricity raises important questions concerning their Hermetic and Gnostic status. The "electrical fire" of Divisch, Fricker and Oetinger is an instrument of the transcendent God to communicate an active, animating soul to matter, so that it may continue to unfold and evolve in accordance with His will. Its presence throughout all Creation underlines the idea that the cosmos is good. The Gnostic idea that the cosmos is a bad product of an evil demiurge has no place in the thought of the 18th-century Pietist electrical theologians, who articulated an emanationist cosmology and anthropology. Blavatsky also adopted electricity as an instrument of emanationism, regarding it as the vehicle of cosmic ideation, impressing forms in nature. She also regards electricity as the *anima mundi* and the "soul" in man. However, her ideas were theologically much less sophisticated than those of the Pietist theologians who were concerned with scriptural interpretation. Her ideas of miscegenation in the third root-race carried overtones of a Gnostic separation from the divine.

Lanz adopts electricity to an elaborate scriptural exegesis, which displays both Hermetic and Gnostic tendencies. Lanz sees Aryan man as a stranger in a hostile world of bestial lust, which has rendered the living gods extinct on earth. The spark of their divinity survives only in the minority of blond, fair Aryans, whose blood has remained relatively pure. But Lanz does not see the cosmos or even the world itself as evil, but locates evil in the demonic, inferior race and its idolatrous cults of bestial interbreeding. As Roelof van den Broek

³⁵ Lanz von Liebenfels, *Elektrotheologie des Sakraments der Ehe und Priesterweihe*, 14.

has shown in his comparison of Hermetism and Gnosticism in antiquity, the Hermetist's positive view of the cosmos did not imply that he was optimistic about the fate of the soul in its earthly existence. The passions of the body and the allurements of the senses continuously threatened to pull the soul down to a state of deadness and obscured its awareness of its divine origin³⁶. If Lanz were a pure Gnostic he could never have celebrated the living presence of *Theozoa* in a former earthly paradise. Instead, he articulates a manichaeic world of opposing principles and species, the one seeking purity and liberation from the senses, the other seeking sexual gratification and licence, and thereby filling the world with ugliness, disorder and violence. Just as the author of *Poimandres* described man's fall into nature as the origin of his dual nature, Lanz elaborates an ascetic Hermetism to show how man can regain his divine birthright and redeem the world: 'The gods slumber in the bestialized human body, but the day will come when they arise again. We were electric, we will be electric, to be electric and divine, is one and the same!'³⁷

4. Conclusion

The extent to which electricity has entered the corpus of esoteric speculation has been indicated in this article with reference to a small sample of writers. Electricity is primarily identified as an ensouling, animating force in esoteric cosmology and anthropology. As such, it tends to support emanationist and non-dualist, Hermetic philosophies. Already in the seventeenth century, electricity represented for Kircher a divine force in nature and even tended to displace more orthodox notions of an absolute, transcendent deity. Oetinger saw electricity as the instrument of God, introducing the *animus mundi* into matter at the very outset of Creation. All things, not only living creatures, were thus endowed with soul, so that the whole universe was a living, responsive entity in accord with God's design and containing its future development. Oetinger saw this living nature as the basis of magic. He believed that the ancients and patriarchs had understood and known how to use this underlying connection and sympathy between all things. Likewise, Blavatsky adduced electricity as the *animus mundi* and a cosmogonic agent responsible for translating the ideas of the Universal Mind into the myriad forms of the manifested universe. Given the influence of Mesmer in 19th-century occultism, electricity readily performed its function as an animating principle. Lanz von Liebenfels was the heir of such scientific occultism but, as a trained Cistercian, his particular

³⁶ Roelof van den Broek, 'Gnosticism and Hermetism in Antiquity', 11-12.

³⁷ Lanz-Liebenfels, *Theozoologie*, 91.

inspiration in Hebrew and Christian sources led him to articulate a much more elaborate esoteric theology. In his case, electricity is a measure of spiritual evolution. His electrotheology describes electricity as a divine energy, vouchsafed only to the noble Aryans, Christ and other spiritual intermediaries. Besides his racialist concerns, Lanz also illustrates the paradox of scientific occultism in using spiritual notions to explain the contemporary scientific facts of biology and evolution, and conversely using the latter to outline the means of spiritual ascent.

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Die esoterischen Deutungen der Elektrizität: Die Theologie der Elektrizität von den schwäbischen Pietisten an die Ariosophie.

Seit dem siebzehnten Jahrhundert sind die damals erst vor kurzem entdeckten Kräfte des Magnetismus und der Elektrizität wie das Licht zu Symbolen der göttlichen Schöpfungsmacht geworden. Der Urgedanke dazu läßt sich schon im Werke von Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680) finden. Danach kam eine Gruppe von Theologen und Naturforschern, hauptsächlich schwäbische Pietisten und Theosophen, die während der 1760er Jahre eine "Theologie der Elektrizität" ausarbeiteten. Diese "elektrischen" Theologen versuchten zu zeigen, daß bereits die Bibel und die Kabbala Hinweise auf die fortgeschrittenen Kenntnisse der Antike auf dem Gebiet der Physik and Medizin enthielten. Die kosmologischen and anthropologischen Ideen von Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702-1782), Prokop Divisch (1696-1765) und Johann Ludwig Fricker (1729-1766) werden mit besonderem Bezug auf das "elektrische Feuer" untersucht. Mit dieser grundlegenden Kraft hätte Gott die Materie am Anfang der Schöpfung beseelt.

Die Studie spürt dann den esoterischen Aspekten der Elektrizität im Zeitalter des wissenschaftlichen Okkultismus nach. Aufgrund ihrer Begeisterung für den Mesmerismus und den damaligen Anwendungen der Elektrizität, teilt Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (1831-1891) der Elektrizität sogar eine kosmogonische Rolle in ihrer Lehre der Theosophie zu. Dabei wirkt die Elektrizität als ein beseelendes Prinzip, das die Ideen des Universellen Geistes den mannigfaltigen Formen des offenbaren Kosmos aufprägt. Diese Vorstellung von Elektrizität ging auch in die Werke von Alice A. Bailey (1880-1949) ein, die die Begründerin einer späteren theosophischen Schule war. Die Metapher der Elektrizität als Vehikel einer göttlichen oder lebenspendende Kraft kommt auch in New Age Religionen und Therapien vor.

Jörg Lanz von Liebenfels (1874-1954) hat eine Elektrotheologie als Bestandteil seines rassistischen Kultes der Ariosophie in Österreich und Deutschland ausgearbeitet. Indem er Biowissenschaften mit genauem Bibelstudium kombinierte, entwickelte Lanz eine esoterische Anthropologie der arischen Rasse. Elektrische Gottmenschen sollen einst auf der Welt gelebt haben bis ihre Herrschaft durch eine Rassenmischung mit Tiernmenschen zu Ende ging. Christus

war demzufolge ein Gottmensch, der den Ariern ein Evangelium der Rassenreinigung predigte, da die Arier als einzige Rasse Spuren ihrer einstigen elektrischen Natur bewahrt hätten. Lanz artikuliert eine Art moderner biologischer Esoterik, bei der die Eugenik in der sakramentalen Sprache von geistigen Vermittlern und Transmutation beschrieben wird.

Der Übersichtsartikel zeigt die unterschiedlichen Formen, unter denen Elektrizität in der westlicher Esoterik vom achtzehnten bis zum zwanzigsten Jahrhundert verstanden wird und zeigt dabei die zeitgenössischen wissenschaftlichen Kenntnisse und politischen Interessen auf.

DIANA REDUX: RETOUR SUR L'AFFAIRE LÉO TAXIL – DIANA VAUGHAN

MASSIMO INTROVIGNE

“Athirsata”, *L’Affaire Diana Vaughan – Léo Taxil au scanner*, Paris: Sources Retrouvées 2002.

L’affaire Léo Taxil est trop connue des historiens de la franc-maçonnerie, et de l’anti-maçonnisme catholique, pour qu’il soit nécessaire de la rappeler ici dans ses détails. J’y avais consacré en 1997 une soixantaine de pages de mon ouvrage *Enquête sur le satanisme. Satanistes et anti-satanistes du XVIIe siècle à nos jours*¹. En bref : Marie-Joseph-Antoine-Gabriel Jogand-Pagès (1854-1907), connu sous le nom de plume de Léo Taxil comme auteur d’ouvrages d’un anti-cléricalisme outré et ordurier, se déclare en 1885 converti de la franc-maçonnerie au catholicisme. Il commence à produire des ouvrages anti-maçonniques qui ne disent rien de très nouveau, jusqu’à ce que – après la parution en 1891 du roman *Là-bas* de Joris-Karl Huysmans (1848-1907), qui avait mis le satanisme à la mode –, un associé de Taxil, le Dr Charles Hacks (“Dr Bataille”) et Taxil lui-même commencent en 1892 à livrer à un public de plus en plus étonné les secrets du satanisme maçonnique.

Derrière la franc-maçonnerie, on apprend qu’il y a le “Palladisme” luciférien, jadis dirigé par le franc-maçon américain Albert Pike (1809-1891) et aujourd’hui par le grand maître italien Adriano Lemmi (1822-1896), contre lequel une révolte est pourtant en cours. En effet, une grande querelle divise la “haute maçonnerie” (qui compte, bien entendu, aussi bien des femmes que des hommes) entre les partisans de deux grandes prêtresses lucifériennes : l’une odieuse, Sophia Walder, l’autre somme tout sympathique, Diana Vaughan. Pour les lecteurs de Taxil et de Bataille, le *happy ending* de la conversion de Diana Vaughan au catholicisme n’est donc pas vraiment surprenant. Diana (sans jamais paraître en public, bien qu’elle se manifeste à quelques personnes en privé) commence à son tour à publier des ouvrages anti-maçonniques, qui contiennent sur le satanisme des particularités tellement bizarres que des anti-maçons catholiques s’en inquiètent et se mettent à douter. Après que le Dr Hacks-Bataille ait confessé qu’il s’agissait bien d’une mystification, Léo Taxil annonce que Diana va finalement se montrer le 19 avril 1897. Ce soir-là, à la Salle de la Société de Géographie, c’est Taxil qui paraît pour confirmer qu’il

¹ Introvigne, *Enquête sur le satanisme*, 143-208.

s'agit en effet d'une mystification: il a voulu montrer la crédulité des catholiques, avec la complicité du Dr Hacks et d'une dactylo d'origine quelque peu américaine, qui a joué le rôle de Diana Vaughan dans les rares occasions où il a fallu la montrer à quelques personnes. L'affaire fait grand bruit, car le Pape lui-même avait reçu Taxil; on en rit, on s'énerve et finalement on l'oublie.

Il y a toujours eu une poignée d'anti-maçons pour ne pas accepter l'aveu de Taxil, et pour soutenir que la mystification allait bien dans l'autre sens: Taxil était sincère quand il parlait du luciférisme, de la Haute Maçonnerie, des querelles entre Diana et Sophia; il mentait quand il réduisait l'épopée du Palladisme à une simple fumisterie, et on le soupçonnait même d'avoir fait assassiner Diana Vaughan. Il serait difficile de trouver de ces anti-maçons-là dans l'Eglise Catholique aujourd'hui; mais on en trouve dans des groupes proches de la Fraternité Saint Pie X ou sedevacantistes (pour lequel il n'y a plus de "vrai" Pape à plein titre dans une Eglise qui a perdu sa légitimité en raison de ses "hérésies" modernistes). C'est de ces milieux-là, semble-t-il (mais nous ne disposons pas de preuves à l'appui), que provient l'ouvrage signé "Athirsata" et publié en 2002 sous le titre *L'Affaire Diana Vaughan – Léo Taxil au scanner. La plus grande mystification du XIXe siècle... mais pas celle qu'on croit*. Il s'agit de 561 pages (en grande partie, des documents reproduits au scanner) pour soutenir que Diana Vaughan a bien existé, que les écrits de Taxil et de Bataille (à quelques exagérations près) sont dignes de confiance, et que c'est l'aveu du 19 avril 1897 qui est faux.

Reconnaissons d'abord que l'auteur a fait un travail considérable, et qu'il faut toujours regarder d'un œil favorable la mise à la disposition du public de documents qui, pour n'être pas inédits, sont d'accès plutôt difficile, sauf à fréquenter la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris. Ajoutons qu'il s'agit d'une des machines de guerre les plus ingénieuses qu'il nous ait été donné de voir mises en oeuvre pour soutenir une thèse difficile. Mais la thèse demeure insoutenable.

L'auteur adopte comme méthode la critique systématique, adressée à l'encontre soit de l'ouvrage de l'historien américain Eugen Weber (*Satan Franc-Maçon. La mystification de Léo Taxil*), soit du mien cité ci-dessous. Le livre de Weber est qualifié d'«important ouvrage, qui mériterait plus d'attention de la part de nos "élites"», par un auteur «qui connaît bien son sujet et qui apporte des éléments nouveaux» (12); ma thèse serait même devenue «la thèse officielle» (470) sur l'affaire Taxil. Bien entendu, «officielle» signifie ici qu'elle est celle du «parti» dominant «anti-Diana Vaughan» (12).

Il est impossible d'examiner en quelques lignes tous les arguments de ce demi millier de pages, mais on peut les diviser en trois groupes. Un petit groupe d'arguments veut montrer que les chercheurs et les universitaires ont

commis quelques erreurs, ce qui est parfois vrai, et là, l’auteur apporte des vrais éclaircissements, lesquels pourtant ne changent pas le fond de l’affaire. En ce qui me concerne, il m’est reproché surtout d’avoir suivi Eugen Weber lorsqu’il affirme que le pamphlet paru après l’aveu de 1897 (*La Vérité sur Miss Diana Vaughan la Sainte et Taxil le tartufe*, par l’abbé Gabriel-Marie-Eugène de la Tour de Noé) avait été écrit (encore une fois) par Taxil lui-même. “Athirsata” a retrouvé plusieurs brochures sur la fin du monde, le grand monarque, et autres sujets, signées par cet abbé, qui permettent de croire qu’il était bien un personnage en chair et os, et l’auteur probable du pamphlet. C’est bien possible, et je regrette d’avoir trouvé “improbable”² le nom de la Tour de Noé, qui semble correspondre, en revanche, à un personnage authentique (quoique, à son tour, un peu bizarre). Mais la brochure de l’abbé de la Tour de Noé était signalé dans mon texte comme une simple curiosité: le fait qu’elle soit ou non l’ennième mystification de Taxil ne change rien à ses mystification précédentes³.

Un deuxième groupe d’arguments montre que plusieurs petits faits rapportés dans les ouvrages de Taxil, “Bataille” et “Diana Vaughan” sont tout à fait exacts. Qu’il me soit permis de faire référence ici à mon ouvrage *Enquête sur le satanisme*, où j’ai bien fait remarquer qu’ ‘il était impossible de produire dix mille pages en quelques années seulement [comme Taxil l’a fait] sans puiser abondamment à des sources antérieures’, et que par conséquent

on ne peut pas dire que tout ce que contient cette littérature [de Taxil] est faux. Il était impossible de noircir plus de dix mille pages sans utiliser des multiples sources, donc sans tomber, même sans le vouloir, sur des documents et épisodes authentiques. Il se peut également que certains épisodes véridiques – dont les conspirateurs préféraient faire croire qu’ils étaient des faux – aient été mêlés à d’autres, d’une fausseté évidente, pour brouiller les pistes des futurs chercheurs⁴.

Mais il ne faut surtout pas exagérer lorsqu’il s’agit d’identifier la part de vrai dans les ouvrages taxiliens. Parfois, “Athirsata” invoque des témoignages de franc-maçons: le fait que certains (surtout dans la maçonnerie “en marge”, ou para-maçonnerie) aient pris un moment au sérieux certains éléments de la mystification est certes très fâcheux pour eux, mais ne constitue pas en soi une

² Introvigne, *Enquête sur le satanisme*, 195.

³ C’est presque la seule erreur matérielle qu’on me reproche: en effet, je n’accepte pas la critique selon laquelle j’aurais attribué une partie majeure des ouvrages du Dr Bataille à Taxil, alors que les écrits signés Bataille et ceux signés Taxil exhibent parfois des idées différentes, notamment sur la question juive. Certes, mais nous avons affaire ici à une mystification de haute école, où quelqu’un qui écrit sous deux (ou trois, ou une demi-douzaine) de signatures diverses prend bien évidemment soin de se créer un style et même une idéologie quelque peu différente pour chaque “auteur”.

⁴ Introvigne, *Enquête sur le satanisme*, 199-200.

preuve de la vérité de ces mêmes éléments. Et j'ai donné moi-même plusieurs exemples de "documents" maçonniques et autres (mais tous imprimés *après* les ouvrages de Taxil) présentant comme très authentiques des "circulaires" d'Albert Pike qui sont, en fait, l'invention de Taxil.

Le troisième groupe, plus connu dans l'histoire de ces controverses, insiste sur le fait que Diana Vaughan et Sophie Walder ont bien existé: des journaux en ont parlé, des personnes affirment les avoir vues. On comprend que l'on touche ici au fond de l'affaire. Sur les deux personnages centraux de celle-ci, je me limite à deux observations. Diana Vaughan, d'abord. Qui donc s'est montré à quelques personnes sous ce nom? "Athirsata" ne donne que deux possibilités: la vraie Diana Vaughan, qui était bien ce que la littérature taxilienne disait qu'elle était, ou la dactylo dont Taxil avait parlé en 1897. On peut regretter que, si attentif qu'il soit à mon livre, et si critique qu'il se montre à l'égard de l'ouvrage anti-taxilien du franc-maçon anglais Arthur Edward Waite (1857-1942), *Devil-Worship in France, or the Question of Lucifer*, "Athirsata" ait décidé de ne pas mentionner le fait que Waite, après la confession de Taxil, écrivit un second volume, *Diana Vaughan and the Question of Modern Palladism*, lequel n'a pas trouvé d'éditeur mais dont je possède une copie du manuscrit original, conservé dans une collection privée en Angleterre, copie que j'ai souvent citée et utilisée. Dans ce second texte, Waite émet une troisième hypothèse, celle d'une "Diana Vaughan" américaine, pathologiquement anti-maçonne et affligée de sérieux problèmes psychiatriques, que Taxil aurait rencontrée et exploitée. Il s'agit, certes, d'une simple hypothèse, mais il eût été intéressant de la prendre en considération.

Admettons, toutefois, l'insolubilité de l'énigme Diana Vaughan. Reste Sophia Walder, et l'existence de cette dame et de son père est un aspect tout à fait crucial de l'affaire. Je pense que là réside, en effet, la preuve finale de la mystification taxilienne. Sophia Walder est loin de n'être ici qu'un personnage mineur: la lutte de Diana contre Sophia est si centrale que, si Sophia n'existe pas, Diana n'existe pas non plus, ou n'existe pas dans les termes qu'on dit. Or, l'un des ouvrages capitaux de la controverse, *Le Diable au XIXe siècle*, signé "Dr Bataille", nous affirme que Sophie ou Sophia Walder est la fille de 'l'expasteur Walder, [...] aujourd'hui mormon, qui réside aux Etats-Unis, dans l'Utah, où il est la doublure de John Taylor'⁵. Son père, à son tour luciférien, joue dans cette même affaire un rôle qui n'est pas tout à fait négligeable.

Or, John Taylor (1808-1887) n'est pas n'importe qui. Troisième Président de l'Eglise des Mormons, c'est un personnage tout à fait fondamental dans l'histoire du mormonisme. Dans mon ouvrage paru en 1997, j'écrivais: 'il n'y

⁵ Bataille, *Le Diable au XIXe siècle*, vol. I, 39-42.

a pas la plus petite trace d'une "autorité générale" (ni même d'un dirigeant local) de l'Eglise mormone dans les années comprises entre 1860 et 1900, à Salt Lake City ou dans les missions européennes, qui réponde au nom de Walder⁶. Je parle d'une 'enquête que j'ai personnellement menées dans les archives' de l'Eglise mormone à Salt Lake City⁷. Pour moi, en matière de mormonisme, *Salt Lake City locuta, quaestio soluta*, mais "Athirsata" n'y croit pas. Voici son commentaire: 'Il ne nous fera pas croire qu'il a eu accès à *toutes* les archives...' (472). Et de citer un extrait de l'ouvrage d'Abel Clarin de La Rive (1885-1914), *La Femme et l'enfant dans la franc-maçonnerie universelle*, qui dit avoir vu 'un journal américain' annonçant la mort de 'Phileas Walder', lequel aurait été 'bien connu comme l'ami de John Taylor, le successeur de Brigham Young; c'est en qualité de disciple de ce dernier qu'il fit tant pour la propagation des doctrines du mormonisme'⁸.

Or, je connais bien l'ouvrage de Clarin de la Rive et ne doute pas de la bonne foi de cet auteur. Mais il faut considérer ici ce qu'est le mormonisme. Les mormons se considèrent a "record-keeping people": ils ont une vraie manie de l'histoire et des documents, et des raisons religieuses les incitent à tenir un journal personnel et à s'occuper de généalogie. Les documents sur l'Utah et les mormons au 19e siècle ne sont nullement tous dans les mains de l'Eglise mormone: plusieurs sont dans les familles des pionniers mormons, dont beaucoup se sont éloignées du mormonisme, et des milliers sont dans des collections non mormones, comme celles de la très laïque Utah State Historical Society (que nous avons également consultées au sujet d'un "Walder" mormon). Les archives de l'Eglise mormone étaient très accessibles à la fin des années 1980 (date de notre enquête): on y a pu retrouver et publier notamment des documents sur les pratiques spirites, non pas d'un quelconque Walder, mais du prophète fondateur du mormonisme lui-même, sans parler de plusieurs criminels ayant appartenu à l'Eglise mormone au 19e siècle.

Ceux qui connaissent ces archives (doublées de celles de l'Utah State Historical Society, que l'Eglise mormone ne contrôle aucunement, et de la Huntington Library à San Marino, en Californie, qui elle non plus n'est pas dirigée par des mormons) se rendent compte immédiatement que la vie en Utah au 19e siècle est parfois mieux documentée que celle à Paris en 2003. Nous savons qui habitait où, sa maison, son compte en banque. Si l'Eglise mormone voulait supprimer le nom d'un personnage, même mineur, on en retrouverait les traces dans des journaux de particuliers dont plusieurs échap-

⁶ Introvigne, *Enquête sur le satanisme*, 202.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Clarin de La Rive, *La Femme et l'enfant dans la franc-maçonnerie universelle*, 721.

pent totalement à son contrôle. Je dis bien: un personnage mineur. En effet, supprimer jusqu'à l'existence de quelqu'un qui était "la doublure" d'un Président de l'Eglise mormone, le disciple de Brigham Young (1801-1887) en personne, et qui 'fit tant pour la propagation des doctrines du mormonisme', à supposer que l'Eglise y ait intérêt, cela serait tout à fait impossible. Ce serait sans compter avec le fait que nous avons non seulement des centaines, mais des milliers, de journaux et de collections de documents soigneusement conservés par des particuliers, et déposés en bonne partie dans des bibliothèques et archives non mormones. Il est impossible que pas un seul de ces documents ne mentionne un Phineas, ou Phileas, ou en tout cas un personnage du nom de Walder à l'époque de Brigham Young et de John Taylor, si ce Walder a vraiment existé.

Objectera-t-on qu'on ne peut pas consulter tous les documents? Leurs index d'archives sont très bien faits. Aurait-on manipulé les index, même dans des institutions non mormones? Voilà qui serait déjà très difficile à croire (pourquoi s'aventurer dans la difficile suppression totale d'un nom, alors qu'il suffisait le cas échéant de nier son "luciférisme"?), mais nous avons maintenant la possibilité d'une contre-épreuve. Aujourd'hui, on peut s'abonner sur l'internet à la banque de données *ancestry.com*, qui est remarquablement complète sur tous ceux qui ont laissé une trace aux Etats-Unis du XVIIIe siècle à nos jours. Par exemple, on y trouve la trace des noms de personnes parus dans tous les journaux dont une copie existe dans la moindre bibliothèque américaine, des actes de naissance, de propriété et de décès (peut-être incomplets dans le Kentucky de Diana Vaughan – sans pourtant croire trop rapidement Taxil sur ce point –, mais certainement pas en Utah). Bref, des millions de noms, sur la base des archives mormones mais aussi de centaines d'autres archives non mormones. Or, il n'y a pas de Phineas ou de Phileas Walder dans tout cet immense ensemble d'archives: il est donc impossible qu'il ait laissé une trace dans les journaux américains. Clarin de la Rive, certes de bonne foi, a eu sous les yeux (avant l'aveu du mystificateur) un faux de Taxil.

Il y a eu aux Etats-Unis quatre Sophies ou Sophia Walder, mais elles sont nées respectivement en 1838, 1876, 1892 et 1893 (celle de 1892 est morte l'année même de sa naissance), donc aucune ne correspond au personnage évoqué par Taxil. *Ancestry.com* inclut maintenant également les données anglaises, où nous trouvons trois Sophia ou Sophie Walder qui se marient respectivement en 1886, 1898 et 1920: les dates ne conviennent pas, ni les noces, puisque la Sophie Walder de Taxil est, de par ses préférences sexuelles, "lesbienne ardente"⁹ – et, en plus, fiancée (puis épouse) du très jaloux diable Bitru.

⁹ Taxil, *Y-a-t-il des Femmes dans la franc-maçonnerie ?*, 390-393.

En revanche, pas de Diana Vaughan (serait-ce la faute des registres du Kentucky ?) jusqu'à une époque récente: nous osons espérer qu'une pauvre Diana Vaughan (1956-1975), morte à l'âge de dix-neuf ans, n'aura au moins jamais su de quelle héroïne elle portait le nom.

Bref, le Phineas Walder de Taxil et Bataille n'a jamais existé, pas plus qu'un dirigeant mormon nommé Walder n'a eu une fille nommée Sophie ou Sophia, et tout ce qui concerne ces personnages a été inventé par Taxil. Mais si Sophie Walder, grande prêtresse luciférienne, et son très luciférien (et mormon) géniteur Phineas n'ont jamais existé, comment prêter une existence à Diana Vaughan – qui aurait donc menti sur une partie essentielle de son histoire, tout comme le “Dr Bataille”, lequel, comme bien entendu Taxil, parle beaucoup de Sophie/Sophia Walder?

Il semble qu'“Athirsata” prépare un autre ouvrage, sur *L'Elue du Dragon*. Nous nous sommes expliqué ailleurs sur les raisons qui obligent à considérer cet ouvrage néo-taxilien paru en 1929 comme un simple roman¹⁰. Mais nous lirons volontiers ce qu'aura à en dire “Athirsata”, dont le capacité d'assembleur de vieux documents oubliés rend service même à des lecteurs qui ne sauraient pas partager ses points de vue.

Massimo Introvigne, sociologue et directeur du CESNUR (Centre d'Etudes sur les Nouvelles Religions), est l'auteur de trente volumes en italien, dont plusieurs traduits en anglais, français et allemand sur les Nouveaux Mouvement Religieux et l'ésotérisme contemporain.

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¹⁰ Introvigne, *Enquête sur le satanisme*, 228-238.

BOOK REVIEW SECTION

Richard Caron, Joscelyn Godwin, Wouter J. Hanegraaff & Jean-Louis Vielliard-Baron (eds.), *Ésotérisme, gnosés & imaginaire symbolique: Mélanges offerts à Antoine Faivre*, Leuven: Peeters 2001. 948 pp.

As every reader of *Aries* will know, Antoine Faivre has been instrumental in placing the study of Western esotericism on the academic map. What tribute could be more fitting than to receive as a *Festschrift* a tome of nearly a thousand pages, comprising no less than sixty-one contributions in three languages (French, German and English), written by the best-known scholars in the field. The topics of this massive volume reflect the current state of research on Western esotericism, as well as Faivre's own interests.

There are, obviously, contributions on such central elements of Western esotericism as alchemy, hermeticism, and the kabbalah. Quite a few articles treat aspects of German Romanticism, *Naturphilosophie* and Christian Theosophy, subjects that lie at the heart of Faivre's own work. Several contributions deal with the concept of imagination and the imaginary, a cluster of topics central to many esoteric currents. There is a section dealing with a motley selection of more or less institutionalized movements, such as Masonry and Traditionalism. And for those familiar with Faivre's personal interests, it should come as no surprise that there are articles on seemingly more peripheral subjects such as vampires.

For a reviewer, an edited volume of this size and scope constitutes both a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge lies in the impossibility of giving attention to every article and every topic and the concomitant necessity of presenting just a few articles from the entire cornucopia. The opportunity that presents itself is to use the very breadth and diversity of the collection to reflect on the present state of the field itself.

After a preface by Jean-Robert Armogathe, the book opens with a section focusing on three central topics of esotericism: alchemy, hermeticism, and the kabbalah. There is, of course, a risk in naming a section in such a way that readers will be tempted to interpret these as "the core topics" of esotericism. The move to define these three as particularly important would by implication appear to relegate other fields to secondary status. Indeed, magic is the subject of only a few contributions, while divinatory practices such as astrology and the tarot receive practically no attention at all. The thirteen contributions of this section span five centuries and a whole continent, and represent vastly different practices. The article by Richard Caron, for instance, documents the surprising revival and reconstruction of the alchemical tradition in France to-

ward the end of the 19th century. His compact text, presenting a wealth of names, dates, intellectual affiliations and titles, could by itself serve as the point of departure of a whole line of research into a little-known sector of European intellectual history.

The mostly German currents represented in the second section range in time from Christian theosophy via Romantic philosophers and scientists to the writings of Rudolf Steiner and C.G. Jung. To cite just one example, Dietrich von Engelhardt's article on the romantic chemist and physicist J.S.C. Schweigger affords the reader a glimpse into a world where it was assumed that the natural sciences could lead to an understanding of spiritual truths. Schweigger's writings encompassed numerous empirical studies on various aspects of chemical technology, but also quasi-theological attempts to find correspondences between the movements of the heavenly bodies and chemical processes. Schweigger's Romantic heritage is apparent not least in his approach to myth. Like Herder before him, he considered myth to be the poetic production characteristic of a specific people. As a natural scientist, he understood this poetic message to consist of thinly veiled references to chemical and physical processes. The twins Castor and Pollux of Greek mythology, he felt, referred to negative and positive electrical charges.

Especially in the post-Enlightenment period, esoteric practices increasingly became institutionalized as movements. In the last two centuries a vast number of such religious (or at least religiously tinged) movements have been formed. The third section of the *Festschrift* concentrates on such movements, and by preference on older ones such as various Masonic orders, the Theosophical Society and the various Traditionalist currents. Contemporary esoteric movements are underrepresented, with a contribution by Jean-François Mayer on the Order of the Solar Temple being the only major exception. From Mayer's text it is clear how different the scholarly traditions are that permeate the study of esotericism versus that of New Religious Movements. Whereas articles on the former tend to concentrate on the doctrines of the various currents, Mayer focuses on the social dynamics, and in this particular case on the apocalypticism and violence that came to characterize the Order of the Solar Temple.

Under the perhaps somewhat opaque heading "Imagination, imaginaire et Imaginal" of the fourth section, one finds a set of contributions mostly dealing with the intersections between esotericism and various modes of artistic production. Here are papers on topics such as painting, literature, cinema and horticulture. An article on New Age literature by Frank Greiner surveys the themes that appear in esoterically colored mass-market fiction by authors such as Deepak Chopra, Paulo Coelho and James Redfield. The imaginative narra-

tive that characterizes this fiction is, in Greiner's analysis, largely subservient to bringing across the doctrines of the authors. When one compares the material Greiner has studied with e.g. the esoteric references in Thomas Mann's *Zauberberg* (the subject of an article in the present volume by Wouter Hanegraaff), the author's conclusion (p. 573) that New Age ideas still await expression by a truly gifted author seems completely warranted. Nevertheless, Greiner's aesthetic rather than sociological reading of the literature seems to prevent him from seriously engaging with a central aspect of contemporary popular religion. The simplicity and artlessness of these books would seem to be their very *raison d'être*. Such books are symptomatic of the way in which the production and spread of religious innovations is no longer the prerogative of churches and creative individuals, but has to a large extent been usurped by the market.

The section on Imagination also contains articles on vampires. As the title of Massimo Introvigne's paper "Antoine Faivre: Father of Contemporary Vampire Studies" suggests, a less well-known side to Faivre's work is his pioneering study of modern vampire myths. In 1962, he published the first genuinely scholarly book on the subject under the near-pseudonym Tony Faivre. Introvigne's paper summarizes the history of vampire mythology in a format convenient for those approaching the subject for the first time. The article also shows that there is indeed a connection between this field and that of Western esotericism. One of the most influential early authors on vampires, Dom Calmet (1672-1757), suggested as one of several possibilities that these mysterious creatures were in fact caused by astral bodies.

The last section is equally heterogeneous. Some contributions elucidate the philosophical underpinnings of specific esoteric themes. Others survey the careers of individual scholars in the field. Yet others draw parallels with non-Western and particularly Islamic esoteric traditions. A few articles broach meta-theoretical, theoretical and methodological questions. If this book is to be read as a survey of the field (rather than as an attempt to be a *Festschrift* faithful to the interests of its recipient), these latter would seem to merit particular scrutiny. Unfortunately, the reflective pieces are generally weaker than the more empirically-based papers elsewhere in this volume, and largely consist of philosophical meditations, religionist reflections or wide-ranging but rather superficial comparisons. By far the best is Ivan Strenski's article on the history of religious studies at the *École Pratique des hautes Études*. It is, however, also the one with the most tenuous connection to the topic of esotericism.

After these five sections, the book concludes with an appendix that is in itself the result of a formidable scholarly effort. Richard Caron and Marco Pasi have compiled a massive bibliography of the works of Antoine Faivre. The

sheer fact that such a compilation takes up 43 printed pages is a tribute to Faivre's productivity and intellectual vigor.

It is frequently remarked that the study of Western esotericism is a multidisciplinary academic field. This contention is amply illustrated by the present volume. The methodologies employed in the various articles encompass philological, literary, iconographical and philosophical approaches. Esotericism can be found in film and drama, on television and in popular science-fiction. Even landscape architecture has its place in the field, as will be evident to those who are familiar with the exuberant and playful art of Niki de Saint-Phalle's Tarot Garden. The reader of this volume comes away with a deeper understanding of esotericism as a vibrant part of Western culture, not merely as the counterculture that it sometimes is portrayed as. If a statistical imbalance can nevertheless be discerned from the variety of approaches, it is this: most scholars are primarily interested in what people say they believe, whereas questions that deal with how they organize, what they do and in whose interests they act are secondary. The contributions that do embrace the second set of questions reveal how fruitful such an avenue of inquiry can be. As shown in the article by Monica Neugebauer-Wölk, even the seemingly editorial-philological matter of publishing and commenting on translations of the *Corpus Hermeticum* carried contentious political subtexts.

A book can be interesting not only for the wealth of material it includes, but also for what it chooses to de-emphasize. In *Localizing Strategies: Regional Traditions of Ethnographic Writing* (1990), anthropologist Richard Fardon and his co-authors illustrated how area studies tend to accumulate a tradition that in time gains the status of habitus: more or less unconscious dispositions toward a certain research practice that are simply part of the taken-for-granted. If the study of Western esotericism is accurately portrayed in this volume, a specific habitus would indeed seem to characterize the field. Time and again the reader of these contributions comes across striking instances of issues that have been the center of sustained attention in the humanities and social sciences: alterity, commercialism, embodiment, gender, globalization, identity and personhood, magic, material culture, modernity, mythmaking, performance and rituals, power, symbols, and syncretism – just to mention a few. Nevertheless, the often obvious relevance of the topic at hand to such more general scholarly concerns tends to remain on the level of covert intertextuality. Again and again one finds a wealth of fascinating data, but far fewer references to any available theories and thinkers that might illuminate these data. It is, metaphorically speaking, ethnography without anthropology.

At a more general level, this approach illustrates the double nature of any area study. In his contribution, Jérôme Rousse-Lacordaire (p. 834) character-

izes esotericism as ‘un phénomène spécifique et irréductible à d'autres’. On the one hand, that presupposition will attract scholars with a high level of scholarship, detailed knowledge and a true dedication to the empirical material. On the other hand, that same conviction can make communicating with others rank far down on the list of priorities. One of the challenges facing the study of Western esotericism is to open up the field to the concerns of other disciplines.

Olav Hammer

Kocku von Stuckrad. *Das Ringen um die Astrologie. Jüdische und christliche Beiträge zum antiken Zeitverständnis* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 49). Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000. xviii, 912 pp. ISBN 3-11-016641-0.

Recent scholarship has brought us much closer to a rehabilitation of the “wretched subject” of ancient astrology. Following the pioneering efforts of Bouché-Leclercq, Boll, Cumont, Bezold, the Gundels, and Neugebauer, Tamsyn Barton recently provided a new impetus to this fascinating subject. Her example is now followed by Von Stuckrad's study, which focuses on Jewish and Christian astrological discourse between the 2nd century BC and 8th century AD.

The result is a forceful refutation of popular generalizations about the intrinsic incompatibility between astrological and Judeo-Christian religious traditions. A reconstruction of their historical interaction clearly demonstrates that modern views on astrology as a deterministic and naturalizing system were widely neither shared in ancient Judaic traditions, nor in early Christianity. It is argued that ancient Judeo-Christian attempts to control astrological discourse chiefly aimed at avoiding astral worship, but not astrological prediction or the religious use of astrological symbolism. In other words: astral cults constitute one particular form of astrology, but are not co-extensive with it. It was the state-sponsored “centrist Christianity” of the 4th century that outlawed astrology on theological, political, and epistemic grounds.

Sheer comprehensiveness may be the most important feature of this book. Von Stuckrad takes us on a detailed historical tour of the interaction between ancient Judeo-Christian and astrological discourses. He includes the propagandistic use of astrological events by the Hasmoneans, Herod the Great, and Bar Kokhba in their respective struggles for political and religious

legitimacy; astrological symbolism and practices in the Jewish communities of Qumran; the attitudes of Jewish historians like Philo of Alexandria or Josephus Flavius; the famous Astronomical Book in the *Book of Enoch*; astrological passages in both the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud; the account of Christ's birth in Matthew 2, and the Apocalypse of John; astrological components of Gnostic Christianity and Manicheism; and Christian astrological criticism (e.g., St Augustine's *City of God* or the second council of Braga) and the political criminalization of astrology in the late Roman Empire.

Obviously, this ambitious project stands on the shoulders of giants. Von Stuckrad's technical command continues this tradition, while supplementing it with new questions and a rare astrological expertise. The latter also enables him to supplement and/or criticize previous analyses of the same sources, even if this expertise is not always beyond reproach (for instance, his repeated claim that a different zodiacal sign rises above the horizon every two hours, is quite mistaken). The aforementioned results are tightly argued, and seem generally reliable. For these reasons alone, Von Stuckrad's book should become an essential point of reference for any future investigation of ancient astrology.

However, I am not convinced that this will be the case for Von Stuckrad's equally ambitious theoretical agenda. In my opinion, Von Stuckrad failed to resolve some of its essential intricacies, thereby restricting the scope of his historical conclusions. Let me clarify this point. A lengthy methodological introduction announces that this study offers no more than "hope" for future agreement and solidarity in the study of ancient astrology. In fact, Von Stuckrad refuses to claim objectivity altogether (pp. 54-55). This shift from epistemology towards morality is strongly indebted to the work of Richard Rorty, who links scientific status to moral values like patience, curiosity, and a willingness to stake out knowledge claims through linguistic persuasion. At the same time, Von Stuckrad pushes this far beyond a promise that critics will not endure physical abuse.

More specifically, the author defends Rorty's "pragmatic" and "ethnocentric" interpretation of truth as something that is constituted in local attempts to justify knowledge claims, and therefore strictly tied to a specific social and historical context. This has some interesting implications. First of all, it allows Von Stuckrad to revamp the study of religion into a "pragmatistische Religionswissenschaft" that strongly favours historical approaches. Secondly, it promotes a model of historical scholarship in which the ideal of *Rekonstruktion* has been replaced by *Konstruktion*, and where the pursuit of "historical truth" is given up for "the art of telling interesting stories" (pp. 57-58). At the same time, Von Stuckrad is anxious to privilege historical sources and artefacts, apparently as a moral antidote against the spectre of trans-cultural au-

tism (pp. 60, 64, 67). This suggests that the tension between “reconstruction” and “construction”, now stripped of its epistemological relevance, still burdens the pragmatistic student of religion.

The practical implications of this become clear as soon as Von Stuckrad attempts to define his topic: astrology. Disregarding the ancient historical record, he finds his answer in late twentieth-century astrological manuals, and simply asserts that these provide the proper key to understand ancient hermetics, Stoics, or Pythagoreans (p. 71, note 145). Astrology thus becomes a form of discourse that describes and predicts “time qualities” as “simultaneous phenomena” linked by “inherent symbols and meanings” (p. 100). Von Stuckrad derives further support for this commonplace interpretation from Bergson’s philosophy of time and Pauli’s interpretation of quantum mechanics, which enables us “to *überhaupt* think a non-causal astrology” (p. 101). I strongly doubt that our ability to justify modern commonplaces about astrology is of much *practical* relevance to the identification of ancient views about astrology. At least in this case, apologetics seem to dominate Von Stuckrad’s pursuit of history. One may regret this, since many historians would happily go along with his disavowal of the ‘Grad ihrer Annäherung an die historische Wirklichkeit’, if this only implied equal attention for the ‘Überzeugungsfähigkeit im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs unserer Zeit’ (p. 64).

A sustained historicism might also resolve certain problems in Von Stuckrad’s own discourse. For instance, his assertion that Jewish astrological discourse involved “internal” Judaic discussions on the one hand, and boundary work with respect to pagan religion on the other (p. 532), raises questions about the historical adequacy of this distinction between “internal” and “external.” Another fundamental distinction, now between astral cults and astrological prediction, is qualified as being not applicable to “certain people” (p. 533). How important were these people? In which context did they adopt or abolish this distinction? Von Stuckrad’s initial definition of astrology makes it virtually impossible to answer these questions. Turning to the Christian denunciation of astrology, he provides a standard narrative of the alliance between Christian theology and Roman politics, but does not answer the most important question: to which extent were “theological” concerns informed, rather than promoted, by local political challenges? This tendency to shy away from full historicism also seems to underlie Von Stuckrad’s frequent invocation of historical discontinuities and “paradigms.”

Steven vanden Broecke

Carlos Gilly et Cis van Heertum (eds.), *Magic, Alchemy and Science, 15th-18th Centuries: The influence of Hermes Trismegistus*, 2 vols., Florence: Centro Di 2002. 588 et 334 pp.

En 2002, la Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica d'Amsterdam et la Biblioteca Marciana de Venise joignaient leurs efforts pour offrir une exposition de manuscrits et d'imprimés qui eurent une influence notable dans les révolutions intellectuelles de la Renaissance et de la Réforme. Carlos Gilly, co-éditeur du volumineux catalogue et curateur de l'exposition, s'est aussi chargé, dans le premier volume, de présenter longuement plus d'une douzaine parmi les premiers imprimés qui brillèrent au firmament de la "galaxie hermétique", pour employer l'expression de Frans Janssen, directeur actuel de la Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica.

Cette présentation s'ouvre sur le *De tribus facultatibus*, du paracelsien Alexander von Suchten, puisque la magie y est analysée selon les trois sciences (ou "livres") qui la composent, à savoir la théologie, l'astronomie et la médecine (p. 194). Ensuite, Gilly présente l'*Arbatel* (1575), livre de magie qui connut une grande diffusion et exerça une forte influence. L'identité de son auteur est encore totalement inconnue. C'est dans ce texte, maintes fois publié, notamment parce qu'il fut réimprimé avec les œuvres d'Agrippa de Nettesheim que, précise Gilly, se retrouvent réactivés dans la culture occidentale les termes de "théosophie" et d'"anthroposophie" (p. 213).

Vient ensuite une série de traités théoriques de l'époque; l'histoire contextuelle de chacun est décrite en détails. À titre d'exemple, résumons ce que le curateur de l'exposition dit de quelques uns d'entre eux. Le traité de Severinus (*Idea Medicinae Philosophicae*), un paracelsien des plus influents ayant pratiqué à Venise, défend une position théorique originale, révélatrice des méandres polémiques de cette période car Severinus oppose Hippocrate à Galien et relève les affinités du premier avec les hermétistes, les platoniciens et les paracelsiens (p. 235).

À l'inverse et en contraste, sont exposés également des traités comme celui d'Erastus (*Disputationes*), l'un des plus illustres ennemis de l'hermétisme et du paracelsisme. Cet aristotélicien, critique de Calvin et de plusieurs luthériens, considérait la *Tabula Smaragdina* comme une fiction; il alla jusqu'à réclamer la peine capitale pour les paracelsiens (p. 249). Andreas Libavius, autre aristotélicien anti-paracelsien, considère la magie et le scepticisme comme les deux principales menaces de son temps, dirigées contre la véritable connaissance (p. 409-410).

À ces figures de proue que sont les livres de Zwinger, Dee, Khunrath, Arndt et Zetzer, le curateur consacre ses plus longues études. De fait, il est recom-

mandé d'en prendre connaissance avant de se rendre à l'exposition, car elles permettent de situer ces ouvrages majeurs dans leur contexte. Ainsi, chacune des pages frontispices des manuscrits et livres exposés est reproduite en pleine page dans le volume premier du catalogue qui contient les dites études. Ces mêmes ouvrages sont repris dans le volume second où ils font l'objet de descriptions matérielles et techniques détaillées (notamment, questions de datation, d'attribution et d'édition).

D'autres spécialistes décrivent le contexte culturel et politique de ces ouvrages et de leurs auteurs. Cesare Vasoli brosse un tableau général de l'hermétisme dans la Venise du 16^e siècle, évoquant à cette occasion la figure de plusieurs intellectuels, dont le philosophe et théologien Francesco Giorgio (Zorzi), qui figure parmi les aristotéliens influents. Marino Zorzi, l'actuel directeur de la Biblioteca Marciana, relate comment, en 1468, le cardinal Bessarion fit don de sa collection de livres précieux à la République de Venise. Bessarion est à ranger parmi ceux qui recherchaient ardemment une unité d'esprit et de connaissance entre les traditions grecque, hébraïque, chrétienne et les hermétistes.

Plusieurs contributions théoriques qui composent le premier volume traitent de la magie. Dans son étude sur la littérature magique vénitienne face au tribunal de l'Inquisition, Federico Barbierato explique comment cette tradition littéraire parvint à contourner les positions du tribunal, lequel avait interdit la publication d'ouvrages du genre en 1571. Cela fut rendu possible grâce à une abondante circulation de manuscrits, d'autant plus naturelle que la pratique magique elle-même nécessite ou privilégie souvent l'écriture manuscrite de l'opérateur (pentacles et grimoires). Antonio Rigo inventorie les principaux ouvrages magiques et astrologiques qui firent le voyage de Constantinople aux bibliothèques de Venise, dont les *Cyranides* présentes dans les *codices* d'ouvrages attribués à Hermès.

D'autres spécialistes se penchent sur des manuscrits présentés à l'exposition. Ainsi, Jean Letrouit poursuit ici son analyse du *Marcianus Graecus* 299, pièce intégrante de l'exposition, et donne en appendice 'une édition préliminaire du texte le plus célèbre de ce manuscrit: le *Discours oméga* de Zozime de Panopolis' (p. 85), à laquelle il joint une traduction française. De son côté, Thomas Hosmeier se penche sur le travail de reconstitution de la *Tabula Smaragdina* qu'a publié Wilhem Kriegsmann au 17^e siècle, pour ensuite comparer certaines des nombreuses versions de ce texte si souvent pris pour référence et de première autorité. La biographie que Hosmeier donne d'Isaac Casaubon consacre une large part au travail critique effectué par celui-ci sur le *Corpus Hermeticum*.

Le second volume composant le catalogue est consacré à une description

détaillée de chacun des documents de l'exposition. Elisabetta Lugado décrit les manuscrits des *codices* Marciani. Paola Cadelano traite des éditions du *Corpus Hermeticum*. Antonio Rigo, Delio Proverbio, Thomas Hosmeier et Laura Balbiani couvrent différents groupes de manuscrits grecs, arabes ou italiens.

Précédant la description des entrées de l'exposition, on offre une “chronologie hermétique”, depuis l'antiquité égyptienne jusqu'à la fin du 18^e siècle européen. Dans ce tableau synoptique qui déborde nécessairement l'époque couverte par l'exposition, on peut regretter l'absence de certaines dates pourtant cruciales dans l'histoire de l'hermétisme occidental. Ainsi, la période 1300-1420 se réduit à une seule phrase: ‘Dissemination of hermetic alchemy and astrology’; on ne mentionne pas l'arrivée des *Hieroglyphica* d'Horrapolon à Florence, en 1419. La publication de l'*Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* de Francesco Colonna (1499) n'est pas mentionnée. Della Porta n'est pas intégré, lui non plus, à cette chronologie qui pourtant inclut la magie autant que l'alchimie et la théosophie.

En ce sens, en marge de l'intitulé de l'exposition *Magia, alchimia, scienza*, la lecture de l'ensemble des œuvres exposées et traitées dans le catalogue met en relief, non pas tant le discours scientifique, que plutôt le discours théosophique, discours partagé par beaucoup d'intervenants dans la querelle sur le paracelsisme et sur l'esprit réformateur en général. La distinction effectuée par Khunrath entre, d'une part, les théosophes et, d'autre part, les “théosophistes” que sont les théologiens des universités (vol.1, p. 342), résume un axe majeur des controverses relatives à la crise scientifique de cette période. Et ce qui préoccupait ces nouveaux philosophes, ce n'était pas tant certains postulats de la physique d'Aristote. C'était davantage les problèmes posés par l'intégration de connaissances diverses et variées qui venaient à la rencontre les unes des autres. Ainsi, Suchten écrivait que la magie était composée de théologie, d'astronomie et de médecine. Arndt, pour sa part, pensait que la magie commence là où l'alchimie finit, pour ensuite céder sa place à la kabbale, qui conduit à son tour à la théologie (vol.1, p. 345). Toutes ces préoccupations de classement des modes de connaissance montrent à quel point les humanistes européens voulurent concilier les diverses traditions de sagesse païenne et chrétienne mais aussi, tel le cardinal Bessarion, souligner l'apport de la tradition hermétique dans l'ancienne culture (*idem*, p. 126).

Claude Gagnon

Martin Mulsow (Hrsg.), *Das Ende des Hermetismus: Historische Kritik und neue Naturphilosophie in der Spätrenaissance. Dokumentation und Analyse der Debatte um die Datierung der hermetischen Schriften von Genebrard bis Casaubon (1567-1614)*, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 2002. VI + 405 pp. ISBN 3161477782.

The various aspects of Frances Yates's "grand narrative" of the Renaissance hermetic tradition, presented most forcefully in her *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* of 1964, have come under increasing attack by specialists. This important collection of articles edited by Martin Mulsow gives the *coup de grâce* to Yates's thesis that Isaac Casaubon's dating of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, in 1614, was a revolutionary event that marked "the end of hermetism" due to the fact that, 'at one blow' (*Giordano Bruno*, 398), it exploded the myth of Hermes Trismegistus' great antiquity. Yates herself left no doubt about the importance she attached to the year 1614: discussing Casaubon's heavily annotated copy of Turnèbe's Greek edition (1554) of the *Corpus*, now in the British Museum, she wrote that 'holding this little book in one's hand one realises, with a certain awe, that it represents the death of the Hermes Trismegistus of the Renaissance' (o.c., 401). And for her this "death of Hermes Trismegistus" meant not only the end of Renaissance hermetism, but the end of the Renaissance as such: henceforth one might speak of the "pre-Casaubon era" and the "post-Casaubon era", and of 1614 as 'a watershed separating the Renaissance world from the modern world' (o.c., 398). It is true that three years later, in a famous article in a volume edited by Charles S. Singleton, she accepted Debus's criticism of having overestimated the significance of 1614; but although she acknowledged that that year did not mark the "end of hermetism", the revolutionary nature of Casaubon's dating remained unquestioned.

In a very important but somewhat neglected article of 1976, reprinted in the present volume, Frederick Purnell Jr. demonstrated that in fact Casaubon had not been the first to doubt the great antiquity of the *Corpus*. The argument was further developed in a second and equally important article by his hand which was submitted to the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* in 1988 but – quite amazingly, given its quality and importance – was never published. This second article is based upon a manuscript containing Teodoro Angelucci's letter to Antonio Persio of 1588 and Persio's response; having discovered this same manuscript in 1991, Mulsow found out that Purnell had already made the same discovery before him and had pointed out its great relevance in his ill-fated article. The latter is now published in the present volume; Purnell's two authoritative analyses, together with several important contribu-

tions by Mulsow and a German translation of Anthony Grafton's well-known 1983 article on Isaac Casaubon, once and for all demonstrate that if the "death of Hermes Trismegistus" ever took place at all, it was certainly not Casaubon who killed him.

We learn from Purnell and Mulsow that as early as 1567 the Benedictine theologian Gilbert Genebrard (a pupil of the same Turnèbe whose edition of the Greek *Corpus Hermeticum* would later be used by Casaubon) criticized in his *Chronographia* those who saw Hermes as a contemporary or predecessor of Moses, and argued that since Hermes wrote in Greek, he must have lived after the time of Alexander. Hermes was placed in the year 303 B.C., in the period following the death of Aristotle, which obviously meant that Plato could not be a "hermetist"; instead, Hermes now could be seen as 'occupying a place in the history of Platonism' (110). In the revised edition of his *Chronographia* (1580), Genebrard kept to this dating but added more arguments, taken from the Calvinist chronographer Matthieu Beroalde's *Chronicum scripturae sacrae auctoritate constitutum* (1575): Hermes is mentioned only by authors who flourished after the fourth century B.C.; Iamblichus says that Hermes wrote on papyrus, but papyrus was not developed in Egypt before that same period; Hermes mentions the Sybils, who flourished many centuries after the death of Moses; and C.H. XVIII mentions the 5th-century sculptor Phidias. The third and perhaps the most bizarre protagonist in the dating debate was the Flemish erudite Jean van Gorp (Goropius), who believed that Flemish was the most ancient of all languages. In his *Hieroglyphica*, published like Genebrard's revised edition in 1580, he argued that Hermes' Egyptian name "Theut" or "Thoot" derived from the Flemish "tHoot" or "het Hoot" ("the head"), meaning God himself. References to Hermes should therefore be taken as references to God, and a historical Hermes had never existed; the writings attributed to him were dismissed as works of 'heathen madness'.

Then in 1581 Francesco Patrizi published his *Discussionum peripateticarum tomi IV*, criticizing Aristotle from the *prisca theologia* perspective, and abounding in references to Hermes Trismegistus. Three years later Patrizi's perspective was attacked by the humanist grammarian Teodoro Angelucci (a pupil of Genebrard), and still in the same year Patrizi responded with a vehement *Apologia*. But Angelucci would not be silenced, and in his *Exercitationes*, published in 1585, he mounted a fullscale attack on the sort of ancient authorities quoted by Patrizi. Among them was Hermes, and Angelucci repeated the arguments that had earlier been put forward by Genebrard, Beroalde, and van Gorp. Patrizi did not respond this time, but was defended by his younger friend Francesco Muti. Muti sought to refute Angelucci's arguments by various counter-arguments. That Asclepius mentions Phidias puz-

zled him most, because he failed to find the reference in the latin *Asclepius* or in the *Pimander*. The explanation is simple: it occurs in C.H. XVIII, which was not included in Ficino's *Pimander* but had been translated independently by Lodovico Lazzarelli and first published by Symphorien Champier in 1507 (not – *contra* Muccillo p. 66 nt 13 – by Lazzarelli himself, who had died in 1500).

Muti's *Disceptationum libri V contra columnias Theodori Angelutii* appeared in 1588, and in the same year Angelucci happened to meet the philosopher Antonio Persio in a bookshop in Padua. They drifted into a discussion about Muti's tract, and Angelucci got the impression that Persio took Muti's side. This must have upset him, for having arrived home he sat down to write a long letter to Persio to explain in detail his position regarding Hermes. Purnell points out that this letter is 'the most extensive and thorough attack on the authenticity of the Hermetic tradition known from the sixteenth century'; and that it 'raises the level of criticism of the works to a degree of acerbity hitherto unattained. What it gives us ... is a frontal assault on the historical evidence supporting the Hermetic tradition, coupled with a wholesale condemnation of the moral and religious character of the Hermetica and the gullibility of those who have been misled by them' (130). The contents of the letter are analyzed in detail by Purnell (130-143). Having received it, Persio found himself in a dilemma: although he was on close and friendly terms with both Patrizi and Muti, he actually found himself in agreement with Genebrard, and Angelucci's letter convinced him even more. This he pointed out in a response to Angelucci; the two letters are found bound together among Persio's papers in the Biblioteca Cordiniana in Rome. Patrizi, for his part, again took up the debate in the prefaces to his translations of Greek Hermetica attached to his *Nova de universis philosophia* of 1591. The Phidias argument bothered him most, and caused him to grudgingly reject C.H. XVIII: 1-10 as spurious.

The research of Purnell and Mulso demonstrates clearly that, far from having been the first to doubt Hermes' great antiquity, Casaubon is better seen as the closing and culminating protagonist in a debate that had started almost half a century earlier: no important new arguments were put forward after him. Of course this does not mean that the influence of the Hermetic writings came to an abrupt end, and in an important epilogue Mulso discusses what he calls "the fast and the slow end of hermetism". He does so by discussing four factors relevant to the Hermes-reception of the 17th and 18th centuries: the oft-neglected fact that philosophical and alchemical "hermetism" constitute two quite different cultural milieus that should not be conflated merely because they both refer to Hermes, the differences between the reception of (both kinds of) hermetism in elite and in popular culture, the necessity of distinguishing

between debates about the dating and about the authenticity of the hermetic writings respectively (e.g. Casaubon may have been concerned with the former, but in criticizing him Ralph Cudworth was more interested in the latter), and the way in which the “vernünftige Hermetik” of the 18th century could be perceived as welcome compensation for an exaggerated mechanism.

While the central thesis of this volume concerns the Renaissance debate about the dating of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, it also contains valuable contributions about other but related aspects of the milieu: the *prisca theologia* tradition (Vasoli), hermetism in medical discussion (Siraisi), Annibale Rosselli's commentary on the Hermetica (Muccillo), the philosophy of Francesco Piccolomini (Plastina), and hermetism and *prisca sapientia* in Patrizi and Persio (Bleuel, Mulsow). The editor has done the reader a very useful service by adding as appendixes facsimile editions or transcriptions of all the major texts (Genebrard, Patrizi, Muti, Angelucci, Persio, Casaubon) central to the dating debate. In sum: paraphrasing Frances Yates one may conclude – whether or not ‘with a certain awe’ – that this excellent volume spells the death of her concept of the “pre-Casaubon era”.

Wouter J. Hanegraaff

Joy Dixon, *Divine Feminine: Theosophy and Feminism in England* (Studies in Historical and Political Science, 119th series, number 1.), Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 2001.

In 1875 the mysterious Russian-born American seer Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and the American businessman Henry Steel Olcott founded the Theosophical Society (TS), an organization through which, as both founders declared, the West would be instructed in universal brotherhood and true spirituality. Blavatsky claimed that the insights the TS introduced were the result of her acquaintance with eastern (Tibetan and Indian) adepts (which she called Mahatmas or Masters) and the study of their science. Two years after the foundation of the TS, Blavatsky published her *Isis Unveiled* which offered occult knowledge and the explanations of a hundred mysteries.

With *Isis Unveiled* Blavatsky attracted, especially in Great Britain, a great number of people from upper-middle class and highbrow culture. Many of them joined the TS and participated in its meetings and lodges. Among them was an increasing amount of women who were also suffragettes or involved in

issues and debates considering the woman's movement. This connection between theosophy and the quest of women for the right to vote did not remain unnoticed. In fact it was ridiculed, of course mostly by men who felt threatened by the wish of women to participate in public life. According to contemporary comic novelists, for example, a suffragette was not only an unfashionable, hysterical and sexually frustrated middle-aged woman but also an animal rights activist, and a devotee to Higher Thought, Cosmic Consciousness, or the Masters of Wisdom.

It was by studying these attempts to mock suffragettes that Joy Dixon discovered that the link between these spiritual movements and feminism did not only exist in the minds of critics, but was in fact part of a self-conscious and highly interesting attempt at creating a feminist spirituality. During further study Dixon soon became aware of the fact that in the historiography of 19th and early 20th century feminism little or no attention has been paid to the way feminist politics were linked to spirituality and religiosity. It is not easy to explain why this is so. Perhaps feminist historians focus too much on the more instrumental aspects of 19th century feminism and are therefore simply less interested in the history in this more expressive side of the political culture of the woman's movement. It is also possible that feminist historians are afraid that to focus attention on the spiritual part of the history of feminism would make feminism lose its current political credibility and, as a result, its nowadays sometimes still disputed place in mainstream political history. This fear would by no means be excessive, as can be deduced from a statement of the editor of the Association of Contemporary Church Historians, John S. Conway, of the University of British Columbia: 'Historians – mostly men – have dismissed theosophy and the antics of its foundress, Madame Blavatsky, as a crackpot cult, unworthy of serious attention' (*Newsletter Association of Contemporary Church Historians* 7:11 [2001], 1).

In *Divine Feminine*, Dixon does not elaborate on the origins of the lacuna in historiography she was confronted with, nor does she endeavor to defend the typical theosophical beliefs. She instead offers an interesting and persuasive perspective on the theosophical movement in 19th century England and the construction of the feminist spiritual culture of which it was part. She does this by showing how gender, sexuality and race as categories were shaped and formed by the men and women participating in the TS. The result is a detailed portrait of the development of both the internal and external politics of the TS and its cultural and historical context.

The part of *Divine Feminine* dedicated to the early history of the TS is centered on Blavatsky, who became known as an enigmatic and controversial person. She was attacked fiercely by the Society for Physical Research (SPR).

In a report by this organization that attempted to investigate such debatable phenomena as mesmerism, spiritualism and occultism, Blavatsky was called one of the most accomplished, ingenious and interesting imposters in history. But, as Dixon shows, Blavatsky did not just passively undergo these insults. She in fact used them to construct her image in ways she considered fruitful for the TS. She represented herself as standing outside convention and carefully used both the fact that she was half Asiatic and that she was born a European to portray herself as a respectable embodiment of east and west. At the same time she moved back and forth between the roles traditionally associated with men and women. According to Dixon she made her womanhood a crucial part of her transgressive public persona: she claimed spiritual powers as a woman called Helena Blavatsky, and spiritual authority as a man, an authority she referred to when she used her initials HPB.

After the death of Blavatsky, the TS changed and underwent a series of schisms. In England it became more and more an organization that resembled other late Victorian literary and scientific societies but it lacked academic credibility. Efforts were made to attain such credibility and to shape the TS even more according to the model of other clubs for the higher classes, most of which were gentlemen clubs. This attempt was accompanied by a shift in the way the TS defined itself. Many men in the TS began to explicitly speak of theosophy as masculine. Christianity was, according to them, precisely the opposite, namely weak and feminine. What Dixon calls the reconstitution of the TS in a scientific mode started with a separation of the theosophical principles from theosophical phenomena that were associated with Blavatsky, who had according to some members become a potential embarrassment because she had been exposed as a fraud by the SPR. The emergence of this scientific mode was answered by the foundation of the Blavatsky Lodge; this lodge was meant, as one of the founders stated, to rescue the TS from the dilettante class of high society men. Later the Esoteric Section (ES) of the TS was founded for the same reasons, but it claimed to be closer to the Mahatmas and their true wisdom and thus formed the inner circle of the Blavatsky Lodge.

Within the ES, men and woman who claimed and believed that they were a direct link to the Mahatmas formed an Inner Circle of exclusive members. One of the "Inners" was Annie Besant, who had been appointed by Blavatsky as her successor and who also was one of the most prominent women of her days. Besant was well known in the public debate but had not lost her respectability or credibility as a womanly woman. She referred to the conventional image of a woman as the personification of truth and linked her spiritual authority to her Irish background, with reference to the idea of Ireland as an ancient land of sages, men of wisdom, and saints, just as Blavatsky had once referred to her

Asiatic background. Again spiritual authority was linked to ethnic identities and gender. Because of this strategy, and the use of a slightly more conventional discourse, Besant was far less controversial than Blavatsky. However, her choice of representation and her emphasis on feeling within the TS brought with it that more and more women joined the TS – in the United States they even came to outnumber the men.

Under Besant a new element in theosophy was introduced, namely the belief in the imminent coming of the World Teacher in the person of the young Brahman Jiddu Krishnamurti. This new direction, beginning in 1909, would eventually lead to innumerable pamphlet wars, schisms and secessions. Again the TS was changing. It engaged itself more in political activities. New headquarters were set up, reflecting a renewed belief in Theosophy's public mission, and an idealism that would be tempered only with the outbreak of the First World War. But until the war, Indian nationalists, social reformers and feminists welcomed theosophy.

Dixon offers a detailed description of the different kinds of feminism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century and shows how for most feminists, not only those who were members of the TS, spirituality was a constructive element in their politics and ideals. There are, however, some questions that arise when reading Dixon's analysis of the shifting role of class, race and gender representations in the discourse of both theosophists and feminists. One wonders whether the counterculture described by Dixon was really as consciously and carefully constructed as is suggested by her book. Was it, for example, a deliberate strategic choice of women like Blavatsky and Besant to present themselves as they did? Did they think the same way we nowadays think about discourse and representation? Does one not run the risk of attributing to these theosophists and feminists an almost postmodern perspective on identity? In a historical narrative there should be room for the unintentional and ironic sides of history. However, this is just a side remark. The most important fact is that *Divine Feminine* is very convincing and cleverly as well as beautifully written. Without a doubt Dixon's erudite study is an essential contribution to the history of feminism, political history, and the history of spirituality. It is highly recommended for anyone who wants to know more about the cultural history of the late 19th and early 20th century.

Amanda Kluveld

Liesel Heckmann, *Valentin Tomberg: Leben (1900-1944)* (*Valentin Tomberg: Leben-Werk-Wirkung I*, 1), Novalis Verlag: Schaffhausen 2001. 576 pages et illustrations. ISBN 3-907160-77-0. *Valentin Tomberg: Quellen und Beiträge zum Werk*, herausgegeben vom Ramsteiner Kreis Trier (*Valentin Tomberg: Leben-Werk-Wirkung II*), Novalis Verlag: Schaffhausen 2000. 400 pp. ISBN 3-907160-72-X.

Le nom de Valentin Tomberg a été révélé au public francophone en 1986, par Antoine Faivre qui a publié cette année-là dans une revue, *La Tourbe des Philosophes*, une analyse d'un ouvrage paru l'année précédente en France: *Méditations sur les vingt-deux Arcanes majeurs du Tarot, par un auteur qui a voulu conserver l'anonymat* (éditions Aubier). Cette analyse fut reprise en 1996 dans *Accès de l'Esotérisme occidental* (tome II), du même A. Faivre. Les deux éditions allemandes des *Méditations*, parues en 1972 et 1983, sont des traductions, l'original ayant été écrit directement en français. Elles aussi conservent – à l'instar de l'édition française de 1985 – l'anonymat de l'auteur, qui signe "l'Anonymus d'Outre-Tombe". Mais, progressivement, on a appris des détails sur la vie et l'œuvre de cet écrivain (cf. notamment l'article qui lui est consacré dans le *Dictionnaire critique de l'Esotérisme*, Paris, P.U.F. 1998, entrée "Tomberg"). Il faut savoir gré à un groupe anthroposophique allemand, le Ramsteiner Kreis Trier (Trèves), de s'être attaqué, depuis quelques années et sous l'impulsion de Liesel Heckmann, à l'étude détaillée tant de la vie et de l'œuvre de Tomberg, que de la réception de celle-ci. Les deux volumes parus jusqu'à présent, et présentés ici, concernent respectivement la première partie de sa vie et certains aspects de sa pensée. Doivent être ultérieurement publiés un volume (volume I, 2) sur la seconde partie de la vie, et un autre sur la réception de l'œuvre.

Rappelons que Valentin Tomberg (1900-1973) est un Russe, d'origine balte, chassé de Russie par la révolution bolchevique. Né à Saint-Petersbourg, fils de fonctionnaire tsariste, élevé dans une école secondaire germano-russe, il dut fuir en Estonie, où il vécut jusqu'en 1938 comme employé à la Direction des Postes. Il émigra alors aux Pays-Bas, puis, vers la fin de la guerre, en Allemagne où, grâce à son ami Ernst von Hippel, Professeur de Droit international à l'Université de Cologne, il devint Docteur en droit. Il trouva en Angleterre, où il émigra en 1948, son havre définitif. En effet, employé à la B.B.C. grâce à ses dons remarquables de polyglotte, il vécut dès lors avec sa famille de façon très retirée. Après avoir pris sa retraite à Reading, près de Londres, il se consacra, entre 1963 et 1967, à la rédaction, en français, de son *opus magnum*, les *Méditations sur les arcanes majeurs du Tarot*, qui parut d'abord en

traduction allemande, en 1972, un an avant sa mort subite, survenue en 1973 lors d'un voyage aux Baléares.

Le volume I.1 (*Leben*), biographique, couvre la période qui va de la naissance en 1900 jusqu'au début de l'année 1944, année où Tomberg quitte les Pays-Bas pour l'Allemagne. Dans ce volume, L. Heckmann expose d'abord comment, baptisé dans l'Eglise évangélique luthérienne, il entra en contact, dès son adolescence, avec certains mouvements ésotériques chrétiens de Saint-Petersbourg et adhéra, dès son arrivée en Estonie, à la Société Anthroposophique Universelle de Rudolf Steiner, dont le siège est en Suisse, à Dornach, près de Bâle. Nous suivons ensuite la carrière anthroposophique de notre auteur: Il devint Secrétaire Général de la Société Anthroposophique estonienne en 1932, et nous voyons comment toute son activité intellectuelle, en dehors de ses obligations professionnelles à Tallin, en Estonie, puis aux Pays-Bas, jusqu'à la guerre, fut consacrée à l'Anthroposophie. En 1933, il commença à publier ses *Considérations anthroposophiques sur l'Ancien Testament*, sous forme polycopiée, et plusieurs articles dans des revues anthroposophiques. Or, comme le rappelle L. Heckmann, Rudolf Steiner, le fondateur du mouvement anthroposophique, était mort en 1925, et on avait vu alors se développer à Dornach, au sein de l'équipe dirigeante de la Société Anthroposophique Universelle, des conflits, accompagnés de scission et de l'exclusion de certains membres dirigeants. Des groupes anthroposophiques indépendants se formèrent, auxquels adhéra Tomberg, qui se retira pourtant, en 1938, de la Société mère universelle de Dornach, ainsi que, pendant la guerre, de la branche néerlandaise.

L. Heckmann a eu accès aux archives du Goetheanum, centre de la Société Anthroposophique Universelle, et à celles de la Fondation héritière de Rudolf Steiner, et a pu interroger aussi un certain nombre de témoins de la vie de Tomberg. Cet effort remarquable de documentation mérite d'être souligné, car il permet d'expliquer l'évolution du mouvement anthroposophique et le parcours de Tomberg pendant cette période. Ce volume I, 1 s'arrête au début de 1944, lorsque Tomberg arrive en Allemagne. Le second volume, à paraître, devrait être autant, sinon plus intéressant que le premier pour ce qui concerne l'ésotérisme, puisqu'il contiendra le récit de la conversion de Tomberg au catholicisme et la rédaction des *Méditations* sur le Tarot. Pour ce qui concerne ce volume I,1, on peut regretter que malgré la présence d'une table des matières détaillée, la parution de l'index soit remise (du moins nous l'assure-t-on) à la parution du second volume .

Le volume II (*Werk*), paru un an avant le volume I.1 (*Leben*), porte sur certains aspects de la pensée de Tomberg. Il est assez composite, destiné à éclairer sur l'anthroposophe, ainsi que sur le juriste, le philosophe des reli-

gions et l'hermétiste chrétien, et il se divise en deux parties. La première partie, intitulée *Le chercheur spirituel anthroposophe*, reproduit des textes de Tomberg peu connus, sur l'Évangile de Jean, et sur l'étude de l'Anthroposophie considérée comme une propédeutique à l'ésotérisme au sens où il l'entend. Ces textes sont accompagnés d'études originales. Ainsi, de M. Bendau, sur la relation des œuvres de jeunesse et des œuvres tardives; de W. Seiss, sur l'apparition du Christ dans le monde éthérique, notion centrale de l'Anthroposophie, et sur son importance dans l'œuvre de Tomberg; de G. Roggero, sur la christologie comparée de plusieurs anthroposophes, tels que F. Rittelmeyer, H. Beckh, E. Bock et V. Tomberg.

La seconde partie, intitulée *Le juriste, philosophe des religions et hermétiste chrétien*, reproduit deux textes connus de Tomberg. Le premier est consacré à l'effort créateur dans la science juridique; il est extrait de sa thèse de droit sur la dégénérescence et la régénération de la science juridique. Le second est la "Méditation" sur le dix-neuvième arcane du Tarot. Cette seconde partie contient aussi deux traductions d'extraits d'ouvrages français. D'une part, celle de l'analyse des *Méditations* par A. Faivre, et de larges extraits de l'ouvrage de P.-E. Rausis intitulé *L'Initiation*, paru en 1993, qui traite en particulier de l'initiation "christique" et présente pour celle-ci Tomberg comme modèle. Cette seconde partie contient aussi des études inédites. Ainsi, M. Frensch étudie le chemin spirituel parcouru par Tomberg après la seconde guerre mondiale; constatant que la montée du Mal risquait de submerger la conscience humaine, notre auteur a voulu bâtir, à la manière de Noë, une sorte d'arche intérieure, pour conserver les valeurs de la vérité et de la civilisation, notamment celles de la "Tradition". C'est dans cette optique, qu'il a écrit sa thèse de droit, à l'Université de Cologne, et décidé de se convertir au catholicisme. Les *Méditations* sur le Tarot peuvent également être considérées, selon M. Frensch, comme une autre conséquence de cette conversion, d'autant que Tomberg y insiste sur le rôle du pape et de l'infailibilité pontificale. C'est cette dernière que W. Maas étudie, tant au point de vue historique que théologique; il en rappelle la conception opposée de Steiner ainsi que la conception actuelle depuis le concile Vatican II, où l'infailibilité de l'évêque de Rome est, en quelque sorte, liée à celle de l'ensemble de l'Église, clercs et laïcs inclus. H. Salman, quant à lui, précise les influences auxquelles fut soumis Tomberg dans sa jeunesse. A savoir, celle des groupes ésotéristes russes, notamment celui de G.O. Meubes, et celles des occultistes français du 19ème et du début du 20ème siècles, en particulier celle de Papus. K. J. Bracker, enfin, montre l'influence de l'ouvrage de R. Steiner sur la *Philosophie de la liberté* (1894) sur les œuvres de jeunesse de Tomberg et étudie son attitude d'hermétiste chrétien tout au long des *Méditations*.

Certaines des études rassemblées dans ce volume II portent sur des points encore plus spécifiques. Pour R. Spaemann, l'hermétiste est un médiateur entre la conception du monde selon le théologien, d'une part, et celle que propose la théorie évolutionniste, d'autre part. M. Saint-Paul compare la pensée de Tomberg et celle de Teilhard de Chardin. J. Morgante s'élève à des hauteurs théologiques en proposant, poussé par l'usage de l'intuition recommandée par Tomberg, une divinité sextuple, composée de deux trinités, l'une masculine (Père, Fils et Saint-Esprit), l'autre féminine (Mère, Fille et Ame-Sainte). Th. Körbel, dans une étude détaillée des concepts de l'ésotérisme, présente l'historique du jeu de Tarot et montre comment, au cours du 19^{ème} siècle, sa signification s'est transformée, permettant, comme le dit Tomberg, à l'homme contemporain de comprendre les traditions hermétique et chrétienne. Selon G. Wehr, Tomberg pose une sorte de défi à la théologie protestante évangélique qui, au 19^{ème} siècle, a négligé la riche tradition de l'ésotérisme chrétien. Il compare notre auteur au théologien F. Rittelmeyer, qui fit le chemin inverse, du protestantisme vers l'Anthroposophie. Enfin, C. Lawrie, parcourant la vie et l'oeuvre de Tomberg, en explique la continuité à travers son évolution spirituelle.

L'ensemble de ce volume II est très riche et donne des informations approfondies sur la vie et les idées de Valentin Tomberg. Peut-être eût-il gagné à une certaine coordination préalable qui aurait permis de définir, pour chaque auteur, sa partie à jouer dans ce concert, et la longueur de sa contribution, ce qui aurait évité certaines redites. Mais, considéré dans son ensemble, il constitue une copieuse et fort riche contribution à l'approche de la pensée de Valentin Tomberg. A l'instar du volume I, 1, il nous fait bien augurer, d'une part, de la suite (Vol. I, 2) de la biographie établie par L. Heckmann; d'autre part, du volume III, en préparation, de cette trilogie *Valentin Tomberg: Leben-Werk-Wirkung*. Ce volume III sera consacré, comme le promet le dernier mot du titre de la trilogie, à la réception (*Wirkung*) de l'œuvre et de la pensée de cet ésotériste chrétien.

Michel Saint-Paul

RECENT AND UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Aries aspires to keep its readers informed about recent and upcoming conferences relevant to the study of Western esotericism, but for this, the editors are dependent on the information they receive. Readers are therefore invited to send Conference Programs as well as Calls for Papers and announcements of upcoming conferences to the editorial address, if possible in electronic form. In doing so, please take into account that *Aries* is published in the months of January and July, and that copy must have reached the editors five months in advance (i.e. August 1 and February 1 resp.)

The Magic of Things, Princeton University, 11-12 April 2003.

Papers included: Matthew Dickie, 'Conjuring Tricks and Sorcery in Classical and Late Antiquity'; Sophie Page, 'Magical Things and Medieval Cosmologies'; David Pingree, 'The Creation of Rational and Irrational Animals'; Lauren Kassell, 'The Economy of Magic in Early Modern England'; Daniel Stolzenberg, 'The Rise and Fall of a Magical Object in the Scientific Revolution: The Sympathetic Cure of Wounds'; William Newman, 'Newton's Alchemy, the Tabula Smaragdina and the Aerial Niter'.

Information: Robert Goulding, Society of Fellows, Joseph Henry House, Princeton NJ 08544, United States of America/Tel.: +1 (0)609 2586939/Fax: +1 (0)609 2852783/Email: goulding@princeton.edu

La Figure d'Adam (org.: Groupe d'Études Sprituelles Comparées), Sorbonne, Paris, 24-25 May 2003.

Papers included: Xavier Tilliette, 'Le rêve d'Adam: Du premier homme au premier couple'; Roger Dachez and Pierre Mollier, 'Adam, Ève et le Paradis terrestre dans le légendaire maçonnique'; Alexandra Roux, 'Adam chez Leibnitz en Malebranche: L'empire du concept et la voix du symbole'; Roland Edighoffer, 'L'Adam pélerin selon Johann Valentin Andreae'; Maurice-Ruben Hayoun, 'La figure d'Adam et les séfirot'; Nicole Jacques-Lefevre, 'De Martinès à Saint-Martin: Dramaturgies adamiques'; Bertrand Vergely, 'Le Christ, nouvel Adam, dans la tradition orthodoxe'.

Astrology and the Academy, Bath, United Kingdom, 13-14 June 2003.

Papers included: Angela Voss, 'From Allegory to Anagoge: The Question of Symbolic Perception in a Literal World'; Ronald Hutton, 'Astral Magic: The Acceptable Face of Paganism'; Prudence Jones, 'Ministering Angels: Planetary Deities and Celestial Messengers in Late Antiquity'; Joanne Pearson, 'Astrology, Magic, and the Academy'; Jesus Navarro, 'Astrology and Sci-

ence: Two Worldviews Searching for a Synthesis'; Maarit Laurento, 'A Dialogue Between Astrology and Science'; Pat Harris, 'Astrological Research in the Field of Psychology'; Liz Greene, 'The Academy as an Archetypal Group Dynamic'; Geoffrey Cornelius, 'Astrology Besieged: Perils of the Occult Mentality'; Jean Lall, 'Light From Dark Matter: The Burden and the Gift of Astrology's Shadow Position in Academe'; Jacques Halbronn, 'Astrology, Astronomy and Historical Thought at the Renaissance'; Anna Marie Roos, 'The Alternative Academy: Astronomy, Astrology and the Early Modern English Newspaper 1690-1711'; Joanna Komorowska, 'The Lure of Egypt, or How to Sound Like a Reliable Source'; Derek Walters, 'The Twelve Animals of the Chinese Zodiac'; Ruth Cintra, 'Astrology and Brazilian Culture'; Mike Harding, 'Astrology as a Language Game: A Wittgensteinian Challenge'.

Information: Alice Ekrek, Sophia Centre, Bath Spa University College, Newton Park, Newton St. Loe, Bath BA2 9BN, United Kingdom/Tel.: +44 (0)1225 876147/Fax: +44 (0)1225 876230/Email: a.ekrek@bathspa.ac.uk

All and Everything 2004, International Humanities Conference, Bognor Regis (United Kingdom), 24-28 March 2004.

Special theme: Gurdjieff and Art.

Information: All & Everything Conferences, c/o Ian MacFarlane, 47 Baldwins Hill, Loughton, Essex, IG10 1SF, United Kingdom/Tel.: +44 (0)208 5083350/Email: aec.info@ntlworld.com/Internet: www.aandeconference.org

Esotericism: From Europe to North America (org.: Association for the Study of Esotericism), Michigan State University 3-5 June 2004.

Information: Arthur Versluis, 235 Bessey Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing MI 48824 U.S.A. Fax: 1 517 353 5250; Tel.: 1 517 355 3282.
<http://www.aseweb.org>

ACADEMIC TEACHING PROGRAMS IN WESTERN ESOTERICISM

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

The subdepartment History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents of the University of Amsterdam (Faculty of Humanities; Department of Art, Religion and Culture) offers courses in the study of Western esotericism at the Bachelors and Masters level.

The *Masters program* “Religious Studies” is provided in a one-year and a two-year variant (for all information on requirements, admission procedures etc., see <http://cf.hum.uva.nl/graduateschool>). Within both variants, students can choose a trajectory “Mysticism and Western Esotericism”. The following standard courses belong to this trajectory:

- Renaissance Esotericism I: Jewish-Pagan-Christian Syncretism (Kocku von Stuckrad)
- Renaissance Esotericism II: Religious Plurality and Esoteric Discourse (Kocku von Stuckrad)
- Western Esotericism and the Quest for Enlightenment I: Theosophy, Illuminism and the Age of Reason (Wouter J. Hanegraaff)
- Western Esotericism and the Quest for Enlightenment II: Spiritual Techniques and Experiential Phenomena (Wouter J. Hanegraaff)
- Occult Trajectories I: Mesmerism, Spiritualism and New Thought (Olav Hammer)
- Occult Trajectories II: Charisma in 19th-20th Century Esotericism (Olav Hammer)
- Western Esotericism and (Post) Modernity (Wouter J. Hanegraaff)
- Aspects of Christian Mysticism (Burcht Pranger)
- Religious Diversity in Pre-Modern Europe (Joke Spaans)
- Piety, Prophecy and Symbolism: From the Family of Love to Mormonism (Joke Spaans)

In addition, students in the 2-year program follow tutorials on selected topics.

Within the *Bachelor program* “Religiestudies” it is possible to follow a so-called “minor” Westerse Esoterie, consisting of three courses (in Dutch):

- Westerse Esoterie (Hermetica I) (Wouter J. Hanegraaff)
- Westerse Esoterie in de Vroeg Moderne Periode (Hermetica II) (Kocku von Stuckrad)
- Westerse Esoterie sinds de Verlichting (Hermetica III) (Olav Hammer)

Information, including updated descriptions of the course contents:
www.amsterdamhermetica.com

ÉCOLE PRATIQUE DES HAUTES ÉTUDES, SECTION DES SCIENCES RELIGIEUSES
 (SORBONNE)

“Histoire des courants ésotériques dans l’Europe moderne et contemporaine”
 (Année académique 2003-2004)

Programme de Jean-Pierre Brach, Directeur d’Études:

- La kabbale chrétienne (thèmes et documents)
- Le *De numerorum mysteriis* (1594) de F. Patrizi et les sources grecques de l’arithmologie à la Renaissance.

Programme d’Antoine Faivre, Directeur d’Etude émérite:

- Questions de méthodologie portant sur l’histoire des courants ésotériques dans l’Europe moderne et contemporaine.
- Ésotérisme et littérature de fiction.
- L’idée de tripartition corps-âme-esprit dans les courants ésotériques occidentaux modernes.

Programme de Marco Pasi, Chargé de Conférences libres

- La construction d’un système magique dans l’occultisme anglais (1875-1915).

Information: www.ephe.sorbonne.fr/sr/accueil.htm

UNIVERSITY OF WALES LAMPETER

The Department of Theology and Religious Studies in the University of Wales Lampeter offers postgraduate Master’s courses and supervision for the PhD in the areas of Western Esotericism and Religious Experience. Doctoral (PhD degree) and postdoctoral research is promoted through the Centre for Western Esotericism (Director: Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke) www.lamp.ac.uk/trs/staffgallery/nicholasgoodrickclarke.html. Related projects are also undertaken in association with the Religious Experience Research Centre (Directors: Prof. Paul Badham and Dr Wendy Dossett) (www.alisterhardytrust.org.uk).

Masters Program in Religious Experience: a six-module course (120 credits)

with a dissertation. Two compulsory core modules in Religious Experience (Dr Wendy Dossett) and research methodology. The optional modules include:

- The Western Esoteric Tradition (Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke).
- Near-Death Experience (Paul Badham)
- Jewish Mysticism (Dan Cohn-Sherbok)

Masters Program in Western Esotericism (forthcoming 2004): a six-module course (120 credits) with a dissertation. Research methodology and two compulsory core modules in

- The Western Esoteric Tradition I: Renaissance to Reformation (Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke)
- The Western Esoteric Tradition II: Enlightenment to the Present (Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke)

The optional modules include:

- From Jewish to Christian Kabbalah
- The Hermetic Art of Alchemy
- The Rosicrucian Tradition in England
- Theosophy and the Globalization of Esotericism
- Anthroposophy and the Steiner legacy
- Esotericism in Modern Art
- The esoteric imaginaries of Britain

Information: University of Wales Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales SA48 7ED.
Tel: +44 1570 424748 Fax: +44 1570 423530. www.lamp.ac.uk/trs

UNIVERSITÉ DE LAUSANNE

Cours et Conférences portant sur l'Esotérisme Occidental donnés au Département Interfacultaire d'Histoire et de Sciences des Religions (DIHSR [UNIL]), Année académique 2003-2004.

1) Cours de licence:

“Introduction à l'étude des traditions religieuses marginales et marginalisées” (Sylvia Mancini) :

- 1: Traditions magico-religieuses populaires occidentales et extra-européennes.
- 2: Introduction à l'étude des courants ésotériques occidentaux modernes et contemporains : 1) Histoire de la spécialité “Courants ésotériques occidentaux modernes et contemporains”. 2) Présentation des principaux de ces courants (ainsi, kabbale chrétienne, hermétisme néo-alexandrin, paracelsisme, théosophie, alchimie dite “spirituelle”, courant dit occultiste et les divers mouvements issus de celui-ci, comme Théosophisme et Anthroposophie). 3) Rapports entre ces courants dits ésotériques et des courants voisins (comme magnétisme animal et spiritisme, “métapsychie”, au sens large), Nouvel Age et certains Nouveaux Mouvements Religieux.

2) Cours de D.E.A.: “L’histoire comparée des religions et les états modifiés de conscience”. Le plan d’études comporte cinq modules (méthodologiques et/ou historico-critiques). Cours et conférences qui ont un rapport précis avec l’Esotérisme Occidental:

P.-Y. Brandt: De l’exorcisme au magnétisme animal: le conflit d’interprétation entre l’exorciste Johann Joseph Gassner (1727-1779), et Franz Anton Mesmer (1734-1815); et: Le marquis de Puységur (1751-1825) et ses méthodes. I. Rossi : Le corps opérateur de la croyance. La transe entre chamanisme amérindien et néo-chamanisme. B. Méheust : L’histoire conflictuelle du magnétisme animal; et: Le somnambule Alexis Didier; et: Les soucoupes volantes. M.-C. Latry, Les somnambules du prix Burdin; et: Pratiques du rêve et de la vision en Europe du Sud à l’époque contemporain. R. Dericquebourg, États étranges de la conscience et voie de salut dans les groupes religieux minoritaires. A. Faivre: Le problème de l’expérience mystique. M. Cifali: Les travaux de Théodore Flournoy sur une femme médium. M. Varvoglis: États modifiés de conscience et phénomènes paranormaux. M. Cazenave: La question de l’ “occulte” chez C. G. Jung et S. Freud. M. Thévoz: États modifiés de conscience et création artistique: l’art médiumnique. C. Bergé: Conduite de la transe et états modifiés de conscience [...] chez des] médiums spirites lyonnais au 18^{ème} siècle.

Un colloque international consacré au thème du DEA est prévu à Lausanne en automne 2004. (<http://www.unil.ch/dihsr/dea>, CH-1015 Lausanne, ++41-21-692272, Coordination@dihsr.unil.ch)

ZOSIMOS OF PANOPOLIS AND THE BOOK OF ENOCH: ALCHEMY AS FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE

KYLE A. FRASER

1. *Introduction*

The *Chronographia* of George Synkellos, the 9th century Byzantine chronicler, preserves a curious fragment from the alchemist and Hermetic philosopher, Zosimos of Panopolis. In this passage, which is not extant in the Greek alchemical manuscripts, Zosimos seems to lend his support to a dark and unwholesome view of the alchemical art and its origins.

It is stated in the holy scriptures or books, dear lady, that there exists a race of daimons who have commerce with women. Hermes made mention of them in his *Physika*; in fact almost the entire work, openly and secretly, alludes to them. It is related in the ancient and divine scriptures that certain angels lusted for women, and descending from the heavens, they taught them all the arts of nature. On account of this, says the scripture, they offended god, and now live outside heaven—because they taught to men all the evil arts which are of no advantage to the soul¹.

These ‘ancient and divine scriptures’ to which Zosimos refers are no doubt the ancient Hebrew scriptures, specifically the Book of Enoch. Zosimos implies that Hermes knew this ancient Hebrew work, and made reference to its teachings about fallen angels in his ‘physical writings’ (*physika*)². Although the Book of Enoch never attained canonical status for Jews or Christians, it was a formative influence in the world of Hellenistic Judaism, especially within those messianic and apocalyptic currents from which Christianity eventually emerged. Indeed, the book was widely read and circulated throughout the Hellenistic world in the first three centuries CE. The Synkellos fragment

¹ George Synkellos, *Ecloga Chronographica* (ed. A.A. Mosshammer), 14.4-11. Though this passage does not appear in the Greek alchemical corpus, there are close parallels in a 15th century Syriac manuscript. For a discussion of the parallels see Mertens, *Alchimistes Grecs*, Tome 4, LXX-LXXXVIII.

² These physical writings are not extant: everything that we know about the “Hermetic” view of alchemy (which is very little) has been reconstructed from references in Zosimos and the later commentators, like Olympiodoros. For a discussion of the evidence see Festugière, *Révélation I*, 240-256.

attests to this wider sphere of influence: Zosimos knows the book, and seems to endorse its teachings, as evidently does his Hermetic source.

The writings of Zosimos express a high regard for the Jewish alchemical tradition, in particular for Maria, to whom Zosimos appeals as his chief authority in questions of alchemical apparatus and technique³. More generally, we see the influence of gnostic currents connected to developments within—or on the fringes of—Late Antique Judaism. Thus it is not surprising that Zosimos should refer to the Book of Enoch as sacred scripture. R. Patai describes an Arab tradition, according to which Zosimos was actually regarded as a Jewish author. He claims that the evidence does not permit us to determine whether this tradition is based on fact or fancy⁴. In reality, it seems certain that Zosimos was not a Jew. In one passage, he clearly identifies himself as part of the Egyptian tradition, as distinct from the Jewish tradition: ‘Thus the first man is called Thoth by us, and Adam by those peoples’⁵. Elsewhere he speaks of Jewish alchemists as imitators of Egyptian alchemy⁶. In short, while Zosimos does regard Jewish alchemy as a genuine initiatory tradition, which has transmitted important alchemical wisdom, he also insists that it is derivative of the Egyptian tradition, to which he himself belongs. His reverence for Maria and Jewish alchemy, and his interests in esoteric Judaism, are best explained as reflecting the cosmopolitan outlook of an Alexandrian philosopher. It is in terms of this syncretic outlook—

³ The passages from the corpus of Zosimos relating to Maria are collected and discussed by Patai, *Jewish Alchemists*, ch. 6. However, this source should be used with caution. Patai bases his translations directly on the French translation of Berthelot, which in turn is based on the often unreliable Greek text established by Ruelle. See also note 6 *infra*.

⁴ Patai, *Jewish Alchemists*, 56.

⁵ *On the Letter Omega* 9, 87-88, in Mertens, *Alchimistes Grecs* Tome 4. See also the edition of Jackson, *Zosimos of Panopolis, On the Letter Omega*.

⁶ ‘Thus the Jews, imitating [the Egyptians] (*hoi Ioudaioi autous mimêsamenoi*), deposited the opportune tinctures in their subterranean chambers, along with their secrets of initiation . . .’, *Final Quittance* 5.26-27, as edited by Festugière, *Révélation I*, appendix 1, 363-368. Raphael Patai claims that for Zosimos ‘the Jews’ knowledge of alchemy was greater and more reliable than that of any other people, including even the Egyptians’ (p. 12). But this assertion is based on a faulty translation of the opening lines of *The True Book of Sophe the Egyptian*. Following the edition of Berthelot-Ruelle, Patai reads: ‘There are two sciences and two wisdoms: that of the Egyptians and that of the Hebrews, which latter is rendered more sound by divine justice’ (Patai, *Jewish Alchemists*, 52). Though the Greek is admittedly tortuous, this is an implausible reconstruction. Much better is Festugière’s suggestion (*Révélation I*, 261, note 2), which Patai evidently does not know: ‘The true book of Sophe the Egyptian and the God of the Hebrews, Lord of the Powers, Sabaoth (for there are two sciences and two wisdoms, that of the Egyptians and that of the Hebrews), is more solid than divine justice’. The reference to the two sciences is parenthetical, and that which is ‘more solid than divine justice’ is just the *Book of Sophe* itself.

this confidence in the esoteric unity of all ancient traditions—that we should understand Zosimos’s appeal to the Book of Enoch, which he regards as having an essential affinity to the “physical” teachings of the Egyptian sage Hermes Trismegistus. In the same syncretic spirit he makes the fabulous claim that Hermes was sent by the high priest of Jerusalem to translate the Hebrew scriptures into Greek and Egyptian—a claim that would be impossible within a strictly Jewish context⁷.

According to the Enochian account, a race of fallen angels, called the Watchers, revealed the arts and sciences to humans:

And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them (1 Enoch 6.1-3) . . . And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives . . . and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments (7.1-2) . . . And Azazel taught men to make swords, and knives . . . and made known to them the metals of the earth and the art of working them . . . and all kinds of costly stones, and all colouring tinctures . . . Baraqijal (taught) astrology, Kokabel the constellations . . . Araquiel the signs of the earth, Shamsiel the signs of the sun . . . And as men perished, they cried, and their cry went up to heaven (8.1-4) . . .⁸.

In exchange for their revelations, the lustful angels had intercourse with human women and bred through them a race of giants. The Book of Enoch recounts this forbidden exchange of sex for wisdom with a view to explaining the origins of human sinfulness, which from the author’s point of view has reached epidemic proportions in his own time. In the catalogue of the various forms of knowledge revealed to nascent humanity, the occult sciences—magic, astrology, and divination—are front and center. There is no explicit mention of alchemy⁹. However, the reference to ‘tincturing’ (1 Enoch 8.2) might well have signaled to Zosimos that alchemy is implied¹⁰.

⁷ *On the Letter Omega* 8.82-86 (Mertens). Festugière emended *Hermên* (‘Hermes’) to *hermênea*, ‘interpreter’ (*Révélation I*, 268 n. 5). However, as Jackson (*Zosimos of Panopolis*, 48, n. 42) and Mertens (*Alchimistes Grecs* Tome 4, 5, n. 56) argue, the reference to Hermes—though impossible in a strictly Jewish context—makes sense within an Egyptian-Hermetic perspective that is appropriating Jewish materials.

⁸ Book of Enoch, trans. R.H. Charles, in id., *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, 191-193.

⁹ However, one Ethiopic manuscript adds, ‘transmutation of the world’ after the reference to ‘tinctures’ at 1 Enoch 8.2. E. Isaac, in a more recent translation, interprets this expression as a reference to alchemy: ‘And Azaz’el taught the people . . . all coloring tinctures and alchemy’ (Charlesworth, *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 16, with note 8 [d]). Although this is an *interpretation*, it is not implausible in the context.

¹⁰ The Greek Enochian fragments actually use the expression *ta baphika*, ‘colouring tinctures’,

For Zosimos, as we shall see later, alchemy is fundamentally concerned with the tincturing of base metals, a process which he interprets as a purification, a ‘baptism’. From his perspective, this Enochian reference to ‘tincturing’, which occurs in close proximity to a catalogue of occult sciences, would no doubt have seemed like a reference to alchemy. Indeed, *Chêmeia* is, for Zosimos, the very essence of this angelic revelation, as he goes on to explain in the Synkellos quotation:

These same scriptures also say that from them [sc. the angels] the giants were born. Their initial transmission about these arts came from *Chêmes*. He called this book the *Book of Chêmes*, whence the art is called *Chêmeia* (*Ecloga*, 14. 11-14).

The word “alchemy” is, of course, unknown to the Greek alchemists. It translates an arabic word, *alkimiya*, a combination of the article *al* and a substantive *kimiya*. Scholars have proposed two main alternatives as to the origins of the arabic word, *kimiya*: they derive it either from *Chêmia*, the Greek word for Egypt or the “Black-land” (Egyptian, *Kmt*); or from the Greek *chûma*, which is related to the verb for “smelting” (*choaneuein*). Our Zosimos fragment lends weight to the first alternative: the sacred science is *Chêmeia*, the art related to *Chêmia*, the Egyptian “black-earth”¹¹. The idea of “black-earth” has a twofold significance: it points us to the presumed Egyptian origin of the Art, and it represents symbolically one of its chief concepts—prime matter, the black substrate of alchemical transmutation¹². Adding his own fanciful etymological touch, Zosimos links *Chêmeia* with a mythical figure named *Chêmes*, who is evidently one of the gigantic offspring of the fallen angels and their human wives. This giant, he tells us, recorded the revelations of the angels in the *Book of Chêmes*, in which form they were transmitted to the earliest alchemical initiates. In this way, Zosimos appropriates the Enochian story and expands it into an explicit account of the origins of his own sacred art, *Chêmeia*.

which accords perfectly with the alchemical sense of tincturing as baptism. See Festugière, *Révélation I*, 223, nt. 2.

¹¹ For a full discussion of the possible etymology see Lindsay, *Origins of Alchemy*, 68ff. For the connection of the Greek word *Chêmia* to the Egyptian *Kmt* see Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris*, 364c6-8 (trans. J. Gwyn Griffiths): ‘Again, they call Egypt, since it is mostly black, *Chêmia* . . .’. The related word *Chêmeia*, as Lindsay observes (o.c., 69), belongs to a series of words terminating in *-eia*, which denote arts or occupations (e.g. *mageia*, as the art of the *magos*). Presumably, then, *Chêmeia* is the distinctive art connected to *Chêmia*.

¹² For this point see Festugière, *Révélation I*, 218.

The Book of Enoch views the occult sciences and technology in general as responsible for the moral corruption of humanity: ‘And the whole earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel: to him ascribe all sin’ (1 Enoch 10.8-9)¹³. This assessment was widely influential, especially for the early Church Fathers. Tertullian, for one, takes up the Enochian story with enthusiasm, even improvising a clever analogy between the fall of the lustful angels and the historical “fall” of certain magicians and astrologers who were persecuted and driven out of Rome: ‘The astrologers are expelled just like their angels. The city and Italy are interdicted to the astrologers, just as heaven to their angels’¹⁴.

Roman law was highly unfavourable to the occult sciences—with the obvious exception of official cult practices, such as *haruspicium*. Tacitus speaks of the death penalty for magicians as an ‘ancient custom’¹⁵. Under the *Lex Cornelia*, as interpreted through the *Pauli Sententiae* (3rd century CE), magicians were to be publicly burnt, or exiled, depending on their social status. Suspicion of “magic”, in the Roman legal discourse, was construed as the practice of private or clandestine religious rites, unsanctioned by the official state religion¹⁶. Thus the early Christians were commonly regarded by educated Romans, like Celsus, as magicians, who engaged in secret diabolical rites. After all, the Christians refused to participate in the official Roman cults, embracing and reinforcing their alien status in the Empire. Moreover, the claims of the Christians themselves to heal the sick and exorcise daemons were adduced as evidence of sorcery and diabolism: ‘Since these men do these wonders, ought we to think them sons of God? Or ought we to say that they are the practices of wicked men possessed by an evil daimon?’¹⁷. In the face of such criticism, the early Fathers, like Tertullian, were anxious

¹³ However, as K. von Stuckrad argues, 1 Enoch does not regard knowledge *as such* as the root of evil, but the revelation of divine knowledge to those who are unfit and unprepared to receive it (*Das Ringen um die Astrologie*, ch. 6, section 1.2). The revelation of the fallen angels (1 Enoch 6-11) stands in sharp contrast to the revelations of the holy angel Uriel (1 Enoch 72-82), which Enoch is charged to pass on secretly to his descendants. Clearly the implication is that divine knowledge should be kept secret—reserved for the righteous—since it is dangerous in the wrong hands.

¹⁴ Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, trans. in Thelwall, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 3, 65. Cf. Tertullian, *On the Apparel of Women*, in Thelwall, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4, 14-16.

¹⁵ Tacitus, *Annalium* 32.11-15 (ed. C.D. Fisher).

¹⁶ For a close examination of magic as “illicit religion” see Kippenberg, ‘Magic in Roman Civil Discourse’. On the *Pauli Sententiae*, see p. 149; on secrecy, see p. 150ff. ‘The departure of magic from official religion came about precisely because of the practice of secrecy, that turned an official religious ritual into a magical one’ (p. 155).

¹⁷ Origen (quoting Celsus), *Contra Celsum*, Bk. 1, ch. 68 (trans. H. Chadwick).

to distinguish the acts of Christians, which derived their efficacy from the name of Christ, from the acts of magicians, which were allegedly effected through the agency of daimons.

These accusations of illicit religious practices—"magic" in its rhetorical and polemical usage—worked both ways. Once Christianity became the official state religion, the Christians were able to deploy the same rhetorical categories in their persecution of the pagan cults, eventually outlawing them altogether. St. Augustine, in his *City of God*, rejects the attempts of the Neoplatonists to distinguish between theurgy and magic. The rites of theurgy, he says, are fraudulent (*ritibus fallacibus*). The theurgists believe that they are attaining unity with angels and gods, when in fact they are unwittingly sacrificing to evil daimons, disguised as angels (*sub nominibus angelorum*)¹⁸. Magic—that is to say non-Christian ritual—is for Augustine linked to the influence of hostile daimonic powers, as in the Book of Enoch. Ironically, Augustine's position makes use of material drawn from Porphyry's criticism of theurgy, allowing Augustine to employ a divide and conquer strategy. The rhetorical oppositions between theurgy and magic, or illicit and licit religious practices, are operative within Neoplatonism itself. Porphyry accuses the theurgists of attempting to manipulate and entice the gods with incantations and sacrificial vapours. Like Augustine, Porphyry worries that the true objects of theurgic rites may be daimons disguised as divinities¹⁹. How then can divine theurgy be clearly and safely distinguished from daimonic magic? Iamblichus's response to Porphyry, though it sheds much light on the character of theurgy, works largely within the same polemical categories: theurgy raises us to the gods, whereas magic attempts to draw the gods to us; theurgy invokes the gods through the appropriate, natural receptacles, whereas magic constructs artificial receptacles, like idols, through which to contain and manipulate divine powers²⁰.

¹⁸ *City of God* X.9 (Trans. David S. Wiesen).

¹⁹ In his *Letter to Anebo*, Porphyry implies that theurgists are confused about the nature of the gods, since they seem to hold that immaterial gods are attracted by material sacrifices (Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 211.19-212.3, ed. des Places). In *On the Abstinence of Animal Food* he goes further: the true objects of blood sacrifices are daimons, disguised as divinities. He holds that the pneumatic bodies of daimons are replenished by the sacrificial smoke, a view which Zosimos also holds—and with great anxiety—but which Iamblichus rejects (see note 36 *infra*). For further discussion see especially Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, 129ff.

²⁰ Iamblichus distinguishes sacred visions attained through theurgy from the residual phantasms artificially produced through sorcery (*apo tês goêteias technichôs*, *De Mysteriis* 160.15-18, ed. des Places). Likewise, he distinguishes theurgy from the animation of statues, which is also effected through magical artifice (*technichôs* 170.9). For further discussion see Shaw, *Theurgy and the Soul*, 38-39.

In short, the charge of “magic” was part of a rhetorical strategy employed by Christians, Hellenes and Jews alike, sometimes against one another and sometimes against rival factions or schools within their own religious traditions. One important aspect of this polemical use of the category “magic”, evident also in the Book of Enoch, is the notion that magic, wittingly or unwittingly, works through the wrong powers, through daimons or fallen angels, to the ultimate enslavement and destruction of the magician²¹. Seen in this context, Tertullian’s appropriation of the Enochian story makes good rhetorical sense. It allows him to legitimate the Christian religion in contradistinction to other “false” or “illicit” religions.

What is perhaps more difficult to understand is the fact that some *alchemists*, including Zosimos, were also sympathetic to this account, which seemed to play so neatly into the hands of their detractors, and potential persecutors. It is the main purpose of this paper to explore the alchemical appropriation of the Enochian story, with particular emphasis on Zosimos.

Is the Synkellos fragment consistent with the surviving works of Zosimos? How can such a negative view of the origins of alchemy be reconciled with its status as a divine art? I shall argue that the fragment is intelligible when interpreted within the wider context of Zosimos’s works on alchemy. In two of his more theoretical works, *On the Letter Omega* and the *Final Quittance*, Zosimos develops a distinctive daimonology, rooted in Gnosticism. According to this gnostic daimonology, the daimons who inhabit the upper regions of the world are the earthly ministers of the planetary rulers—the gnostic archons—who determine the Fate of the individual and of the whole physical cosmos. These archons and their daimonic servants are intent on maintaining the ignorance and enslavement of fallen humanity. The goal of alchemy, for Zosimos, is liberation of the spiritual part of the human from the bonds of matter and Fate—from the clutches of the archons and their daimons. However, alchemy cannot simply ignore these forces, or wish them away: as a form of “theurgy”²², alchemy works directly with material substances,

²¹ Fritz Graf identifies this topos as one of two prevailing strategies for defining “magic” in a monotheistic context: ‘One [way] is to assume that the sorcerers make use of negative super-human beings which coexist with God, those pagan gods who have now been unveiled as evil demons and who either are or are not identical with the fallen angels of Jewish tradition . . .’ (‘Theories of Magic in Antiquity’, 104). The other way of distinguishing magic from religion, which Graf associates especially with Plotinus, stresses intentionality and the manipulation of natural bonds of sympathy and antipathy (o.c., 100-104).

²² Of course, “theurgy” in the strict sense refers specifically to the ritual practices of the *Chaldean Oracles*, which were further developed by Iamblichus and his followers. My suggestion here is not that alchemy is *identical* to this Chaldean theurgy, only that it implies a simi-

and seeks salvation through a spiritual regeneration of matter. Alchemy works *through* the world—a world ruled by hostile daimonic powers. How, then, does the alchemist engage with matter, without falling prey to the daimonic and astrologic forces which rule over it? There is a danger that the alchemist may become obsessed with the material ends of the art, seduced by the daimons and their false promises. Does the alchemist require the assistance of these daimons and the observance of astrologically propitious times? Or does alchemy proceed entirely on natural principles? In working through these problems Zosimos articulates a distinction between two kinds of alchemy: one profane, the other sacred; one aimed at the material ends of transmutation, the other aimed at a spiritual “baptism”; one utterly enslaved to daimons, the other a means of salvation. Zosimos joins Enoch in condemning profane alchemy, while insisting on the integrity of the true Hermetic Art. Thus he too deploys the rhetorical categories of licit and illicit religion, and his reasons for appropriating the Enochian story turn out not to be so different from Tertullian’s: both employ the Enochian myth to legitimate their religious and ritual practices, in distinction from their spiritual competitors.

2. *Consider the Source: Angels, or Demons in Disguise?*

Scholars have long noted a connection between the Book of Enoch and the Graeco-Egyptian alchemical tract *Isis the Prophetess to her son Horos*. In this pseudonymous tract, Isis recounts to Horos the details of her initiation into the alchemical mysteries by Amnael, angel of the sun:

In accordance with the opportune celestial moments (*tôn kairôn*), and the necessary revolution of the heavenly sphere, it came to pass that a certain one of the angels who dwell in the first firmament, having seen me from above, was filled with the desire to unite with me in intercourse. He was quickly on the verge of attaining his end, but I did not yield, wishing to inquire of him as to the preparation of gold and silver. When I asked this of him, he said that he was not permitted to disclose it, on account of the exalted character of the mysteries, but that on the following day a superior angel, Amnael, would come . . .

lar valuation of the material world and its ritual utility. As Shaw argues, on the theurgic view ‘[e]ven the densest aspects of matter . . . were potential medicines for a soul diseased by its body, and the cure for a somatic fixation in this theurgic homeopathy was the tail of the (daimonic) dog which bound it’ (*Theurgy and the Soul*, 47). Likewise, alchemy, as Zosimos understands it, works *through* matter to rise *above* matter. This ritual engagement with matter involves a degree of tension given Zosimos’s concerns about the daimons and archons who rule over the material world. Iamblichus, by contrast, has a more positive view of the daimons (for further discussion see Shaw, 130ff).

The next day, when the sun reached the middle of its course, the superior angel, Amnael, appeared and descended. Taken with the same passion for me he did not delay, but hastened to where I was. But I was no less anxious to inquire after these matters. When he delayed incessantly, I did not give myself over to him, but mastered (*epokratoun*) his passion until he showed the sign on his head and revealed the mysteries I sought, truthfully and without reservation (Berthelot p. 29.2-11, 16-23)²³.

These lustful angels are associated with the heavenly spheres, and with the astrologic conception of “opportune times” as defined by the positions of the planets relative to one another and to the signs of the zodiac. The question as to what extent alchemical procedures are dependent upon these *kairoi*, or opportune astrological moments, is also of central interest for Zosimos, as we shall see. The angels in the Isis tractate represent, more precisely, the sympathetic astral forces of the *moon and the sun*, which are implicated in the production of silver and gold respectively, the very mysteries which Isis is anxious to acquire. First, the angel of the “first firmament”, the moon, descends on Isis; but his advances are rejected, as he will not, or cannot, reveal the mysteries of gold and silver. As the moon is associated with the making of silver, one may reasonably speculate that the lunar angel is inadequate to the higher mystery of gold, which only the appropriate and superior angel can reveal, namely the solar angel. This angel, Amnael, descends at the meridian, when the sun is at its highest power, with the same lustful agenda as his lunar predecessor. Isis must resist his advances—master his passion—until he offers up the secrets promised.

The tension between the erotic or “sympathetic” intentions of Amnael and the antipathetic resistance of Isis is a crucial, though subtle aspect of the account. The language of “mastery” (*epikratein*, 29.20) suggests the famous maxim of Pseudo-Demokritos, quoted later in the tract: ‘For nature rejoices in nature, and nature conquers nature’ (30.18-19)²⁴. The suggestion seems to

²³ For the Greek text of this tract see Berthelot, *Collection des Anciens Alchimistes Grecs*, vol. II, 28-33. The text established by Ruelle is based on Paris 2327 f. 256r, collated with variant readings from Paris 2250 f. 217r. The connection to the Book of Enoch is discussed briefly by Festugière, *Révélation I*, 255-256.

²⁴ See the *Physika kai Mystika* of Pseudo-Demokritos (i.e. Bolos of Mendes), edited in Berthelot, *Collection des Anciens Alchimistes Grecs*, vol. II, 41-53. In this tractate, “Demokritos” tells of the discovery of a secret book, concealed by his master Ostanos in a temple column. In this book the famous maxim was revealed, which reads in full: ‘Nature rejoices in nature; nature conquers nature; nature dominates (*kratei*) nature’ (43.20-21). Variants of this maxim appear throughout the alchemic corpus. Note the analogy between the notion of nature dominating (*kratei*) nature, and Isis’s mastery (*epikratein*) of Amnael’s passion. The alchemist must balance natural sympathies and antipathies. At the start of the work she must cause dissonant sub-

be that the alchemist must have dealings with daimonic or angelic powers that are sympathetic to the Work and necessary to its “opportune” execution; and yet these powers must for some reason be held at bay, and mastered—prevented from overwhelming the work. Indeed these angelic forces are of a dubious character. Their descent from the planetary spheres in which they properly reside can be taken in two very different senses.

On the one hand, this descent signals the mediating role of the angel or daimon as an earthly conduit for planetary influences. It was a common philosophical view in the time of Zosimos that daimons are the earthly administrators of Fate or *heimarmenê*, a view clearly expressed, for instance, in tractate XVI of the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

When each of us has been born and ensouled the daimons that are responsible for the administration of birth at that moment take charge of us—the daimons which are ordered under each of the planets (*C.H.* XVI, 15) . . . They accomplish the whole of this earthly administration through the instrument of our bodies; and this administration Hermes called Fate (*tautên de tèn dioikêsin Hermês heimarmenên ekalesen*) (XVI, 16)²⁵.

In the Platonic-Stoic syntheses of Late Antiquity, of which Hermetic philosophy is one current, the idea of mediating daimons is central. As the philosophical conception of the divine becomes increasingly transcendent, the need for hierarchy and *mediation* increases accordingly. For later Platonists, like Plutarch, the idea of intermediate daimons provides a means of reconciling mythic and cultic perspectives on the divine, with more transcendent philosophical conceptions. The daimons execute all of the earthly functions of the gods: they animate statues, provide oracular guidance, and oversee theurgic rites²⁶.

The descent of the angels in our Isis tractate can be interpreted in just this way, as the execution of the cosmic function of *mediation*. However, as administrators of Fate, responsible in particular for maintaining the gene-

stances to coalesce in the primordial mixture, or prime matter. It is this harmony of the natures that Ostanes failed to reveal to “Demokritos” before his death (42.22-25). In another way, however, this harmonization or blending is also a *dissolution* of the distinct natures of the various substances, their reduction to primordial “blackness”. This dissolution is effected through the application of reagents like mercury, sulphur and vinegar. Once the “black” mixture has been attained, then there is a process of differentiation, expressed through the successive stages of “tincturing”, i.e. whitening and yellowing.

²⁵ I follow the Greek text established by Nock & Festugière, *Hermès Trismégiste, Corpus Hermeticum* vol. II.

²⁶ See Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum*, ch. 13; in *Plutarch's Moralia*, trans. F.C. Babbitt.

siurgic link between souls and bodies²⁷, the cosmic role of the daimons is often regarded with an air of menace, especially in the Gnostic systems. Plutarch explains that the daimons, as intermediate beings, have a share of divinity, but their divine nature is conjoined with a soul and a body, capable of perceiving pleasure and pain. Consequently, the daimons, like humans, are moved by appetite, and are capable of both *good and evil*²⁸. Viewed in a positive light, the daimons seem to constitute our link to the divine, bridging the distance between the earthly and the heavenly; viewed in a *negative* light, they can be regarded as responsible for the incarnation of our souls, and so for maintaining our enslavement to materiality and Fate.

This ambivalence about the moral character and motivation of daimons is reflected in the Isis tractate. If we look to the actual *motivation* of the angels, their descent from the spheres seems not to represent a normal cosmic function at all, but an aberration and a perversion. It seems, in other words, to constitute a “fall” in the Enochian sense. These angels are the guardians of esoteric truths, forces sympathetically aligned to the Work of silver and gold; but their sympathetic attraction to the Work takes the form of *carnal lust*, which moves them to depart from their proper seats in the celestial firmament.

Isis for her part seems not to be bothered by the lustful motivation of her angelic teacher, Amnael. There is certainly no indication of a moral judgment; and this constitutes an important divergence from the Enochian model, with its emphatic condemnation of the angels. For Zosimos, however, the moral implications of the Enochian account, and the forbidden nature of the angelic lust, are impossible to ignore. He seems to agree with the condemnation of Enoch: the arts which these angels revealed to humans, he says, are ‘evil and of no advantage to the soul’ (Synkellos, 14.10-11). Yet, paradoxically, he concedes that his own sacred art, *Chêmeia*, was the fruit of this forbidden union.

Alchemy, as conceived by Zosimos, takes on an explicitly redemptive character, in line with the spiritual aims of the mystery schools and the Gnostic and Hermetic initiatory traditions. Whether such a conception is already implicit in the earlier Isis tract is arguable; but for all of its talk of initiation and esoteric truths, there is no explicit reference to the spiritual ends of

²⁷ See Iamblichus, *De Mysteriis*, 67.15-18 (des Places, *Les Mystères d’Égypte*): ‘It is necessary to reserve for daimons the generative powers, which govern nature and the connection of souls to bodies’ (*tou sundesmou tôn psychôn eis ta sômata*).

²⁸ Plutarch, *On Isis and Osiris*, 360d13-e23 (trans. J. Gwyn Griffiths).

alchemy, nor to any deeper meaning attaching to the production of silver and gold. For Zosimos, by contrast, the spiritual interpretation is *front and center*: the goal of alchemy is the liberation of the spiritual Adam from the bonds of carnality imposed upon Him by the rulers of the sublunary world, the gnostic archons. Within this spiritual interpretation, the idea of the daimonic origins of alchemy becomes a deep problem. The daimons or angels, who reveal the liberating *gnôsis* to Isis, are themselves subject to the very carnal desires that alchemy seeks to overcome; indeed these beings are the very *type* of a spiritual being which has fallen into material embodiment.

According to the account of the spiritual Anthropos in the Hermetic *Poimandres*, a work evidently familiar to Zosimos²⁹, the fall into matter is precipitated by lust. Poimandres, the “shepherd”, is the first Nous, creator of the Demiurgic Nous and the Anthropos. The Anthropos is thus conceived as the very brother of the Demiurge, prior to the seven planetary archons, and superior to them in dignity. His fall begins when he takes on the powers of the archons. As a result of absorbing their demiurgic powers, the Anthropos is inspired to try his own hand at creation. He breaks through the heavenly spheres into the sublunary world, where he falls victim to a form of narcissism. He sees his beautiful form reflected in Nature and is drawn into her embrace:

The Anthropos, seeing a resemblance of his form in her [sc. Nature], fell in love and desired to make a home there. Immediately his wish was made actual, and he came to dwell in form devoid of reason. Nature, having received the object of her love, engulfed him utterly and they mingled in passion. For they were in love (*Poimandres* 14)³⁰.

The account points to lust and pride as fatal defects in the Anthropos, originating from the influence of the archons. The result is his enslavement in the world of fatality. There is in this account both a positive sense of the dignity of the Anthropos as microcosm, containing all of the powers of the universe, and an intimation of the dangers of pride and self-love. The lustful fall of the Anthropos has resulted in the scattering of the divine Light in matter; and it is the goal of alchemy to remedy this fall, by drawing out the hidden Light, or solar potentiality of matter.

The lustful angels of the Book of Enoch and the Isis tractate seem to represent the spiritual fall into matter which it is the goal of the alchemic art

²⁹ He seems to refer to this work at the close of *The Final Quittance*: see below pp. 18-19.

³⁰ For the Greek text see Nock & Festugière, *Hermès Trismégiste, Corpus Hermeticum* Tome I.

to overcome. How then can they be understood as guardians of the liberating alchemic *gnōsis*? This problem, I shall argue, is inherent in the theoretical position of Zosimos, and arises from his unique synthesis of Gnosticism, daimonology and alchemy.

3. *Daimonology and Alchemy in Zosimos*

The tractate *On the Letter Omega* is evidently an introduction to a larger work of Zosimos concerning alchemical furnaces and apparatus, which has not survived in the manuscripts³¹. *Omega* is of great importance for understanding the Gnostic and Hermetic currents that influence Zosimos, and which provide the theoretical and spiritual background to his interpretation of alchemy. Particularly prominent is the influence of an “archontic” Gnosticism, in which the astral rulers and their daimonic agents are conceived as hostile to the human spirit, and as responsible for its continuing enslavement in the world of Fate and corporeality³². This archontic Gnosticism, I shall argue, has deep implications for Zosimos’s attitude towards astrological and daimonic influences in alchemy.

³¹ I follow the critical edition of Mertens, *Alchimistes Grecs* Tome IV, 1-10. Also useful is Jackson, *Zosimos of Panopolis*. However, Jackson’s interpretation of the tractate is problematic: he understands Zosimos to be endorsing ‘opportune tinctures’ and stressing the need for astrologic considerations, a reading that turns the argument on its head. The Greek text of *On the Letter Omega* is preserved only in the second recension of Marcianus 299. The full title in the manuscript reads, *Of the same Zosimos, Authentic Memoirs concerning Apparatus and Furnaces. On the letter Omega*. We do not possess the actual treatment of apparatus and furnaces, of which *Omega* is evidently the introduction, with the exception perhaps of a short excerpt, also edited by Mertens (o.c., 23-25).

³² Zosimos blends conceptions from the *Hermetica* with an “archontic” Gnosticism, in the vein of the *Apocryphon of John*. Contemporary scholars have attempted to differentiate these Hermetic and Gnostic currents (which for Zosimos are clearly part of one framework) in terms of “optimistic” and “pessimistic” *gnōsis*. While it is true that the *Hermetica* generally give a more positive assessment of the natural world, and of the roles of the Demiurge and the archons, it is misleading to suggest that they offer an “optimistic” conception of *gnōsis*. Clearly *gnōsis* is required precisely because humanity is fallen, and requires salvation. The Hermetic *Poimandres* is quite close in spirit to the so-called “gnostic” viewpoint, and there are many other allusions in the Hermetic corpus to the negative features of embodiment. As Garth Fowden has argued, the optimistic and pessimistic (or “monistic” and “dualistic”) attitudes to the material world should be understood as reflecting different stages in the soul’s ascent to the divine (see Fowden, *Egyptian Hermes*, 102ff). On the other hand, we shall find that the dualistic tendencies in Zosimos, as reflected in his anxieties about embodiment and the daimonic ministers, are indeed in a certain tension with his commitment to the material operations of alchemy—thus his concerns about the role of daimonic and astrologic influences in the processes of tincturing.

In the opening of the work, Zosimos expresses frustration to Theosebeia about a group of alchemists who have ridiculed a certain work on furnaces and apparatus, which he evidently holds in high regard. Their reasons for rejecting this technical work center around their commitment to a conception of ‘opportune tinctures’ (*kairikai katabaphai*, *Omega* 2.11-12), or tinctures which are effected through the observance of propitious astrological times. These men claim that the practical requirements laid down in the book on furnaces are false and unnecessary, on the grounds that they have been blessed by the daimons simply by observing the propitious times. They will only concede their error when these astral forces, in which they have placed all their trust, turn against them:

For many who have received from their personal daimon the favour to succeed with these opportune tinctures have mocked the book “On Furnaces and Apparatus”, claiming that it is false. And no demonstrative argument has persuaded them that it is true, unless their own daimon indicates this, when it has changed in keeping with the changing moments of their Fate (*kata tous chronous tês autôn heimarmenês*), and a malefic (*kakapoïou*) daimon has taken charge of them. When all of their art and good fortune has been overturned . . . reluctantly they concede, from this clear demonstration of their Fate, that there is something beyond the methods which they previously entertained (2.13-24).

In their desire for immediate and easy results these alchemists eschew the disciplines of laboratory work and give themselves over to Fate. They are so fixated on the material ends of the art that they forget about the fickleness of fortune—until disaster strikes.

This conception of Fate incorporates a mix of Stoic and Gnostic ideas. For Zosimos, Fate and her daimonic administrators rule the human body and the material ends of human life; and liberation from Fate can only be attained through self-knowledge. The true philosopher or alchemist is liberated inwardly from the cycles of pleasure and pain which Fate controls:

Hermes and Zoroaster maintained that the race of philosophers is superior to Fate, because they neither rejoice in her blessings, for they are masters of pleasure; nor are they thrown by her evils, since they live an inner existence; nor again do they welcome the beautiful gifts she sends, since they focus on the end of evils (5.41-46).

Those alchemists who trust in the gifts of daimons, the messengers of Fate, disclose their subservience to the desires of the flesh, and their failure to grasp the spiritual ends of the alchemical art. They are as mindless as the common lot of humanity, entirely lacking knowledge of their divine origin and end.

Zosimos enters now into an extended account of the fall of the spiritual Anthropos, explaining how humanity has become enslaved to the powers of Fate. In the course of this account it becomes evident that Zosimos's distrust of the astrological dimensions of alchemic practice (as encapsulated in the notion of 'opportune tinctures') is rooted in a gnostic conviction that the ruling powers of the cosmos stand in a hostile, or at least ambivalent, relation to the spiritual aims of the alchemist.

Zosimos tells us that the spiritual or luminous man, whom the Hebrews call Adam, and the Egyptians Thoth, was tricked by the archontic ministers of Fate into clothing himself in a corporeal Adam, composed of the four elements. As a result of this deceit, the light of the spiritual Adam became trapped and divided in material bodies:

When Light (*Phôs*) was in paradise, pervaded by spirit (*diapneomenos*), they [sc. the archons], in the service of Fate, persuaded him—who was without malice and powerless—to clothe himself in the Adam, which they had created from Fate and the four elements. On account of his innocence he did not resist, and they boasted because he had been reduced to slavery (11.104-109).

Zosimos speaks later of the salvific role of Jesus Christ, who instructed humanity as to its spiritual nature and began to recollect the Light that had been dispersed throughout matter (13.121-132). Working against the salvific aims of Christ is a figure called the 'counterfeit daimon' (14.133), a jealous entity that mimics the true God, seeking to maintain human enslavement to Fate and matter. This counterfeit daimon has an analogue in the 'opposing spirit' of the *Apocryphon of John*, which is infused by the archons into the material composition of Adam to resist the aims of the good spirit, who has been sent by the Father to awaken Adam's spiritual nature³³.

This gnostic exposition of the fall of the Anthropos is of exceeding importance for the light it casts on Zosimos's attitude to the astrological and daimonic dimensions of alchemy. No doubt Zosimos would not go so far as to reject entirely the idea of 'opportune tinctures'. The idea that alchemical processes and substances are sympathetically aligned to astral influences had been central to alchemy from the start, as is reflected in the planetary symbols for gold and silver (i.e. the solar disk and lunar crescent). As a follower of the "Hermetic" way in alchemy, Zosimos would no doubt have been aware

³³ *Apocryphon of John*, in: Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*, N.H.C. II, 1.21; 24-27; 29-30. Note also the analogies with the Book of Enoch: the angels of Ialdabaoth seduce the daughters of men and beget offspring through them (II, 1.29-30).

of the strong daimonic and astrologic doctrine attributed to Hermes, for instance in the *Koré Kosmou*:

These are the men who, having learned from Hermes that the atmosphere is full of daimons, inscribed it on *stelae* . . . they became initiators of men in arts and sciences and all pursuits, as well as lawgivers. These men, having learned from Hermes that things below are ordered sympathetically by the Demiurge to those above, instituted the sacred procedures (*hieropoiias*) on earth which are vertically aligned (*proskathetous*) to the heavenly mysteries³⁴.

Clearly the Hermetic view expressed here recognizes the necessity of daimonic influences and the vertical alignment of the sciences to the heavens. Indeed, Zosimos does not deny the importance of these sympathetic “vertical” relations. The problem is that the planets, and their archontic rulers, are also—and more fundamentally—*antipathetic* to the spiritual aims of transmutation. Thus, in addition to the observance of astrologic conditions, Zosimos insists on the need for a rigorous methodology and technique, grounded in an empirical grasp of the natural powers of substances. His view is not that the astrologic side should be rejected entirely, but that a diversity of methods and techniques should be recognized within the single Art (17.160-170). Just as in the area of medicine we do not put all of our trust in healing priests, but seek out also the practical advice of natural physicians, so the alchemist, Zosimos argues, should not put all of his faith in the stars, but should develop a strong basis in technique, operating independently, as far as this is possible, from the changing whims of Fate (18.171-189).

The argument of *On the Letter Omega* implies the existence of different schools of alchemy, with different methods and aims. The school which Zosimos criticizes follows an *exclusively* astrological methodology, with little regard for the practical operation of furnaces and other apparatus. The folly of these alchemists lies in their complete subservience to the archons and their daimonic messengers.

These considerations provide a fuller context and background for the Synkellos fragment, and its claims about the daimonic origins of *Chêmeia*. Though Zosimos does indeed acknowledge the role of daimons in *Omega*, he also wants to maintain that the alchemist can operate, to a large extent, independently of daimonic influences. The alchemist achieves this independence by attending to the *natural* sympathies and antipathies of substances, and by developing an empirical technique suited to manipulating these na-

³⁴ Following the Greek text of Nock & Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum*, vol. IV, fragment XXIII, 67-68.

tural powers. The true alchemist must recognize the necessity of daimonic and astral influences, without becoming further enslaved to them. For the goal of true alchemy—spiritual alchemy—is liberation from the conditions of fatality.

That this is indeed the considered opinion of Zosimos is confirmed by another of his theoretical works, the *Final Quittance*. Here we find once again a discussion of the differences between ‘opportune tinctures’, which are astrologic and daimonic in origin, and ‘natural tinctures’, which are grounded in a more empirical methodology and technique. In this account, the daimonology is developed much more directly and extensively. The daimons are conceived not merely as cosmic and impersonal principles of Fate, but as personalities with their own malevolent intentions. There are, we shall see, striking connections to the Book of Enoch, with its concerns about predatory daimons.

Zosimos claims that those tinctures which are called ‘opportune’ (*kairikai*) in his day were, in the time of Hermes, regarded as natural tinctures (*physikai baphai*). But this true alchemy, which Hermes knew, has been almost forgotten, due to the jealous stratagems of the daimons, who resent the independence of the alchemists and their natural methods. Eventually these natural secrets were appropriated by the daimons and became contingent upon their influence and will. The daimons now jealously guard these secrets of tincturing, revealing them only to the priests who slavishly worship them:

When the [daimonic] guardians are driven off from the great men they [sc. the daimons] deliberate as to how they may lay claim to our natural tinctures, so as not to be driven away by men, but venerated and invoked, and nourished with sacrifices. This is what they did. They concealed all the natural and self-regulating tinctures (*ta physika kai automata*), not only out of envy, but giving heed also to their own sustenance, so that they would not be whipped, chased away, and punished with hunger through the cessation of the sacrifices. They acted as follows. They hid the natural tincture and introduced their non-natural tincture, and gave these to their priests; and if the common people were neglectful of the sacrifices, they hindered them even in attaining the non-natural tinctures (Fest. p. 366, ll. 18-26)³⁵.

Zosimos holds the view that the daimons which inhabit the upper regions of the world are nourished by the smoke of sacrifice, and so are dependent upon the offerings of human worshippers. There is an implication that the airy bodies of these daimons are actually replenished by the sacrificial vapours, a

³⁵ I am following the Greek text established by Festugière, *Révélation I*, appendix 1, 363-368.

question that seems to have been debated in theurgic circles³⁶. In order to ensure the maintenance of their sacrifices, Zosimos says, the daimons plotted to keep the alchemists dependent upon them. They concealed the old Hermetic secrets of natural tincturing and replaced them with non-natural or ‘opportune’ tinctures, which they now reveal only to those who make the proper sacrifices.

Zosimos says that these alchemists, who serve the daimons in exchange for secrets of tincturing, are fixated on the material ends of the art. They are ‘wretched lovers of pleasure’ (p. 67, l. 5), who cannot see, or do not care to see, the spiritual dangers of their enslavement. Instead of seeking *liberation* through alchemy from the pleasures and pains of the body, they surrender themselves, body and soul, to these predatory daimons, in exchange for the superficial trappings of the art. In other words they care only for profane gold but not for the “gold” of self-purification. It is clear that these misguided alchemists are in precisely the same situation as those blind followers of Fate, criticized by Zosimos in *On the Letter Omega*: those who ridicule the techniques of natural alchemy and trust only in astrologic and daimonic principles.

Zosimos seems to be concerned that Theosebeia is associating with a “prophet” of this debased school of alchemy, and has unwittingly made herself the object of daimonic lust: ‘They wish to do the same to you, dear lady, through their false prophet: the local daimons flatter you, hungry not only for sacrifices, but for your soul’ (p. 367, ll. 6-8). Here we are close indeed to the concerns expressed in the Book of Enoch about predatory daimons, which attempt to seduce human women with false promises of wisdom. Zosimos urges Theosebeia to master the immoderate bodily passions and appetites, which attract these daimons, and to focus inwardly on attaining the knowledge and experience of the true God. The final lines clarify in a direct and explicit way the Hermetic and Gnostic influences that underlie his interpretation of alchemy:

Do these things until you perfect your soul. When you recognize that you have been perfected, then, realizing the natural tinctures, spit on matter, take refuge in Poimandres, and once baptized in the krater (*baptistheisa tōi kratēri*) ascend quickly to your own race (Fest. p. 368, ll. 1-4).

³⁶ Iamblichus falls on the other side of the debate. On his view, the idea that daimons are nourished by theurgic sacrifice involves a confusion of “wholes” and “parts”, making the daimons subject to, and dependent upon, the material substances over which they are supposed to hold dominion. See *Les Mystères d’Égypte*, 210.15ff (des Places).

Zosimos seems to imply a familiarity with two of the tractates of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (or if we cannot assume that he knows the tractates themselves, at least he knows their central concepts). The *Poimandres*, discussed earlier in the paper, presents the famous gnostic account of the “narcissistic” fall of the Anthropos. Zosimos exhorts Theosebeia to spit on matter and take refuge in Poimandres. In other words he urges her to reject the downward pull of the body and its appetites, which led to the original fall, and which continue to keep humans enslaved to Fate and the daimons; he urges her to resist this attraction to Nature and to return to her spiritual origin as a true child of Poimandres, *superior* to the daimons and their archontic masters.

The reference to the *krater*, or baptismal bowl, is also highly significant. Tractate IV of our *Corpus Hermeticum*, *The Krater or Monad*³⁷, describes a spiritual baptism of the soul in *nous* or mind. This baptism imparts the secret *gnôsis* which liberates us from material enslavement: ‘All those who heeded the proclamation and were baptized in mind (*ebaptisanto tou noos*), these received the *gnôsis* and became complete men, having received mind’ (*C.H. IV*, 4). The Greek word for ‘baptize’, *baptizein* and its cognates, is connected, etymologically and conceptually, to the alchemic terms *baphê* and *katabaphê* which I translate as ‘tincture’. The different kinds of *katabaphai* which Zosimos discusses in *On the Letter Omega* and *The Final Quittance* are different ways of tincturing or “baptizing” metals. This “baptism” of metals is, for Zosimos, a purification; and it is the external sign of a deeper spiritual baptism, a baptism precisely of the sort that is described in *C.H. IV*. In referring Theosebeia to this Hermetic tractate, and to its central concept of “baptism”, Zosimos is reminding her of the true meaning of alchemy—the Hermetic meaning—and warning her against falling in with those debased practitioners of the Art who care only for material results to the detriment of their very souls, and to the delight of the predatory daimons.

In the end, however, the problem of daimons remains largely unresolved. Given that the alchemist must take *some* account of these daimonic and astrologic influences—inasmuch as he works *through* the material world—how can he do so without compromising the spiritual integrity of the Art and risking daimonic seduction? Is there any way to reconcile the spiritual aims of the Art with its material necessities? There is one tantalizing suggestion. Zosimos advises Theosebeia to perform certain sacrifices after the example of Solomon: ‘Then, without being called to do it, offer sacrifices to the daimons, not the useful variety, not those which nourish and comfort them, but

³⁷ For the Greek text see Nock & Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum*, vol. I.

those which deter and destroy them, those which Mambres [Jambres?] gave to Solomon, king of Jerusalem, and of which he himself has written according to his wisdom' (*Final Quittance*, Fest. p. 367, ll. 24-27). Zosimos here shows his familiarity with the folk legends of Solomon as a magus and exorcist, who holds divine dominion over daimons. One wonders whether he has read the *Testament of Solomon*³⁸, in which Solomon describes how he harnessed the powers of the daimons, with the aid of their angelic superiors, in order to complete the construction of the Temple. Solomon, through the divine power of his ring, commands each demon, in turn, to reveal its name, its distinctive activity, its planetary or zodiacal designation, and the angelic or divine power that thwarts it. So long as he maintains a pious relation to God, he is able to control the demons, through their divine superiors, and harness their powers for sacred ends. But when his piety is compromised, and he sacrifices to pagan gods, his control over the demons is lost, and he becomes enslaved to them: '... my spirit was darkened and I became a laughingstock to the idols and demons.' (*Testament* 26.7-8). As K. von Stuckrad argues, one sees in the *Testament* a monotheistic response to the problem of the malevolent astral powers³⁹. Of special interest is the manner in which the Egyptian decan gods are demoted to daimons, now held under the dominion of the Jewish angels and, ultimately, the Jewish God (*Testament*, 18). If Zosimos does have this Solomonic tradition in mind, then he may be suggesting to Theosebeia that the daimons which are attempting to control and seduce her can, in turn, be *controlled* and made subject to the spiritual work of the alchemist—just as Solomon was able to harness the daimons toward the spiritual ends of the Temple. Unfortunately, Zosimos does not clarify the

³⁸ See *Testament of Solomon*, trans. D.C. Duling. In *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. Charlesworth, 935-987. There is disagreement as to the date of the *Testament*, but the consensus seems to place it between the 1st and 3rd centuries CE, in which case Zosimos could be familiar with it. If the "Mambres" of Zosimos is the Egyptian sorcerer Jambres, mentioned in the *Testament* (25.4), then the connection is strengthened (see Duling, 950-51, nt. 94). In any case, Zosimos seems to be familiar with the tradition, even if we cannot be certain that he knows this version of it. A similar legend can be found in the Nag Hammadi *Testimony of Truth*. There we are told that Solomon built Jerusalem by means of daimons, which he subsequently imprisoned in the Temple (in Robinson, *Nag Hammadi Library*, N.H.C. IX, 3.70).

³⁹ K. von Stuckrad notes that the subordination of the astral powers to the Jewish God and His angelic ministers neutralizes their malevolent potency, so that Solomon can harness their powers in the sacred work of the Temple's construction: 'Die Gestirnmächte sind *depotenzierte Engel oder Götter* . . . Der jüdische Gott ist es, welcher die Himmelmächte kontrolliert; durch seine Kraft werden die Dämonen ihrer Göttlichkeit beraubt, geächtigt und sogar zum Dienst am Tempelbau herangezogen' (*Das Ringen um die Astrologie*, 417).

character of these sacrifices, or their function within the alchemical art, so this speculation cannot be confirmed with any certainty.

4. *Conclusion*

We are now in a better position to understand why Zosimos, in the quotation from Synkellos, endorses the Enochian account of the origins of the occult sciences. The notion that alchemy proceeds on the basis of the revelations of unscrupulous daimons, or that it derives its very efficacy from astrologic and daimonic principles, is a central and persistent concern of Zosimos's theoretical writings on alchemy. However, in endorsing and indeed *developing* the Enochian account of daimonic influence, Zosimos does not view himself as undermining the divine status of alchemy. True alchemy, Hermetic alchemy, is above reproach, because it operates—as far as possible—independently of daimons and astrologic principles, employing a natural methodology based on the natural sympathies and antipathies of substances. When Zosimos speaks approvingly of the Enochian account, it may be that he has chiefly in mind that other school of “so-called” alchemists, who are too lazy for laboratory work and have no interest in the purification of their bodies and souls. For them the tincturing of metals is surface deep, lacking entirely the spiritual implications of “baptism” that Zosimos finds philosophically expressed in his Hermetic sources. Their version of *Chêmeia* is indeed ‘of no advantage to the soul’. Zosimos joins the Book of Enoch in condemning these base practitioners of the occult sciences, who are slaves to their own passions and to the daimons who rule the world of Fate and matter. He sees clearly that knowledge in the wrong hands, and applied to the wrong ends, can enslave; even as it can serve as a tool of liberation and enlightenment in the right hands.

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Zosime de Panopolis et le livre d'Énoch: l'alchimie, science interdite

Dans un passage conservé par Georges le Syncelle, Zosime de Panopolis établit un lien entre les origines de l'alchimie et les révélations d'anges déchus, telles que présentées dans le livre d'Énoch. On est surpris de voir le récit de ce livre accepté par un adepte d'alchimie. L'"art sacré" ayant pour but la libération de l'esprit de la chair, comment peut-il être le résultat de la convoitise d'anges déchus? Ce paradoxe est dû à un élément gnostique dans l'interprétation que Zosime donne de l'alchimie; la crainte perpétuelle d'influences astrales ou démoniaques. Dans la mesure où les archontes planétaires et leurs ministres démoniaques gouvernent le monde des corps et de la fatalité, leur influence sur les opérations matérielles de l'art alchimique est inévitable. Pour les procédés de teinture alchimique il faudra nécessairement observer les *kairoi*, les moments propices indiqués par l'astrologie. Cependant, pour Zosime, cette dimension

astrologique de son art est pleine de dangers. En tant que gnostique, il regarde les archontes et démons comme foncièrement opposés aux intentions spirituelles de l'alchimiste. Les démons tentent de séduire et d'obséder les adeptes imprudents, afin de les tenir dans l'esclavage de la matière et de la fatalité. Pour faire face à ces dangers de séduction démoniaque, Zosime met en valeur les méthodes naturelles et autorégulatrices de la teinture ainsi qu'une technique empirique rigoureuse.

THE MOSES OF SINAI AND THE MOSES OF EGYPT:
MOSES AS MAGICIAN IN JEWISH LITERATURE AND
WESTERN ESOTERICISM

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Investigating the question of Moses as magician in modernity might seem hardly a meaningful venture. After all, the figure of Moses was established in the period between humanism and the Enlightenment much more obviously as the founder of a de-mythologized religion, in which things like magic had just been overcome. Under the conditions of modernity, Mosaic monotheism had to be nothing less than the prototype of religion interpreted in terms of secular politics and in terms of law. From such a perspective, Moses the Halakhist, the lawgiver, appears like a Hegel *avant la lettre*, who in his philosophy of law lays down the foundations of a modern secularisation of religion and metaphysics that proscribes myth and magic in any form. What Hegel wrote about Spinoza in the *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*—‘Spinoza’s System is absolute pantheism and monotheism lifted to the level of concept’¹—could then be applied to the philosophical and political achievements of modernity as a whole: its fundamentals can essentially be traced back to Mosaic monotheism.

One might indeed draw such a conclusion if one were to assume that the project of secularisation, by which modernity defines itself², follows a linear progression. However, there is reason to question not only a non-dialectical notion of historical progress in general, but also the related idea that the self-determination of the modern era was based on the exclusion rather than the transformation of myth and magic. If we take a closer look at modernity, we perceive not an end but, rather, an unresolved ‘Work on Myth’³; and likewise we find not a definitive negation of magic as the antithesis of modernity but, rather, a transformation of it. The question of Moses as magician presents us with a basic problem in the philosophy and history of religion, namely the relationship between a knowledge of religious and natural law

¹ ‘Spinozas System ist der in den Gedanken erhobene absolute Pantheismus und Monotheismus’ (Hegel, *Vorlesungen*, 298).

² Blumenberg, *Die Legitimität der Neuzeit*.

³ Blumenberg, *Arbeit am Mythos*.

(according to the paradigm of the Moses of Mount Sinai), on the one hand, and a knowledge of magic (according to the paradigm of the Moses of Egypt), on the other. Thus, in the dialectical process of secularisation and of modernity, two different Moses-figurations appear: Moses the law-giver of Mount Sinai, and Moses the magician from Egypt.

Clearly, an investigation of the potentials and representations of a magical Moses cannot restrict itself to the narrow domain of Latin, European Christianity in early modernity. Rather, one needs to study the relevant processes of theological and scientific transformation and re-interpretation within the transitional domain between Judaism and Christianity. That is why the question that has been thrown up here demands, from a historical and systematic perspective, to be approached from a wider perspective. Firstly, even with a focus on early modernity, a historical contextualization of Moses-configurations requires discussion of sources ranging from late antiquity to the 19th century. Secondly, the subject of Moses as magician requires a comparative study of Jewish as well as Christian literature. In this manner, it is possible to distinguish and describe the potentials of the magical Moses in early modernity from a diachronic and intercultural perspective. First, we will analyze the profile of Moses as magician in Jewish, and especially in kabbalistic literature. The emphasis here lies on the Moses of Sinai as sharply separated from the Moses of Egypt. Second, we will investigate the reinterpretations and transformations of Moses the magician in the literature of Christian Kabbalah and modern esotericism. As will be seen, the Egyptian Moses-paradigm is here resurrected under new conditions.

1. *Mosaic versus Egyptian Magic in Jewish Literature*

All doubts considering the possibility of a magical Moses-figuration are confirmed by biblical and rabbinical literature. In fact, the establishment of mosaic monotheism in the second Book of Moses is presented here as an uncompromising victory over Egyptian magic⁴. Moses' victory over the magic of the Egyptians has become even a foundational element in biblical and accordingly, rabbinical literature: the rejection of Egyptian magic becomes basic to the establishment of tradition. The formula *samti pedut bein ami*

⁴ Cf. Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian*, 11: 'the Hebrew Moses of the Bible has kept an image of Egypt alive in Western tradition that was thoroughly antithetic to Western ideals, the image of Egypt as the land of despotism, hubris, sorcery, brute-worship, and idolatry'.

ubein amecha, 'I will make a distinction between my people and yours.' (Ex 8:23)⁵, is demonstrated most pronouncedly with reference to magic: in a competition of sorcerers, Moses defeats the Egyptian magicians⁶. As prophecy of the one God, who alone lays claim to authority, Mosaic monotheism emerges first of all as a result of its separation from Egyptian sorcery.

In the further development of the Mosaic founding act, the cultural difference between Israel and Egypt is defined more clearly as the difference between law and magic. Not by accident, the first and emphatically repeated directives of Moses' law-giving on Mount Sinai include the prohibition of magic. It is articulated three times: 'You shall not suffer a witch (*mekashafa*) to live' (Ex 22:18); 'You shall not practice divination or sorcery' (Lev 19:26); and finally '... Let no one be found among you who makes his son or daughter pass through fire, no augur or soothsayer or diviner or sorcerer (*mekashef*)' ... (Deut 18:10)⁷. The Torah emphatically attaches importance to presenting the Mosaic position as opposed to the Egyptian religion of sorcery. The reasons have to do not merely with religious law, but also with religious and even cultural history: at stake is nothing less than the origin of Judaism itself, which cannot have its origins in Moses' early Egyptian knowledge but must be founded on the later revelation of Mount Sinai. Accordingly, the origin of the Jewish religion is not an Egyptian secret doctrine but the divine revelation on Mount Sinai.

It was to be expected that the biblical interdict of sorcery and thus also the interpretation of Moses as vanquisher of magic would also be emphasized in philosophical and rabbinical literature. Here too, the myth of the origin of the Jewish religion as such is decisive: it began not in Egypt but on Mount Sinai. Philo of Alexandria, for instance, in *De Vita Mosis*, portrayed Moses precisely as censor of divination and magic, since 'the activities of the sorcerer and the inspiration of the Most Holy cannot exist side by side'⁸. Even stronger: 'as devotee and teacher of the truth', Philo's Moses outlawed any form of divination and magic as a 'false delusion'⁹. Philo's Moses replaces magic by religion, on the one hand, and by politics, on the other. The *Talmud*,

⁵ Cf. Ex 11:7: '... that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel'.

⁶ Ex 7:14-10,11.

⁷ Cf. also 3 Mose 19:31 and 3 Mose 20:27.

⁸ Philo of Alexandria, *De vita Mosis*, I, 277. Cf. Veltri, *Magie und Halakha*, 62. Cf. the translation in: Philo von Alexandria, *Die Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*, I, 284: '[...] denn magische Zauberei durfte mit hochheiliger Verzückung nicht zusammenwohnen'.

⁹ Philo von Alexandria, *SpecLeg* I, 59-65.

too, upholds a strict distinction between Israel and Egypt. Egypt is repeatedly mentioned as the origin of sorcery, from which Israel, with its origins on Mount Sinai, clearly separates itself. The phrase *kol mizraim male keshufim*, ‘All of Egypt is full of sorcery’, can be found in numerous Midrashim¹⁰. ‘Ten measures of sorcery (*keshafim*) came down upon this world’, one may read in the tract *Kiddushin*, ‘Egypt took nine and the whole rest of the world took one’¹¹. Therefore in religious philosophy and Halachist literature, mosaic is whatever is different from magic. The far-reaching innovations established by Moses—law, the state, religion—are presented as fruits of a victory over myth, divination and magic. Or formulated positively: the beginning of monotheistic religion lies in the voice of God, received and written down by Moses in the desert.

Still, in spite of this basic and easily understandable element of the Jewish religion, even within Jewish literature Mosaic monotheism cannot exclusively be considered as vanquisher of all kinds of magic. At closer scrutiny, we find that while Moses may not have adopted magic in its manifestations disqualified as “Egyptian”, he did appropriate it in a monotheistic, secularised and transformed shape. This made it possible to draw a cultural difference and separate the Jewish religion from the Egyptian, but without having to give up magic entirely. Decisive evidence is to be found already in the biblical writings. On closer observation, the cultural and theological separation between Egypt and Israel, which is the real goal of the contest between Moses and the Egyptian sorcerers, turns out to be based not directly on the difference between magic and law, but rather, on the difference between two forms of magic: one Egyptian and polytheist, another Mosaic and monotheist. This difference is manifest already at the level of terminology. Whereas in the case of Egypt the term “sorcery” (*kishuf*) is used, in Moses’ case reference is made to “portents and miracles”, *otioth we muftaim*¹². According to the Talmudic tract *Menachoth*, when Moses performed his “portents and miracles” in Egypt in the service of God, the two Egyptian sorcerers Jochana and Mamra, asked him ‘Are you taking straw to Afraim?’, whereupon Moses replied: ‘To a city that is rich in greenery, bring greenery, for there one will find buyers’¹³; that is to say, Moses had to defeat the Egyptian sorcerers, the

¹⁰ Cf. Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen*, 40, footn. 1. Cf. also Marcel Simon, ‘Superstition et magie’.

¹¹ bT *Kiddushin* 49b. Cf. Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen*, 38-43.

¹² Ex 7:3. Cf. Deut 34:11.

¹³ bT *Menachoth* 85a.

chartumim and *mekashefim mizraim*, by similar means—if not by sorcery, then with “portents and miracles”. Already the relevant passage in Exodus, and in a later period rabbinical literature as well, is careful not to confuse the Mosaic “miracles” with Egyptian “sorcery”.

Secondly, the difference between Egyptian and Mosaic magic could be explained in terms of a dichotomy between polytheism and monotheism. According to the Exodus commentary of the *Midrash Rabba*, in their attempt to imitate and outdo Moses ‘with their spells’ (Ex 7:12, *be-lahateihem*)¹⁴ the Egyptian sorcerers worked with the assistance of ‘corrupt angels’ (*malache chabala*) and ‘demons’ (*shadaim*), whereas Moses acted on God’s authority¹⁵. The Talmud therefore distinguishes between true monotheistic magic, legitimised by God and employed by Moses, on the one hand, and the magical tricks of the so-called “illusionists”, on the other¹⁶. Mosaic monotheism is therefore not merely a vanquishing, but also a secularisation and a sublimation of magic in its transition from myth to religion. As pointed out by the final passages of the Torah, Moses is the prototype of such a monotheistically transformed magician, who owes his power not to mythical-demonic forces of nature but to the one God of the Sinai: ‘Never yet in Israel has a prophet risen like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, with all the signs and portents . . . ; remember the strong hand of Moses (*ha-jad ha-chasaka*) and the terrible deeds which he did in the sight of all of Israel’ (Deut. 34:10-12)¹⁷.

This monotheist reinterpretation and legalisation of magic as action in the service and in the name of God culminates in a theology of the Name of God. Moses’ political and legal authority is accordingly based on a theological one: on his knowledge of God’s Name, first revealed in the burning bush of Mount Sinai as *ehyeh asher ehyeh*, ‘I am who I am’, and on that of the inexpressible four-letter name, the tetragrammaton. When, especially in the Haggadic elements of the Talmud¹⁸ and Midrash¹⁹, Moses was understood as a magician, this was because of his ‘knowledge of the Name’ (*jediat ha-*

¹⁴ Ex 7:11 and 22.

¹⁵ *Midrasch Rabba*, on Exodus 7:11 and 22. Cf. Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen*, 15, footn. 1.

¹⁶ Cf. Veltri, *Magie und Halakha*, 64f.

¹⁷ 5 Mose 34:10-12.

¹⁸ According to Rabba it is possible to calm a storm with a ‘staff’, on which the name ‘ehyeh ascher ehyeh’ is inscribed. Cf. bT *Baba Batra* 73a.

¹⁹ Cf. Horowitz, *Sammlung kleiner Midraschim*, 69. Cf. also Blau, *Das altjüdische Zauberwesen*, 31.

shem)²⁰. This element was raised in Jewish mysticism almost to the level of a discipline, as demonstrated by evidence in Jewish literature since late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. The *Magical Fragments from the Geniza of Cairo* for instance, are essentially based on the Mosaic theology of God's Name. It is not by accident that Moses appears in numerous fragments as the person to whom the divine names were revealed and who knew how to handle them. The magical knowledge of these late antique fragments from the library of Cairo is, accordingly, an eminent example of Mosaic knowledge. 'And once more I invoke you', one reads in one of the incantation texts, 'and establish [that you] will grant me everything I earnestly request before the throne of magnificence, with this Name of the great, heroic, terrible and fearless God, that Name which was written down by Moses the prophet'²¹.

Nor is it a coincidence that the name Moses is found in the title of a certain magical text from the period of late Hekhaloth literature, the so-called 'Sword of Moses' (*Harba de Moshe*). The expression "Sword of Moses" is a metaphor for God's Name. Clearly the author of this text was aware that the magic presented in Moses' name challenged not only the Mosaic prohibition, but the victory over Egyptian sorcery as well. In not only sharply differentiating the Mosaic magic of the Name from sorcery, but in also presenting Moses as the vanquisher of magic, he clearly demonstrated how difficult it was for magical literature to legitimise magic within the Mosaic paradigm. The only possible strategy was the one also followed by rabbinical literature: there are different kinds of magic, that is to say, the practice of magic based upon the monotheist theology of God's Name must be accompanied by a prohibition of the polytheist, Egyptian magic that operates with animal gods and demons.

This is the sword of Moses, with which he brought about portents and acts of power, and put an end to all sorcery. It was revealed to Moses in the burning bush and (thereby) the great and precious Name was made known to him. Now guard it truly, (then) it will protect you. . . . It will save you from all the woes of this world²².

The attempt to legitimise magic in this text again reflects the dialectic according to which Mosaic magic meant an abolishment of Egyptian magic not

²⁰ Cf. Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, 90ff.

²¹ *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, 61. Cf. p. 45 and 59.

²² *Übersetzung der Hekhalot-Literatur*, IV, 10 (§ 606). Cf. the introduction, VII-XVII. Cf. also Gaster, 'The Sword of Moses'; Alexander, 'Incantation and Books of Magic'.

only in the sense of its annihilation but also in the sense of its reinterpretation. Rejection of magic goes hand in hand with its monotheistic transformation.

The dialectic confrontation of the abolishment and sublimation of magic is particularly virulent in the type of Jewish literature where magic is to be most expected: the literature of the kabbalah. However, the Moses figure is of decisive importance for the Kabbalah, not only under its magical aspect—specifically the so-called “practical Kabbalah” (*kabbala ma’assit*)—but also due to his mythical status as founding father of the Kabbalah as such. For questions of origin and transmission are particularly relevant in the context of the Kabbalah, which defines itself as “transmission”: the very meaning of the term “Kabbalah” is “reception”, that is to say, what is handed down by tradition. More precisely, kabbalah is the transmission of the very esoteric knowledge concerning the Torah (*sitre tora*), received by Moses as “oral Torah” (*tora she-bealpeh*) on Mount Sinai, together with the exoteric knowledge that he put down in the “written Torah” (*tora she-bichtav*). This is the classic kabbalistic *Nachrichtentheorie* (media theory)²³, as formulated e.g. by Moses ben Nachman, one of the earliest Spanish Kabbalists, in his Torah commentary: ‘These veiled hints [in the Torah, A.K.] cannot be understood, except [by a chain of transmission] from mouth to mouth (*mi-peh al-peh*), all the way back to Moses at Mount Sinai’²⁴. Thus the Kabbalah finds its mythical beginnings in the Mosaic revelation at Sinai and has been passed on from the time of this primordial act of oral initiation—the founding act of the Mosaic religion—, ‘by being spoken from the mouth of a wise Kabbalist into the ear of an informed Kabbalist’, or literally translated, ‘from the mouth of a wise receptor, into the ear of an understanding receiver’ (*mipe mekubal chacham leosen mekkabel mevin*)²⁵. In this way the Kabbalist chain of transmission of oral information can be traced along a network of mediators: from *mekubal* to *mekabbel*, according to Nachmanides, from receptor to receptor, all the way back to Moses, the first Kabbalist. Nachmanides’ Torah commentary thus restores a primordial and esoteric revelatory knowledge that ‘cannot be inferred from the text and cannot be known at all, except by a tradition that goes back to Moses our teacher and that he received out of the mouth of the Almighty (*eino muwan min ha-mikraot we-lo joda al borahw ela mipe hakabbala ad moshe rabenu mipe hageburah*)’²⁶. Thus Nachmanides

²³ Cf. Kilcher, ‘Kabbalistische Nachrichtentheorie’.

²⁴ *The Commentary of Nachmanides*, 25.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 29.

understands the Kabbalah as the handing down of an unwritten, original voice of God, heard by Moses on Sinai and handed on by oral transmission from there on.

According to Nachmanides, the knowledge of God's Name is part of this esoteric knowledge; he sees it, indeed, as a central element in the oral tradition of the secrets of the Torah that was the substance of the Kabbalah. This is because the Kabbalist, by specialised hermeneutic procedures, makes the secret Name of God in the Torah understandable. More than that: he shows that ultimately 'the whole of the Torah consists of the names of God' (*od jesh bejadenu kabbala shel emet she-kol hatorah kulah shemotav shel kadosh baruch-hu*)²⁷. Now, it is this idea that allows for a certain form of acceptable magic within the kabbalah, namely a magic in the Mosaic tradition that again clearly differentiates itself from the Egyptian kind. In the so-called "practical Kabbalah" this Mosaic knowledge concerning the Name of God becomes a factor of decisive importance. Under this label (*kabbala ma'assit*), older forms of magic like those of "The Sword of Moses" were assimilated, and these were later reinterpreted in the context of new kabbalistic systems²⁸.

This could not but lead to problems, as becomes particularly clear in the ecstatic Kabbalah formulated by the Spanish Kabbalist Abraham Abulafia at the end of the 13th century. Although he grounds his Kabbalah entirely on the Mosaic metaphysics of the Name, Abulafia nevertheless rejects a magical theory of the Name of God such as was possible in Hekhaloth mysticism. In his *Sheva Netivth ha-Tora* (Seven Ways of the Torah) he criticised those who described themselves as *Ba'ale Shem*, "Masters of the Name":

Their error lies in their belief that they can bring about wonders by means of the Power of the Names and their recitations, merely by uttering these Names, without understanding their meaning. They imagine that they can fly, that they can defeat their enemies by means of words, that they can extinguish fire, and that they can assuage the angry seas by means of the power of the Name²⁹.

This is a phenomenology of magical practice that corresponds quite precisely with the contents of texts like the *Harba de Moshe*³⁰. In opposition to this magical practice of the Name, Abulafia put forward his 'real knowledge of

²⁷ Ibid., 27.

²⁸ Scholem, *Kabbalah*, 183. 'In effect, what came to be considered practical Kabbalah constituted an agglomeration of all the magical practices that developed in Judaism from the talmudic period down to the Middle Ages'.

²⁹ 'Sheva netivth ha-Torah', 22.

³⁰ Cf. Niggemeyer, *Beschwörungsformeln*, 20-34, 181-224.

the Name' (*jediat shemot amitit*). In it, the magical/theurgical theology of the names as formulated in Hekhaloth literature is transformed into a mystical/ecstatic version of the Mosaic theology of the names. Abulafia replaced the magical incantations of the Name with a meditative combinatorial use of its letters.

In a similar way, Abulafia's student Josef Gikatilla transformed the older Mosaic magic of the Name according to the new linguistic premises of the Kabbalah. But here it also becomes clear, how a Mosaic magic could nevertheless remain possible within the context of Kabbalah. While warning against the magical use of the Name in the prologue to his book *Sha'are Orah* (Gates of Light), he made a distinction between the prophetic (that is to say, the Mosaic) era and his own one (around 1300). By introducing such a historical distinction it became possible, while criticizing a contemporary usage of the magical theology of the Name, to allow for its possibility in the era of prophecy. This historical distinction was accompanied by a systematic one: the instrumentalisation of the Name for profane purposes is rejected, but as in the case of the biblical Moses, its use for "portents and miracles" is considered legitimate:

If you are told: 'Come with us and we will reveal to you the Name and the incantations, so that you may use them', my son, do not follow them. Steer clear of that path, for these names and the use of them in magic are a means to capture souls and corrupt them. And if it is true that our sages were in the possession of holy names, as handed down by the prophets, such as the name of 72 letters, of 42 letters, of 12 letters and many other holy names, [and if] they could in fact produce portents and miracles with them, they never used them for personal benefit³¹.

Gikatilla's criticism is therefore not directed at the magical power of the Names as such, but at their application for profane purposes, which was indeed widespread in the use of amulets and invocation texts not only up until the 14th century, but would continue within Hasidism right into the 19th century³². In his criticism of the use of the Name in magic (*shimushim*), by the way, Gikatilla makes use of a metaphor that suggests he had the "The Sword of Moses" in mind: 'How can a mortal use holy names in magic and make from them an axe to strike with'³³? In this case, as well, the magic of

³¹ Gikatilla, *Sha'are Orah*, fol. 1aff.

³² Cf. *Sefer ha-Rasim*: '... by his Name and by his letters I invoke you/... that you tell me ... /what is his will, what is the meaning of his dream and what is his plan'. Niggemeyer, *Beschwörungsformeln*, 198.

³³ Gikatilla, *Sha'are Orah*, fol. 1a.

the Names can be legitimate only if it is, so to speak, less Egyptian and more Mosaic. Precisely this applies to the case of ‘our sages’, who ‘could in fact produce portents and miracles’, but who would ‘never have used them for personal benefit’³⁴. This non-instrumentalist use of the magic of the Names is based on the “intentions” (*kawwanoth*) inherent in the Name, or, one might say, on its metaphysical nature, which according to Gikatilla corresponds with the ten Sefiroth:

However, it lies within the truth of the tradition of our covenant, that the person who wishes to fulfil his desire by means of holy names, should persist with all his strength to gain the function and intention of each single name, those holy names which are written in the Torah, such as Ejuh, Yah, YHVH, Adonai, El, Elohim, Shaday, Zevaot. The point is to understand that each single one of these names is like a key to every single thing that man may need in this world. Whoever studies these names will see that the whole of the Torah and its commandments depend upon them. And whosoever knows the function of any one of these names will understand the greatness of Him, who spoke ‘let there be’, and the world was³⁵.

Gikatilla’s contribution to the transformation of magic therefore consists in a historicisation of the Mosaic magic of names, by limiting it to the era of prophecy. In the post-prophetic era, in contrast, which is also the one of the kabbalah, there can no longer be question of using the names the way they were used in the “Sword of Moses”. Rather, it is now a matter of “contemplating” the names in a meditative manner, and try to comprehend from what it is that, like a metaphysical formula, holds the world and the Torah together.

This simultaneous presence of resistance against and sublimation of the Mosaic magical theory of names is characteristic of kabbalistic literature up to Hasidism. A unitary model in the transformation of magic is not to be found. But the examples adduced above make clear, at least, that a more mystically oriented kabbalah tends to transform the Mosaic magic of Names into a theology of the Names, and to oppose the “effect” of the Names to the “knowledge” of them. A more practically oriented kabbalah, on the other hand, was able to continue the tradition of a Mosaic magic of names as it had been developed in medieval Hekhaloth literature and in the *Harba de Moshe*. Precisely this model was taken up in the kabbalah of modern times: the Palestinian one of Moses Cordovero and Isaak Luria, and the Hasidic li-

³⁴ Ibid. Concerning the magical function of the ‘Kidush ha-Shem’ cf. Jehuda ha-Chassid, *Sefer Hassidim*, 49-67.

³⁵ Gikatilla, *Sha'are Orah*, fol. 1b.

terature of the 18th and 19th centuries that followed in its lineage³⁶. Not by chance, the Mosaic figure of the “Ba’al Shem”, the “Master of the Name” has a central place in Hasidic piety. In his *Tales of the Hasidim*, Martin Buber explained in his own words what could be understood by “Ba’al Shem” in a Hasidic context: ‘Baal-Shem, that is the Master of the Name, thus named because he knew the full hidden Name of God and was able to pronounce it, so that with its help he could accomplish the strangest things, but in particular could heal people in body and soul’³⁷. The “Ba’al Shem” is, so to speak, the successor of Moses the prophetic magician: he who not only knows the hidden Name of God but also knows how to handle it.

2. *Mosaic Magic as Egyptian Magic in Christian Kabbalah and Esotericism*

Rather than continuing to follow the trail of Moses the magician within Jewish literature, we will now move to a comparison with early modern Christian literature. It is natural to begin here because from the second half of the 15th century, or more exactly from the time of Pico della Mirandola and Johannes Reuchlin, an intense activity of translating, reading and discussion on Jewish and especially kabbalistic literature got underway. In this context the figure of Moses the magician became of crucial importance. The new interpretations that were given of him outside the sphere of Jewish literature were based on changed theological and philosophical premises. The decisive difference consists in the fact that in the literature of Christian Kabbalah the cultural difference between Egypt and Israel had lost its relevance. Moses could now be an Egyptian and, much less problematically, a magician. Behind this lies a fundamental difference between the Jewish and the Christian Kabbalah, and in fact between Judaism and Christianity as such. It is impossible for the Jewish Kabbalah, and for the Jewish religion as such, to locate their origin in Egypt—on the contrary: they define themselves precisely in terms of the move *out* of Egypt, and locate their founding act in the Mosaic revelation at mount Sinai. For the Christian Kabbalists, in contrast, in their search for an esoteric origin of the Christian religion, there was not the slightest problem in placing the kabbalah syncretistically alongside other esoteric traditions, like those of the Greeks, the Persians and the

³⁶ Cf. Idel, *Chassidism*.

³⁷ Buber, *Die Erzählungen der Chassidim*, 114.

Egyptians, and occasionally even to portray the Kabbalah as an Egyptian doctrine and speak of a *cabala aegyptiana*. The monotheistic sinaitic Moses of the theology of names could be fused with problems with the Egyptian Moses associated with miracles and sorcery. Originally this is still less clearly the case in a Christian Kabbalah of rather narrow Christian-theological orientation, like Johannes Reuchlin's. It is prominent, however, first and foremost in a hermetic and esoterically-oriented Christian Kabbalah, in which the theological question of the difference between the Egyptian and the Jewish/Christian culture is suppressed, and replaced by an interest in the reinterpretation of magic and the hermetic science in terms of a philosophy of nature based on humanist Neoplatonism.

To start with the older Christian myth of the origins of the Kabbalah: it still links Moses relatively closely with the Jewish-Christian tradition. In Pico della Mirandola's *Oratio de hominis dignitate* (1486) the Kabbalah is not an Egyptian and magical secret knowledge but, in line with Nachmanides, 'the more secret and true interpretation of the law', received by Moses at Sinai together with the Torah and originally conveyed orally, that is to say, as "kabbalah"³⁸. Nevertheless, in the *Conclusiones* (1486)—as we see in more detail below—Pico went beyond the Sinai tradition and granted magic a greater respectability. But here too, magic remained intrinsically connected with Kabbalah and hence with the knowledge that Moses gained on Sinai³⁹. In his first Kabbalist writing, *De verbo mirifico* (1494), Reuchlin specified the substance of this esoteric knowledge: it is the knowledge of the Hebrew written language and above all of the Name of God, that is to say, of what Reuchlin described as the "The Wonder-Working Word". Moses is undoubtedly Reuchlin's ideal of the Christian "Ba'al Shem", the one who knows the *verbum mirificum* and how to handle it: 'That man', Reuchlin writes about Moses, 'stands high above all others . . . in regard of his age, his worthiness and religion, the admirable strength of his mysterious workings and his theological knowledge'⁴⁰—more precisely, as Reuchlin specifies, his magical 'knowledge of the Name'. It is precisely here that, in Reuchlin's view, the difference between Egypt and Israel turns out to still exist, for the magic of the Name has to be legitimised by the Hebrew language:

Therefore the barbaric words [that is to say, the *nomina barbara*, the magical Names of God] that we use unchangeably and purely in the holy rite should not

³⁸ Pico della Mirandola, *Oratio de hominis dignitate*, 59.

³⁹ Pico della Mirandola, *Conclusiones*, 78f.

⁴⁰ Reuchlin, *De verbo mirifico*, 167.

be Egyptian but, rather, Mosaic⁴¹ . . . In short: as far as the signs of God are removed from sorcery and witchcraft, no less far removed are . . . in the domain of holy things, the words of the Hebrews from those of the idol worshippers, as taught to us by Moses, who by the Word of God transformed a snake into a staff. The Egyptian sorcerers, however, who were called wise men, produced, in front of the king, by means of mechanically recited words of human learning, similar phenomena, that were eaten by Moses' snake, which showed that they were merely artificial delusions. That is why a famous philosopher [= Pico della Mirandola, A.K.] recently asserted, in Rome, a thesis that does not seem unqualified to me, i.e. that no names in a magical and permitted work possessed the same power as the Hebrew ones⁴².

It may be remarked in passing that Reuchlin here takes up a theme that was known since the time of Origenes and that, in Reuchlin's wake, would be frequently quoted in the Christian Kabbalah of the 16th and 17th centuries: the topos of the untranslatableability of the Hebrew language on the grounds of its magical function⁴³. Decisive for the connections under discussion here is the way in which magic is referred back to the Mosaic knowledge of the Hebrew language and the Hebrew Names of God. 'That . . . however, which contains the supreme power, given to man by the highest God, was revealed to Moses and not to the forefathers', that is to say: the inexpressible Name of God, Reuchlin's *inerrabile nomen*, *schemhamphoras* or more precisely: the *verbum mirificum*⁴⁴.

Pico's and Reuchlin's Mosaic Theology of the magic Name of God, incidentally, found a sharp opponent in the person of Martin Luther. He rejected the magical theory of God's Name not only for theological reasons, however, but also out of an anti-Jewish tendency. In his article *Vom Schem Hamphoras und vom Geschlecht Christi* (1543), he considers one of the most repulsive 'articles of the Jewish faith' to be that 'their Shem Hamphoras can do anything and everything'⁴⁵. Luther's criticism is leveled more precisely at 'the mere, empty, poor letters invested with power, and with the power to work wonders'⁴⁶. But in Luther's Pauline and anti-Jewish hermeneutics the letter of the "law" had always been dead, and only the *sensus*, the "spirit" was alive⁴⁷:

⁴¹ Ibid., 175.

⁴² Ibid., 187.

⁴³ Cf. Kilcher, 'Hebräische Sprachmetaphysik'.

⁴⁴ Reuchlin, *De verbo mirifico*, 245, 251.

⁴⁵ Luther, *Werke*, vol. 53, 604.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 603.

⁴⁷ Cf. Gardt, 'Luthers Übersetzungstheorie'.

That is why there is no inherent power [in letters], but they are merely empty feeble letters. If anything is attained by them, it is not God's but the devil's work, to strengthen his lies and sorcery⁴⁸ . . . In sum: a Jew is so full of idolatry and sorcery as nine cows have hairs, that is to say, innumerable and endless, just like the devil, their god, is full of lies⁴⁹.

So whereas Pico in his *Oratio* and, most of all, Reuchlin, consider the Mosaic magic of the Name possible even within Christian theology, on the basis of an Egyptian-Mosaic distinction, such an option was not possible within the hermeneutical framework of the Reformation. Unlike Reuchlin, Luther does not oppose a magical Egypt against a monotheist Israel, but a magical Judaism against a Pauline Christianity.

Within the latin Kabbalah of early modernity the figure of Moses the magician could be conceptualized even far more radically than had been done by Reuchlin with his Mosaic theology of names: that is to say, by discarding the Jewish-Christian distinction between Egypt and Israel. Moses was thereby removed from the Jewish-Christian tradition and formally made into an Egyptian again⁵⁰. The conditions that made it possible to see Moses as an Egyptian magician were created by what can be called the syncretism of the Renaissance. Pico's *Conclusiones* are one of the earliest attempts to place Pythagorean, Platonic, neoplatonic, Aristotelian-scholastic, Persian, Orphic, kabbalistic and magical "theses" next to one another and, by compiling various cultural codes and religious systems, create a new whole. It was from such a perspective that Pico considered the connection between magic and Kabbalah⁵¹. However, the connection with the Egyptian symbolic system still remained merely implicit. It was Reuchlin's student Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim who located the Mosaic magic of the Name, which according to his terminology should be described as *magia ceremonialis*, within a more comprehensive system of magic that had one of its origins in Egypt. In the *De occulta philosophia* (1533) he remarked—and in this lies the actual transgression of the taboo, from a Jewish perspective—that the "Lawgiver" Moses was initiated in Egyptian magic as well: 'Moses, Hebraeorum legislator ac princeps, in Aegypto magia imbutus'⁵².

Giordano Bruno's Kabbalah systematised this hermetic fusion of Egyptian and Jewish culture, thereby leading the new perspective of the non-Jewish

⁴⁸ Luther, *Werke*, 594.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 602.

⁵⁰ Cf. Hornung, *Das esoterische Aegypten*.

⁵¹ Cf. the *Conclusiones magicae* nr. 19-26.

⁵² Agrippa, *De occulta philosophia*, 174.

reception of Kabbalah in the Renaissance to an extreme⁵³: he generalised Agrippa's "taboo transgression", in that he was in fact no longer interested in a Christian interpretation of the Kabbalah. Even though he understood the Kabbalah to be the original and secret Mosaic knowledge, this interpretation of the Kabbalah emerged from the new and singular angle of a hermetic re-mythologisation of copernicanism. The original wisdom is not Hebrew but Egyptian: the Hebrew is derived from the latter. According to Bruno's hermetic genealogy, Pythagoras and Plato are not inheritors of Kabbalah, as they had been for Reuchlin; rather, Moses is dependent on Hermes Trismegistus, and the Kabbalah is therefore of Egyptian origin. In *Lo spaccio della bestia trionfante* (1584), the dialogue by which, as argued by Frances Yates, Bruno wanted to introduce Copernican-Egyptian heliocentricism as a hermetic reform in England, one may read:

That is why the Godhead . . . was honoured by several other names, which as specific ideas and forces of nature may all be traced back to the one Godhead of Godheads, the primal source of all ideas, that reigns over nature. . . . This seems to have been the starting point of the Hebrew kabbalah, the wisdom of which, whatever may be its nature, definitely stems from the Egyptians by whom Moses was instructed⁵⁴.

Bruno relocated the origin of knowledge in a *cabala aegyptiana*, about which Claude Duret and Athanasius Kircher would later speak as well⁵⁵. This reinterpretation of the esoteric *Nachrichtentheorie*—the origin of the tradition being no longer the Moses of Sinai but the Moses of Egypt—is characteristic of early modern esotericism and hermeticism. When secret knowledge was determined genealogically, then usually as an Egyptian knowledge that had been transferred to Moses. That made Moses into an Egyptian again, who could once more be a magician.

Examples may be found in the esoteric literature of the modern era right into the 18th and 19th century, especially in esoterically oriented Freemasonry and—of particular interest here—in alchemical and magical literature. To start with esoteric Freemasonry, to which the categories of the arcanum and

⁵³ Yates, *Giordano Bruno*.

⁵⁴ 'Pero la diuinitate [. . .] diuersamente in ciascuna de le altere specie, le quali come diuerse idee, erano diuersi numi nella natura, le quali tutti si referiuano ad un nume et fonte de le Idee sopra la natura. [. . .] Da questo parmi che deriuua quella Cabala de gl' Hebrei, la cui sapienza (qualunque la sia in suo geno) é proceduta da gl'Egittij, appresso de quali fu instrutto Mose'. Bruno, *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, Paris 1584. I quote from the edition *Le opere italiane*, vol. II, 533. Cf. Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, 211-234.

⁵⁵ Cf. Kilcher, *Die Sprachtheorie der Kabbala*.

initiation are of central importance: it frequently claims to be the true continuation of the kabbalistic tradition. The latter, however, has its origin not necessarily in the revelation on Sinai but, rather, in the Egyptian tradition. One example is the Viennese Kantian and Freemason Carl Leonhard Reinhold, whose book *Die Hebräischen Mysterien oder die älteste religiöse Freymaurery* (1788) Jan Assmann has shown to be a source of Schiller's lecture on *Die Sendung Moses* and, by mediation of the latter, of Freud's Moses as well. Reinhold considers various mythical genealogies of Freemasonry, including the kabbalistic one:

I could here appeal to those systems that trace the actual sciences of our Order back to the Hebrews, that try to locate our secrets by means of the thirteen rules of kabbalah in the ancient text of the bible, that—apart from the aforementioned bible—also assume an oral revelation given to Moses and the 70 elders at Sinai, and that know how to use the Hebrew Adam Kadmon, purified by means of some procedures of Christian mysticism, as a key to all secret theoretical and practical sciences of nature⁵⁶.

So Reinhold here sketches the media-theoretical option of a reducing Freemasonry to the kabbalist news chain. However, he introduces a variation on the classical masonic foundation-myth, according to which Masonry 'is related to' the 'sciences of the Hebrews', and especially to the oral 'secret revelation' of the Kabbalah. For he emphasizes that the Hebrew secret knowledge of the Kabbalah finds its roots not so much in the revelation on Sinai, but in Moses's more ancient Egyptian knowledge: 'The Israelites came out of Egypt, the homeland of mysteries; their lawgiver had been instructed in all the wisdom and science of this land and most likely had been initiated into its mysteries'⁵⁷.

The Masonic concept of the Egyptian origins of the kabbalist chain of tradition is hardly concerned with magic though. Rather, the latter is central to literature on alchemy and magic. The alchemist Hermann Fictuld (alias Johann Heinrich Schmidt) articulated the thesis in Moses' name, writing in the first person. Fictuld claimed to have translated his book *Moses' Testament* from the original Hebrew; it was printed in 1771, as part of an unconventional *Sammlung von einigen alten und sehr rar gewordenen philosophischen und alchemistischen Schriften* (A collection of some old and now very rare philosophical and alchemical texts). The contents of *Moses' Testament* are evident already from the complete title: rather than with a Christological

⁵⁶ Reinhold, *Die Hebräischen Mysterien*, 21f.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

reinterpretation of the figure of Moses, we are dealing with an Egyptian legacy, *Moses' Testament und Vergabung der Künsten und Wissenschaften, die er am Hof Pharaos in Egypten erlernt, und dem Israel zum Guten im Gefilde Moab am Berg Nebo im Thal gegen Peor und Jericho geschrieben hat* (Moses' testament and gift of the arts and sciences that he learned at the Pharaoh's court in Egypt, and written by him for the benefit of Israel in the field of Moab near the mountain of Nebo in the valley against Peor and Jericho). The condition that made it possible for the Mosaic religion to be founded was, accordingly, the fact that Moses 'was trained and taught in all the Egyptian wisdom, science and arts'⁵⁸. Faced with his own approaching death, or so it is suggested, Moses' thoughts went back to his original, secret Egyptian knowledge. Hence the text promises no less than conveying 'the greatest mystery of the Egyptians, as the treasure of all treasures'⁵⁹. The question then remains in what this Egyptian knowledge consists. From a historical perspective one would have to say that it consists of the hermetic, magical-alchemical *Naturphilosophie*, written in a Rosicrucian and Paracelsian style and terminology. The text itself, however, claims to present a much more primordial *magia naturalis*: the one of the "Book of Creation"⁶⁰, that is to say, of Genesis. Hence Moses' Egyptian testament turns out to be a paracelsian-alchemical translation and reformulation of the biblical creation story.

The presence of a Mosaic paradigm of Egyptian secret knowledge and magic in Paracelsian discourse is documented in numerous texts from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Examples from the 17th century are Robert Fludd's *Philosophia Moysaica* (1638), significantly subtitled 'The Holy Wisdom and Science of the Creation and the Creatures'⁶¹, and also Jacob Böhme's *Mysterium Magnum oder Erklärung über das Erste Buch Mosis* (Mysterium Magnum or Explanation of the First Book of Moses, 1623), the title page of which features a copperplate illustration of a beaming Moses heaving the firmament⁶². The transformation of Moses into a paracelsian and alchemical law-giver according to an Egyptian model is also the essential focus of a treatise

⁵⁸ [Hermann Fictuld], 'Fürstliche und Monarchische Rosen von Jericho. Das ist: Moses Testament, und Vergabung der Künsten und Wissenschaften, die er am Hof Pharaos und in Egypten erlernt . . . Aus dem Hebräischen in das Deutsche gebracht und zum Druck befördert durch Hermann Fictuld [1760]', 323. Cf. also p. 330.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 321.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 336.

⁶¹ Fludd, *Philosophia Moysaica*.

⁶² Cf. also Rosenbach, *Moses Omniscius*; Kozak, *Physica Mosaica*.

by Lambert Alard published in 1722: *Moses' güldenes Kalb/nebst dem magischem—astralischem—philosophischem—absonderlich dem cabalisticchem Feuer/Vermittelst welchem letzterem Moses/der Mann Gottes/dieses güldenes Kalb zu Pulver zermalmet/auffs Wasser gestäubet/und den Kindern Israel zu trincken gegeben*. (Moses' golden calf/along with the magical—astral—philosophical—and especially the kabbalistic fire/by means of which Moses/the man of God/ground this golden calf to powder/dusted it on water/and gave it to the Children of Israel to drink). This alchemical treatise, belonging to the milieu of the Gold- und Rosenkreuzer, interprets the creation and worship of the Golden Calf—presented in the Bible as a regression of the Israelites into an Egyptian and pre-monotheistic cult of animal worship (Ex 32:1-35)—as an alchemical process. Accordingly, the creation of the statue was not at all a sin, punished by Moses by destroying it; on the contrary, it was an alchemical/magical process of creating gold of the most sublime and magically most potent kind, in which Moses and Aaron were both involved. In a first stage of transformation, Aaron melted the jewellery of the Israelite women to make of it the golden calf, thereby already creating a more powerful and sublime kind of gold. The second and ultimate stage of transformation was undertaken by Moses. Referring to Exodus 32:20, Fictuld writes that Moses 'took the calf which they had made, and melted it down in a fire, and ground the powder and threw it on the water, and gave it the people of Israel to drink'. By means of this "kabbalistic fire", an *Aurum potabilum Mosis* was created, a most potent "tincture" which not only could be employed for all alchemical processes of metallic purification, but which also possessed magical powers that were used by Moses. This, in any case, is how Lambert Alard's treatise explains the biblical passage, in line with older Christian kabbalist literature⁶³:

The man of God/Moses, by means of the kabbalistic fire [has] not only ground the gold of the golden calf/dusted it onto water/and given it to the children of Israel to drink/but by these means also increased it in strength/,virtue and power, so much/that it not only could accomplish/corresponding wondrous cures among the Israelites/but also/when required/and when the man of God/Moses, wished it to be so/had the capacity/hereby to change/not only all other metals into the best kind of gold/but also, furthermore/to perform other great miracles in nature⁶⁴.

⁶³ The most important source is the alchemical treatise *Aesch Mezareph*, printed in Christian Knorr von Rosenroths *Kabbala Demudata* (1677-84). Cf. Scholem, 'Alchemie und Kabbala'; Kilcher, 'Cabala chymica'.

⁶⁴ [Lambert Alard], *Moses' güldenes Kalb*, 180. 'Der Mann Gottes/Moses, [hat] durch das

Moses again appears as a magician in the literature of Romanticism. But here a demarcation was necessary with respect to Schiller, who saw *Die Sendung Mosis* (Moses' mission, 1790) also, and in particular, in terms of a liberation from the Egyptian mysteries. If August Klingemann, in his drama about the 'man Moses', once more gave Moses the 'appearance of a magician' (as declared in his programmatic preface), he consciously put himself in opposition against 'the great German master', that is to say, Schiller. Against the latter, he holds that

a poetic portrayal of Moses without the miracles mentioned in the ancient document, armed with which he presents himself as lawgiver and religion-founder, would be a sin against the holy spirit of poetry. . . . Moses appears in his most exalted role as an . . . inspired seer [who] by his fervent research rediscovered the higher meaning of the hieroglyphs, and recovered for himself, as a secret possession, that profound science of nature by means of which he was later able to work such extraordinary wonders⁶⁵.

Thus the magical/Egyptian Moses is cautiously introduced into Romantic literature, after Schiller's verdict and in opposition to it.

Much less reserved, in contrast, was the restitution of a Mosaic magic of names within a particular genre of esoteric writings around 1800, which presented themselves as new and secret books of Moses. Contrary to those of e.g. Pico, Reuchlin and Agrippa, these writings were intended for a readership belonging to esoteric circles rather than for public scholars, and were close to popular magical literature. The idea that there are more than only five "Books of Moses" can be found in magical literature since late antiquity. Already among the Greek magical papyri, there is a fragment titled *Moses' Secret Eighth Book* or *Moses' Secret Book of the Great Name that is good for all purposes, in which appears the Name of he who orders everything*⁶⁶. This myth of the existence of secret Mosaic books containing magical information was repeatedly taken up even as late as the 18th and 19th

Cabalistische Feuer das Gold des gülden Kalbes nicht allein zermalmet/aufs Wasser gestäubet/und denen Kindern Israel zu trincken geben/sondern auch hierdurch dasselbe in seiner Kraft/Tugend und Würckung dergestalt erhöhet/daß es dergleichen Wunder-Curen bey denen Israeliten/nicht allein hat verrichten können/sondern auch/auf erforderndem Fall/und wann es dem Mann Gottes/dem Mose, gefallen/dieses Vermögen gehabt/daß er hierdurch/nicht allein die übrigen Metallen zum besten Golde hat verwandeln/sondern auch noch darüber/viele andere große Wunder mehr in der Natur hat verrichten können'.

⁶⁵ Klingemann, *Moses*, Ixf. ('Vorerinnerung'). Cf. Haring, *Moses zu Tanis*. Cf. also Schächter, *Moses in der deutschen Dichtung*.

⁶⁶ *Papyri Graecae Magicae*, vol. II, 120f. (= XIII, 732ff.)

centuries. In 1725 a book was published in Cologne with the title *Die ägyptischen großen Offenbarungen, in sich begreifend die aufgefundenen Geheimnisbücher Mosis oder des Juden Abraham von Worms Buch der wahren Praktik in der uralten göttlichen Magie* (The Egyptian great revelations, containing the newly found books of secrets of Moses or the Jew Abraham of Worms' Book of the true practice in the ur-ancient divine magic)⁶⁷. Likewise in the "Age of Reason", in the year 1797, a so-called *Sixth and Seventh Liber Mosis* was advertised for sale in the *Allgemeinen literarischen Anzeiger*. Actually published in 1849, and reprinted several times since then⁶⁸, it takes up the tradition of magical incantatory texts and books of sorcery and legitimises them as original and secret Mosaic knowledge: 'These two books were revealed by God Almighty to his loyal servant Moses on Mount Sinai inter-valle lucis . . . as *Biblii arcanorum arcanorum*, that is, secrets of all secrets'⁶⁹. Even as late as just before 1900, the *Sixth and Seventh Liber Mosis* was outdone by a collection of magical treatises with the baroque title *Das Buch Jezira, das ist, Das große Buch der Bücher Moses; das sechste, das siebente, das achte, das neunte, das zehnte und das elfte. Aus ältesten kabbalistischen Urkunden. Kabbala denudata. Offenbarungen aus den Büchern Moses. Das Geheimnis aller Geheimnisse, beinhaltend Sämtliche 40 Hauptwerke über Magie, verborgene Kräfte und geheime Wissenschaften* (The Book Jezira, that is, The great Book of Books of Moses; the sixth, the seventh, the eighth, the ninth, the tenth and the eleventh. From the most ancient kabbalistic documents. Kabbala denudata. Revelations from the Books of Moses. The Secret of all Secrets, containing all in all 40 major works about magic, hidden powers and secret sciences).

The hypertrophy, together with the trivialisation, of Moses the magician within the imaginary esoteric library of books about Moses hardly seems to fit our concepts of modernity. Over against the possibly regressive re-mythologisation of religion stands its progressive natural philosophical reinterpretation in terms of the paradigm of Moses the Egyptian magician; this, at least, was the situation in the 16th and 17th centuries. In early modernity, however, it was still easier to integrate the magical within the domain of official knowledge than has been the case after the Enlightenment. Since then—with

⁶⁷ Abraham von Worms, *Die ägyptischen grossen Offenbarungen*. Repr. *Das Buch der wahren Praktik in der göttlichen Magie*.

⁶⁸ Cf. Peuckert, 'Der Jude als Zauberer', 811ff.; Peuckert, 'Moses, das sechste und siebente Buch', 584ff.; Peuckert, 'Das "Sechste und siebente Buch Mosis"', 123-148.

⁶⁹ *Das sechste und siebente Buch Mosis*.

the exception of the Romantic period—the originally dialectic relationship between magic and religion resp. science has gradually been replaced by an antithetical one. In this process, the Egyptian Moses became ever more the preserve of an esoteric literature that no longer participated in official scholarly discourse. Early modernity was the great era of the Egyptian Moses. His descendent after the Enlightenment, more compatible with modernity, is the Moses of Sinai, Moses the lawgiver and founder of religion and state.

[translation: Tanya Ury]

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- Moses wird gängigerweise als Inbegriff des religiösen Gesetzgebers verstanden. In der Frühen Neuzeit wird dem eine zweite Moses-Figur an die Seite gestellt: Moses als Magier. So stehen sich hier zwei Moses-Figurationen gegenüber: der Gesetzgeber (Moses vom Sinai) und der Magier (Moses aus Ägypten), und damit ein (bekanntes) religions- und naturgesetzliches Wissen auf der einen und ein (vielfach vergessenes) magisches Wissen auf der anderen Seite, auf das in dem folgenden Beitrag der Akzent gelegt werden soll.

STUART FREEMASONRY: RESTORING THE TEMPLE OF VISION?

ANDREW PRESCOTT

Marsha Keith Schuchard, *Restoring the Temple of Vision: Cabalistic Freemasonry and Stuart Culture* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 110), Leiden: E.J. Brill 2002). 845 + xiii pp. ISBN 9004124896.

In the introduction to his book *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland's Century 1590-1710*, the Scottish historian David Stevenson recalls his bewilderment at encountering references to Scottish covenanters becoming Freemasons in the 1640s¹. Like many other academic historians, Stevenson had previously assumed that Freemasonry was a much later development. In his book, and an accompanying volume, *The First Freemasons*, Stevenson describes the early history of Freemasonry in Scotland between 1590 and 1700, emphasising the fundamental contribution of William Schaw, King James VI's Master of Works and General Warden of Masons in Scotland. In two sets of ordinances issued in 1598 and 1599, Schaw introduced the Masonic lodge in its modern form and the first minute books of Masonic lodges date from this time. But, for Stevenson, the "bombshell" in the 1599 Schaw statutes was the requirement that members of lodges should be tested in 'the art of memorie and science thairof'². "The Art of Memory" was of course the subject of a celebrated study by Frances Yates, and Stevenson argues that the references in the Schaw ordinances do indeed relate to those ancient visualisation techniques used to memorise complex information which had been enthusiastically taken up in Hermetic and Rosicrucian circles in the sixteenth century. In Stevenson's analysis, Schaw was engaged in an extraordinary attempt to introduce working stonemasons to cutting-edge Hermetic philosophy.

For Marsha Keith Schuchard, Stevenson's discussion of these clauses in the Schaw statutes opens the door to a revolutionary reinterpretation of British history. Schuchard's huge book *Restoring the Temple of Vision* argues that these references reflect the prevalence of Hermetic and Cabalistic ideas in

¹ Stevenson, *Origins of Freemasonry*, xi.

² Stevenson, *Origins of Freemasonry*, 44-46, 49.

Stuart court culture. She proposes that Jewish building guilds preserved mystical ideas dating back to the time of King Solomon, which they transmitted to medieval European stonemasons and the Templars. These traditions according to Schuchard found a receptive home in Scotland, where they became fused with Scottish national myths and were actively promoted by the Stuart kings. Schuchard argues that after the disaster of 1688, the “Celtic-Catholic-Jewish” values of the Stuarts were preserved abroad in the secret enclaves of *Écossais* Freemasonry. Schuchard rightly feels that most interpretations of British history are still far too Anglo-centric and rooted in the myth of Protestant progress and toleration promoted by the victors of 1688. She portrays the Stuart kings, and particularly James VI of Scotland and I of England and Charles I, as tolerant, progressive and cultured: ‘not the monsters of religious intolerance so often painted in academic and popular writing in English’ (p. 6). The present volume forms, in Schuchard’s words, ‘a prolegomena to future works on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century occultist Freemasonry in Britain, Scandanavia and Europe’ (p. xii). Schuchard evidently plans a vast anti-Whig history of the world.

Schuchard’s energy and thoroughness must be admired. She has shown great persistence in trawling through a huge range of materials to produce a formidable catalogue of references which she suggests reflect the influence of ‘Cabalistic, Rosicrucian, Templar and Swedenborgian Masonry’. Regardless of one’s opinion of Schuchard’s thesis, her book is a valuable compendium of sources which require examination in considering the intellectual milieu of early Freemasonry. At the end of the day, however, the book is fundamentally flawed, and Schuchard’s argument unpersuasive. At almost every point, Schuchard’s narrative is marred by excessive credulity and a lack of critical rigour. It is impossible without writing another book thoroughly to document these problems, so I will concentrate on one example, which goes to the heart of Schuchard’s argument. If the Stuarts are to be seen as the heirs of an ancient Cabalistic tradition which became fused with Freemasonry, it is essential that they themselves should have been Freemasons. For Schuchard, the pivotal figure was King James VI and I, who was, she asserts, initiated as a Freemason.

In view of the importance of this point for Schuchard’s argument, it is surprising that she declares that King James was an initiate of Scottish Freemasonry at least four times (pp. 47, 69, 207, 214) without thoroughly substantiating this claim. It is only after some extended discussion of James as a “Mason King” that the source for the statement that he was a Freemason is finally discussed (p. 237). This reveals that the only seventeenth-century

source to report that James was a Freemason is an elaborate rhetorical prologue to an agreement made between members of the Lodge of Scone at Perth. This agreement was drawn up in 1658, more than fifty years after the alleged initiation. The introduction to the agreement sought to substantiate the claims of this lodge to be the second oldest in Scotland, and is a very suspect source. It falsely alleges that two members of the Mylne family were master masons to the Scottish king. David Stevenson's judicious analysis of this document concludes that its introduction contains 'as much mythology as fact'. On the specific issue of King James's initiation, Stevenson comments that: 'the fact that the assertion that James VI entered the lodge occurs in a passage creating the fabulous history of the Mylnes, quite apart from other considerations, makes the story of James VI's initiation implausible'³.

Schuchard does not produce any new evidence or arguments to counter Stevenson's conclusion that James VI and I was not a Freemason. She simply brushes aside Stevenson's doubts, stating that 'I see no reason to reject the assertion of the Perth Masons, who would soon work for James's grandson Charles II' (p. 237 n. 200). This is a very flimsy argument. Masons seeking royal patronage are more, not less, likely to invent royal connections. The distant possibility of work from Charles II in the event of a restoration did not after all discourage the Perth masons from spuriously claiming that members of the Mylne family had served the crown. The only other substantive point made by Schuchard in support of her claim that James was a Freemason (apart from a reference to the legendary history of Freemasonry compiled in the eighteenth century by James Anderson) is a statement that James encouraged 'some of the deacons and craftsmen of Edinburgh' to threaten rebellion in order to prevent a scheme to marry him to Princess Anne of Denmark (pp. 215-6). Schuchard assumes that these craftsmen were the masons and that the "familiar servant" used in communications with them was probably Schaw. However, there were of course many other crafts in Edinburgh, and James had other familiar servants. Without further evidence, we cannot assume that the craftsmen in question were masons and that Schaw was involved. This is an example of the tunnel vision which is a danger in studying the history of Freemasonry; it is easy to forget that there were other crafts. In adding a further hypothesis to this suspect series of assumptions and claiming that James was perhaps relying on Schaw and his fellow craftsmen to help him in secret and difficult diplomatic affairs, Schuchard finally enters the realm of fantasy.

³ Stevenson, *First Freemasons*, 101-3.

These are very flimsy foundations on which to build a huge book. If James VI and I was not a Freemason, then Schuchard's elaborate house of cards collapses, since she fails to put forward any solid evidence that Charles I, Charles II or James II were Freemasons. Particularly unsatisfactory is her treatment of Charles I. Charles is repeatedly described as a 'Mason King' (pp. 362, 373, 404, 415, 490), and eventually as a 'Masonic Martyr' (with Nicholas Bonneville's preposterous claim that Scottish Rite rituals were based on the scene of Charles I's execution being repeated in earnest on p. 491), but (as far as I can find) the only evidence cited by Schuchard that Charles was a Freemason is a statement by the notoriously untrustworthy Anderson, writing one hundred years later (p. 373). Charles is simply assumed by Schuchard to have had Masonic interests because he undertook architectural projects, was sympathetic to courtiers with Rosicrucian interests, and had as king to concern himself with aspects of the regulation of the trade of stonemasonry in Scotland. This is history by insinuation, disguised as history based on evidence.

As far as Charles II is concerned, Schuchard again produces no satisfactory evidence that he was a Freemason. She relies on Anderson and on an oral tradition among French Freemasons, apparently only first reported some centuries later (pp. 489-90). There is a single sentence in a letter from the enthusiastic Scottish Freemason Sir Robert Moray to Charles denying charges of treason which might possibly be interpreted as a reference to Freemasonry, since Moray says that Charles may do what he wants with him, 'as a master builder doth with his materials'⁴. But this sentence could simply be a desperate man searching for a forceful metaphor, and is a tenuous basis on which to claim Charles II as a Freemason. The fact that Charles sometimes used a peculiar looking symbol to sign letters could possibly mean that he was familiar with Masonic symbolism (p. 586), but there are many other equally feasible explanations. Nowhere does Schuchard find an explicit, reliable and contemporary statement that Charles II was a Freemason—nor does she find any convincing circumstantial evidence. While Schuchard is happy to accept Anderson's claim that Charles I and Charles II were Freemasons, she inconsistently rejects his statement that James VII and II was not a Freemason (pp. 723-4). The evidence she cites to show that James was a Freemason is again unsatisfactory: a claim in an eighteenth-century ritual that a close friend of James was a head of a secret Masonic order, and a second-hand report of

⁴ Stevenson, *Origins of Freemasonry*, 176.

a statement attributed to Bonnie Prince Charlie that the secret Grand Mastership of the Masons was hereditary to the House of Stuart. Having thus established to her satisfaction that James was a Freemason, Schuchard plucks a date out of the air for his initiation, suggesting that it took place between 1649 and 1660, merely because he worked closely with military engineers at that time.

Even if Schuchard's claim that the Stuart kings were Freemasons is rejected, it might still be argued that she has assembled sufficient evidence to show that the Stuart court was permeated by Freemasonry. However, Schuchard's cavalier approach to her evidence means that she exaggerates the number of Freemasons in court circles, and it is difficult to form from her account an accurate impression of the influence of Freemasonry on court culture. Time and time again Schuchard claims individuals as Freemasons on the basis of unreliable or unsafe evidence, such as family traditions or reports made many years later. Thus, for example, General Monk is claimed as a Freemason on the basis of a statement made by Andrew Ramsay in 1741, a hundred years after the event (p. 575). Schuchard uses this dubious evidence to suggest that Monk employed Masonic networks to facilitate the restoration of Charles II. Charles II's Scottish physician, Sir Alexander Fraser, is said to have been a Freemason on the basis of 'an eighteenth-century document' which turns out to be by Baron von Starck, who, Schuchard admits, 'was often inaccurate or confused', and indeed got Fraser's christian name wrong (if it was Sir Alexander that he meant) (pp. 509, 582). The 2nd Duke of Buckingham is claimed as an 'old Mason' solely on the basis of a reference in Anderson (p. 510). In other cases, such as Sir William Davidson, Schuchard assumes that they were Freemasons and talks of their involvement in Masonic networks, but never provides any supporting evidence of membership. The work of David Stevenson and his student Lisa Kahler has shown how records survive which allow the membership of early Scottish Masonic lodges to be analysed very precisely, and there is no need to rely on coincidences or hoary legends in identifying members of Scottish lodges.

Schuchard's analysis of the literary material which embodies what she describes as the Cabalistic Freemasonry associated with the Stuarts also suffers from a lack of precision and insufficiently rigorous categorisation. Schuchard tends to see esoteric Masonic influences where none are immediately evident, and probably are not present. It is difficult, for example, to see how Laud's sermon on the text, 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, let them prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls . . .', can be interpreted as Masonic, and likely particularly to please the London Company of Masons, simply because it refers to walls (pp. 337-8). Although the guilds,

with their religious festivals and celebrations, naturally viewed the Protestantism of John Knox with suspicion, it also seems unlikely that Knox's 1560 sermon on the need to re-build the House of God can be interpreted as referring to the Masons because of its play with the metaphors of wood and stone (p. 167). There can be no doubt that the 1618 epitaph on the working Freemason John Stone relates to Masonry, but it is again difficult to see how its banal references to 'our great corner stone' who loved 'to build God's Temples' suggest 'an infusion of Scottish traditions of Solomonic-Hebraic masonry' (pp. 330-1). Similarly, to interpret passing references by James VI and I to a Pythagorean silence and an apprenticeship as Masonic is over-enthusiastic, to say the least (p. 243). Above all, Schuchard is prone to assume that any reference to King Solomon or his Temple reflects the influence of "Cabalistic Freemasonry". Thus she quotes the description of the building of Solomon's Temple from Abraham Cowley's poem *Davideis*, but it is impossible from the passage quoted to see anything which might connect it with any Masonic ideas (p. 459). At times, the book degenerates into a catalogue of seventeenth-century literary references to King Solomon, his temple, Rosicrucianism and architecture, but none of these themes were the exclusive preserve of Freemasons and it is very dangerous to assume that every reference to King Solomon or Hiram of Tyre reveals the influence of a single hidden tradition. Much more rigorous analysis of these materials is necessary to establish what, if any, impact Scottish Freemasonry had in all these areas in the seventeenth century.

Schuchard's definition of Freemasonry is so wide-ranging that she fails to establish convincing lines of descent between the various traditions to which she points. She is prone to assume that any fraternal organisation with a secret sign or legendary history is Masonic in its inspiration or influence. This is evident in her discussion of the fraternal organisations reported among courtiers of James VI and I (pp. 353-4). In order to interpret these references, it is essential to bear in mind that there was an upsurge in the formation of fraternal clubs and societies in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain, of which the growth of Freemasonry was simply one facet. This phenomenon has recently been authoritatively analysed in a fundamental monograph by Peter Clark⁵, which is surprisingly omitted from Schuchard's bibliography. Schuchard has a fondness for suggesting that unlikely coincidences are in some way significant, as for example in her claim that the use of theatrical settings by Scottish Rite masons in America the late nineteenth century

⁵ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*.

reflects the origin of this ritual in Stuart masques (p. 5). In order to establish such a descent, much more rigorous analysis of the development of the rituals of *Écossais* Freemasonry is necessary than that offered by Schuchard. This needs to take into account the fact that these rituals will have changed and developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Significantly, recent detailed work on the history of relevant rituals, such as that by Dr Jan Snoek presented at recent conferences in Canonbury and Kirkcaldy, suggest a picture wholly different to that offered by Schuchard. This makes the lack of any thorough discussion of ritual by Schuchard particularly disappointing.

In presenting a history to counter the Whig interpretation of Macaulay and other Victorian historians, Schuchard introduces distortions which are just as serious as those which she seeks to correct. This can be seen most strikingly in her treatment of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Schuchard argues that both these monarchs neglected building and architecture. She suggests that the destruction of the monasteries under Henry VIII created a rift between Henry and the masons, and states that foreign stonemasons were unwilling to work for Henry after the Reformation. The patronage of architecture and the craft of masonry by the monarchy in Scotland was in her view intended deliberately to create a counterweight to the anti-architectural activities of the Tudors and to provide a direct expression of Solomonic (and thus in her interpretation Masonic) ideas of kingship. However, Henry VIII was probably one of the most energetic and spendthrift builders in the history of the English monarchy, with an appetite for building described by Malcolm Airs as 'truly voracious'⁶. Henry's expenditure on royal palaces such as Bridewell, St James's, Greenwich, Nonsuch and Whitehall was immense. Above all, Henry instituted a huge programme of military fortification, taking a close personal interest in the technical issues associated with these buildings. Naturally, foreign artists and craftsmen were keen to work for such a lavish patron, and among the foreigners used by Henry in decorating for example Nonsuch Palace were Belin of Modena, William Cure of Amsterdam and Giles Gerig⁷. As Henry grew older, he increasingly identified himself with Solomon, as is vividly illustrated by Holbein's 1534-5 picture of Henry as Solomon, awaiting the arrival of the Queen of Sheba, complete with altered text from 2 Chronicles, in the Royal Library at Windsor. Moreover, Henry took pains to ensure that these Solomonic ideas of kingship were transmitted to his son⁸. As strong a case could be made for Henry VIII as a 'Mason

⁶ Airs, *Guide and Gazetteer*, 31.

⁷ Airs, *Guide and Gazetteer*, 32.

⁸ Cressy, 'Spectacle and Power'.

King' as that put forward by Schuchard for the Stuarts, and certainly in searching for the origins of the Stuart interest in Solomonic imagery, it would be more fruitful to start with Henry VIII than eighteenth- and nineteenth-century romantic fantasies about the Templars.

Schuchard quotes approvingly John Aubrey's comment that under Elizabeth I 'Architecture made no growth: but rather went backwards'. However, in substantiating this view, she largely relies on later Masonic sources and gives prominence to the claim by Anderson that Elizabeth broke up an assembly of Freemasons in York in 1561 (p. 170), a story for which there is no independent corroboration. The handful of quotes which Schuchard gives from modern architectural historians such as Malcolm Airs or Mark Girouard to support her view of the moribund state of Elizabethan building are selective and used in a misleading way. It would be difficult to guess from Schuchard's account that Elizabeth's reign falls in the period between 1570 and 1640 famously described by the historian W.G. Hoskins as 'The Great Rebuilding'⁹. Although Hoskins's thesis of a "Great Rebuilding" between 1570 and 1640 has been criticised for its broadbrush approach and narrow date range, the main charge has been not that Hoskins was inaccurate in suggesting that there was an enormous upsurge in building during Elizabeth's reign, but rather that he neglected the extensive building activity after the civil war, which can be plausibly seen as a further "Great Rebuilding". In his recent book arguing that there was a second Great Rebuilding in the late seventeenth century, Colin Platt nevertheless accepts and endorses Hoskins's general conclusion that 'from Cornwall to Lancashire, and from Herefordshire across to Suffolk, the evidence for the Great Rebuilding between 1570 and 1640 is abundant and inescapable'. Professor Platt concludes that 'Professor Hoskins' original Great Rebuilding is still persuasive', and paints a picture of vigorous building activity in England between 1550 and 1700, disturbed only by the disruptions of the civil war¹⁰.

While Schuchard makes the inevitable references to Thomas Tresham's building work in Northamptonshire with its intriguing numerological and religious symbolism, she fails to mention any of the large-scale country house projects of Elizabeth's reign, such as Hardwick Hall, Longleat, Burghley House, Chatsworth, Montacute House, Condover Hall in Shropshire, Wollaton Hall in Nottinghamshire, and Kirby Hall in Northamptonshire. This is all the more surprising since Schuchard quotes from Mark Girouard's biography of

⁹ Hoskins, 'The Great Rebuilding'; Hoskins, 'Rebuilding of Tudor and Stuart England'.

¹⁰ Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, vii, 1.

Robert Smythson¹¹, the mason who supervised the building of some of these houses (p. 171). Schuchard quotes Girouard to the effect that the Elizabethan period did not have any architects, and uses this to give the impression that the building industry was moribund. However, Girouard was here concerned to make a completely different point, namely that the work of designing and building Elizabethan houses such as Hardwick was still undertaken, as in the middle ages, by craftsmen such as Smythson, who was described in a letter of introduction given to him by Sir Humphrey Lovell, Elizabeth I's master mason, as 'Robert Smytheson, freemason'¹². Schuchard similarly misrepresents the work of Malcolm Airs, the authority on the Tudor and Jacobean country house. She refers (p. 246) to Airs's comment that Elizabethan patrons did not concern themselves greatly with the details of building plans in order to give the impression that there was little interest in building among the Elizabethan gentry. In fact, Airs argues that, in the Elizabethan court, 'architecture became a fashionable talking point' with courtiers 'intensely interested in each other's buildings'¹³. The blurb for Airs' 1995 volume sums up his conclusions more accurately: 'stimulated by the Elizabethan Court, architecture became a matter of passionate interest and social rivalry, characterized by symbolism, allegory and fantasy'¹⁴. This seems a better starting point than Aubrey.

It is inevitable that in covering a period from Solomon to the end of the middle ages in just over a hundred pages, the first section of the book also contains distortions, but again these seem greater than those necessarily introduced by compression. While Schuchard performs a valuable service in stressing the importance of early Jewish building guilds, her stress on the Jewish contribution gives an over-simplistic view of the complex processes, involving interchange between the Latin Christian, Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish communities, by which ideas were transmitted from the ancient period to the early middle ages. Thus, her claim that the idea of the guild originated with Jewish masons underestimates the significance of other fraternal organisations of the Roman Empire. It also assumes a stricter division between craft guild and religious fraternity in medieval Europe than was in fact the case. It is strange that the extraordinary mass of information about the organisation of medieval stonemasons assembled by Douglas Knoop and Gwilym

¹¹ Girouard, *Robert Smythson*.

¹² Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, 40.

¹³ Airs, *Tudor and Jacobean House*, 4-5.

¹⁴ Airs, *Tudor and Jacobean House*.

Jones in their monograph on *The Medieval Mason* has still not been fully absorbed by scholars of Freemasonry¹⁵, and Schuchard also fails to make use of this work, recycling instead tired speculation about the Templars which mostly does not bear scrutiny. If the use of Anderson as an authority for the history of seventeenth-century Freemasonry is unwise, referring to him as a primary source for the middle ages is positively reckless (p. 98).

Schuchard is critical of those historians who are excessively Anglo-centric in their view, but, like many recent scholars who profess to be writing a more truly British history, she seems to imagine that Britain consists exclusively of England and Scotland. There is little sense in replacing Anglo-centrism with an Anglo-Scottish (and too often Anglo-Lowland Scot) centrism. Wales barely figures in Schuchard's discussion. The only substantial mention of Wales comprises inaccurate statements about the building of Edward I's castles there¹⁶. This is surprising since the Welsh gentry had strong Jacobite sympathies. If there was a strong connection between Freemasonry and Jacobitism, one might anticipate that the themes discussed by Schuchard would figure strongly in Welsh history. This point was made by J.P. Jenkins in an article in the *Welsh History Review* as long ago as 1979, when he urged a detailed examination of this issue¹⁷. This is an omission Schuchard might perhaps repair in future studies. Even more surprising than the cursory treatment of Wales is the lack of any substantial discussion of Ireland, which

¹⁵ Knoop and Jones, *The Medieval Mason*.

¹⁶ Schuchard states that 'As he [Edward] subdued Wales, his Master of Works impressed Welsh masons—under threat of arrest—to not only build the conqueror's castles but to assist the subsequent advance of the English army into Scotland'. This is a complete travesty, as a moment's glance at the meticulous reconstructions in the various studies published by Arnold J. Taylor of the complex logistical operations required to build Edward I's Welsh castles will show: Taylor, 'King's Work's in Wales'. The director of this building programme was identified by Taylor as the Savoyard Master James of St George, but many other gifted craftsmen from both England and abroad were used. Stonemasons and many other craftsmen were recruited from all over England to undertake the work. For example, for the initial work on Aberystwyth Castle, sheriffs were ordered to impress masons from Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Bristol. The masons were ordered to assemble in Bristol. In the case of Flint Castle, the first building work was undertaken by masons drawn from Leicester, Lincoln and Nottingham. Moreover, as Taylor's work amply shows, the work on the castles was extended over very long periods, with demand for masons and other craftsmen fluctuating, so that it is impossible to make pat statements about who built the castles. The fact that a large castle building programme was undertaken in Wales but not in Scotland is more easily explained by Colvin's argument that, because Scotland was already a feudalised country, there were already castles in existence and no need to build them, than by Schuchard's suggestion (p. 88) that it reflected difficulty in recruiting Scottish masons to undertake building work for the English kings.

¹⁷ Jenkins, 'Jacobites and Freemasons'.

does not even appear in the index. This is a major flaw. Ireland is of central importance in the history of the Stuarts, and of no less importance in the history of Freemasonry. Schuchard's failure to discuss Ireland is even more surprising in that her avowed aim was to help understand 'why the Irish poet William Butler Yeats argued that William Blake was a Cabalist, Rosicrucian and Swedenborgian; why the Irish novelist James Joyce portrayed his Everyman hero, Leopold Bloom, as a Jewish Freemason in Catholic Dublin' (p. 7). Again, perhaps Ireland has been reserved for a future volume.

This brings us to the fundamental problem in Schuchard's book. She deeply wants to believe that the "eccentric" version of history proposed by such figures as MacGregor Mathers is really true. She is of course right in thinking that there are other views of the history and significance of Freemasonry than those which might be gleaned from examining conventional mainstream Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry. She hints at some of these threads in her book. For example, she picks out the view of the French revolutionary writer and Freemason, Nicholas Bonneville, that Freemasonry preserved aspects of Stuart court culture (pp. 581, 585). These views influenced English radicals such as the English Masonic reformer, William Finch, who published a pamphlet repeating Bonneville's claims about the Stuart origins of Freemasonry, and Thomas Paine, an associate of Bonneville. Paine wrote an essay on the origins of Freemasonry which was profoundly to influence such radical thinkers in England as Richard Carlile and George Jacob Holyoake. What is interesting in this is not whether or not Bonneville was right in his views, but the influence they exerted, which, through these paths, helped shape the views of Yeats and Joyce on Freemasonry. In understanding the views of Paine, Blake, Yeats and Joyce on Freemasonry, it is not necessary to know whether theories of the sort put forward by Bonneville were right or wrong. What is required is rather to trace the paths by which theories of this kind were transmitted and transmuted.

Having said that, in the wake of David Stevenson's work, there is a pressing need for a study of seventeenth-century Freemasonry in England, but it requires a completely different approach to that adopted by Schuchard. Schuchard remains, like the Whig historians she criticises, captivated by the crown and constitution. To understand developments in Freemasonry in seventeenth-century England, we need to look further down the social scale, at the working masons themselves. Stevenson's studies posed an important challenge. If the first steps towards modern Freemasonry were taken in Scotland, how was Freemasonry later transmitted into England, Ireland, Wales and ultimately Europe and America? England has nothing comparable to the

lodge records in Scotland, but there are still many archival resources bearing on the organisation of working stonemasons in seventeenth-century England which remain unexplored. It is sad that the important researches of the Revd. Neville Barker Cryer into the surviving records of the Grand Lodge of All England in York, which have produced more solid evidence of the organisation and structure of English Freemasonry in the late seventeenth century than anything in Schuchard's book, have been unable to find a publisher. It is equally surprising that no attempt has apparently been made to gather references to the organisation and structure of English Freemasons in such standard published sources as the Public Record Office's *Calendars of State Papers Domestic* or the calendars published by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. Beyond this, there are huge archives which remain untouched by Masonic scholars. The archives of cities such as Newcastle, York or Coventry require examination to see what information they contain about the organisations of stonemasons known to exist in those towns in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. Above all, the kind of concerted attack on building accounts, building contracts, judicial records, ecclesiastical court records and other archives which Knoop, Jones and Hamer undertook in the 1930s and 1940s for the middle ages needs to be repeated for the early modern period. What kind of people did Robert Smythson employ in his great Elizabethan building projects? How were they organised? What contacts did they have with Scottish stonemasons? Would Scottish stonemasons working in England have brought any of their new practices with them? What changes in the organisation of the English stonemasons' craft did the "Great Rebuildings" bring about? How did the rise of the gentleman architect and the increasing specialisation of building activities affect the position of working freemasons such as Smythson¹⁸? Such questions can only be answered by detailed archival research, and it is only from such research that hidden truths will ever be rediscovered.

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¹⁸ There is in fact a great deal of detailed information on these matters in the works of architectural historians such as Airs and Girouard, but Masonic scholars do not seem to have taken any interest in these researches.

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RESPONSE TO PRESCOTT'S REVIEW

MARSHA KEITH SCHUCHARD

In Andrew Prescott's review of *Restoring the Temple of Vision: Cabalistic Freemasonry and Stuart Culture*, he either missed or avoided the whole point of the book—i.e., to investigate the possible historical roots of certain clearly defined themes that emerged in the elaborate higher degrees of eighteenth-century *Écossais* Freemasonry. Throughout that turbulent century, historians and critics of Masonry (pro and con, Tory and Whig, Jacobite and Hanoverian) maintained the tradition that the Stuart kings—especially James VI and I, Charles I, and Charles II—were initiated Masons and that the exiled supporters of the deposed James VII and II carried Stuart Masonic traditions into France, Italy, Germany, Sweden, and Russia. By the 1740s, many of these Jacobites and their European supporters had developed elaborate “higher degrees”, in which the initiate was instructed in various esoteric and chivalric notions that differed dramatically from the official, orthodox version of Masonic history promoted by the “modern” Grand Lodge of London. As stated in my Introduction (p. 7),

I concentrate on certain themes that define the Stuart Masonic mentality—i.e., Jewish and Scottish architectural mysticism; Jewish and Lullist mnemonic—visualization techniques; Cabalistic and Hermetic sexual theosophy; Rosicrucian and Masonic scientific schemes; crusader chivalry and illuminated knighthood; liberty of conscience and universal brotherhood.

For some reason, Prescott does not examine any of these themes, so that a reader of his review will gain little sense of the main subject matter of the book.

I also state in the Preface (p. xi) that I hope to provide a pre-1717 historical background to the developments in eighteenth-century *Écossais* Freemasonry that have been the subject of excellent studies by the French historians Auguste Viatte, René Le Forestier, Antoine Faivre, Pierre Chevallier, Charles Porset, Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, and André Kervella; by the Germans Karl Frick, Rolf Zimmerman, and Helmut Reinalter; by the Italian Carlo Francovich; by the Spaniard Ferrer Benimeli; by the Israelis Gershom Scholem and Jacob Katz¹. Unfortunately, Prescott did not bother to check these works

¹ Full citations to their books are given on page 1 of my book.

before claiming that my whole thesis is “credulous”, for that is a charge he would also have to make against many of these major scholars. The lack of a pre-1717 history of British (Scottish, English, and Irish) Masonry that links up with post-1717 *Écossais* systems has been a frustrating stumbling block to European scholars, who are hampered by the anti-Jacobite, anti-French “conventional wisdom” of most English writers on Masonry. The major French historian, Pierre Chevallier, observes about ‘Les émigrés jacobites habitués en France’:

Les origines de celle-ci baignent dans une obscurité profonde et peu d'espoir existe de la voir un jour dissiper. Faut-il-et cette origine serait très séduisant-ajouter foi à ceux qui font remonter les première Loges françaises à notre sol des Stuart exilés après 1649 et 1688? . . . L'origine Jacobite (du nom des partisans des Stuarts détronés Jacques II, puis 'Jacques III') de l'Ordre n'est pas facile à écarter . . .²

My book aims to bring some light to that ‘profound obscurity’ about early Stuart Masonry and its influence in France.

Chevallier’s puzzlement over the alleged Jacobite influences is shared by the American historian Margaret Jacob, who has carried out important archival work in Holland and France and who has published major works on the “modern”, Newtonian Masonry of the English Grand Lodge and the “enlightened”, rationalist Masonry of non-*Écossais* rites in France. Jacob forthrightly recognizes the problem that the persistent Stuart-Jacobite traditions poses to historians:

Generally historians have not known quite what to do with the stalwart but exiled Jacobites except to see them as romantic patrons of an essentially lost, and backward-looking, cause. When their cause emerges with a commitment to freemasonry, defined as progressive and modern in its aspirations and outlook, the historian is confounded by an ostensible paradox. One solution has been to see the Jacobite influence as confined largely to the period prior to 1740 and thus divorce it from the last decades of eighteenth-century French masonic history with its complex, but real, tendencies toward reform, if not republicanism³.

Her own re-thinking of Masonic history was stimulated by David Stevenson’s ground-breaking books, *The Origins of Freemasonry: Scotland’s Century, 1590-1710* (Cambridge, 1988), and *The First Freemasons: Scotland’s Early Lodges and Their Members* (Aberdeen, 1988), as well as the on-going publication of newly discovered Jacobite and *Écossais* documents from European

² Chevallier, *Histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie Française*, I, 4-5.

³ Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*, 206.

archives. Maintaining an open mind (even to new material that seems to contradict her earlier arguments), Jacob observes,

We cannot imagine Jacobitism as the driving impulse in French aristocratic freemasonry by midcentury. Rather it was one of its roots, and those origins may help to account for the simultaneously enlightened, baroque, and occult—even pious—freemasonry that we found so prominent in the Strasbourg lodges of the 1770s and 1780s, among others⁴.

In my book, I examine the early Franco-Scottish ties (the “auld alliance”) that influenced the similarly ‘enlightened, baroque, and occult’ preoccupations of the seventeenth-century Stuart kings, and I suggest ways that these interests were expressed and implemented in Masonry during their reigns. Moreover, I draw on recent revisionist studies of Jacobitism to argue that the religious and scientific policies of the later Stuart kings and their Masonic supporters were actually ‘progressive and modern’⁵.

According to Prescott, my concentration on these Masonic themes is ‘an example of tunnel vision’, for I ‘forget that there were other crafts’. However, the other crafts did not maintain as their traditions the selected themes of the book; nor were any other crafts so precisely associated with the Stuart kings from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. He also states as an example of ‘excessive credulity’ my acceptance of the tradition that James VI and I was an initiated Mason: ‘If James VI and I was not a Freemason, then Schuchard’s elaborate house of cards collapses’. In response to this challenge, I will examine the sole source for Prescott’s rejection of the Masonic affiliation of James—the statement by David Stevenson that he finds a statement made in a 1658 Masonic document ‘implausible’⁶. In Robert Mylne’s book, *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland and Their Works* (1893), he reproduced a ‘Contract by the Master Masons . . . on the decease of John Mylne, Master Mason and Master of the said Lodge’ at Perth, dated 24 December 1658, which included the following assertions:

. . . there came one from the North country named John Mylne, a mason, . . . who by reason of his skill and art was preferred to be the King’s Majesty’s Master Mason and Master of the said Lodge at Scone, and his son John Mylne being after his father’s decease preferred to the said office, and Master of the said Lodge, in the reign of his Majesty *James the sixth of blessed memory, who by*

⁴ Ibid., 207.

⁵ See especially Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People*; McLynn, *Charles Edward*; Corp & Cruickshanks, *Stuart Court in Exile*; Cruickshanks, *Glorious Revolution*; and the Special Feature articles in *1650-1850*, 8 (2002), 159-255.

⁶ Stevenson, *First Freemasons*, 103.

*the said second John Mylne was by the King's own desire entered Freeman, Mason, and Fellow Craft, and during all his lifetime he maintained the same as one member of the Lodge of Scone—so that this Lodge (if well ordered) within this kingdom—of which name of Mylne there hath continued generations of Master Masons to his Majesties the Kings of Scotland . . . [my italics]*⁷.

At that time, in 1988, Stevenson could find no contemporary evidence to support the claim that the second John Mylne was a royal master mason and, given the preceding mythological material on the Masons' direct descent from Solomon's Temple, he found the statement about James VI and I 'implausible'—i.e. not convincing (but not disproven). Seven years later, in 1995, Howard Colvin—the leading historian of British architecture—published reinforcement for the claim about Mylne and accepted the statement about the king's initiation. In his biographical entry on the second John Mylne (d. 1621), Colvin summarized Robert Mylne's account and the assertion in the Perth document:

Although no official or contemporary record appears to confirm this statement, it may be noted that John Mylne is also referred to as royal master mason in the memoirs of James Lord Somerville (d. 1690). Writing in 1679, Lord Somerville recalled that in 1584-5 the 7th Lord Somerville employed 'John Millne, the king's master meassone,' to build the family seat called the DRUM, MIDLOTHIAN . . . [*Memorie of the Somervilles*, ed. Walter Scott, Edinburgh, 1815, I, 460]⁸.

Colvin goes on to state that 'As Master of the Lodge of Scone he [Mylne] entered King James VI and I by his own desire as "frieman Meason and Fellow Craft." In his next entry on the third John Mylne (d. 1657), Colvin states that he served as Master Mason to the Crown' under Charles I until 1636, when he passed the office on to his son John (d. 1667), who 'was made "fellow of craft" in the Edinburgh Masonic lodge' and who 'repeatedly served as Deacon of the Edinburgh masons'⁹. After the Restoration, the fourth John Mylne 'was confirmed in his office of Master Mason to the Crown'. His only son having died in infancy, his nephew Robert Mylne (d. 1710) was appointed by Charles II in 1668 as 'Master Mason to the Scottish Crown'. It was after the third John Mylne's death that the Masons of Perth produced their document about James VI's initiation. For Prescott, this document (whose authenticity has never been contested) is 'a suspect source', in which the Perth

⁷ Mylne, *Master Masons*, 128-29. I modernized the spelling in the quotation.

⁸ Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary*, 674-675.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 676-679.

masons ‘spuriously’ claim that ‘members of the Mylne family had served the crown’. However, according to Colvin (and Deborah Howard), that claim was accurate¹⁰. Prescott’s assertion that ‘Masons seeking royal patronage are more, not less, likely to invent royal connections’ is not convincing, because such a claim—especially in a written document—could subject them to serious legal charges. Moreover, their bold statement was made in 1658, when the Stuart family was in exile and could provide no employment. Because I greatly admire Stevenson’s work, I had no desire to argue with him, so I did not belabor our point of disagreement. After all, plausible and implausible are matters of opinion. To justify my own decision for ‘plausibility’, I provided the most thorough examination that has yet been published concerning James VI and I’s religious, intellectual, political, and internationalist interests in architecture and his close collaboration with known masons.

Because the claim about James’s initiation was *not rejected* and was *repeated* in virtually all eighteenth-century documents dealing with Scottish Masonry, I assumed that most readers (and certainly students of Masonic history) would be familiar with the strength and persistence of that widely-known and widely-disseminated tradition. Thus, to shore up my ‘house of cards’, I will briefly list authors who repeat the assertion that James VI and I was a ‘Mason King’: James Anderson, *Constitutions of the Freemasons* (London, 1723 and 1738); John Pennell, *Constitutions of the Freemasons* (Dublin, 1730); *Antient Constitutions . . . with a Speech Delivered at the Grand Lodge of York* (London, 1731); *A Curious Collection of the Most Celebrated Songs in Masonry* (London, 1731); William Smith, *A Pocket-Companion for Freemasons* (London, 1735) and *The Book M; or, Masonry Triumphant* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1736); Fifield D’Assigny, *A Serious and Impartial Inquiry into . . . Freemasonry in the Kingdom of Ireland* (Dublin, 1744); M. de la Tierce, *Histoire de Franc-maçonnerie* (Frankfurt, 1747); *Hiram: or, the Grand Master-Key to the door of Both Antient and Modern Freemasonry* (London, 1766); William Preston, *Illustrations of Masonry* (London, all editions from 1775 to 1812); *Constitutions of . . . Free and Accepted Masons* (Worcester, Massachusetts, 1792), dedicated to the Grand Master, George Washington; John Robison, *Proofs of a Conspiracy* (1797)¹¹. In the 1760s,

¹⁰ In her important work, *Scottish Architecture*, Deborah Howard cites the Mylne-Somerville source and provides reinforcing information on the generations of Mylne master masons; see o.c., 38, 44-46, 191-93, 216-17.

¹¹ This list can be greatly extended, but I do not have access at present to the many relevant publications held in the British Library and London Grand Lodge.

Baron Théodore-Henry Tschoudy established a special Masonic rite which featured a degree entitled 'Grand Ecosais de la voûte sacrée de Jacques VI'¹². In the nineteenth-century, the highly-respected German journal of Masonic research, *Latomia*, published detailed articles on the Masonic affiliation of James VI and I (and his Stuart successors), noting that these traditions had long been taught in German and Swedish high-degree lodges¹³.

According to Prescott, 'Nowhere does Schuchard find an explicit, reliable and contemporary statement that Charles II was a Freemason'. He ignores my quotations on p. 669 (the epigraph to Chapter Eleven) and p. 674 from the manuscript, 'Ye History of Masonry', written by Thomas Treloar in 1665 and copied by Jon Raymond in 1705:

And after many days Charles [I] did reign in ye land and lo his blood was spilled
upon
ye earth even by ye traitor Cromwell.
Behold now ye return of pleasant for doth not ye Son of ye blessed
Martyr [Charles II] reign over ye whole land.
Long may he reign in ye land and govern ye Craft.
Is it not written ye shall not hurt ye Lords anointed¹⁴.

The quotations in Hebrew letters, Hiramic references, parallel between Hiram and Charles II as the Widow's Son, and strong royalist sentiments in the manuscript have been ably discussed in Masonic publications, which do not dispute its authenticity nor its claim about Charles II as governor of the Craft¹⁵. In 1723 James Anderson asserted that 'besides the Tradition of old Masons now alive, which may be rely'd upon, we have much reason to believe that King Charles II was an Accepted Free-Mason, as everyone allows he was a great encourager of the Craft'; at the Restoration, 'true Masonry was likewise restored'¹⁶. Soon after Anderson's publication, an anonymous critic of his book and of Masonry in general complained that this was weak evidence for Charles II, but he did not query the claim for James VI and I¹⁷. In Anderson's 1738 revised edition, he clarified his statement, noting that Charles II 'was made a Free-Mason in his travels'¹⁸. No other critic questioned the assertion that Charles II was initiated during his Continental exile,

¹² Bord, *Franç-Maçonnerie en France*, I, 255.

¹³ *Latomia*, IX (1847), 24-39; XXI, pt. 2 (1865), 125-44; XXIX (1873), 29.

¹⁴ Manuscript reproduced by Thorpe in 'Old Masonic Manuscripts', 40-48.

¹⁵ See especially McLeod, 'Additions', 98-99.

¹⁶ Anderson, *Constitutions* (1723), 40-41.

¹⁷ Anonymus, *Secret History*, 37.

¹⁸ Anderson, *Constitutions* (1738), 101.

and it was repeated in all of the eighteenth-century Masonic histories cited above—plus Friedrich Nicolai, *Versuch über die Beschuldigen welche dem Tempelherren gemacht worden* (1782); and Nicholas de Bonneville, *La Maçonnerie Écossoise comparée avec les trois Professions et le secret des Templiers du 14^e Siècle* (1788).

Though Anderson, a strong anti-Jacobite and supporter of the Hanoverian succession, said that the deposed James II ‘was not a brother Mason’, I do raise the possibility (not claim the proof) that he was affiliated with the Scottish (not English) fraternity during his residence as Duke of York in Edinburgh, when he sponsored major architectural projects and collaborated closely with known Masons, who published a mystical-mathematical-Masonic broadside in 1685 to support his claim to the British throne (pp. 723-27, 740-41). As French and Irish historians have long noted, publications from the 1730s onward affirmed a Masonic role for James II. For example, René Le Forestier (the pre-eminent French historian of ‘illuminist’ Masonry) describes a pamphlet published in 1739 in Paris, which ‘affirmait que Jacques II avait établi les degrés maçonniques supérieurs pour récompenser le loyalisme des Écos-sais qui avaient été ses plus fidèles partisans; c’est pourquoi les hauts grades portaient ce titre générique [Écossais]’¹⁹. Moreover, ‘Les Écossais passés en France avec Jacques II avaient le projet de remettre leur maître sur le trône avec l’aide de ce nouvel Ordre’. In the archives of the Royal Order of Heredom of Kilwinning in Edinburgh, eighteenth-century documents describe ‘the Scottish Degree of James II’²⁰. In *Latomia*, German Masonic historians published descriptions of the development by James II’s partisans of the higher degrees of Scottish Master and Knights of the ‘heiligen Andreas zur Distel’ and ‘Stuartbrudergra’²¹. Similar eighteenth-century assertions about James II and his Jacobite followers have been noticed by all the modern European historians I cited (as well as John Herron Lepper in Ireland). Is this proof?—no; is it a ‘plausible’ suggestion?—yes.

Moreover, after 1724, when Jonathan Swift (a critic of Anderson’s *Constitutions*) referred to ‘the famous old Scottish Lodge of Kilwinning of which all the Kings of Scotland have been from time to time Grand Masters without interruption’, succeeding Masonic authors in Britain, France, Germany,

¹⁹ Le Forestier, *Franc-Maçonnerie Templière et Occultiste*, 102-03.

²⁰ Edinburgh, Royal Order of Scotland: Letter Book ‘Details of Different Degrees’. I am grateful to Gordon Smart, Grand Secretary of the Royal Order, for permission to examine the archives. Curiously, today’s letterhead for the Order reads, ‘The King of Scots Hereditary Grand Master’.

²¹ *Latomia*, IX (1847), 29; XXIV, pt. 2 (1865), 117.

and Sweden repeated the hereditary role of the Stuart 'Mason Kings'²². The widespread destruction of Jacobite documents, including Masonic papers, during and after the 1745 rebellion renders research into subsequent *Écossais* political activities difficult but not impossible. For example, though the role of Prince Charles Edward Stuart in Freemasonry remains controversial, correspondence of the Comte de Clermont (French Grand Master) and the Marquis de Gages in 1767 reveals that both considered the Stuart prince a Grand Master²³. In addition, the surviving minute book of a lodge meeting of Lambert de Lintot's Rite of Seven Degrees (an *Écossais* affiliate) in London in 1774 describes the removal, by vote of seventy members, of Charles Edward Stuart from his position as 'Grand Master, Grand Commander, Conservator, Guardian of the Pact and Sacred Vow of Christian Princes'; the brothers further promise that 'they will give no recognition to any consitution in the name of the Said Charles Edward, in the three kingdoms of Great Britain, as contrary to the vows we make and shall make all our lives for the prosperity of the House of Brunswick'²⁴. The strongest international supporters of the Stuarts as hereditary Grand Masters were the Swedish royal family and pro-French Hat party (from the 1740s on). Among the unpublished Stuart Papers is a letter (dated 18 January 1780) from Duke Carl of Soudermania (first brother of Gustaf III) to Charles Edward Stuart, informing him that he (Duke Carl) has been elected chief of the XII Province of Templar Masonry and thus renders tribute to the Stuart prince as 'Grand Maitre de notre St. Ordre'²⁵. In 1783, in a revealing letter, Horace Mann (British diplomatic representative in Florence and a 'Hanoverian' Mason), reported to Consul Udney what he had learned about Swedish-Jacobite Masonic transactions in Italy:

It is supposed that when the Order of the Templars was suppressed and the individuals were persecuted, some of them secreted themselves on the High Lands of Scotland, and that from them either arose, or that they united themselves to

²² [Swift], *Letter from the Grand Mistress*. I discuss Swift's account of Masonic history and Cabalistic symbolism on pp. 787-92. For an example of the post-Swift statements, see the assertion (often repeated in other publications) in Calcott, *Candid Disquisition*, 104. 'The fraternity of Free-Masons in Scotland always owned their king and sovereign as their Grand Master'.

²³ Jackson, *Rose Croix*, 27; Smith, *Rise of the Ecossais Degrees*, 36.

²⁴ Document reproduced in Wonnacott, 'Rite of Seven Degrees in London', 75. The French-affiliated lodges in London, as well as many Ancient lodges, were then under surveillance by the English government.

²⁵ Royal Archives, Windsor: Stuart Papers, 497/198. These papers and the Swedish royal correspondence reveal that Charles Edward maintained secret bonds with the Swedish Masons while he stonewalled their German rivals.

the Society of Free Masons, of which the Kings of Scotland were supposed to be hereditary Grand Masters. From this Principle the present Pretender has let himself be persuaded that the Grand Mastership devolved on him, in which quality, in the year 1776, He granted a Patent to the Duke of Ostrogothia [second brother of Gustaf III] (who was then here) by which he appointed him his Vicar of all the Lodges in the North . . . The King of Sweden during his stay here [in 1783] obtained a patent from the Pretender in due form, by which he was appointed His Swedish Coadjutor and Successor to the Grand Mastership of the North . . . Count Albany [Charles Edward] said that a few years ago a Minister of the King of Denmark to the circles of Germany . . . solicited the same nomination in favour of the Duke of Brunswick . . . I must own I never thought the Society of Free Masons was looked upon in Germany to be of such importance as to excite the ambition of two such Princes to be at the head of them²⁶.

Charles Edward also named Gustaf III to be his successor as Grand Master of the Templar Masons, a transaction that was formalized after the Young Pretender's death in 1788.

Mann's letter is worth quoting at length, because it reveals the international strength of the Stuart-Masonic claims in an account by a political enemy to those traditions. Moreover, it belies the conventional Whig claim that Jacobitism was a Papist cause, for the Swedes were staunch Lutherans. The letter also points forward to the acceptance of Stuart-Masonic claims by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century opponents of high-degree, *Écossais* rites, who ranged from the radical rationalists Bonneville, Nicolai, and Richard Carlile to the reactionary rationalist John Robison²⁷. Arguing against the continuing dismissal by present-day English Masons of Stuart and French claims, Trevor Stewart (a Scottish member of the London research lodge *Quatuor Coronati*) warns that 'We ignore the *possible* connections of the exiled Stuarts and the oaktree emblem and Freemasonry at our historiographic peril'²⁸. The frustrating refusal of most English Masonic historians to deal with these

²⁶ Sieveking, *Memoirs of Sir Horace Mann*, 329-331. For further accounts of Charles Edward's transactions with the Swedish 'Mason King', see Nordmann, *Gustave III*, 219-20; Monod, *Jacobitism*, 303-05; McLynn, *Charles Edward Stuart*, 532-535.

²⁷ For Carlile, see his journal, *The Republican*, XII (1825), 354. Robison's papers at St. Andrews University reveal his extensive reading in Continental Masonic literature and the mass of documentation he found for the tradition that Stuart partisans brought Masonry to France in 1649 and 1688 (MS. 67, Forbes Papers: Q171.R.8. John Robison's Commonplace Book, ca. 1800).

²⁸ See Stewart's important, scholarly response to Hamill's paper, 'The Jacobite Conspiracy' (Stewart's response is at pp. 105-112). Hamill, who rejects the Jacobite-Masonic case, acknowledges that 'there has been no serious study of the Jacobites and Freemasonry in English Masonic research circles'.

historical developments is a major reason why I undertook my investigation into the medieval- to-seventeenth-century roots of these widely-believed traditions. If Prescott had looked at this vast eighteenth-century Continental, Scandinavian, Irish, and even English literature, he would perhaps have moderated his sweeping condemnation of my theses, which provide seventeenth-century links to these Jacobite-Masonic affairs.

Prescott further accuses me of 'selective quotation'—an odd charge since all quotation is selective, and he himself practices it. For example, when rejecting my argument about the negative and isolationist effect on English architecture produced by Henry VIII's break with Rome and destruction of monasteries, Prescott quotes Malcolm Airs that Henry VIII's appetite for building was 'truly voracious', but he omits Airs' preceding lines about the break in Renaissance building traditions in England. Here is the more fully quoted passage, which deals with the failure of Henry VIII's designers and craftsmen to continue the assimilation of Italian Renaissance architectural principles, which the king had briefly sponsored in 1512:

Perhaps if the links with the Continent had remained open this would ultimately have been so, but the political events which served to isolate England from the cultural forces of Catholic Europe prevented it and no work of art comparable to the quality of Torrigiano's [monumental royal] tomb was to appear in London for another hundred years or so.

In the early years of his reign, Henry VIII had built little that has survived, and it was only with the downfall of Wolsey in 1529 that his appetite for building became truly voracious. It has been reckoned that at the time of his death in 1547 he had more than forty houses at his disposal . . .²⁹.

However, as Airs makes clear, Henry's voracious building was of 'houses' and 'small fortresses' and that the latter 'still remain as an impressive architectural testament to England's isolated position in the years after the break with Rome'³⁰. For the masons, this was a serious decline from the 'Royal Art' of monumental royal and ecclesiastical architecture which was their traditional source of artistic pride and social prestige.

When Prescott argues that 'as strong a case could be made for Henry VIII as a "Mason King" as for James VI and I', he again ignores the main source for my counter-thesis, the architectural historian Howard Colvin, whom I quote on p. 139:

²⁹ Airs, *Buildings of Britain*, 29.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 32.

The dissolution of the monasteries was arguably the greatest single act of architectural vandalism in English, perhaps even in European history . . . In England between 1536 and 1540 every monastery was dissolved in a country whose culture had for five hundred years been largely embodied in its churches and religious houses, and the great majority of their buildings were (to use the contemporary expressions) ‘plucked down’ or ‘defaced’. This was done by the authority of a tyrannical and grasping king [Henry VIII], and effected by his minister, Thomas Cromwell, through subordinates who were for the most part ruthless, cynical and philistine men³¹.

For modern architectural historians, Henry VIII’s break with Rome and iconoclastic policies, followed by Elizabeth I’s neglect of ecclesiastical and monumental building, produced a serious hiatus in English architectural development. Prescott cites Mark Girouard’s book on Robert Smythson, a freemason who built country houses for the Elizabethan nobility, to counter that thesis, but he does not mention Girouard’s statement, which I quote on p. 139. Arguing that Henry VIII’s break with Rome led to disruption of England’s contacts with artistic developments on the Continent, Girouard observes that

the Crown abandoned almost entirely the role of patron of the arts. By two sharp blows English architecture had lost its main supporters and main links which would have connected it with the architecture of the Continent. For fifty years it remained provincial, a backwater in which there were only faint or distorted echoes of developments over the Channel³².

On pp. 138-46, I contrast the developments in Scotland, where James V strengthened his kingdom’s links with European architectural developments and ‘plenished the country with all kinds of craftsmen out of other countries’ in order to ‘apparel his palaces’³³. While James V patronized the brilliant courtier-architect, Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, encouraged his architectural studies in France, and employed sophisticated French master masons, Henry VIII was no longer able to attract first-rank architects and masons from Europe, because—according to Girouard—the best Catholic craftsmen were ‘unlikely to risk Papal disapproval by coming to England’³⁴.

³¹ Colvin, ‘Recycling the Monasteries’, 5.

³² Girouard, *Robert Smythson*, 3.

³³ Lindsay of Pittscoatie, *History of the Stuart Kings*, 252. In sixteenth-century (and twentieth-century) architectural terminology, there was a significant difference in design and construction status connoted by the words ‘houses’ and ‘palaces’. See also McKean, ‘Sir James Hamilton of Finnart’.

³⁴ Girouard, *Smythson*, 3.

The situation did not improve under Elizabeth I, though she did stop the policy of architectural destruction. When John Aubrey observed that 'Under Elizabeth architecture made no growth: but rather went backward', his conclusion was based on a thorough investigation into designing and building practices during her reign. Moreover, Colvin and other modern historians agree with him and consider Aubrey's manuscript 'Chronologia Architectonica' (1671) a valuable historical study:

Almost every significant building is mentioned [by Aubrey] and the perspicacity of the remark about Elizabethan architecture going backwards will not be lost on those who have read Dr. Mark Girouard's paper on 'Elizabethan Architecture and the Gothic Tradition'.*—**Architectural History*, VI (1963). See also Dr. Girouard's essay in the present volume³⁵.

Colvin is also struck that 'on the very first page' of the manuscript, 'we find a memorandum of a conversation about freemasons which Aubrey had had with Wren and Dugdale'. Ignoring my discussion of Aubrey's manuscript on pp. 747-48, Prescott recommends a publisher's "blurb" for one of Malcolm Airs' books on Tudor and Jacobean country houses as 'a better starting point than Aubrey'. As I will show later, even Airs would probably disagree with that judgment.

Girouard argues further that the 'lack of enlightened patronage of the visual arts, and the small estimation in which they were held, meant that there were no Elizabethan architects'³⁶. The complaint about such iconoclastic 'backwardness' was even made to Elizabeth herself in 1570 by her loyal courtier, the royal mathematician John Dee, whom I quote on p. 219:

Architecture, to many may seme not worthy, to be reck'nd among the *Artes Mathematicall* . . . by cause it is but for building of a house, Pallace, Church, Forte, or such like, grosse workes . . . And though the *Architect* procureth, enformeth, & directeth the *Mechanicien*, to handworke & and the building actual, of house, Castell, or Pallace, and is chief judge of the same; yet, within him Selfe (as chief, *Master*, and *Architect*), remaineth the Demonstrative reason and cause of the Mechaniciens worke in Lyne, plaine, and Solid: by *Geometricall*, *Arithmeticall*, *Opticall*, *Musicall*, *Astronomicall*, *Cosmographicall* . . . [are] able to be confirmed and established³⁷.

Dee argued that because of this devaluation of architecture in England, few 'in our dayes atteyne' to the mathematical mastery necessary to great build-

³⁵ Colvin, 'Aubrey's *Chronologia Architectonica*', 5. The manuscript is in the Bodleian Library-MS. Top. Gen. C. 25 ff. 152-79.

³⁶ Girouard, *Smythson*, 6, 19.

³⁷ Dee's Preface to *Elements of Geometrie*.

ing. Even worse is the ‘scarcitie of Artificers’ and skilled craftsmen. As I demonstrate (pp. 262-69), Dee’s plea for a reform of English architecture and its related crafts (i.e., masonry, sculpture, carpentry, etc.) had no influence in England until James Cleland, a Scottish tutor at the court of James VI and I, published *The Institution of a Young Noble Man* (London, 1607), which recommended the study of Dee to gentlemen architects who hoped to achieve the theoretical expertise of the master mason. As Cleland knew, Dee’s important Preface had already influenced Scottish students of architecture.

When Prescott cites the publisher’s “blurb” for Airs’ book, he does not recognize that (like many such book-selling blurbs), it exaggerates and distorts the author’s own, long-argued thesis, for Airs forthrightly considered the Elizabethan country house a lower form of architecture: ‘In England the intellectual basis of Renaissance architecture was not fully appreciated before Inigo Jones, and even then, as a result of the prevailing political climate, it was confined to a small group immediately surrounding the court [of James VI and I]’³⁸. It was the Scottish king who encouraged Jones’s rise from artisan to architect, and who collaborated closely with him on building projects and masque productions. Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong argue that ‘Jones’s most serious theoretical assumptions about architecture appear in the texts of his masques’, and it is relevant that Jones utilized masonic craftsmen from his Office of Works to stage these elaborate symbolic dramas³⁹. Vaughan Hart demonstrates that after James’s death, his son Charles I continued to support Jones’s brilliant implementation of Renaissance designs in mystical architecture and magical theater⁴⁰. In these productions of real and “virtual” architecture, many of the Hermetic, Cabalistic, and chivalric themes were expressed that later emerged in *Écossais* Masonic rituals (themes which Prescott does not mention)⁴¹. Charles I’s role as a deeply-involved, sophisticated patron of architecture is increasingly documented by historians. For example, Dianne Duggan uses newly discovered documents to prove that in the building of Covent Garden, ‘Jones was not only the architect of the whole project, but

³⁸ Airs, *Making of the English Country House*, 21.

³⁹ Orgel & Strong, *Inigo Jones*, I, Preface.

⁴⁰ Hart, *Art and Magic*, 8.

⁴¹ Hart describes (*ibid.*, 17) the influence of ‘Cabala in particular’ on Jones’s magical themes and scenic techniques in the royal masques. These Cabalistic scenarios were replicated in the eighteenth century by the flamboyant theatrical designer and *Écossais* Mason, P.J. de Louterbourg, who utilized these illusionistic techniques in designs for Cagliostro’s Egyptian Rite, which—according to Stephen Daniells—recall the ‘distinctly magical’ stagecraft of the ‘Jacobean masques’; see his article, ‘Louterbourg’s Chemical Theatre’, 199-200, 224.

along with Charles I the driving force behind the design⁴². Thus, it should not be surprising that eighteenth-century historians of Masonry also named Charles I as a “Mason King”. In Prescott’s concluding footnote, he laments that ‘Masonic scholars do not seem to have taken any interest’ in the research of architectural historians such as Airs and Girouard, but he himself did not bother to check any of the major Scottish historians I cite in my book, or to go beyond a few brief references to a handful of English authors and a publisher’s “blurb”. Unfortunately, a reader of his review would have no idea of the wealth of architectural and masonic historical information—much from unpublished manuscript material—that I present in my book.

Because of the limited space allotted for my response, I will briefly address only a few more of Prescott’s criticisms. In my discussion of early and medieval Jewish influences on operative masonry and guild organization, Prescott says that ‘her claim that the idea of the guild originated with Jewish masons’ is part of my ‘over-simplistic view’. However, that is not *my* ‘claim’ but rather a quotation from Mark Wischnitzer’s landmark study, *A History of Jewish Crafts and Guilds* (New York, 1965), pp. 67, 74, in which he argues that Jewish handicraftsmen brought ‘the idea of the guild’ from the Near East and that Jewish guilds played a vital role in the transmission of crafts within the Byzantine empire. Prescott implies that I ignore the complex process of cultural interchange, but I devote much discussion in Chapters One and Two to that Jewish-Islamic-Christian cross-fertilization. What is important to Masonic history is that it was almost exclusively the Jewish architectural mysticism and symbolism that was preserved within the masons’ lodges. This was especially relevant to masonry in Scotland, with its medieval foundation myth and patriotic literature proclaiming a Jewish heritage—a heritage that influenced the Jewish and Cabalistic themes of Stuart Freemasonry. Prescott complains that I am ‘captivated by the crown and constitution’ and need ‘to look further down the social scale’; however, my subject matter is the “Royal Art” of Masonry, which was patronized and developed by kings, courtiers, bishops, and their commissioned craftsmen. Moreover, the spread of *Écossaisme* in the eighteenth century was largely influenced by aristocratic and royal “brothers”, though the Scottish tradition of egalitarianism within a royalist culture (a tradition eloquently described by David Stevenson) brought a refreshingly new social pluralism and mobility into European lodges⁴³.

⁴² Duggan, “London the Ring”, 141.

⁴³ See Stevenson, ‘English Devil of Keeping State’, 126-44. As Neil Cuddy demonstrates,

In a rather silly statement, Prescott complains about the lack of ‘any substantial discussion of Ireland, which does not even appear in the index’; since the index consists of personal names only and not places, of course Ireland does not appear there. Moreover, he apparently skipped over the detailed discussions of Thomas Wentworth’s royalist architectural projects in Ireland; the migration of the hereditary Masonic patron William St. Clair of Roslin to Ireland; the moves of members of the famous Masonic family, Thomas and Robert Mylne, to Ulster; and Jonathan Swift’s Masonically-relevant experiences and writings in Dublin and Ulster (*passim*). In fact, much of the concluding Chapter Twelve deals with Ireland, for it was William of Orange’s invasion of England and Ireland in 1688-89 that brought Irish-Jacobite Freemasonry into the historical record and began the important Irish contribution to *Écossais* Masonic developments. Prescott’s totally unsubstantiated (and almost bizarre) claim that the opinions of the radical English deists Thomas Paine and Richard Carlile ‘helped shape the views of Yeats and Joyce on Freemasonry’ ignores the mass of documented publications on the Irish and French sources of their information (i.e., their own family members, friends, and colleagues who were initiates of high-degree, *Écossais*, Rosicrucian, and Martinist lodges in Dublin, London, and Paris).

Prescott also passes over my discussion of the important Welsh students of Rosicrucianism—William, Thomas, and Henry Vaughan—and their association with the Stuart courts and Scottish Masons. He refers only to my brief interpretation of the different effects of English impressment practices (forced labor from the conquered, local masons) in medieval Wales and Scotland—an interpretation based on the argument by Douglas Knoop and D.P. Jones that there is almost no surviving evidence of impressment of masons in Scotland⁴⁴. Edward I’s failure to replicate in Scotland his construction of ‘castles of occupation’ in Wales meant that Wales was a permanently defeated kingdom, while Scotland managed to drive out the English invaders and maintain her independence. After condemning my ‘suggestion’ as ‘a complete travesty’, Prescott devotes a long footnote to his own interpretation, which does not address the issue raised by Knoop and Jones concerning English versus Scottish policies of impressment.

the architectural design and masonic construction of sixteenth-century Scottish royal residences reflected this ‘system of free and open access’ between subjects and king; see his article ‘The Revival of the Entourage’, 180.

⁴⁴ Knoop & Jones, *Genesis of Freemasonry*, 34-35.

Finally, Prescott states that my call for less Anglo-centric scholarship is invalid because I devote much more discussion to Scotland than to Ireland and Wales; however, the significant Jacobite-Masonic history of the latter territories really emerges in the eighteenth-century and will be the subject of my future studies. After all, those developments are called *Écossais* and not *Irlandais* or *Gallois*. In the meantime, Prescott confines himself to 'Britaino-centric' research and thus seems unconcerned with and dismissive of the vast literature on *Écossais* Freemasonry in non-English sources, as well as the revisionist scholarship in British academic publications concerning the international Jacobite culture. That scholarship steadily produces new archival material and new interpretations that are challenging the 'conventional wisdom' about the nature of that complex mystical, intellectual, artistic, and political movement, which underlay the alternative, anti-Hanoverian Masonic developments in the eighteenth century. Prescott's mockery of my characterization of *Restoring the Temple of Vision* as 'a prolegomena to future works on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century occultist Freemasonry in Britain, Scandinavia, and Europe' is gratuitous, since I have already lectured and published extensively on those subjects and intend to carry them even further in forthcoming books (including one that he has asked to publish at his Centre). I assume that he intends his sweeping statement that 'Schuchard evidently plans a vast anti-Whig history of the world' to be amusing. Thus, it is not inappropriate for me to quote two 'amusing' Masonic anecdotes, separated by more than two centuries, which articulate a continuing problem for researchers into Masonic history—i.e., the chauvinistic refusal of most English Masonic authors to take seriously French developments within Freemasonry, much less French historians of Jacobite-*Écossais* rites.

In the 1760s, after Baron Tschoudy asserted in *La Étoile Flamboyant* that 'Le premier loge connue en Europe fut, dit-on, installée à Edimbourg par le Lord Stuard', he gave a description of English xenophobia, often expressed by calling any foreigner 'Le French Dog': 'la détester de si bonne foi, qu'elle ne fait pas mieux marquer son dédain pour tout ce qui n'est pas né à Londres ou dans le Royaume, qu'en appellant tout étranger *Frenchd*, François'⁴⁵. In the 1990s, while I was working in the Masonic library in

⁴⁵ Tschoudy, *L'Étoile Flamboyante*, 85, 89. Tschoudy's complaint was echoed by a Scottish architect in London. After Robert Mylne (direct descendant of the Stuart Master Masons) won the contract to construct Blackfriars Bridge in 1760, his payment was delayed for many years, because 'Much of London in the 1760s, not only the mob, but also many of the City's politicians, was xenophobic towards both Scots and Irish, to say nothing of the French'. See Woodley, "A very mortifying situation", 181.

London, I explained to a major English Masonic historian and Grand Lodge official that I was researching developments in eighteenth-century *Écossais* systems in France. I was startled by his angry response: ‘But the *frogs* have no authentic Freemasonry!’ Though I do not believe that Dr. Prescott shares this chauvinistic attitude, it is worrisome that he seems to adopt in his review the defensive tone and intemperate language that is accepted practice in Quatuor Coronati lodge meetings, especially when the invited lecturers deviate from the orthodox version of history promoted in official Grand Lodge publications. Tempers especially flare into what one member proudly calls ‘righteous ire and indignation’ when alternative “French” or Jacobite interpretations are given to Masonic affairs⁴⁶. Though several reform-minded brothers are trying to open these English sessions to outside scholars, who sometimes question Grand Lodge orthodoxy, they seem to be engaging in an uphill battle.

Thus, many of us who attempt to investigate this difficult historical territory hoped that the establishment of the Centre for Research into Freemasonry at the University of Sheffield, with Dr. Prescott (a non-Mason) as Director, would move English research beyond that provincial and close-minded attitude. Surprisingly, Prescott’s sweeping generalizations and hyperbolic expressions (‘excessive credulity, enters the realm of fantasy, plucks out of the air, tunnel vision, hoary legends, complete travesty, positively reckless, preposterous’, etc.) seem to echo the vituperative verbal responses (‘absolute rubbish, simple nonsense, balderdash’, etc.) often expressed at London meetings of the “research lodge”. Such responses bear little resemblance to the expected civil discourse of academic debate. Though Prescott’s Centre at the University was founded and funded by the London Grand Lodge, we trust that the scholarly opinions of French “dogs” and “frogs” (and their international colleagues) will find a more receptive atmosphere at Sheffield. Then the Centre will live up to its promise as a disinterested, *academic* forum for various viewpoints and multiple interpretations of Freemasonry, including its controversial roots and complex ramifications in Britain and abroad.

⁴⁶ For examples, see *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*, 103 (1990), 107-08; 114 (2001), 28-37; 115 (2003).

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SEARCHING FOR WELSH INDIANS

ANDREW PRESCOTT

One of my favourite books is *Madoc: The Making of a Myth* by the eminent Welsh historian, Gwyn A. Williams¹. This traces the extraordinary career of the belief that the twelfth-century Welsh prince Madoc sailed to North America and established a colony there which survived into modern times as a tribe of Welsh-speaking Indians. The story of Madoc was widely believed in Britain and America for nearly four hundred years from the 1570s to the end of nineteenth century, when it was finally discredited by the work of textual critics such as Thomas Stephens, who showed that there was no contemporary evidence that Madoc sailed across the Atlantic, and explorers such as John Evans, who searched the American interior for the descendants of Madoc's settlers and reluctantly came to the conclusion that 'there is no such people as the Welsh Indians'. However, Gwyn Williams' brilliant narrative shows that the question of whether Madoc ever travelled to North America or indeed whether he ever actually existed is beside the point. The legend of Prince Madoc became 'what the Indians called an-idea-that-walks, an idea that became material force'². This 'idea-that-walks' is of far greater historical interest and significance than whether or not a nobleman from North Wales was able to cross the Atlantic in the twelfth century.

The enormous literature affirming the truth of the Madoc legend and seeking to locate the Welsh Indians, ranging from George Peckham's *True Reporte* of 1583, which declared that the word "Pengwyn" was clearly Welsh in origin³, to John Williams' compendious *Enquiry* of 1791, the result of more than thirty years archival research, testifies not to the likely truth or otherwise of the Madoc story, but rather to the enormous historical and social impact of the legend. The legend of Prince Madoc was used to justify attacks

¹ Williams, *Madoc*.

² *Ibid.*, iv.

³ 'Pen (head) plus gwyn (white) equals penguin (white head). QED. The only snag here is that (*pace* Sir George and David) penguins have black heads. Later writers translated it as 'white rock'; in any case no speculative linguist worth the name is to be deterred by such little local difficulties. By the twentieth century, at least fifteen Indian languages have been identified as Welsh, often by linguists of such uncommon capacity as to be able to recognise the Welsh language without knowing it': *ibid.*, 43.

on Spanish dominion of America, inspired crazed expeditions across uncharted territory in search of the Welsh Indians, and became a significant force in rivalry between Britain, France, Spain and the fledgling United States for control of the American interior. The story of the Madoc myth was, in the words of Bernard de Voto cited by Williams, ‘by far the most widespread legend of pre-Columban discovery. In the United States, it became our most elaborate historical myth and exercised a direct influence on our history’. But none of this meant that the legend was true, a fact which was to prove unpalatable when the evidence for the story was more rigorously examined. When Thomas Stephens, a pharmacist of Merthyr Tydfil, submitted to the Llangollen eisteddfod in 1858 what Williams describes as ‘one of the finest essays in historical criticism to be written in any language’, showing beyond any doubt that the Madoc legend was not supported by any evidence, the eisteddfod committee disqualified the essay so that it was not printed, provoking a near riot.

Part of the fascination of Williams’ book is the way in which it vividly shows how British history consists of many different narratives of different nations and people, jostling together. Welsh history has its own distinctive narrative (or indeed narratives), as do the histories of Scotland, Ireland and England. Welsh history cannot be represented by token references to Welsh people who figure in the histories of other countries. But the most important message of Williams’ book is that myths and legends are as important in shaping history as real events. The first duty of the historian is to establish what is legend and what is supported by reliable evidence, but beyond this the historian should also examine the way in which myth and legend can shape history. In Williams’ words: ‘Now that professional Welsh history has come of age and fulfilled its first duty, to clear the ground of legend, it is moving into a more sophisticated enterprise—the relocation of these legends in history, the analysis of legend and its function in history, for the history of all peoples has largely been a matter of motor-myths’⁴.

Within masonic history, the legend that the Stuart kings actively participated in pre-Grand Lodge freemasonry, actively promoted in both Britain and Europe by legions of masonic writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was clearly another motor myth, an ‘idea-that-walks’. There is as yet no convincing evidence to support the idea that James VI and I, Charles I or Charles II were themselves freemasons, but the dissemination of the legend that they were tells us a great deal about the history of freemasonry in

⁴ *Ibid.*, 202.

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The effects of these beliefs were fundamental driving forces in the intellectual history of freemasonry. There is a pressing need to investigate the career of this legend, in the way that Williams did for Madoc.

Some obvious lines of descent can be made out from the most superficial examination. One of the most evident is that which stems from Thomas Paine⁵. As is well known, Paine wrote a short essay on freemasonry, intended to form part of a response to the attack by the Bishop of Llandaff on Paine's deistic treatise, *The Age of Reason*. This essay was influenced and perhaps directly inspired by Paine's associate, Nicholas de Bonneville, who was thoroughly acquainted with the traditions associated with Ecosais freemasonry, and the pamphlet was first published in an expurgated form by Bonneville's widow. Paine argued that freemasonry represented the remnants of the ancient pre-Christian sun religion, of which the Druids had been the priests. The first complete version of Paine's text was published by his disciple Richard Carlile, who later published an exposure of freemasonry in his journal *The Republican*. Reprinting his exposure as a *Manual of Freemasonry*, Carlile became convinced that Paine was right in arguing that freemasonry was an allegory of the ancient pre-Christian religion and that freemasonry was the key to understanding how Christianity was a blasphemous perversion of ancient religions. These ideas were also taken up and developed much further by the pioneering writer on comparative religion, Godfrey Higgins. Popularised by Carlile and Higgins, these ideas were to have an astonishing impact on Victorian freemasonry in Britain.

Through Carlile, this view of freemasonry had a direct influence on the English radicals Charles Bradlaugh, an enthusiastic freemason under the Grand Orient of France, and Annie Besant, who played a fundamental role in introducing co-masonry into England. Even more remarkable, however, was the effect of the work of Carlile and Higgins on Grand Lodge freemasonry in England. The work of the supreme ideologue of Victorian freemasonry, Revd. George Oliver, was a direct reaction to the ideas of Carlile and particularly Higgins, as Richard Sandbach has noted⁶. Oliver accepted that freemasonry went back to the beginning of time, but argued that the religion it prefigured was Christianity⁷. Although Oliver's historical work is now completely discredited, it is essential for understanding the mentality of

⁵ This is described in more detail in my paper 'The Cause of Humanity'.

⁶ Sandbach, *George Oliver*, 32.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

freemasonry in the late nineteenth century. Many of the esoteric movements associated with Victorian freemasonry emerged from under the cloak of Oliver⁸. The inauguration of the school of research associated with the English Quatuor Coronati lodge represented a positivistic reaction to Oliver's huge mass of writings on the history of freemasonry, and the founders of the Quatuor Coronati lodge were anxious to rescue freemasonry from the charge levelled by more critically-minded readers of Oliver and his precursors Anderson and Preston that its historical claims were spurious.

This is a simple illustration of one line of development of the "motor-myths" of freemasonry. As these legends became ideas-that-walked, they wandered down many unlikely byways, found their paths crossing and encountered other legends on the way. For example, at one point we find the myths of freemasonry meeting Madoc's Welsh Indians. Godfrey Higgins was influenced in his work by the Welsh poet and social visionary Iolo Morganwg, one of the most influential Madoc propagandists. One writer on Madoc at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Colonel Amos Stoddart, offered a masonic argument in favour of the existence of the Welsh Indians. He pointed out that certain Indian activities 'resemble our lodges of freemasons'. This in his view demonstrated their Welsh roots, since 'the knowledge of freemasonry was mostly confined to the Druids' and Wales 'was more fruitful of this description of men, than any other part of Europe'⁹.

There are few writers in English better qualified than Keith Schuchard to undertake such an archaeology of masonic mythology and legends. Unfortunately, she has chosen not to write this much-needed book, but rather to produce a narrative of Anglo-Scottish (as opposed to British) history which proceeds from the assumption that many of the legends of Stuart involvement in freemasonry promulgated in the eighteenth and nineteenth century had some basis in historical fact. If Schuchard was analysing the impact of these myths and the reasons for their elaboration, I would warmly applaud her work, but she is not doing this. She proposes that James VI and I, Charles I and Charles II were all "mason kings", and that this both requires a reappraisal of the history of their reigns and alters our perception of earlier history. Since this is the case, the tests that have to be applied to her work are the conventional and routine tests applied to historical evidence. Is there explicit, reliable and above all *contemporary* evidence to support these assertions? It is my contention that the evidence presented by Schuchard fails

⁸ I discuss this further in my forthcoming article, 'A Body without a Soul?.'

⁹ Williams, *Madoc*, 194.

these fundamental tests. In trying to establish my case, I am conscious that I run the risk of that ‘positivistic excess’ which Williams laments has affected discussion of Madoc, but it is necessary to perform that fundamental duty of the historian in clearing the ground of legend before proceeding to undertake the more sophisticated and interesting forms of analysis which Williams suggests.

The only seventeenth-century source for the statement that James VI and I was a freemason is the 1658 agreement which is the oldest document in the archive of the masonic lodge in Scotland which is now the Scoon and Perth Lodge No. 3. This document was first brought to wider attention, like many of the other documents of seventeenth-century Scottish freemasonry, by one of the founders of Quatuor Coronati Lodge, William James Hughan, a prolific masonic scholar of Scottish parentage who also wrote on Jacobite freemasonry. Visiting Perth in 1872-3, Hughan was unable to secure access to the archives of the Scoon and Perth lodge¹⁰, but he later came across the text of the 1658 agreement in the 1866 edition of the by-laws of the lodge, and reprinted the text in the *Masonic Monthly* for October 1878¹¹. It was reprinted again in the *Masonic Monthly* a year later¹². For Hughan the main interest of the text was that it offered firm evidence of the practice of freemasonry in seventeenth-century Scotland. He commented that ‘Any who read and study the literature of the Craft, or who are familiar with the “Cosmopolitan Calendar” will be aware that there are many lodges in Scotland which date from beyond the last century . . . the “Scoon and Perth” lodge, though dating from 1658, had evidently been in working order for many years anterior to the dating of its charter. . .’¹³. Hughan thought this more significant than the reference to James VI’s initiation, on which he did not comment.

In discussing the document shortly afterwards in his *History of Freemasonry*, Robert Freke Gould reprinted the Scone agreement, but again he was more interested in its evidence for the practice of freemasonry in seventeenth-century Scotland. Gould argued that the mass of material accumulated by Hughan and others provided much firmer evidence of the antiquity of freemasonry than the fantasies of Anderson or Oliver:

It will be seen that, by the collection and comparatively recent publication of many of the interesting records above alluded to, so much evidence has been

¹⁰ Gould, *History*, 3, 411.

¹¹ Hughan, ‘Charter of Scoon and Perth Lodge, A.D. 1658’, 146-148.

¹² *Ibid.*, 132-134.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 146.

collected respecting the early history, progress, and character of the craft, as to be almost embarrassing, and the proposition may be safely advanced, that the Grand Lodges of Great Britain are the direct descendants, by continuity and absorption, of the ancient freemasonry which immediately preceded their institution, which will be demonstrated without requiring the exercise of either dogmatism or credulity. . .¹⁴’

Gould declared that the final clause of the Scone agreement, with its reference to the ‘glorious luminary of nature’ was ‘suggestive that speculative freemasonry was then not wholly unknown in the city of Perth’¹⁵. Gould does not explicitly discuss the document’s claim that King James was initiated in the lodge, but his sarcastic aside, ‘Well Done Perth!’¹⁶, referring to the claim that because of James’ membership the lodge (if well run) was the most famous in the kingdom, suggests that Gould felt that the Scoon and Perth lodge was anticipating later masonic lodges in making exaggerated claims of its fame and antiquity.

In 1893, the Scone agreement came to the notice of the wider scholarly community with the publication of Rev. Robert Scott Mylne’s pioneering study of *The Master Masons to the Crown of Scotland*¹⁷. Mylne’s work, building on earlier labours by his father, was a huge antiquarian compilation, which assembles an enormous amount of archival material on the history of building in Scotland, but it is important to bear in mind that it was a work of family piety, intended to document and celebrate the intimate connection between the Mylne family and the office of Principal Master Mason to the crown¹⁸. Like Hughan and Gould, Mylne printed the agreement without any critical discussion of its contents¹⁹. All subsequent discussion to date has depended on Mylne’s transcript of this document and on the other materials relating to the Mylne family assembled by him. A report of Mylne’s book was promptly made to the Quatuor Coronati lodge by Edward Macbean, in which he described the Scone agreement, and stated that the story of the initiation of King James was generally considered apocryphal, a view in which

¹⁴ Gould, *History*, 3, 381.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 411.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 412.

¹⁷ Mylne, *Master Masons*.

¹⁸ Cf. Paton, *Accounts*, xxx: ‘Beyond incidental allusions to some of the master masons, particularly those from France, Mylne’s treatise on the King’s Master Masons expends itself mostly on members of his own ancestry who held this office during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’.

¹⁹ Mylne, *Master Masons*, 128-30.

Hughan, Gould and other members of the lodge concurred²⁰. Apart from Gould's aside, this was the first occasion on which the claim of the Scoon and Perth lodge to have included King James in its ranks was discussed.

In 1898, D. Crawford Smith published a history of the Scoon and Perth Lodge which included a facsimile of the 1658 agreement and a new transcript of it²¹. Smith took issue with Macbean's claim that the story of James's initiation was apocryphal, but offered no scholarly grounds for disagreeing with Macbean. Smith simply suggests that Macbean's comment was ungentlemanly because it cast aspersions on the honour of his fellow freemasons: 'There can be no doubt of the truth of this statement unless we are to suppose, which no reasonable man can, that the writer of this agreement deliberately sat down and wrote a falsehood, and that the brethren who signed the document agreed to promulgate a lie . . . We do not ourselves consider [the agreement] historically accurate in every point; but we have no knowledge of any masonic writer, with the exception of this brother, who considers the reception of King James apocryphal. It is true that general history does not corroborate the fact, but general history is silent on matters of much greater importance. Brother Macbean has no ground for his gratuitous remark therefore he ought not to have made it. He can furnish no evidence in support of his remark therefore he ought to withdraw it in the same public manner in which he has made it. His remark is born of a desire to be thought critical. His statement is without knowledge and his assertion without proof'²². Assuming therefore that the tradition recorded in the 1658 agreement was true, Smith made a further leap and declared that James must have been initiated when he visited Perth on 15 April 1601, was made a burgess of the borough and appointed honorary provost²³. This tradition, established by Smith, has been perpetuated ever since in the lodge's histories²⁴. It became accepted in the 1950s by the Grand Lodge of Scotland, and the list of 'notable masonic dates' in the Grand Lodge's Year Book still states that James VI and I was initiated in the lodge Scoon and Perth in 1601²⁵.

²⁰ Macbean, 'Master Masons of Scotland', 101-108.

²¹ Smith, *History*, 45-7. The facsimile of the 1658 agreement is reproduced in *Year Book of the Grand Lodge*, between pp. 82 and 83.

²² Smith, *History*, 51-54.

²³ Smith, *History*, 49-50.

²⁴ Bell, *Lodge Scoon and Perth No. 3*, 7. The hall used by the lodge has a mural, painted by Brother T.H. Peddle in the 1930s, depicting James kneeling at an altar on the occasion of his initiation: Bell, 'Lodge Scoon and Perth No. 3', 83.

²⁵ *Jubilee Year Book*, 46. The earlier versions of the list of notable masonic dates in for example the 1957 *Year Book* do not mention James's initiation, but, after a facsimile of the 1658

The preface to Smith's history was written by Hughan, who had been made an honorary member of the Scoon and Perth lodge and found himself in the embarrassing situation of introducing a book written by the Worshipful Master of the Scoon and Perth lodge which strongly criticised a fellow member of the Quatuor Coronati lodge. Hughan commented: 'Concerning the reception of King James VI as a "Freeman Mason" by Bro. John Mylne, on behalf of the Lodge at Perth, and my friend Bro. Macbean's doubts thereon, let me say that he was simply one of several, including myself, who at one time looked upon such admission as apocryphal. On a careful study of the matter, I see no reason whatever to question the assertion of the ordinance of 1658, though it would have been still more satisfactory had an actual Lodge minute, or some other contemporary record, been preserved of the occurrence. It should be noted that 41 Brethren signed the contract aforesaid, which contains the statement of the King's initiation, so that a goodly number of the members believed that his Majesty had been made a Free Mason as described'²⁶. Hughan's reappraisal therefore depended on the assumption that all the signatures to the document dated from 1658, and it is certainly the case that, if a sufficiently large number of members of the lodge declared in 1658 that James had been a member, it is possible that at least some of them were speaking from personal knowledge. This still provides perhaps the strongest argument in favour of accepting the claim in the 1658 agreement that James became a member of the lodge. However, as will be seen, there are serious objections to this proposition.

After Hughan, there was no further scholarly discussion of the agreement until David Stevenson's analysis of it in 1988²⁷. In noting the claim that James was a freemason, Stevenson comments that 'a first reaction, influenced by the absurdities of later masonic historians in claiming that practically every king had been a mason, is to dismiss Scone's claim out of hand'. However, Stevenson counsels that this document is worth at least a closer glance: 'in view of James's well known intellectual curiosity, and the fact that he was the first King of Scots to condescend to be made a burgess—and that in Perth (1601)—indicates that the idea of his being intrigued by the idea of a craft organisation which hinted that it possessed esoteric knowledge is not completely unthinkable'. Nevertheless, Stevenson's careful analy-

agreement was included in the 1958 *Year Book*, 1601 was added to the list of notable masonic dates.

²⁶ Smith, *History*, xiii.

²⁷ Stevenson, *First Freemasons*, 101-3.

sis points out that this section of the agreement sought to bolster the fabulous history of the Mylne family being actively propagated at that time, and that ‘there is as much mythology as fact in this account of them’. Since the claim of James’s initiation occurred in a section of the document which was factually suspect, Stevenson rejected the idea that James was a mason. Since 1988, no new evidence has been produced which was not already in Robert Scott Mylne’s book and available to Stevenson²⁸, and Stevenson’s 1988 analysis remains the only full scholarly discussion of this document. One would have expected that, in rejecting Stevenson’s analysis, Schuchard would have included a more extended discussion of it in her book, but since she does not, it is advisable here to revisit the 1658 agreement. Since readers may not have easy access to the published transcripts by Mylne and Smith, I have included a transcript, rechecked against the facsimile, as an appendix to this article.

The Scone document is an agreement, dated 24 December 1658, between members of the stonemasons’ lodge meeting at Perth. This lodge claimed to date back to the building of nearby Scone Abbey in the middle ages, ‘Which is now ffour hundred thriescor and fyve yeires since or therby’. In late 1657, the master of the lodge, John Mylne III, who had been Principal Master Mason to Charles I from 1631 to 1636, died. This seems to have created a crisis in the affairs of the lodge. The agreement sought to resolve this crisis by recording the appointment of a new master and warden and stipulating a series of regulations. Members of the lodge signified their acceptance of these regulations by signing the agreement. In appraising a piece of historical evidence, it is usual first to consider if the document is contemporary. There is no doubt that the Scone agreement is really a document from 1658, and that it provides evidence as to what was happening in the stonemasons’ lodge in Scone in 1658. It is not, however, contemporary evidence of what was happening in the reign of a King who died more than thirty years previously or an event which (if it is accepted that the most likely date for James’s initiation was 1601) took place more than fifty years before. There is merit in Hughan’s argument that, as the document was signed by more than forty members of the lodge, there is a chance that at least some of them might be speaking from personal knowledge. However, as Stevenson emphasises, it was the practice for sometime after the document was drawn up for new members of the lodge to sign it to confirm their acceptance of its regulations: ‘most of the signatures were added later, sometimes decades later, as

²⁸ The works by Colvin and Howard cited by Schuchard both rely on Mylne’s work.

the records of the Incorporation of Wrights of Perth and other sources show²⁹. The text of the agreement names the new Master and Warden and those present at the meeting when the agreement was made. Apart from the Master and Warden, only one of those named as present signed the document³⁰. The claims in the agreement were thus only formally attested by a handful of lodge members (possibly as few as one).

At best the claim of James's initiation represents a lodge tradition current by the middle of the seventeenth century. How can one test the reliability of such a tradition? Again, the standard tools of historical criticism provide tests which are helpful in this case. It is necessary to consider the nature and purpose of the document. If the text includes claims in support of *ex parte* positions apparent elsewhere in the document, then they must be regarded as suspect, unless they can be substantiated from other evidence. The Scone agreement follows the form of a conventional indenture, with a lengthy preamble followed by details of the transaction to which the signatories agreed. The operative part of the document is thus the second half, and this gives some impression of the crisis which had affected the lodge. Since the lodge needed a master following the death of Mylne, it was agreed that James Roch should be master of the lodge for life or as long as he was willing to serve. Andrew Norie was appointed as Warden on similar terms. However, the agreement was not simply about the appointment of a new master and warden. Mylne had died a year before, and it is evident from the remainder of the agreement that the lodge had since then experienced difficulties. It seems that some members had been attending other lodges or that an attempt had been made to form a breakaway lodge. Members were enjoined by the agreement not to go to other lodges or to make a new lodge among themselves, since the existing lodge was 'principall wthin the shyre'. Members who joined another lodge were threatened with swingeing fines and other punishments. It seems that there had also been rivalry among lodge members for work, and regulations were laid down to prevent masons poaching work and manpower from their brethren. Finally, the agreement stipulated dues to be paid by fellow crafts and apprentices.

Stevenson points out that many of the regulations in the 1658 agreement reflect anxieties of the Perth stonemasons about the status of their trade. The stonemasons of Perth were members of the incorporation of wrights and very much a junior partner in this body, with stonemasons barred from holding

²⁹ Stevenson, *First Freemasons*, 105.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

senior offices in the incorporation. In this context, the Perth stonemasons would naturally have been anxious to stress the antiquity and elevated character of their lodge. In the specific context of 1658, following the loss of a powerful leader in John Mylne III and worried about the formation of new lodges, it is to be expected that those members of the lodge responsible for drawing up the 1658 agreement should stress its antiquity and elevated status, and in the first half of the document this is precisely what they do.

The first section of the document is designed to demonstrate that the Scoon and Perth lodge was one of the oldest and prestigious in Scotland. It declares that, from the time of the building of the temple of temples, the craft of stonemasons had enjoyed 'ane uniforme communitie and wnione throughout the whole world'. Stevenson remarks that this is the first explicit reference in Scotland to the myth of Solomon's Temple as the source for the later skills and achievements of the craft of stonemasonry. The agreement goes on to declare that Solomon's Temple was the progenitor of other temples in Scotland, the first of which was the Abbey at Kilwinning. Kilwinning had in turn been the precursor of many other temples in Scotland, 'Off which ther preceded the Abbacie and Lodge of Scone built by men of Art and Architectorie'. This lodge had been upheld by the Kings of Scotland at Scone, then at Bertha (according to medieval legend the precursor of Perth) and finally at Perth. Thus, claims the agreement, the lodge at Scone had been in existence for 465 years, and it was without question the second lodge in the kingdom.

The 1658 agreement uses a claim of descent from the lodge at Kilwinning and an alleged connection with Scone Abbey to make a forceful case that it ranked second among the Scottish masonic lodges, outranked only by Kilwinning itself. This is apparently a completely spurious claim, unsupported by earlier documentation such as the Schaw statutes, but it would nevertheless in 1658 have been a powerful argument against any Perth masons trying to form a breakaway lodge. However, the authors of the 1658 agreement were conscious that they had no means of verifying these claims: 'As the Masters friemen or follow crafts did formerlie Whose names we know not'. Luckily, there was more recent evidence which could bolster these claims, namely the close connections of the lodge with the crown through the Mylne family. Schuchard has already cited the relevant section of the document, but for the sake of clarity, here it is again:

But to our own recoon and knowledge of our predecessors ther cam one from the North countrie named Johne Mylne ane measone a man weill experted in his calling who enter^d himself both frieman & burges of this brugh Who in processe off tyme (by reasone off his skill and airt) was preferred to be the Kings

Maties M^r Measone and Master of the said Lodge at Scone, And his sone Johne Milne being (after his fathers deceis—preferred to the said office, and M^r off the said lodge in the reigne off his Majestie King James the sixt of blesed memorie, Who by the said second Johne Mylne wes be the kings own desere, entered ffriman measone and ffellow craft And during all his Lyftyme he mantayned the same as ane member off the Lodge off Scone So that this Lodge is the most fo mous Lodge (iff well ordored) within this kingdome Off the which name of Mylne ther hath contenewed severall gennrationes Mr Measones to his Maties the Kings of Scotland and M^{rs} off the said Lodge of Scone till the year one thousand six hundred and fiftie seven yeires at qch tyme the last Mr Mylne being M^r off the Lodge off Scone, deceased.

The claim that King James was a member of the lodge occurs in a section of the agreement containing a number of dubious claims of precedence on the behalf of the Perth lodge designed to deter troublemakers within the lodge, and was intended specifically to bolster these claims and to show that the lodge was ‘the most famous lodge (if well ordered) within this kingdom’. The parenthetical statement ‘if well ordered’ seems to have been aimed directly against those who had been seeking to undermine the position of the lodge. In this way, the statement that James was a member of the lodge fails the second major test of textual analysis which can be applied to this document. It was designed to support an *ex parte* claim by members of the lodge and is inherently untrustworthy. Not only is this section of the Scone not contemporary with the event it describes but it is also evidently biased in its description of it. However, there is one final test which can be applied. The agreement gives detailed circumstantial information about the connection of the Mylne family with the lodge, and declares that James was initiated by the first Mylne to serve as master of the lodge. If this information can be shown to be correct, then maybe the benefit of the doubt can be given to its claims about King James.

The Mylne family was one of the most remarkable of all architectural dynasties, members of the family being prominent in Scottish and indeed British architecture from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Moreover, the Mylnes were closely associated with the office of Principal Master Mason to the Crown, a connection of which members of the family were very proud from an early date. The epitaph to John Mylne IV (d. 1667), Principal Master Mason to Charles I and Charles II, the son of the John Mylne who had been Master of the Scone lodge and whose death had precipitated the Scone agreement, described him as

. . . The Fourth John
 And by descent from Father unto Son
 Sixth Master Mason to a Royal Race of Seven Successive Kings . . .³¹.

This tradition was evidently current and widely accepted at the time this epitaph was set up by the Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh in 1668. It was cherished by later generations of the Mylne family, and Revd. Robert Scott Mylne's work on the Master Masons to the crown was designed to document and confirm this family tradition.

The office of Principal Master Mason was, as Mylne emphasises at the beginning of his book, a formal office, like that of Overseer of the Works and Master Wright³². The Principal Master Mason was appointed for life by a commission from the King and received a salary from the crown. Some of the Principal Master Masons were debarred from undertaking work for clients other than the King. Their appointments are recorded in the Privy Seal Register. Mylne was the first to compile lists of the holders of this office, but these were subsequently refined by Henry Paton, John Imrie and John Dunbar, in the introductions to their editions of the *Accounts of the Masters of the Works*, which are indispensable resources for those studying the history of building in Scotland at this time. These establish that the succession of Principal Master Masons from 1529 to 1715 was as follows (dates of appointment given in brackets):

John Ayton (to 1532); John Brownbill (16 January 1532); Thomas French (30 April 1535); Moses Martin (1 December 1536); Nicolas Roy (22 April 1539); John Roytell (10 March 1557); William Wallace (18 April 1617); John Mylne III (4 June 1617); John Mylne IV (1 February 1636); Robert Mylne (28 February 1668)³³

The only hiatus in this line of succession is between John Roytell and William Wallace. Roytell was still in office as late as 1582, but it seems unlikely that he lived until as late as 1617, and it is tempting to suggest that we are missing the name of one or more Principal Master Masons at this point. However,

³¹ Mylne, *Master Masons*, 159.

³² 'The office of Principal Master Mason to the Crown was one of the Offices of the Court from the time of James V to the death of Queen Anne. Like other similar posts, it was tenable for life, was invested with a fixed yearly fee, and certain small perquisites. Its history corresponds to other appointments of like nature': Mylne, *Master Masons*, vii. On the history of this office, see also Paton, *Accounts*, xxx-xxxv, and Imrie & Dunbar, *Accounts*, lix-lxx.

³³ Paton, *Accounts*, xxxii-xxxv; Imrie and Dunbar, *Accounts*, lx-lxi.

Wallace's letter of appointment makes it clear that there had been no previous appointments to this office: 'our Souerane Lord vnderstanding that his hienes darrest mother of worthie memorie maid and constitut vmquhile Johne Roytell Frencheman principall maister maissoun to all his hienes warkis concerning the aucupatioun during all the dayis of his lyfetyme And gaue and grantit to him any certane fie for exercising of the said office And that be his deceis the said office is now vacant' . . .³⁴.

The succession of Principal Master Masons is thus quite clear, and it is difficult to give credence to second-hand anecdotes such as Lord Somerville's claim, cited by Mylne³⁵ and repeated by Colvin, that John Mylne II (d. 1621) was 'the King's Master Measonne'. Somerville was writing in 1679, a hundred years after the event he describes, by which time the myth of the six Mylne royal master masons had taken strong root. There is one potential source of confusion which might help explain Somerville's remark, in that while the office of Principal Master Mason was a distinct one with a single holder, the Principal Master Mason himself employed master masons to undertake work on royal palaces and castles. This is stressed by Paton, citing Macgibbon and Ross as follows: 'We find that several master masons are engaged at one and the same time at Linlithgow . . . Each master mason had a small gang or company of masons, who worked along with him and are called his "servants" . . . The master masons were paid like the ordinary masons by day's wages, but at a higher rate; and the king's master mason received, in addition, an annual salary, sometimes for life, sometimes at pleasure'³⁶. It is possible that some of the Mylnes were employed as master masons of the King's works in this way, and that this may have been the root of the myth of the six members of the Mylne family had been royal master masons. Nevertheless, there was a clear distinction between the Principal Master Mason and master masons in royal employment, and the first firmly attested appointment of a Mylne as Principal Master Mason was of John Mylne III in 1617. The 'reinforcing information' which Schuchard claims is presented by Deborah Howard of the Mylne connection with the office of Principal Master Mason all refers to John Mylne III and John Mylne IV, about whose tenure of this office there is no doubt³⁷. In assessing the

³⁴ Mylne, *Master Masons*, 70.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³⁶ Paton, *Accounts*, xxxi.

³⁷ Howard, *Scottish Architecture*, 38-39, 44-46, 191-193, 216-217.

Scone agreement, the key issue is whether earlier generations of the Mylne family served as Principal Master Masons.

In establishing the succession of Principal Master Masons, Robert Scott Mylne created a problem for himself. John Mylne IV was supposed to have been the sixth Mylne to have served as Principal Master Mason but, according to the Privy Seal Register, he was only the second. Robert Scott Mylne proceeded to try and patch up the family legends. He proposed that four earlier members of the family had served as Principal Master Mason. First, he assumed that two Mylnes served as Principal Master Masons before the first appointment to the office recorded in the Register of the Privy Seal in 1532. He proposed that John Mylne had been the Master Mason of Kings James III and IV, but cited no evidence in support of this apart from family tradition³⁸. He also suggested that Alexander Mylne, Abbot of Cambuskenneth, who as a canon of Dunkeld had been Master of Works for the rebuilding of the bridge there, also served briefly as Principal Master Mason. Mylne cited in support of this claim a register in the Lyon office referring to one Alexander Mylne as Master Mason to James V, but unfortunately did not print this source³⁹. Mylne also notes that Alexander audited the books of accounts for royal building work⁴⁰. However, all this is very tenuous, and it is far more likely that any involvement in the royal works of Alexander, who was afterwards President of the Council, was more administrative in character.

In order to find his other two Mylnes who served as Principal Master Masons, Mylne looked at the apparent vacancy in the office between the death of John Roytell, sometime after 1582, and the appointment of William Wallace in 1617. This, Mylne suggested, is where the other two fitted in. He pointed out that the name of Thomas Mylne appears in a list of names of the incorporation of masons and wrights in Edinburgh in 1559, and that a Thomas Mylne was made a burges of Dundee in 1593 and was buried at Elgin in 1605. It is not even clear if these refer to the same person, or if this person or persons had any relationship to the later Mylnes. Nevertheless, Mylne proposed, without any further evidence, that 'Thomas Mylne, the grandson of John, must have exercised the office of Master Mason'⁴¹. Mylne was on slightly firmer ground with his next candidate, John Mylne II

³⁸ Mylne, *Master Masons*, 5. John's appointment is marked with a question mark in Mylne's pedigree.

³⁹ Mylne, *Master Masons*, 30.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 30-1; cf. Paton, *Accounts*, 55, 114, 195-7 and 234.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

(d. 1621). At least there could be no doubt about the accomplishments of John Mylne II as a mason⁴². He undertook various works at Dundee, including the repair of the harbour and the erection of a market cross, and became a burghess of the borough in 1587. His greatest achievement was the building of a new bridge over the River Tay at Perth between 1605 and 1617. Mylne was admitted to the freedom of Perth in 1607. However, the only evidence that Mylne was able to offer that his ancestor served as Principal Master Mason were the Scone agreement and the 1679 statement of Lord Somerville already mentioned. If John Mylne II, who was still alive in 1617, had served as Principal Master Mason, there can be no doubt that this would have been mentioned in the letter appointing William Wallace to this office. Instead, Wallace's appointment is emphatic that the last Principal Master Mason was John Roytell, and that no appointments had been made since his death. In the face of this clear-cut contemporary evidence, there can be no doubt that the much later statements by Somerville and the Scone lodge that John Mylne II was Principal Master Mason must be rejected, and that Robert Scott Mylne was wrong in elevating his ancestor to this post. Accordingly, Henry Paton rejected the claim that Thomas Mylne and John Mylne II were Principal Master Masons as 'somewhat hypothetical', and excluded them from his definitive list of the holders of this office⁴³.

In the light of this analysis, let us now revisit what the Scone agreement says about the Mylne family. It begins by describing the first member of the family to come to Perth. It states that this man was called John Mylne, that he 'came from the North countrie', that by his skill and art he became both a freeman and burghess of Perth, was appointed the King's Principal Master Mason and became Master of the lodge of stonemasons. As has been seen, the first mason of this name to work in Perth was John Mylne II, who began work on the bridge at Perth in 1605⁴⁴, who did indeed become a burghess of the borough and, since the masonic lodge was in existence at this time⁴⁵, doubtless also became master of the lodge. However, he did not come from the north, having previously worked in Dundee, and was never Principal Master Mason. Moreover, the Scone agreement makes it clear that this was not the man who initiated James VI and I. According to the agreement this

⁴² Ibid., 65-69, 89-103.

⁴³ Paton, *Accounts*, 34.

⁴⁴ Mylne, *Master Masons*, 90: John Mylne II was appointed to start work on the Tay Bridge on 4 June 1605.

⁴⁵ Stevenson, *First Freemasons*, 101-102.

honour fell to his son, also called John. In other words, the Scone agreement suggests that John Mylne II was the son of a Principal Master Mason who was also a burgess of Perth, but there is no evidence of the existence of such a person. No matter what permutation of Mylnes we try, it is impossible to marry up this first part of the Mylne family history in the Scone agreement with the known information about the family. The first Mylne described in the Scone agreement was completely fictitious.

The agreement then declares that John Mylne II became Principal Master Mason after his father's death. Again, there is no reliable contemporary evidence that John Mylne II ever held this office and even Robert Scott Mylne, who put forward the unsafe hypothesis that John Mylne II may have held the office briefly in the 1580s, never suggested that he inherited the office from his father, since the previous holder of the office was John Roytell. Moreover, Mylne's pedigree suggests that the father of John Mylne II was Thomas Mylne. The Scone agreement thus garbles the history of the Mylne family and falsely claims two members of the family as Principal Master Masons.

If John Mylne II did indeed initiate James VI and I, it is chronologically impossible that he did so before James acceded to the English throne in 1603. Mylne only began work in Perth in June 1605, and was not a burgess until 1607, and is unlikely to have been master of the masons' lodge there before then. Yet James visited Scotland just once after he became King of England. This was in 1617. James's progress included a visit to Perth on 5 July 1617, when he was presented with several poems by Henry Adamson, including his verses in praise of Mylne's bridge. If James was initiated at Perth by James Mylne II, this was the only occasion on which it could have happened. However, doubt must be felt as to whether it would have been possible to initiate James into a masonic lodge in the goldfish bowl atmosphere of his 1617 progress, when his every movement was being reported back to the English court. Such an event would surely have been mentioned in the detailed reports which were being sent back to England. In any case, if James was only initiated in 1617, the statement in the Scone agreement that 'during all his Lyfytyme he mantayned the same as ane member off the Lodge off Scone' sounds unconvincing, since he would not have had any further direct contact with the lodge for the few remaining years of his life. These chronological difficulties about James's initiation again emphasise the implausibility of the information about the Mylne family given in the Scone agreement.

This garbling of the Mylne family history in the Scone agreement is further compounded by the next sentence, which declares that 'Off the which

name of Mylne ther hath conteneded *severall* gennrationes Mr Measones to his Maties the Kings of Scotland and M^{rs} off the said Lodge of Scone till the year one thousand six hundred and fiftie seven yeires at qch tyme the last Mr Mylne being M^r off the Lodge off Scone, deceased.’ Anybody reading this without prior knowledge of the Mylne family would assume that there were a number of Mylnes who served as Principal Master Masons and Masters of the Perth lodge. In fact, the John Mylne who died in 1657 was the son of John Mylne II, and was the first member of his family who served as Principal Master Mason. Indeed, only these two John Mylnes served as Masters of the masonic lodge in Perth, John Mylne IV, who succeeded his father as Principal Master Mason in 1636, preferring the lodge in Edinburgh⁴⁶. The ‘severall generaciones’ of Mylnes claimed by the agreement as Master Masons and Masters of the lodge simply did not exist. Evidently somebody in Perth in 1658 was twisting the history of the Mylne family and thus that of the masonic lodge to suit their own ends.

By every standard test of documentary analysis, the claims in the Scone agreement as to the history of the lodge prior to 1657 are extremely suspect and completely untrustworthy as historical evidence. The agreement was attested by few members of the lodge and is unlikely to embody personal knowledge. It seeks to deal with the problems faced by the lodge in 1658 by articulating a claim to be the second oldest lodge in Scotland. It attempts to substantiate this by drawing on the (at that stage) largely fictitious claims of the Mylne family to a close connection with the crown, and indeed makes its own substantial additions to that mythology. The claim that James VI and I was a member of the lodge was part of this strategy of textual aggrandisement. At best, the information in the first part of the Scone agreement is garbled; at worst, it is fictitious. In short, this first section of the Scone agreement contains, in Stevenson’s words, ‘as much mythology as fact’, and in the end it is worthless as evidence that James VI and I became a member of the Scoon and Perth lodge. The story that King James became a freemason is, as Edward Macbean put it as long ago as 1894, ‘apocryphal’. Or, to quote Gould again, ‘Well done Perth!’

Historical information in contemporary documents can be difficult to appraise; historical information for which we have only later witnesses is often nothing short of a quagmire and frequently unreliable. The need for rigour in interpretation of source materials is further illustrated by the source cited

⁴⁶ Ibid., 25-7.

by Schuchard in support of her claim that Charles II was a freemason. The reference to Charles as a ‘governor of the craft’ occurs in a fragmentary copy of the Old Charges which contains a very unusual continuation of the legendary history of stonemasonry in England, claiming connections with figures such as St Dunstan, Edward the Confessor and Henry VII, who do not appear in other versions of these histories:

Then was the science of Geometry ruled over by Saint Dunstan and somewhile
Edward the Confessor.
And it came to pass after many days that Henry was king and he did rule over
the craft
And yet another Henry did rule over the whole Craft even the seventh of that
name
And after many days Charles did reign in the land and lo his blood was spilled
upon the earth even by that traitor Cromwell
Behold now the return of pleasant . . .
for doth not the Son of the Blessed Martyr rule over the whole land.
Long may he reign in the land and govern the craft
Is it not written ye shall not hurt the Lords anointed⁴⁷.

The claims in this manuscript that St Dunstan and Edward the Confessor ruled the craft are unusual, perhaps unique. Oddly, the history seems to imply that Charles I was not connected with the craft. The reference to Charles II does not, of course, explicitly state that he was a member of the craft; it links his governorship of the craft with his rule as king, and may simply mean that as king he was responsible for the welfare of stonemasons. This reference is therefore not explicit, but at a superficial glance it may be thought at least to be contemporary. This copy of the Old Charges was said to have been copied by one John Raymond in 1705 from a document compiled by Thomas Treloar in 1665⁴⁸. Providing that it can be shown that Raymond accurately copied and dated Treloar’s text, we can at least be confident that one man in 1665, Thomas Treloar (whoever he was) thought that Charles II had some kind of connection with the craft.

Unfortunately, however, we cannot be sure of this. Raymond’s original manuscript has vanished. It was seen sometime in the late nineteenth century (we do not know when, where or how) by the masonic scholar W.H. Rylands, who made a copy of it. Ryland’s transcript was passed over to W.J. Hughan, who made some notes on it, but was apparently unsure of its textual status and so did not include it in his compendious review of the

⁴⁷ Thorp, ‘Masonic Manuscript’, 47.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

manuscripts of the Old Charges published shortly before his death. After Hughan's death in 1911, Rylands' transcript passed to John Thorp, who was also evidently puzzled by it, but eventually published Rylands' copy in 1926⁴⁹. In publishing the text, Thorp did not discuss at length the reference to Charles II, perhaps reflecting doubts as to the reliability of this information because of the uncertain provenance of the text. Likewise, in reporting the Raymond Manuscript as an addition to the standard list of manuscripts of the Old Charges, Wallace McLeod simply noted the additions to the legendary history as an indication of the distinctive textual character of this document, without commenting on the description of Charles II as governor of the craft.

Without Raymond's original manuscript, we cannot be sure of the status of this section of the text. For example, did Raymond copy this addition to the legendary history from Treloar's original work, or did he add it himself? Were the Hebrew inscriptions, another distinctive feature of the text, copied from Treloar or added by Raymond? Did Raymond copy the date of Treloar's treatise accurately, and did Rylands himself also accurately copy Raymond's manuscript? In many manuscripts, additions are afterwards made in other hands. Could this have happened in the case of the Raymond manuscript? Without the original manuscript, and relying only on Rylands' modern transcript, we have no way of answering these questions in order to assess the reliability or otherwise of this text.

Treloar's claim was not explicit, and we have no contemporary manuscript of his work. There is therefore no way of knowing whether the suggestion that Charles II was a freemason is reliable, and it is an unsafe inference. There would be no need to subject Rylands' transcript to this intensive scrutiny if we had any other evidence from Charles' reign that he was a freemason, but so far none has been found. This in itself strongly suggests that Charles was never formally connected with freemasonry. The point that, if Charles was indeed a freemason, we should expect some more definite evidence to have emerged was made as long ago as 1724⁵⁰. If, after nearly two hundred years of intensive research, the best evidence that can still be mustered is a vague reference in a modern transcript of an eighteenth-century copy of an earlier text of uncertain status, it suggests that Charles's links with the craft were indeed tenuous.

In investigating the traditions associated with Ecosais freemasonry, it is not necessary to think they were true, anymore than it is necessary to believe

⁴⁹ Ibid., 40.

⁵⁰ Knoop, Jones & Hamer, *Early Masonic Pamphlets*, 125.

in Welsh Indians when writing about Prince Madoc, or to believe in the bible when writing about christianity. Clearly the circulation of these legends about the Stuart kings in the eighteenth century were closely related to Jacobite involvement in the development of freemasonry, particularly in continental Europe, during the eighteenth century. A refusal to accept the truth of these legends does not imply a rejection of the need to undertake research into Jacobite connections with freemasonry. However, in doing so it is vital that the scholarly standards applied to the use of evidence are as rigorous as those applicable to any other field of historical research. Moreover, the constant barren revisiting of Anderson means that other, potentially far more fruitful, methods of investigating these issues are neglected. In his comments on John Hamill's recent paper on 'The Jacobite Conspiracy', Trevor Stewart suggests some potential lines of enquiry which should certainly be followed up. These include a detailed analysis of the readership of Ramsay's *Voyage de Cyrus*, particularly from the subscription list attached to the 1730 London edition, and a correlation of the membership of London Jacobite clubs with that of masonic lodges⁵¹. Another obvious line of research, not mentioned by Stewart, would be to use Scottish lodge records to determine the extent of masonic membership among Jacobite exiles. Hamill agreed in response to Stewart's comments that these suggestions provide good lines for further research, and it is this kind of detailed and laborious prosopographical study, firmly grounded in solid historical evidence, which is more likely to yield historical fruit than the method adopted by Schuchard in the present work.

The aim of the new Centre for Research into Freemasonry at the University of Sheffield is to draw the attention of mainstream scholarship in Britain to the importance of the history of freemasonry as a field of research. In doing so, it is axiomatic that historical evidence for freemasonry should be treated with the same rigorous critical scrutiny as is the case in other fields of historical enquiry. We cannot afford to be less rigorous in our standards because of the influence of oral traditions current within different masonic orders. Gould put the point, which is the nub not only of the study of freemasonry but of all academic research, succinctly. 'Statements of students of history—Masonic or otherwise—like those of advocates in Courts of Law, are only to be relied upon, so far as they can be sustained by evidence'⁵². If we give too much credence to the wrong sorts of evidence, the results can be counter-productive. This was a point of which Gould, Hughan and the other founders

⁵¹ Stewart, 109-110 (see Schuchard's response, nt. 28).

⁵² Gould, *Early History*, 4.

of the Quatuor Coronati lodge were aware. Gould pointed out that the wild and unsubstantiated claims of Oliver and others had caused the vital evidence of early freemasonry in Scotland to be overlooked. Gould's comments are pertinent here and worth repeating:

The ordinary practice of masonic historians, from Anderson to Oliver, having been to draw largely upon their imaginations, whilst professedly furnishing *proofs* of the antiquity of freemasonry, has led many critical readers to suppose that at best the existing society is simply a modern adaptation of defunct masonic organisations, and that the craft, now so widely dispersed over the four quarters of the globe, dates only from the second decade of the last century. The trite observation that "truth is stranger than fiction" finds an apt illustration in the early histories of the fraternity, for however improbable, it is none the less a fact, that the minutes of Scottish lodges from the sixteenth century, and evidences of British masonic life dating back by some two hundred years, were actually left unheeded by our premier historiographer, although many such authentic and invaluable documents lay ready to hand, only awaiting examination, amongst the muniments in the old lodge chests . . .⁵³.

At the same time that Gould was urging masonic historians to explore the mass of original primary sources which lay forgotten in their archives, Thomas Stephens was urging his Welsh compatriots to lay aside the search for Prince Madoc's Welsh Indians, and to start investigating the real evidence for Welsh history which had also been neglected. Stephens concluded his classic criticism of the Madoc legend with a call to arms which is as relevant to the study of the history of freemasonry as it is to many other areas of historical research:

The Madoc story has done us very serious injury; it has lowered our character as truthful men . . . Let us do our duties, late as it is. Let us put the legend in its proper place in the list of our "Mabinogion". Let us show that we are not incapable either of self-analysis or of historical research . . . We have an ancient literature, which Europe expects us to translate and illustrate: be it our pleasing duty to gratify the expectation . . . We have an honourable history, as yet unwritten . . . may we seek to study these records, to write our annals honestly and thoroughly and to present such pictures of our forefathers and ourselves, as from their fidelity shall obtain for us lasting honours, when the fables which form the texts of stump-orators have been scattered to the four winds of heaven . . . Amen, I think!⁵⁴

⁵³ Gould, *Early History*, 3, 381.

⁵⁴ Williams, *Madoc*, 200-1.

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APPENDIX: THE SCONE AGREEMENT OF 1658

The following transcript is based on that in D. Crawford Smith, *History of the Ancient Masonic Lodge of Scon and Perth No. 3 (The Lodge of Scone)*, Perth: Cowan and Co., 1898, 45-47, but has been rechecked against the facsimile included in Smith's book. Expansions of abbreviations are given in italics. Original punctuation has been retained.

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN.—To all and sundrie persones whome thes presenttes doe belong. Witness that we the persones wnder subscribers Maisters, freemen and fellowcrafts measones resident within the brugh off Perth That whair ffor semeikle as we and our predecessores have and haid, ffrom the Temple of temples building on this earth (ane uniforme communitie and wnione throughout the whole world) ffrom which temple proceded one in Kilwinning in this our nation of Scotland, And from that of Kilwinning many moe within this kingdome Off which ther praceded the Abbacie and Lodge of Scone built of men of Art and Architectorie wher they placed that Lodge as the second Lodge within this nation which is now past memorie of many generatones, And wes wpheld be the Kings of Scotland for the tyme both at Scone, and the decayed cite of Bertha when it stood And now at Perth heid bourgh of the shiredome therof to this verie day. Which is now flour hundred thriescor and fyve yeires since or therby. And during that ilk space the saide Masters fremen and followcrafts inhabitants within the said brugh of Perth wer all wayes able within them selves to mantayne ther first liberties And are yet[?] willing to doe the same. As the Masters friemen or follow crafts did formerlie Whose names we know not. But to our own recoon and knowledge of our predecessors ther cam one from the North countrie named Johne Mylne ane measone a man weill experted in his calling who enter^d himself both frieman & burges of this brugh Who in proces off tyme (by reasone off his skill and airt) was preferred to be the Kings Maties M^r Measone and Master of the said Lodge at Scone, And his sone Johne Milne being (after his fathers deceis - preferred to the said office, and M^r off the said lodge in the reigne off his Majestie King James the sixt of blessed memorie, Who by the said second Johne Mylne wes be the kings own desere, entered ffrrieman measone and ffellow craft And during all his Lyftyme he mantayned the same as ane member off the Lodge off Scone So that this Lodge is the most fo mous Lodge (iff well ordored) within this kingdome Off the which name of Mylne ther hath contenedewed severall gennratones Mr Measones to his Maties the Kings of Scotland and M^{rs} off the said Lodge of Scone till the year one thousand six hundred and fiftie seven yeires at qch tyme the last Mr Mylne being M^r off the Lodge off Scone, deceased. And left behind him ane compleit Lodge of measones ffrriemen & ffellow crafts wth such off ther number as wardens and others to oversie them And ordained that one of the said number should choyse one of themselves to succeid as Master in is place. The names of whose persones follows To Witt Thomas Craich measone & warden then James Chrystie James Wilson Andrew Norie John Wast James Roch and Johne Young all measones frieman and ffollow crafts Who after ther true and laull deliberatione understanding that the said Lodge could not stand without ane Master Therfor they all in ane voice wnanimouslie ffoe keyre of wnon and aimity among themselves Did nomynat and mak choyce of the said James Roch to be master of the said Lodge dur ing all the dayes of his Lyftyme And the said Andrew Norie to be Warden theroff also during his Lyftyme or as the sd Masters and ffellow crafts find it convenient And we the said Masters Warden and bodie of the said Lodge off Scone resident within the brugh of Perth doe bind and obleis ws and our successors to stond and abyd to the whole acts maid be our predecessors And confirms the samene wheroff the tennor of a part of them are to ffollow To Witt that ne frie man not residing wthin this brugh tak upon him to contradict any true thing that the ffrriemen resident wthin the brugh speaks acts or does No goe to no other Lodge nor mak ane Lodge among themselves Seing this Lodge is prmⁿ wthin the shyre And if eny frie man or ffellow craft tak himself to any other Lodge he shall not be hold in to

returne ever againe to this Lodge til he first pay the triple off that which he payed either to our Lodge or to the Lodge wher he was Last And to be put cleane fro other company of the Lodge he was last in And to suffer the Law of our Lodge at our pleasure Lykas we doe conferme the said James Roch M^r off the said Lodge And Andrew Norie Warden first with the consent of ws all ffor themselves and ther successores foirsd, to put the foirsd act to executione (with our consent - agst the transgressoris. As also the acts following To Witt That no master within the brugh or without shall tak another friemans work till he first give it over and be payd for what is done Secondlie that no Master goe betwixt another Master to seik work ffrom any persone with whome the first Mr is aggrieing till once he quytt the bargeane Thirddie That no frieman tak another friemans prenteis or journeyman to work with him either belonging to this Lodge or an other except they have ane frie discharge from ther Master nor resave any entered or wntered except for twenty dayes space onlie And if they be dischargd of ther Master they are to have ther vott in the Lodge and Law thereof iff they serve heirefter ffourthlie That all f fellow crafts that are past in this Lodge pay to the Master Warden and ffollow crafts off the samene The sowm off Sixteine Pund scottis money besyd the gloves and dewes therof with Thrie Pund scottis at ther first incoming to the Lodge efter they are past. And tht everie entered prenteis shall pay Tuentie merkis money, with ffourtie shilling at ther first incomeing to the Lodge besyd the dewes thereof And yt non shall be holdin to be cau^r for others but if they doe not imediatlie pay the sowmes afor sd they are to have a cautioner not belonging to the sd Lodge for the dew and lawfull payment thereof ffythlie that no entered prenteis shall leave his Master or Masters to tak any work or task work aboue ffortie shilling scottis nor tak a prentis And if they doe in the contrair they are to be debarred from the libertie of the said Lodge as ane fellow craft in all tyme to come. And Lastlie Wee and all of ws off ane mind consent and assent doe bind and obleidge ws and our successoris to mantayne and wphold the hail liberties and previledges of the said Lodge of Scone as ane ancient frie Lodge ffor entering and passing within our selves as the bodie thereof residing within the brugh of Perth as sd is: And that soe long as the Sun ryseth in the East and setteth in the west as we wold wish the blessing of God to attend ws in all our Wayes and actiones. In Testimony whereof we have submit it the samene with our hands Att Perth the twentie fourt day of December [*illegible in facsimile, but given in Smith's transcript as Jajvc*] and ffiftie eight yeires

[The signatures are given in Smith's transcript as follows. In the facsimile they are in a different order, and a number are illegible. Vertical in original, here printed horizontally for reasons of space]

J. Roch Mr Measone / James Chrystie / John Strachane / Lawrence Chapman / Androw Christie / Matthow Hay / Henie Mateson / Andrw Stewart / Thomas Craigdellie / Johne Mill / John Watson / A. Donaldson / D. Broune / James Whytte / Wal Thomson / David Cochren / John Condie / Edward Kicking / Andrew Buchan / And Ballanquall / J. Fyffe / Andro Norie Warden / Will Graham / John Newton / C. Rattray / Alex Ritchie / Ja. Massone / A Ritchie / Alexander Chrystie / Androw Norie / Johne Haggarrtt / James Irvine / Matthew Imrie / Thomas Roch / John Robertson / Robert Strachane / James Roch, yo^r / James Alexander / James Gou / Matthew Barlan / M.L. Dobie

Endorsement

Att Edinburgh, the 19th day of May, Invijc and fourty two years, The Which day The within contract and agreement was presented by Gideon Shaw, Esq^r, and Recorded in the books of the Grand Lodge of free and accepted masons in Scotland, by their order, By me, Clerk to, and keeper of, the records thereof.

R^o Alison, G. Clerk

BOOK REVIEW SECTION

Joscelyn Godwin, *The Pagan Dream of the Renaissance*, London: Thames & Hudson 2002. 292 pp., many illustrations, ISBN 0-500-25119-3.

‘The pagan divinities are a hardy breed’. With this sentence Joscelyn Godwin opens his diligently researched book on *The Pagan Dream of the Renaissance*. As the title already indicates, the book is not about Renaissance “paganism”. Instead, it is ‘about a state of mind and soul that arose in fifteenth-century Italy, spread through Europe along certain clearly-defined fault-lines, and persisted for about two hundred years, during which, although no one believed in the gods, many people acted as though they existed’ (p. 1). It is a book about ‘cultivators of pagan fantasies’ (p. 11) who are ‘touched by the pagan spirit’ (p. 13). Somehow surprisingly—or, as I will point out later, maybe consistently—Godwin does not tackle the impulses the pagan discourse of the Renaissance received from George Gemistos Plethon, although he acknowledges his importance. This is astonishing insofar as Plethon in fact is a crucial figure when it comes to early modern (re-)constructions of ancient polytheistic traditions. Instead of tracing Plethon’s impact, Godwin seems to subscribe to the founding myth of the “Platonic academy” by Cosimo de’ Medici and Marsilio Ficino (see p. 11), a fable that was deconstructed by James Hankins already thirteen years ago (*Renaissance Quarterly* 44:3 [1991], 429-475).

Godwin sets out with an analysis of Francesco Colonna’s *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, printed in 1499. This, of course, fits his objective to describe the imaginal worlds of Renaissance paganism and the interlacing of art, public spheres, and religious or philosophical doctrines. One of the world’s leading experts of the *Hypnerotomachia*, Godwin points at the Platonic elements of this work that go hand in hand with a concrete eroticism, which seems to be a characteristic of the time. As Godwin argues persuasively throughout his book (explicitly so on p. 130), the positive evaluation of sexuality and bodily pleasures, often downplayed in Renaissance studies (see Bette Talvacchia, *Taking Positions: On the Erotic in Renaissance Culture*, Princeton 1999, not mentioned by Godwin) is compatible even with official Christianity—Colonna was a friar of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, and the people who stand behind the Italian magic gardens (see ch. 8) are cardinals or other high-ranked

Christian intellectuals. Godwin describes the *Hypnerotomachia* as a ‘single, intricate knotwork [of] all the threads of early Renaissance’, from the ‘elitist thrill of humanistic learning’, the uneasiness with regard to scholasticism and Catholic orthodoxy, to the new regard of bodily pleasures and a sense for living nature (p. 37). While these elements without doubt can be found in this work, Godwin even suggest that ‘the aesthetic movement known as Mannerism has also been latent within Colonna’s dream’ (p. 37), an interpretation that would need further evidencing.

After having presented the *Hypnerotomachia* as an ‘attempt to re-make the world in a form nearer to the heart’s desire’ (p. 39), Godwin devotes the rest of his study to a detailed description of how Renaissance culture pursued this task. In well-written and richly illustrated chapters he takes the reader on a trip through the ‘Private Microcosm’, the ‘Grotesqueries’, and the magic gardens, describes the ‘Enchantment of Public Spheres’, the ‘Marvels of Art and Nature’, and the ‘Joyous Festivals’, and ends with chapters on ‘The Birth of Opera’ and the architecture and gardens of ‘Versailles and After’. This makes for fascinating reading that at times resembles a guided tour through the fantastic world of a bygone culture, with living statues that are about to speak to the visitor, strange *Kunst- und Wunderkammern* in which extravagant people store their private collections, and so on. This impression is not by chance, because Godwin makes clear that to understand the peculiar mood of Renaissance pagan imagination, scholars have to be open to the sensual and bodily impression of the phenomena they study. ‘The garden magic’, says Godwin, ‘is a mood that descends especially on the solitary visitor, a trancelike atmosphere of suspended excitement beyond words or the rational mind. In earlier times, when consciousness was less rigidified, it must have been stronger, leaving no doubt of the presence of Pan and his retinue’ (p. 153). Repeatedly, the author tells us that it is not possible to analyze these artifacts rationally, since ‘[e]rudition and scholarship play no role in the mildly trancelike state of openness to its wonders, aided by one’s own casual associations’ (p. 159).

Of course, Godwin is right in addressing the fact that the emotions, associations, and impressions of the scholar are an important—and often marginalized—element of his or her analysis. To be open to them and reflect upon them, is something that will make the analysis much richer and more balanced. The problem I have with Godwin’s methodology is that he wants to go beyond that. For instance, following the sentence I just quoted, Godwin draws a comparison between magical gardens and Christian churches and asks ‘theologians and scholars [to] deliberately set their learning aside in

favor of a more *unmediated experience of the holy*' (italics mine), namely in these powerful gardens. Without making his methodological framework explicit, Godwin runs the risk of stepping into the religionist trap of religious studies. Sometimes it seems as if he shares the assumptions of Rudolf Otto and his mystical school, but gives them a pagan tenor. So, he is interested in the 'developments and unfoldings in the World of the Imagination, which to an extent is *timeless*' (p. 37, italics mine); he insists that 'studying the Star Castle in an American library might well be different from what one feels in the castle itself, where the *genius loci is exceptionally strong*' (pp. 80-81, italics mine); and on p. 89 he says that the 'psychological *truth*, that behind every masculine achievement is the creative energy of what C.G. Jung called the *anima*, expresses itself in Beliore by giving the Nine Muses . . . the lineaments of desire' (italics mine, for a positive evaluation of Jung's approach see also p. 253).

I do not want to dismiss such sentences as mere religionist tropes. But since Godwin does not offer a rational analysis or fleshes out his methodological framework, we have to read between the lines. In my view, instead of (implicitly) harking back to precarious religionist approaches, Godwin could have strengthened his argument by drawing on methodological considerations elaborated on the field of *visual* or *material culture*. These provide a framework of analysis that is needed to study religion as something that cannot be separated from the public sphere, from art, experience, body, or performative action. Viewed from this perspective, the Renaissance is one of the best examples of a visual culture.

Testing Godwin's methodology leads to another important question: Is it true that we can only talk of a pagan 'dream', while 'religion' is something quite different? Again, there is a religionist or, rather, theological subtext in his book. When Godwin insists on the fact that no one believed in those gods but 'many people acted as though they existed' (p. 1)—I note in passing, though, that this sentence seems to contradict his notion that the gardens left 'no doubt of the presence of Pan and his retinue'—it is clear that he follows a concept of religion that is focused on *belief* and *inner states of mind*. However, if we approach religion as a *public* issue, with *action* and *communication* as major instruments of analysis, we will get a quite different picture of early modern paganism. It might be argued that Godwin stepped into the second trap of theological discourse, namely the trap of "singularization". The unity of "belief—identity—person" is a concept that emerged in post-Reformatory times and it powerfully conceals the fact that there is no such thing as a fixed identity. Identities are constructed in a complex

process of negotiation, and the alternatives to Christian readings of the cosmos and of history are a crucial element of Renaissance and early modern discourses. If Godwin had given George Gemistos Plethon a more important role in his narrative, this would have become much clearer. Hence, it would be very promising to pick up the questions Godwin raises and confront them with the ongoing discussion about the concept of monotheism and its legacy (among recent monographs, see especially those by Regina Schwartz, Jan Assmann and Rodney Stark). The processes of singularization are a significant structural element of European history of religions, but they also fostered pluralization and produced polytheistic alternatives that many—mainly intellectual—Europeans embraced.

Although Godwin gives occasional hints to these issues, he is not interested in addressing them openly. In the end of his book, he contemplates previous readings of Renaissance culture and expresses his call to defend the Renaissance against misreadings that did not have ‘the slightest appreciation for the fifteenth-century attempt to reopen a channel to the imaginal world of ancient paganism, backed by a revival of Neoplatonic and Hermetic philosophy’ (p. 259). At this point, the scholar Godwin turns into an artist who calls for the appreciation of the *mundus imaginalis* as something that nourishes the artist’s soul. In almost Eliadian terms—and subscribing to Jung’s archetypal theory—Godwin prescribes the meditation and experience of the ‘superfluity of the past and the overwhelming superiority of its treasure’ (p. 261) as a remedy to the illness of modernity and a way to be illuminated by the ‘one truth’. And since polytheistic paganism ‘can afford to be relativized and subsumed in a greater metaphysical whole’ (p. 260)—it might be argued, though, that this is not true in the case of Plethon’s exclusive, totalitarian polytheism—Godwin calls the reader to reopen his or her senses to the archetypal whispering of Renaissance paganism.

However, even if one criticizes the lack of methodological reflection and the religionist shortcomings in terms of analysis, one must be thankful to Godwin that he wrote this book. Given Godwin’s enormous erudition and his courage to follow unorthodox approaches, every chapter opens new perspectives and provides stimulating new insights. The book raises important questions and presents a cornucopia of fascinating material that future research will have to deal with. Although it shows that the pagan divinities, indeed, are ‘a hardy breed’ for modern scholars, *The Pagan Dream of the Renaissance* is an important contribution to an interdisciplinary study of Renaissance esotericism.

Erik Leibenguth, *Hermetische Poesie des Frühbarock: Die "Cantilenaes intellectuales" Michael Maiers*, Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag 2002. 644 pp. ISBN 3-484-36566-8.

With the publication of Erik Leibenguth's doctoral thesis the academic world has received not only a fine annotated translation of one of Count Michael Maier's most elegant and enduring works, but also a very detailed and insightful account of Maier's life and worldview. Working under the guidance of Kühlmann and Telle at the *Neuphilologische Fakultät* of the University of Heidelberg, Leibenguth shows how the *Cantilenaes Intellectuales* form something of a transition from traditional alchemical natural philosophy to the theosophical and pietistic appropriation of alchemical concepts—the medium being the religious *Erbauungsliteratur* of the Baroque period. The fascination elicited through the centuries by this work is due in no small part to its profound fusion of natural philosophical and religious themes, and Leibenguth's command of the many fields of Maier's encyclopaedic learning has resulted in a study and a translation that faithfully reflect the original.

Following in the footsteps of Figala and Neumann, Leibenguth also casts further light on the biography of Maier, who appears to have inspired mistrust and apprehension wherever he went (he was 'a peculiar man', in the words of one Straßburger councillor), and who was yet driven by his conscience and convictions (p. 23). Amongst his new findings, Leibenguth appears correctly to dispute Figala and Neumanns' revision of Maier's birth date from summer of 1568 to summer of 1569 (p. 24); he also identifies the original source of Maier's lasting wrath against alchemical *Betrüger*, which was none other than the alchemist Johann Grasse whom Maier consulted upon his return to Kiel in 1602 (p. 39). According to Maier's testimony, this *grasator* ('bandit') deliberately threw his alchemical work into confusion by feeding him misleading information, and charged him the exorbitant sum of 450 thalers for the privilege (whilst being well aware that Maier had received a good sum from his rich host in Danzig). Incidentally, Grasse is listed in most library catalogues as Johann Grasshoff; he spoke of himself as a *frater aureae crucis*, and appears to have drawn certain ideas in his *Güldener Tractat vom Philosophischen Steine* from Maier's work. Leibenguth also refers to a letter from Maier to August von Anhalt-Plötzkau showing that the purpose of his fateful journey to Prague was not only to consult with the leading alchemists and doctors of his day, who were gathered at the court of Rudolf II, but specifically because he lacked the Philosophical fire necessary to realise

the next stage in his ill-fated quest for the Philosophers' Stone (p. 42). In both Bohemia and England Maier 'seems to have been surrounded by a somewhat dubious aura' (p. 51); and Leibenguth presents a newly uncovered letter from Francis Anthony (infamous for his controversial *aurum potabile*) which testifies to his close friendship and experimental collaboration with Maier (p. 52). Leibenguth also suggests that the quartan fever which afflicted Maier for many years, and which was associated with his death, was a symptom of malaria—a common souvenir for German students in Italy (p. 467).

Leibenguth devotes some pages to dispelling certain myths that have grown up around the historical figure of Maier, and on this subject certain of his findings concur with my own research on the alchemist, which was carried out more or less contemporaneously with his own. For example, in his *vita Maieriana* Leibenguth demonstrates that any belief Maier performed an important political function at the Prague court, or that he served as a Rosicrucian "agent" in England, has no basis in the historical data. Nevertheless, the statement that 'for his entire life Maier saw behind this "Fraternity R. C." a secret grouping of scientists and alchemists, and he understood the initials of the Brotherhood in this sense . . . as "Res Chymicae"' (p. 53) is in need of qualification. Nor are Maier's public arguments championing the existence of the Fraternity in the *Symbola Aureae Mensae* a necessary reflection of his opinion; indeed, that he did not deem the truth to be fit for public consumption is shown by his words in a letter to Landgrave Moritz von Hessen-Kassel, where he simply states: 'Quantum mihi cognitum sit de Philosophis R. C. iam ante in aurem Serenituri. V:ae dixi, in qua opinione a ratione et experientia stabilitus et confirmatus videor' (see my article in *Aries*, 2:1 [2002]). Leibenguth follows Figala and Neumann when he states that Maier understood the initials R. C. to refer to *Res Chymicae*; nevertheless, the passage in his *Themis Aurea* in which he says R. should be the substantive and C. the adjective has a specifically Christian (and Lutheran iconographic) significance: rather than a rosy cross, it is the "crucified rose" of Christ which the letters denote, for the misery of earthly existence is fleeting in contrast to the joy of eternal life. This is, of course, also a reference to *Res Chymicae* in the sense of that 'splendid substance which is passed from master to master, in the beginning of which there is misery with vinegar, but in the end of which there is truly joy with gladness'; but the initials R. C. have a manifold significance in Maier's work. Furthermore, the cryptic promise of the *Echo Colloquii Rhodo-Staurotici* (1624) that Maier will be rewarded by the Brethren with 'great honours and communications of singular mystery' is

decipherable only with recourse to the original German version of that work; as it stands, Leibenguth's abbreviated reference to the Latin text as the *Echo Fraternitatis* (pp. 518, 530) only adds to the confusion.

As well as offering new insights into the course of Maier's life, Leibenguth grants us new perspectives on the place of Maier's work in the history of ideas. Most significant in this regard is the chapter on *Mythoalchemie als Argumentationsschema*, in which the author seeks to clarify the rhetorical and hermeneutic context of Maier's alchemical interpretation of mythology. The *Margarita pretiosa novella* (1330) is identified as a seminal work in this "mythoalchemical" tradition; for there Petrus Bonus argues that Ovid, Virgil and Homer wove the secrets of the alchemical art into their stories and myths by way of an 'ornate language'; as a result, only the wise can see their true intention (p. 92). Leibenguth also speaks of Maier's part in a 'theosophical-pietistic protest movement against Lutheran orthodoxy', citing his vicinity to Melchior Breler, the publisher of Johann Arndt's work, and the currency of his work in the circle of Abraham von Franckenberg (p. 65). According to Leibenguth, Maier's work 'exercised its influence above all in those opposition circles which set themselves in defense against an authoritarian Christianity and the authoritarian conduct of a centralised state' (p. 13); and whilst this may be partially true of the post mortem reception of Maier's work, we would do well to remember that while he lived his main patrons were Erastians, that he became inclined in his later life to a virulent anti-Catholicism, and that he railed against democracy in both the state and the *civitas corporis humani*. Furthermore, by the eighteenth century Maier's work was current above all in circles of anti-Enlightenment medievalist reaction (i.e. the *Gold- und Rosenkreutz*).

This having been said, in so many aspects of Maier's thought we see a man ready to compromise—between new-fangled Paracelsianism and the Galenic tradition, between the Copernican and the Ptolemaic cosmologies, between an Aristotelian psychology and Platonic idealism—and although on most matters Maier stood on the wrong side of history (as it seems), the fact that his work straddles the medieval and the modern often makes its categorisation difficult. With regard to Maier's attitude towards Paracelsianism, Leibenguth recognises his attempt to demonstrate the compatibility of Galenic medicine with the new system commonly thought to be its antithesis, and shows that he drew upon the central Paracelsian conception of the 'Light of Nature' as a principle both of form and of recognition (pp. 74, 255) whilst utilising gnostic Paracelsian motifs such as the "inner Adam" (p. 387). Nevertheless, surely the most basic distinction between the teaching of

Paracelsus and that of Maier is the latter's rejection of the *tria prima* (pp. 311-312, n. 480; see also the *Septimana Philosophica*, 1620, p. 74), rather than his endorsement of Erastus' critique of Paracelsian natural magic, as Leibenguth proposes (p. 72)? After all, Erastus railed against Paracelsus as a restorer of Gnostic heresy and disciple of the Devil; but Maier praised him as the equivalent of Luther who purged the 'papist faeces' from the realm of medicine, and argued that Erastus' criticisms were most relevant to certain unlearned disciples of Paracelsus (*Verum Inventum*, pp. 210 ff.).

Further on this point, it certainly cannot be said that Maier 'did not deign to deal with concepts of natural magic' (p. 72). On the contrary, he professed the same *magia naturalis* as that practised by the Rosicrucian Brethren, who in Maier's eyes were chiefly occupied with the manipulation of astral virtues in both herbal medicine and *chymiatría*. For Maier natural magic referred simply to the application of a deep knowledge of the occult forces and sympathies present in Nature, which was a gift from God to the pious ('Nulla ipsis Magia in usu praesumitur, nisi naturalis, quae est scientia secretorum naturae, et non nisi viris piis, bonis et eruditis a Deo conceditur', *Themis Aurea*, 1624, 177). In his defense of natural magic in the *Themis Aurea* he also calls upon the testimony of Origen to distinguish between a devilish, deceptive and impious art on the one hand, and a lawful, natural art such as that practised by Apollonius of Tyana on the other ('de Magia naturali loquitur, eam distinguens a Daemoniaca, fallaci et impia, quam damnat et improbat: Apollonium Tyanaeum in licita et naturali exercitatum fuisse, ut multi asserunt, sic nos non negamus', *Ibid.*, 177); his burden is to show that the Rosicrucian Brethren use only lawful and natural remedies. Similarly, in the 16th chapter of the *Silentium post Clamores* (1617) Maier inveighs against those zealous detractors of the Rosicrucian Fraternity who accuse the Brethren of practicing black magic; there he argues that if we reason from effect to cause, the spirit which guided the art of the Fraternity's pagan predecessors—Apollonius, Pythagoras, the Brahmans and the Gymnosophists—cannot have been malevolent. He goes on to say that the art of predicting the future with the help of the stars is a gift of the highest God, as Hermes has shown, and has its roots in the nature of truth—as do many other *artificia* which may be found in the *Magia Naturalis* of della Porta and the *De Subtilitate et Varietate Rerum* of Cardano. According to Maier, these authors operated with the help of legitimate, natural mediums; and whilst some may have been manifest and some occult, only the insane would speak of them as diabolical (*Silentium post Clamores*, 1617, pp. 75-78). Thus Leibenguth errs when he blankly states that Maier was 'opposed to the *magia naturalis* of Gian Baptista della Porta'

(p. 73); rather, that Maier should voice criticism of della Porta in one place whilst citing him favourably elsewhere is merely characteristic of his nuanced and critical approach to received tradition. In light of his positive evaluation of natural magic, Maier's utterances in the *Symbola Aureae Mensae* concerning Pythagoras and the wonders attributed to him (i.e. those involving his communications with animals) can only be read as a condemnation of diabolical magic, not of magic *per se* as Leibenguth reads them (p. 216; the same is true for similar comments found in the *Silentium post Clamores*, 1617, pp. 17-18); and we should remember that even the theurge Iamblichus, who ascribed these miracles to Pythagoras, is an important authority for Maier.

One of the goals Leibenguth sets himself at the beginning of his work is 'to contribute to the final extinction of unreflective legends that have grown up around the secretive iatrochemist and poet Michael Maier' (p. 4); and whilst it may sometimes be irritating to read the same old tales passed off as historical fact, I would like in closing to take the opportunity to argue that this type of demystification should not constitute a goal of the historian of Western esotericism. At this risk of appearing pedantic, that goal should rather be to expose legends as legends, whilst remaining indifferent to the question of their continued survival—for what would be left of many esoteric traditions (and I refer here in particular to alchemy and Rosicrucianism) were they to be purged of legend, be it of the reflective or the unreflective kind? It is true that, when uncovering the textual vestiges of Maier's life, the researcher finds a figure that is 'in danger of disappearing under a tangled mess of historicising legends of esoteric and mystifying provenance' (p. 9); but these legends seem often to be associated with an impulse to establish authority (take, for example, the grandiose and conspiratorial caricatures of Maier as "Rosicrucian agent") which is itself deserving of investigation. After the essential work of determining the often complex distinction between legend and historical fact, there remains a task of primary concern for our deeper understanding of the traditions we study, namely the identification of the underlying logic of such lore and the forces contributing to its formation. This task requires, in the words of Coleridge, a 'willing suspension of disbelief' rather than the crusading iconoclasm of the *Aufklärer*, and (as far as I can see) at this point the use of psychological or phenomenological categories becomes unavoidable.

In any case, these musings can hardly be taken as a serious criticism of Leibenguth's work, which achieves its goals admirably. Setting the *Cantilenae intellectuales* in the tradition of the alchemical *Lehrdichtung*, Leibenguth dis-

plays an extensive knowledge of both classical sources and the alchemical corpus as he elaborates upon the verses of the work, which deal less with the Phoenix of its subtitle, and more with the elusive Philosophical fire which effects the transformation of the material within the vessel (pp. 247 f.). We are provided with an excellent account of both the religious and the laboratory connotations of the symbolism employed, and the result is an unparalleled exposition of Maier's "physicotheology", as Leibenguth puts it. With the inclusion of translations of a number of important letters and textual passages as an appendix, as well as the most thorough annotated bibliography of Maier's printed works and manuscripts yet compiled, this work is indispensable for any serious student of Maier.

Hereward Tilton

Pierre Gordon, *Les Vierges Noires. L'origine et le sens des contes de fées. Mélusine*. Introduction de Philippe Subrini. Paris: Signatura 2003. 125 pp. ISBN 2-915369-00-3.

Les éditions Arma Artis avaient publié en 1993 un superbe ouvrage à tirage limité intitulé *EVA AVE* dans lequel l'auteur, Henri Gariat, commentait la représentation de la Vierge Noire sur les vitraux de Notre-Dame de Mézières. Dix ans auparavant, le même éditeur avait réuni sous le titre général d'*Essais* trois études de Pierre Gordon, dont l'une était consacrée aux *Vierges Noires*. En 2003, sous le signe éditorial du ternaire, les éditions Signatura ont eu l'heureuse idée de rééditer ce texte, accompagné comme en 1983 des études de Pierre Gordon sur *l'origine et le sens des contes de fées* ainsi que sur *Mélusine*.

Fulcanelli, dans son célèbre *Mystère des cathédrales*, avait dès 1922 donné une interprétation judicieuse des Vierges Noires, puisque, selon lui, le christianisme avait assimilé la tradition d'un ancien culte à Isis: 'Isidi, seu Virgini ex qua filius proditurus est' (Paris, Jean-Jacques Pauvert, rééd. 1964, p. 75). Fulcanelli évoquait bien sûr la cathédrale de Chartres et la célèbre statue de *Notre-Dame-sous-Terre*, mais il mentionnait également d'autres Vierges Noires, au Puy, à Marseille, à Rocamadour, à Vichy, à Quimper, et même à Paris dans les caves de l'Observatoire. Pierre Gordon décrit à son tour les Vierges Noires de Marseille, de Vichy, et il mentionne encore d'autres lieux où était vénérée la *Virgo paritura*. La dénomination de *Notre-Dame-sous-Terre* expli-

que l'adjectif "noir": en effet ces vierges étaient vénérées dans l'obscurité des cryptes, donc dans les profondeurs évoquant à la fois la mort à soi-même et la matrice d'où allait jaillir une nouvelle naissance. C'était tout le mystère du *stirb und werde*, du "meurs et deviens" mentionné par Goethe dans son célèbre poème intitulé *Selige Sehnsucht*, "Nostalgie bienheureuse".

L'étude de Pierre Gordon intitulée *L'origine et le sens des contes de fées*, qui fait suite au texte sur les Vierges Noires, se concentre sur la tradition des tabous nuptiaux. L'auteur part d'une citation biblique du Livre de Tobie, qui dans sa version de la Vulgate (6, 16), fait dire par l'ange aux jeunes mariés qu'ils doivent passer les trois premières nuits dans la continence et la prière. Ainsi leur union se trouve sacralisée, et le tabou de la nudité est levé. Dans d'autres contes, le tabou porte sur un déguisement qui transforme le conjoint en un animal (ours, loup, cheval, serpent, etc.) et le rend ainsi sacro-saint. Le type du tabou enfreint par l'épouse est fourni à Pierre Gordon par la légende de Lohengrin, fils de Parsifal, héros de la légende du *Chevalier au cygne*, qu'on trouve à la fin du *Parzifal* de Wolfram von Eschenbach, un vaste poème de 25000 vers. La duchesse de Brabant a refusé les avances de nombreux prétendants nobles, jusqu'à ce que Lohengrin, venu de Montsalvat, le royaume merveilleux du Graal, apparaisse à Anvers dans une riche nacelle traînée par un cygne. La duchesse est séduite par cet homme mystérieux qui ne lui impose qu'une seule condition, à savoir qu'elle ne lui demande jamais qui il est. Elle lui donne des enfants, mais un jour, elle succombe à la curiosité, provoquant le retour inéluctable de Lohengrin dans le royaume du Graal. On sait que le mythe du *Chevalier au Cygne*, repris par Conrad de Wurzburg au 13^e siècle, a fourni à Richard Wagner le sujet de *Lohengrin*, représenté pour la première fois à Weimar en 1850 sous la direction de Liszt.

L'exemple par excellence du pendant masculin au tabou imposé à la femme est fourni par le conte de *Méhusine* auquel Pierre Gordon consacre de nombreuses pages. Mélusine a pour caractéristique d'être une femme sacralisée par sa queue de serpent, et l'on sait que la curiosité de son mari Raimondin, qui découvre un samedi, jour de sacralisation, cette anomalie, provoque la disparition de la femme-vouivre.

Les fées participent du surnaturel, tout comme Jacob, dont la Bible nous dit qu'après son combat avec l'ange, il se mit à boiter (Genèse 32, 25-33). L'anomalie corporelle est un signe d'initiation. Et si les fées, dans la légende, se dégradent souvent en sorcières, l'auteur estime que certaines d'entre elles se survivent dans les saintes du christianisme.

On retrouve ici l'ambivalence du sacré, si bien mise en lumière par Roger Caillois dans son livre *L'homme et le sacré*: 'Le sacré', écrit-il, 'se mani-

feste presque exclusivement par des interdits. Il se définit comme le “réservé”, le “séparé”; il est mis hors de l’usage commun, protégé par des prohibitions destinées à prévenir toute atteinte à l’ordre du monde, tout risque de le détraquer et d’y introduire un ferment de trouble’ (Gallimard 1950, 127). On trouve précisément une excellente illustration romanesque de cette définition dans les contes de fées analysés par Pierre Gordon dans le présent recueil sur *les Vierges Noires*, sur *l’origine et le sens des contes de fées* et sur *Mélines*. On sait gré aux éditions *Signatura* de mettre à nouveau ces beaux textes à la disposition des lecteurs.

Roland Edighoffer

Marie-France Tristan, *La scène de l’écriture: Essai sur la poésie philosophique du Cavalier Marin (1569-1625)*, Préface de Yves Hersant, Paris: Honoré Champion 2002. 753 pp. ISBN 2 7453 0670 7; ISSN 1262 2850.

Si l’*Adone* du chevalier Giambattista Marino, alias le Cavalier Marin, connut la gloire lors de sa parution en 1623, au terme du long séjour de l’auteur à la cour de France, le succès fut bientôt payé d’un long purgatoire. Survenue dès 1627, sa mise à l’index (après beaucoup d’autres et, parmi les plus significatives, celle de la *Nova de universis philosophia* de Francesco Patrizi qui entendait refonder une philosophie chrétienne sur des bases hermétiques) marque une ère nouvelle où la rationalité théologique post-tridentine constitue la face indissociable d’une remise en ordre simultanément philosophique et scientifique pour compartimenter tous les domaines du savoir et canaliser les coulées volcaniques de l’âge précédent. Rappelons que l’année même de la parution de l’*Adone*, Mersenne engageait son offensive contre toutes les fausses sciences, spirituelles ou non, marquant bien la solidarité du combat mené par la théologie et la nouvelle physique. Il fallut donc attendre près de trois siècles et demi pour voir réappréciée sous l’influence de Benedetto Croce et dans le sillage des études sur le concept de baroque, exploré dans le domaine des arts avant de l’être dans celui des écrits littéraires ou philosophiques, une œuvre considérée comme illisible et en tout cas jugée dépourvue de toute intention philosophique, au nom d’une conception réductrice de la poésie et plus généralement de la rhétorique. Il fallait aussi disposer de rééditions critiques de l’*Adone*, simultanément fournies par M. Pieri et par le P. Pozzi qui avait donné en 1960 l’édition critique des *Dicerie sacre* de

1614, fondamentale pour comprendre l'*Adone*. L'abondance des œuvres de Marino et de la critique marinienne depuis une quarantaine d'années n'en rendait que plus audacieuse l'entreprise de Marie-France Tristan qui s'est très nettement démarquée de ses prédécesseurs, préférant le style de l'essai thématique à l'inventaire et à l'analyse des sources, bref donnant le pas à l'interprétation philosophique de l'imaginaire symbolique, 'de la mythocritique à la mythanalyse', illustrée entre autres par C. G. Dubois et G. Durand, sur le point de vue philologique de l'historien des textes. Contestant le point de vue du P. Pozzi quant à la valeur doctrinale, théologique et philosophique, de l'œuvre de Marino, la première partie de l'ouvrage commence par en déployer sur le mode synthétique la vision du monde néo-platonicienne et hermético-kabbalistique, depuis le monde archétypique jusqu'au monde sensible, qui reproduit pour l'essentiel la structure du *De harmonia mundi* (1525) de Georges de Venise. Si cependant Marino n'est pas, contrairement à ce dernier, un théologien et ne peut donc être jugé à cette aune, il est bien dans la lignée de ces poètes philosophes qui sont aussi, au sens germanique du terme, des "philosophes de la nature". L'appréciation de l'hétérodoxie marinienne, justement limitée au vitalisme et à des tendances panpsychistes, mais à l'abri du panthéisme et de l'athéisme, aurait néanmoins profité d'une exploration plus précise des sources où puisa Marino. En quel sens, par exemple, peut-on parler d'hétérodoxie trinitaire et doit-on voir comme purement analogique, en matière de kabbale, le rapprochement avec le thème lurianique du *tsimtsoum*? Les éventuelles colorations hétérodoxes des sources kabbalistiques de Marino supposent au préalable la mise en évidence objective de leur utilisation directe ou indirecte ainsi que l'éclairage de leur contexte. Encore n'est-il pas inutile de rappeler que l'hétérodoxie de certaines démarches est, elle aussi, tributaire de l'histoire. Centrale depuis la Renaissance qui renouait d'ailleurs en les réactivant les débats patristiques, la question des rapports entre la théologie chrétienne et la mythologie païenne dont l'*Adone* propose une illustration exemplaire suscitent des réactions fort diverses dans des espaces de temps très brefs, voire dans une même période. L'analogie généralisée entre les deux ordres du sacré et du profane n'a pas attendu l'époque baroque pour se déployer et connaître tantôt la faveur, tantôt la suspicion. Très tôt au cœur même de l'humanisme florentin ou napolitain, de l'académie pontanienne chez Sannazar et le cardinal Gilles de Viterbe, cette démarche concordiste émaille en France même de non moins étonnantes analogies les écrits d'un Guillaume Budé et n'éveille qu'occasionnellement, dans la longue durée d'un siècle, les réserves du magistère. Si brillante soit-elle, toute interprétation philosophique ne peut ainsi faire l'économie de l'histoire

et passe par une évaluation des sources qui permette de retenir seulement, pour mieux les éclairer, celles que l'auteur a traitées d'une façon originale. La question se pose en particulier pour apprécier les allégories mythologiques qu'il développe, dont la signification philosophique analysée par M.-F. Tristan dans les trois autres parties de l'ouvrage demanderait, il est vrai, d'être confrontée à celle que lui donnait la vaste tradition mythographique du 16^e siècle, pour ne citer que quelques-uns de ses représentants les plus connus, tels que Pietro Bongo, Fabio Paolini, Antonio Ricciardi, voire Pierio Valeriano. Dans la profusion de figures mythologiques systématiquement explorées et classées par thèmes, entre autres celui du miroir, de l'éthique dionysiaque ou celui des silènes, célèbre depuis Erasme et Rabelais, la symbolique complexe et contradictoire d'Adonis qui donne son titre et son fil conducteur au grand poème de Marino constitue sans doute aussi la clef de sa philosophie, qu'il eût peut-être été opportun de nous donner d'emblée et sous une forme moins morcelée. A la fois héros et anti-héros, Adonis incarne la coïncidence des opposés et une éthique de la docte ignorance par delà la morale commune. Figure christique sur le mode nécessairement implicite, 'réparateur de l'ordre du monde et restaurateur de la paix, de la justice et de la paix au sein de la société des dieux et des hommes', Adonis circonscrit bien un poème sacré dont M.-F. Tristan situe volontiers l'auteur dans le sillage de Nicolas de Cuse, concluant en aval à une parenté entre le poète philosophe et le philosophe poète Leibniz, du moins à travers l'interprétation qu'en donna naguère Gilles Deleuze, cité dans la conclusion. L'occasion était bonne pour tenter de cerner, fût-ce brièvement *in fine*, la spécificité d'un esprit baroque, tâche que rend malaisé le réseau serré de continuités qui relie cet âge mouvant à celui de la première Renaissance.

Bien qu'elle s'avère généralement aléatoire, on ne peut que saluer l'entreprise de décryptage philosophique d'une œuvre littéraire dont le langage et la finalité diffèrent par nature, pourvu toutefois que la grille interprétative s'attache à limiter, avec sa part inévitable d'anachronisme, la distance qui sépare toujours le lecteur moderne du contexte et des sources. On se félicitera en tout état de cause de trouver dans cette thèse de doctorat d'Etat un commentaire continu assorti d'abondantes citations du texte de Marino ainsi que maintes analyses émaillées de formulations brillantes qui eussent sans doute été mieux mises en valeur dans un ensemble quelque peu élagué, y compris de son jargon "technique" imposé par l'écriture philosophique à la mode depuis quelques décennies. On ne manquera pas pour autant de tirer grand profit d'une vaste bibliographie qui dépasse de loin la critique marinienne, ainsi que d'un index thématique très développé, suivi d'un index des

références et des citations de l'*Adone* et des autres œuvres de Marino. Sans dispenser de se reporter aux autres grands travaux qui l'ont précédé, cet essai leur apporte un utile complément critique et contribue à faire mieux connaître un auteur auquel la France persiste pour d'évidentes raisons à s'intéresser fort peu.

Jean-François Maillard

Pascale Barthélemy (éd.), *La Sedacina ou l'œuvre au crible; l'alchimie de Guillaume Sedacer, carme catalan de la fin du XIV^e siècle*, 2 vols., Paris/Milano: S.É.H.A, Archè, Union Académique Internationale 2002.

Pour Sarton, écrit Pascale Barthélemy, Guillaume Sedacer constituait, avec Jean de la Roquetaillade et Ramon de Tarrega, 'un groupe de trois catalans témoignant de l'activité alchimique en Catalogne dans la seconde moitié du 14^e siècle' (I,184). Mais c'est en Italie, suivant l'analyse de la circulation des manuscrits faite par Pascale Barthélemy, que l'œuvre de Sedacer connut une certaine fortune dont une traduction intégrale italienne (I, 57). En exil de son ordre, celui des Carmes, mais protégé par l'Infant d'Aragon, ce scientifique, qui possédait un nombre exceptionnel de manuscrits, aura le temps d'écrire un premier ouvrage de compilation concernant les diverses substances et manipulations des expériences en vue de la transmutation (*Liber Alterquinus*) puis un second livre qui développe tous les aspects pratiques et théoriques de ces expériences qu'il coiffe d'un titre éponyme (*Sedacina*) et qui constitue un ouvrage considérable.

Le travail philologique, paléographique et herméneutique que Pascale Barthélemy consacre à l'œuvre et à la philosophie des métaux de Guillaume Sedacer constitue une somme définitive qui permet de régler plusieurs questions scientifiques et philosophiques pour le carme catalan et aussi pour plusieurs idées scientifiques de son siècle.

Sous le conseil de Guy Beaujouan qui signe la préface, Pascale Barthélemy a produit une édition critique et une traduction française de la *Sedacina*. En chemin de son enquête, elle découvrit que le *Liber Alterquinus*, peu diffusé et demeuré anonyme à ce jour, avait bel et bien pour auteur Guillaume Sedacer. Elle a donc ajouté une édition du *Liber Alterquinus* à sa publication qui réunit ainsi les deux pôles du projet alchimique de l'alchimiste espagnol consistant

à ‘rassembler le plus grand nombre de recettes [de transmutation] attestées par la tradition’ (I, 108).

L’œuvre de Sedacer, même si elle ne se compose que de deux moments d’écriture d’une seule investigation, n’est pas simple. La *Sedacina* est à la fois une *practica et speculativa* (I, 112) et elle a pour ambitieux objectif de regrouper les diverses recettes pour les transmutations en argent et en or y compris les nombreux élixirs. Sa table des matières développe en profondeur, c’est-à-dire théoriquement, les quatre livres du *Liber Alterquinus*. Malheureusement le carme n’eut le temps que de rédiger les deux premiers des quatre livres prévus ou presque, le deuxième n’étant pas achevé. Mais l’ouvrage demeure précieux puisqu’il veut rassembler ‘la moelle des propos les plus véridiques des philosophes alchimistes’ écrit Sedacer dès l’incipit. Les sources sont multiples et indicatives de l’époque et du lieu culturel en cause, l’Espagne érudite.

Pascale Barthélemy a travaillé à identifier le plus possible les sources du carme catalan non seulement dans l’apparat critique de son édition mais aussi dans un chapitre de son étude (IV: Sedacer et ses sources); ce qui fait apparaître clairement l’alchimie théorique de ce dernier (V: L’alchimie de Guillaume Sedacer).

L’originalité de cette alchimie théorique, rappelle Pascale Barthélemy tout au long de son étude (I, 155), réside essentiellement en un criblage des sources de la tradition. C’est dans ‘le rebut, c’est-à-dire dans les textes que le carme a rejeté au terme de son tri’ (I, 155) que se trouverait l’axe de sa position doctrinale. En reprenant la liste des alchimistes que Sedacer nomme sans pourtant les utiliser, Pascale Barthélemy constate que ‘ces auteurs sont représentants d’un important courant de la littérature alchimique du 14^e siècle auquel s’oppose précisément Sedacer. Ils reprennent et développent tous la “théorie du mercure seul” que la *Summa perfectionis* du ps.-Gueber a exprimée avec force et précision au début du 13^e siècle’ (I, 156).

D’une manière analogue, l’alchimiste espagnol s’oppose à ceux qui ne cherchent qu’un seul procédé pour réaliser la transmutation: ‘dacer exhorte son lecteur à ne pas s’étonner de la diversité et du grand nombre des procédés. . . Ils se trompent donc, tous ceux qui pensent que la pierre et non pierre ne peut s’obtenir qu’à partir d’une seule catégorie de substances, qu’elle soit animale, végétale ou minérale’ (Ibid.). Le versant positif de cette position théorique peut être ensuite mieux résumé et compris: ‘l’alchimie de Sedacer s’inscrit clairement dans la tradition de l’alchimie pratique héritée des Arabes, telle qu’on la trouve dans les textes traduits de l’arabe comme le *Secretum*

secretorum de Razi (10^e siècle), le *De anima in arte alchemiae* du ps.-Avicenne (12^e siècle) et le *De salibus et aluminibus* (12^e siècle) ou encore dans les traités du 13^e siècle rédigés en latin mais très largement tributaire de cette alchimie arabe, tel le *De perfecto magisterio* du ps.-Aristote ou la *Semita recta* du ps.-Albert le Grand⁷ (I, 158).

Ainsi, l'œuvre de Sedacer est peut-être unique en ce qu'elle rassemble une somme considérable de recettes qui 'tendent toutes vers un même but, la transmutation métallique en argent ou en or'. Et à l'intérieur de cette finalité, 'l'élixir est essentiellement un agent de transmutation métallique . . . capable de guérir également tous les maux humains' (Ibid.). En ce sens, l'important dépouillement des sources et l'analyse systématique de leurs utilisations par Pascale Barthélemy dans les deux rédactions de l'alchimiste persécuté met à jour enfin un corpus instructif non seulement sur les visées et expériences de transmutation des chimistes de cette époque mais aussi leur connaissance des métaux et des différents corps naturels, les produits de laboratoire et aussi leur science de la chimie.

L'éditrice précise que Sedacer fut un 'alchimiste ordinaire dans le sens où il reste profondément ancré dans la tradition alchimique du 13^e siècle héritée des Arabes et où il n'apporte pas d'éléments radicalement nouveau' (I, 184), mais il n'est aucunement "banal" pour autant car il vaut par son crible. Cette notion de crible revient sans cesse dans l'étude de Pascale Barthélemy car c'est dans le criblage que résiderait le propre de l'œuvre du moine.

Mais 'la renommée de Sedacer tourne court: le crible du temps fut pour lui sévère' (I, 182). Mise à part la diffusion de la *Sedacina* en Italie, l'alchimiste espagnol ne fit l'objet que de rares mentions bibliographiques jusqu'à Borel pour ensuite tomber dans l'oubli d'où le sortira Thorndike qui, en considérant la *Sedacina*, avait remarqué que 'la plupart des recettes ont une fin transmutatoire' (I, 183). Cette seule caractéristique suffit à légitimer le travail colossal de Pascale Barthélemy qui a réussi à remonter le cours du temps du criblage opéré par le moine catalan en découvrant qu'il était l'auteur occulte du *Liber Alterquinus*. En analysant ensuite chacune des recettes pour chacune des substances répertoriées et classées par Sedacer, elle a pu mesurer dans le détail ce qui passait et ce qui ne passait pas dans le tamis de son jugement. L'un des résultats de cette évaluation est un substantiel Glossaire-index des termes techniques, incluant les références aux sources et aux passages de la *Sedacina*, qui permet de comprendre les définitions et les descriptions scientifiques de l'alchimiste de même que ses nombreux jeux de mots avoués.

Car ce carme transmetteur de recettes transmutatoires utilise les alphabets palindromes pour cacher son identité dans l'explicit de son *Liber Alterquinus*. Il expose aussi dans l'introduction de sa *Sedacina* les trois techniques de codage auxquelles il a eu recours pour cacher les «noms des choses»: inversion des syllables, noms étrangers, figures métaphoriques (I,161). Pascale Barthélemy a déchiffré l'explicit, retrouvé l'identification de chacune des substances et donne ainsi dans son appartat critique la lunette permettant de la lire la *Sedacina* et sa traduction française.

Claude Gagnon

RECENT AND UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Aries aspires to keep its readers informed about recent and upcoming conferences relevant to the study of Western esotericism, but for this, the editors are largely dependent on the information they receive. Readers are therefore invited to send Conference Programs as well as Calls for Papers and announcements of upcoming conferences to the editorial address, if possible in electronic form. In doing so, please take into account that *Aries* is published in the months of January and July, and that copy must have reached the editors four months in advance (i.e., *October 1* and *April 1* resp.).

Jornadas de Esoterismo y Religión. "La imaginación en la filosofía, la religión y la psicología" (org.: Centro de Investigaciones en Filosofía e Historia de las Religiones (CIFHIRE), Departamento de Filosofía—Escuela de Graduados de la Universidad Argentina John F. Kennedy), 10-12.09.2003.

Papers included: Francisco García Bazán, 'La facultad de imaginar y la memoria'; Cristina Simeone de La Croce, 'La fuerza de la imaginación creadora en San Agustín'; Jorge F. Ferro, 'El principio espiritual en la masonería operativa'; Andrea De Vita, 'Sohravardí y el mundo de las *formas suspendidas*'; Laura Corso de Estrada, 'Cicerón académico y la aproximación a lo verdadero'; Vicente Rubino, 'Arte y Alquimia'; Graciela Ritacco, 'Imaginación y Mito'; Olivia Cattedra, 'Imaginación y fantasía en Shankara'; Bernardo Nante, 'La imaginación en la alquimia occidental: Una lectura junguiana del *Aurora Consurgens*'; Néstor Costa, 'Imágenes del pasado, imágenes que pueblan nuestro presente'; Liliana García Daris, 'Las visualizaciones de Honen sobre la Tierra Pura establecidas en le Sanmai Hottoku-Ki'; Paula Savon, 'Imagen e imaginación en el arte de la India'; Hanna Ch. de Chelmicki, 'Imaginación en la búsqueda del concepto del ser supremo en el Rig Veda expresado a través de la palabra creadora: Vak'; Patricia Ciner, 'La imaginación, los sueños y el cuerpo brillante de la preexistencia en el *Contra Celso* de Orígenes'; Leandro Pinkler, 'La concepción del hombre primordial en el *Poimandres hermético*'.

Information: Tel.: 4300-1166 (14.00 a 22.00 hs); Email: egrad@kennedy.edu.ar

La magia nell'Europa moderna, (org.: Istituto Nazionale di Studi sul Rinascimento), Firenze (Italy), 02-04-10.2003.

Papers included: Michael J.B. Allen, 'Ficino's Magical Mousing Cat: Knowing when to Pounce'; Walter Tega, 'L'uomo al centro: nuovi sistemi del sapere per l'Europa moderna'; James Hankins, 'Ficino and the Magical Powers of

Soul'; Vittoria Perrone Compagni, 'La magia ermetica tra Medioevo e Rinascimento'; Maria Assunta Ceppari, Vinicio Serino, 'Tra Ermete Trismegisto e la *occulta philosophia*. Cultura ermetica e pratiche magiche a Siena tra '400 e '500'; Brian Copenhaver, 'The Cabala in Pico's Magic. Reading the *Oration* by way of the *Conclusions*'; Richard Kieckhefer, 'The Concept of Natural Magic in Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples'; Giulio Busi, 'La koinè magica latino-abraica nel Rinascimento italiano. Traduzioni, invenzioni e chimere bibliografiche'; Franco Bacchelli, 'Cabala teurgica e filosofia dell'amore in Leone Ebreo'; Annarita Angelini, 'Archemastria e archettura del sapere nel '500'; Cesare Vasoli, 'Per una rilettura della *Démonomanie* di Jean Bodin'; Marco Matteoli, Rita Sturlese, 'Il canto di Circe e la "magia" dell'arte della memoria di Bruno'; Eugenio Canone, 'Una scala per l'al di qua. L'orizzonte filosofico della magia (e dell'ermetismo) secondo Giordano Bruno'; Elisabetta Scapparone, "'Efficacissimus filius Dei". Su Cristo mago nel secondo '500'; Nicoletta Tirinnanzi, 'Eroi e demoni da Ficino a Bruno'; Paolo Rossi, 'Tra magia a scienza: vecchi e nuovi miti'; Simonetta Bassi, 'Metamorfosi della magia bruniana'; Germana Ernst, 'Magia naturale, segni e divinazione in Tommaso Campanella'; Ingrid Rowland, 'Athanasius Kircher tra magia egiziana e *magia naturalis*'; Mariassunta Picardi, 'Dalla magia talismanica alla caccia alle streghe: le ambibuita della polemica antimagica di Charles Sorel'; Lorenzo Bianchi, 'Libertinismo e magia: la critica di Gabriel Naudé alla tradizione magica e al Rosacroce'; Miguel Benitez, 'La bibliothèque magique de Bonaventure de Fourcroy'; Ornella Faracovi, "'Quei maledetti libri negromantici". La critica astrologica della magia'; Paul Richard Blum, Benedictus Pererius: tra magia, filosofia della natura e metafisica'; Leen Spruit, 'La magia e le Congregazione romane dell'Inquisizione e dell'Indice'; Jean-Claude Margolin, 'Sur les vertues magiques de quelques plantes et les opinionions diverses à leur sujet dans l'Europe de la Renaissance'; Armando Maggi, 'Storiografia e pratiche magiche in Strozzi Cigogna: *Il palagio degli incanti* (1605), *Magiae omnifariae* (1605)'; Massimiliano Rossi, 'Federico Zuccari a Torino: l'*Idea* incarnata e i talismani per Carlo Emanuele I di Savoia'; Francesca Crasta, 'Dalla scienza alla magia: su alcuni percorsi della ragione fra '600 e '700'; Andrea Orsucci, "'Antichristi e storici del Rinascimento nel primo '900: nuove ricerche sulla magia e sul sincretismo religioso della tarda antichità'".

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La costruzione dell'identità cristiana tra Oriente e Occidente (I-VII secolo), (org.: Centro Italiano di Studi Superiori sulle Religioni), Bologna (Italy), 16-18.10.2003.

Papers included: François Vouga, 'La construction apostolique de l'identité chrétienne comme invention de la conscience individuelle'; Rinaldo Fabris, 'La lettera di Giacomo'; M. Pesce, 'Un progetto di edizione di fonti'; Claudio Gianotto, 'L'identità religiosa tra gli gnostici: i gruppi sethiani'; Gaetano Lettieri, 'L'identità rivale: Simone mago primo eretico?'; Aldo Magris, 'La filosofia greca e la formazione'; Eric Revillard, 'Pratiques funéraires et identité chrétienne (III^e-V^e siècles)'; G. Otranto, R. Giordani, A. Campione, A. Felle, D. Nuzzo, I. Aulisa, P. De Santis, 'Identità cristiana e territorio: i casi della Puglia e della Calabria'; Tessa Cannella, 'Actus Sylvestri. L'invenzione di un'identità statale cristiana'; Rosa Maria Parrinello, 'Identità dei monaci e identità dei laici nell'Ascetico di Isaia di Gaza (V sec.)'; Ch. Spuntarelli, 'La costruzione dell'identità cristiana nella formula battesimale eunomiana'; Maurizio Zerbini, 'La figura dell'anacoreta cristiano interlocutore e baluardo di fronte all'irrompere dei barbari'; Roberto Mazza, 'Il commentario al Nuovo Testamento in basi ai papiri documentari'; Elena Zocca, 'L'identità cristiana nel dibattito fra cattolici e donatisti'; Lorenzo Perrone, 'La preghiera come fattore di costruzione dell'identità religiosa nel cristianesimo antico'.

Information: Segreteria del congresso, Email: iareah@iperbole.bologna.it

Colloque Henry Corbin (1903-1978). Philosophies et Sagesses des Religions du Livre (org.: le Centre d'Etude des Religions du Livre (CNRS / EPHE) et l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes), Sorbonne (France), 6-8.11.2003.

Papers included: Christian Jambet, 'H. Corbin et l'histoire'; Jean-Michel Hirt, 'Psychanalyse et religion monothéiste'; James Morris, 'La religion après la religion?: Henry Corbin et l'avenir de l'étude des religions'; Jean-François Marquet, 'Henry Corbin et la "Science de l'Unique"'; Jean-François Vieillard-Baron, 'Les images de Hegel dans l'itinéraire spirituel de Henry Corbin'; Hermann Landolt, 'La question de l'avicennisme'; Paul Fenton, 'Corbin et la mystique juive'; Simon C. Mimouni, 'La notion du Verus Propheta de la littérature pseudo-clémentine chez Henry Corbin et ses élèves'; Gerard Wiegers, 'Henry Corbin et l'Evangile de Barnabé'; Michel Chodkiewicz, 'Ibn 'Arabî dans l'oeuvre de H. Corbin'; Maria Subtelny, 'Le motif du Trône et les rapports entre le mysticisme islamique et le mysticisme juif'; Jad Hatem, 'Suhrawardî et Corbin: une relecture'; Todd Lawson, 'H. Corbin et le Coran'; Paul Ballanfât, 'H. Corbin et le soufisme persan'; Charles-Henry de Fouchecour, 'H. Corbin et la poésie mystique persane'; Daniel de Smet, 'H. Corbin dans

san apport aux études ismaéliennes'; Guy Monnot, 'Opposition et hiérarchie dans la pensée d'al-Shahrastâni'; Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, 'La prière dans le shi'isme imamite'.

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Ciclo di lezioni su angeli, diavoli e streghe dall'antichità al rinascimento, (org.: Istituto studi umanistici F. Petrarca, Istituto Lombardo), Milano (Italy), 07.10-16.12.2003.

Gianfranco Ravasi, 'Angeli e diavoli nella Sacra Scrittura'; Tiziana Suarez Nani, 'Tommaso d'Aquino e il linguaggio degli angeli: l'emergenza di un paradigma'; Enrico V. Maltese, 'Tra Bisanzio e l'Inquisizione: la demonologia di Michele Psello'; Barbara Faes, "'Angeli pacis amare flebunt" (Is. 33,7): interpretazioni medievali della tristezza degli angeli'; Giuseppe Mazzocchi, 'Gli angeli di Santea Teresa d'Avila'; Paolo Lucentini, 'Le statue animale dell' "Asclepius" e le interpretazioni medievali'; Rolando Dondarini, 'Persistenze e trasformazioni delle credenze e dei culti ancestrali al cospetto del Dio unico'; Chiara Crisciani, "'Vecchia strega": definizione di un ruolo e di un'immagine'; Paolo Bellini, 'L'iconografia del maligno nel Rinascimento'; Silvana Vecchio, 'La superbia dell'angelo'; Marco Piccat, 'La caduta di Lucifero'.

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The Varieties of Esoteric Experience (org.: Wouter J. Hanegraaff & Jeffrey J. Kripal), Esalen Institute, 7-12.3.2004

Papers: Wouter J. Hanegraaff, 'Gnosis and Peak Experiences: Towards a "Biographical" Approach in the Study of Western Esotericism'; Peter Kingsley, 'The Roots of Esotericism and the Roots of Experience'; Georg Luck, 'The Chemistry of Religion'; Gregory Shaw, 'The Talisman'; Antoine Faivre, 'The Experiential Dimension of Western Esotericism and Mysticism'; Claire Fanger, 'Experientia and Experimentum: Historical Dimensions of a Semantic Field'; Elliott Wolfson, 'Seeing the Eye that Sees: Embodying the Name and the Secret of the Garment in the Meditational Practices of Thirteenth-Century Kabbalah'; Michael Allen, 'Ficino's House of Cancer'; Arthur Versluis, 'Gnostic Dimensions of Christian Theosophy'; Olav Hammer, 'Methodological Agnosticism and the Study of Religious Experience'; Richard Tarnas, 'Synchronicity: An Experiential and Conceptual Bridge between Modernity and Esotericism'; Philip Wood, 'Esoteric Experience after the Death of God

and the Advent of Nihilism in the West'; Dan Merkur, 'Psychoactive Drugs and the Origin of Spiritual Alchemy in Elizabethan England'; Kocku von Stuckrad, 'Empiric Esotericism: John Dee's Conversations with Angels'; Don Hanlon Johnson, "'Body" at the Boundary between Esoteric and Exoteric: The Cognitive and Communal Relevance of Body Practices'; Garry Trompf, 'Anthropological Research as Background to the Study of Esoteric Experience'; Helmut Zander, 'Experience in the Esoteric School of Theosophy'; Brendan French, 'Meeting the Masters'; Jeff Kripal, 'The Roar of Awakening: Founding the "Experience" of Esalen'.

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All and Everything 2004, 9th International Humanities Conference, Bognor Regis (United Kingdom), 24-28.03.2004

Papers included: Wim van Dullemen, 'Giving and Taking: Russian Symbolism and the Art of Gurdjieff, Ouspensky and De Hartmann'; Paul Beekman Taylor, 'Gurdjieff and the Paris Art Scene of the Twenties'; Reijo Elsner, 'Icons: A Form of Objective Art'; Terje Tonne, 'Art and the Six Processes'; Sven Louland, 'The Power and Limitations of Conventional Thinking'; Dimitri Peretzi, 'Remembering and Observing the Self'; Patrick Conti, 'Gurdjieff and Art'.

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1st Conference Association for the Study of Esotericism, Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, U.S.A., 3-5.6.2004

Information: <http://www.aseweb.org/Conference.htm>

Francesco Petrarca-L'opera latina: tradizione e fortuna, (org.: Istituto di Studi Umanistici Francesco Petrarca). Chianciano-Pienza (Italy), 19-22.07.2004.

Information: Email: istpetrarca@iol.it; Internet: www.lrst.net

Horoscopes and History (org.: Dr. K. von Stuckrad, History of Hermetic Philosophy and Related Currents, University of Amsterdam), Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 26-28.7.2004.

Papers: Peter Schiller, 'The Horoscope as a Historical Source'; James Herschel Holden, 'What Will Happen Next?'; Rüdiger Plantiko, 'On Dividing the Sky'; Patrick Curry, 'Insights From Anthropology: What Progress?'; Wolfgang

Hübner, 'Sulla's Horoscope?'; Stephan Heilen, 'The Emperor Hadrian in the Horoscopes of Antigonus of Nicaea'; Nicholas Campion, 'The Survival of Babylonian Astrology in the 5th Century'; David Pingree, 'Mâshâ'allâh and His Importance for Medieval Horoscopic Astrology'; Dieter Blume, 'Art and Astrology in the Italian Communes of the Middle Ages'; Josefina Rodriguez, 'Horoscopes of Israel in Medieval Spain'; Robert Zoller, 'The Medieval Astrologer Looks at Rantzau's Nativity (with introductory remarks on Rantzau's biography and context by Günther Oestmann)'; Günther Oestmann, 'The Conversion of a Professional Astronomer: J.W.A. Pfaff's Rediscovery of Astrology in the Age of Romanticism'; Steven vanden Broecke, 'On Published Horoscope Collections in Early Modern Europe'; Jean-Patrice Boudet, 'Horoscopes of the Foundations of Cities: Myth and Realities'; H. Darrel Rutkin, 'Various Uses of Horoscopes: Astrological Practices in Early Modern Europe'; Kocku von Stuckrad, 'The Function of Horoscopes in Biographical Narrative: Cardano and After'.

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