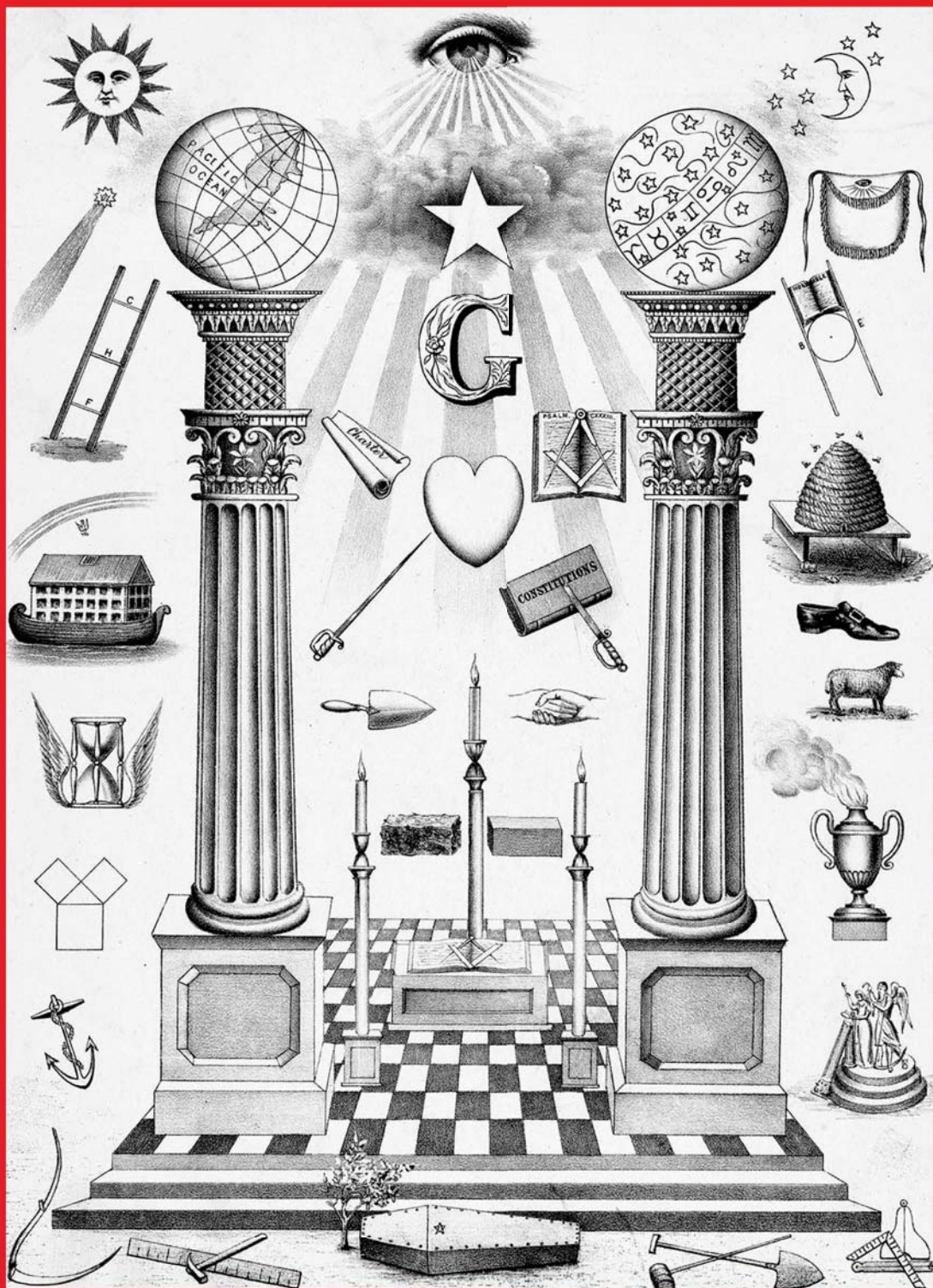


RENE GUENON & THE DESTINY OF FREEMASONRY

DENYS ROMAN



BERSERKER

BOOKS



It has been written that, before René Guénon, everything had been said about Freemasonry, except the essentials.

And indeed, among all those who have spoken for, or against, this permanent organisation for the sake of its very enigmatic aspects, Guénon occupies a place quite apart. Very severe towards the "political" or "moralising" deviations, which the Masonic Order has suffered in this or that Obedience, with no weakness for the notorious incomprehension (notably, in matters of symbolism) of certain of the highest dignitaries of the Royal Craft, René Guénon, from one end to the other of his long and fruitful career, has never ceased to carry an interest in the Masonic Order, has never ceased to take a meticulous interest in the innumerable vicissitudes of an institution, which he considers to be, with Christianity, one of the very rare "points of support", usable for the maintenance of what remains of the Western tradition, and also, consequently, for the very health of the West.

The author of the present work explains the reasons for this interest sustained by Guénon; reasons due, he thinks, to the very striking peculiarities of Freemasonry, which give it a privileged place among the rare authentic initiatory organisations still surviving in the West. These particularities are closely related to the characteristics of the epoch, of the history of the world, in which we find ourselves. And since, according to the author, the function of Guénon's work is also intimately linked to this epoch, everything and being, let us understand it well, of a permanent topicality, Guénon's favourable attention for Freemasonry is self-explanatory.

This work includes a follow-up entitled: *"Reflections of a Christian Freemasonry"*.

To all those, known or unknown, to whatever Tradition they belong, whose thought and life have been renewed by the Work of René Guénon.

FOREWORD

A few years before the Second World War, the scientific chronicler of the *Mercure de France*, in the course of an epistolary polemic with a Dominican religious man who thought he could claim René Guénon's authority, described the as an "orientomaniac". This is perfectly normal, coming from a "scholar" imbued with the absolute superiority of the "values" of the modern West, and for whom the Orient -- -we mean the traditional Orient- is synonymous with "obscurantism". Guénon, indeed, almost alone in the intellectual world of the time, had dared to refute the pseudo-dogma of Progress and the pernicious "superstitions" which resulted from it; and almost to the eve of his death, he could rejoice in the efforts made by most of the Eastern peoples to resist the Western "invasion".

But this epithet of "orientonamo" could not suit Guénon, for he seems to understand that this author's work deals only with the East, when, in fact, it has a truly universal scope and is as interested in Western doctrines as it is in Eastern ones. We can even go further. A hasty reading of Guénon's Works may give the impression that the West has something to learn. Whereas the East has no need. And this was true at the beginning of our century, when Guénon began to write. But events have moved fast, and now we can say that a large part of the East is allowing itself to be contaminated by the deadly illusions born of the modern West, and henceforth it is the whole world which reveals the warnings formulated by Guénon and which should be able to benefit from the solemnity of these warnings.

In this contemporary West, whose intellectual shortcomings he has unceremoniously criticised for their unflappable security and ridiculous pretensions, Guénon has only found two things that have really caught his attention: Christianity (especially in its Catholic form) and Freemasonry. For him, Christianity was the tradition, in religious form, proper to the Western world, and this tradition, after many centuries, became completely exoteric and did not involve initiatory rites. As for Freemasonry, it offers this particularity of being an initiatory path open to men of all traditions¹. It is therefore natural that Christians, who have not had, or no longer have, an initiation of their own, should turn to Freemasonry for an initiatory link. And we can immediately see how the situation becomes abnormal when a Christian religious authority forbids its faithful to become Freemasons.

* * *

It is sometimes heard, and it may have been recently, that the doctrine expounded by Guénon is in contradiction with Christian doctrine as taught by the Church. Some have indicated that it is also in contradiction with Islamic doctrine, and probably with Jewish doctrine. On the other hand, we are almost certain that if

¹ According to Guénon, there is still another regular initiatory organisation in the West: the Compagnonage. The latter, however, is not, so to speak, widespread outside France, and is only addressed to persons exercising certain manual trades. In any case, the lines that Guénon has devoted to it cannot be compared in parallel with the innumerable pages in which he has dealt with many aspects of Freemasonry.

If Shankarâchârya had been a contemporary of Guénon, he would have considered him as an undoubted "master of errors". Indeed, given what this illustrious prince of *Adwaita* doctrine has been able to write about Buddha and Buddhism, it is evident that he could see nothing but lies and illusions in the ideas expounded by a Muslim who admits the truth of Christianity, Judaism, Taoism and, in short, of all traditions, present or past, spread over the surface of the earth.

The truth is that the ideas expounded by Guénon are perfectly in accord with Christianity² and with all traditions, religious or otherwise, except for one point: that is when Christianity, or any other religion, claims to be the sole messenger of truth. Moreover, if Catholics hostile to Guénon had been able to meet Catholic Guenonians, they might have been shocked by the "quality" of their faith. We often think that if, in the totally "materialised" age we live in, the "initiatory realisation" has become extremely difficult, it is at least an incomparable "blessing" for the Catholics who have given their assent to Guénon's work, and who have drawn a faith which is equally true and which sweeps away, without risk, the return of the idols proudly erected by a science which is nothing but "ignorant knowledge".

But the attentive study of Guénon's Works has not only developed the fervour of many Christians, it has also aroused priestly or religious vocations. One of our correspondents wrote to us one day: "Brother X (he is a monk belonging to a contemplative Order) told me many times that the study of Guénon's Works was the origin of his vocation". And one of our friends, consulting, for professional reasons, a regional publication, was surprised to discover, under a random heading, an anecdote of which we reproduce the gist:

"When I was making my debut in public service, a colleague and true friend shared with me the desire I felt to join the orders. This vocation resulted from the profound study of the work of René Guénon, the French metaphysician who died in 1951, around whom is organised the most solid and tenacious of the conspiracies of silence and about whom Gide wrote: "If Guénon is right, all my work collapses". After a stay in a seminary, for late vocations, my friend was appointed priest of the small hamlet, of a small community, at the foot of a mountain in the high Alps. Four or five times I went to see him, and he said mass in his poor church, always in front of empty pews. He never spoke of him (...) I don't know exactly what a saint is, but after the idea I got, I am sure that my friend, who has disappeared, was one"³.

Regardless of the fathers and religious who have felt called to the "perfect life" by reading Guénon's books, there are many men and women who have been called to the "perfect life" by reading Guénon's books.

² This agreement goes even further and applies to details that current trends consider totally despicable. Guénon, for example, justified the cult of relics, which was so important in the Middle Ages (and which for a long time retained a major role among the rites of conservation of a religious building) by pointing out that these remains of a "holy body" are, so to speak, "charged" with a "spiritual influence", which must normally have a beneficial effect on the faithful who venerate them according to the prescribed rites. Let us cite the cult of the "guardian angels", which a recent "survey" has shown to have completely disappeared and which Guénon legitimised by the fact that the angels play, theologically, the role played, from a metaphysical point of view, by the higher states of being.

³ Extracts from *Racines (Roots)*, a monthly regional information organ (Clemont-Ferrand), October 1980.

Church, who have found in this reading an incomparable nourishment for their piety and faith. One of our Masonic friends, visiting a medieval church and questioning the ecclesiastic who was guiding him about a historical capital, was told: "If you wish to learn about the deep meaning of symbolism, I recommend that you read René Guénon's *Appreciations on Initiation*. And one day when we had written to him to ask him where the teachings given in *The King of the World* came from, about the origin of the *Carmes* (*Carmelites*?), he replied that he had them from a Trappist, coming from a Circentian, son of St. Bernard.

These four examples we have just cited, we have taken from among the more "humble" degrees of secular and regular clergy; we cite them because we have learned of the first three very recently, and because we have the last one from Guénon himself. But we know that the Master had friendly relations with a Cardinal, quite influential at the court of Rome. Be that as it may, Catholicism, being a strongly hierarchical institution, what really matters in our point of view is the behaviour exercised towards Guénon by the successors of the Apostle who received, according to the promise made in the fields of Caesarea, the keys conferring the pontifical power to do and to undo. When Guénon was publishing his Work, under two Pontiffs of very different personalities (Pius XI and Pius XII), there was in the Vatican a *dicastère*, the highest in dignity, because he was the favourite of the Pope himself, and whose only object was to watch over the integrity of the doctrine. Any work likely to stifle the faith of the teaching Church" could be referred to him, and he made it the subject of thorough investigation. In unfavourable cases, Rome did not hesitate to condemn it: Bergson was aware of this and so were a number of others. Guénon's Catholic adversaries can rely *a posteriori* on the vigilant hatred of declared or hidden anti-Guénonians. From the academician Henri Massis, to the disturbing Frank-Duquesne, passing through Mgr. Jouin and the R. P. Allo (we omit and not the least), not infrequently those who have abhorred Guénon to the point of seeing in him an agent of hell are not rare. I call bread and wine wine," cried Frank-Duquesme, "and Guénon an enemy of Christ and His Church". And the furious one had powerful connections in religious and "literary" circles. There was no lack of denunciations from the Holy Office. But Rome has kept silent: Guénon's work has never been put in the Index.

Guénon attached great importance to the "gesture"⁴ and therefore also to the absence of the gesture so as not to interpret such an attitude symbolically. He himself noted that Peter understood, at the same time as the two "sons of thunder", the words, difficult to translate into the languages of the earth, which the prophets Moses and Elijah exchanged with Christ on the mountain of transfiguration. In the Gospels, Peter is sometimes harshly rebuked by his Master for speaking too lightly. And just as inexpressible, in the order of knowledge, immeasurably surpassing anything that can be expressed, we can say that Peter's silences are sometimes more full of meaning than his own words.

* * *

⁴ Guénon had considered writing a work particularly devoted to the "theory of gesture. He never had the opportunity to write it; and of all the works that are missing, it is probably this one, together with the one protected on the "science of letters", whose absence is the most regrettable.

We would now like to try to explain the reasons for the privileged attention accorded by Guénon to Freemasonry. We believe it is due, in the first place, to the fact that this organisation admits members belonging to different traditions⁽⁵⁾. Consequently, representatives of these different traditions can meet again, and it is even, let us emphasise, the only "traditional link" where such contacts can be established. This is far from being unimportant at the time of the cycle in which we now find ourselves.

But this "kinship" of Freemasonry with the various traditions has another consequence, which is also very important. When a relevant organisation of this or that tradition is about to disappear, it can pass on all or part of its "deposit" to another relevant organisation of the same tradition; but it can also pass it on to Freemasonry, since the latter is no stranger to any traditional form. And that is why Guénon has been able to write that Freemasonry has several origins, having received the heritage of numerous earlier organisations.

The most famous of these heritages are known to be the Orphism and Pythagoreanism of the Greeks and the *Collegia fabrorum* of the Romans, which represent "vanished" traditions⁽⁶⁾, and then the Order of the Temple and the "invisible College" of the Rosicrucian Cross, revealing the Christian tradition. Such inheritances are eminently precious. The colleges of craftsmen were founded by Numa (the Roman equivalent of the Vedic Manu), who had the Temple of Janus, the double-faced god, whose sanctuary was open during war and closed during peace, built. As for the Orphic-Pythagorean heritage, it links Freemasonry to the primordial Tradition, because of Pythagoras' links with the Delphic and Hyperborean Apollo.

Freemasonry has thus enabled relevant elements of dead civilisations to remain alive⁽⁷⁾ and thus not only the vestiges of the past, but also "germs" for the future. And this may lead us to think of the "separation that must take place at the end of the cycle, between that which must perish and that which must be saved"⁽⁸⁾, a separation that is analogous to what, in Christianity, is the "final judgement"⁽⁹⁾.

⁵ The same is true of Compagnonage; but the latter, as we have already said in note 1, has not spread outside the Christian world, so that its "pluri-traditional" character has remained purely theoretical.

⁶ The Celtic tradition, which was of great importance in ancient and medieval Europe, seems to have transmitted some elements of the 22nd degree of the Scottish Rite (knight of the Royal Axe), where the workshops bear the name of the council of the Round Table. The theme of this degree is wood construction. As a result of this, there are numerous allusions to the Cedar used for the erection of the Temple of Solomon, hence the name "Prince of Lebanon", also given to this degree.

⁷ When we asked Guénon, after publishing his article "Word lost, words substituted", why the dead organisations were "taking refuge only in Freemasonry, instead of dispersing among the various surviving fraternities", he replied: "It is because Freemasonry, alone among the Western organisations, has retained a certain vitality". It is, we think, a certain "beneficial" side of the lack of initiatory discernment Masonic recruitment. Many aproned laymen have thus entered the Lodges, and their lack of understanding - notably in matters of symbolism - has often enabled them to attain the highest dignities (cf. *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, Prologue). In any case, the very number of these Brothers has made the Masonic Order practically indestructible. Was this not what was sought by some those whose obscure purposes Guénon pointed out (*idem*, chap. XXVII)? But is it not well known that "le Diable porte pierre" ("the Devil carries stone") and can even contribute, in certain circumstances, "to reunite the dispersed", notably for the construction of certain bridges, as is attested in various legends?

⁸ We can emphasise that these were the organisations which, even from a simple moral point of view, deserved the greatest "health", i.e. a prolongation of their existence, which is why they were incorporated into the Masonic Order. This is very evident, notably for Pythagoreanism, from which many of the early Christians have recognised its elevation to doctrine and the "virtuous" character of the discipline it has imposed on its members.

⁹ Cf. *The Crisis of the Modern World*, Prologue.

Obviously, to attribute such a role to Freemasonry is to look at it with different eyes from those who consider it as a "society of thought", whose aim is "Progress in all its forms", or even "a particular system of morals", or a mere amusement for dilettantes, or even a method of making gold. But such "earthly" concerns could never have attracted the attention of a René Guénon. And it is René Guénon's ideas that we will deal with here exclusively.

* * *

We believe, in fact, that this transmission of "ancient" elements to Freemasonry implies that it has a role to play at the end of the cycle and that, consequently, it must remain alive until the end of our humanity. This is what the ritual formula, according to which the Lodge of St. John is held "in the valley of Jehoshaphat", is intended to express symbolically.

And this mention of St. John does not lead us to consider the inheritance that the Masonic Order has received from the monotheistic tradition, and more particularly from its Christian form, which received from its founder the promise to subsist "until the consummation of the age". It is therefore simply because these organisations have disappeared, by suppression in the case of the Templars, or by their departure from Europe in the case of the Rosicrucians, that their inheritance has passed to Freemasonry.

Freemasonry was, then, fully appointed to receive the deposit of the Templar Order, which was, like itself, of a "Johannine" character. The Templars were particularly devoted to St. John, which is not surprising, since Christ's favourite Apostle appears in the Gospels as the type and model of the initiates. Was he not designated by his Master as the son of thunder? He is also the "son of the Virgin", a hermetic expression that Guénon recalls, also designated to the initiates. And even in the exoteric cult rendered by the Church, St. John is recognised as having particular privileges of a "secret" nature¹⁰.

As to the relations of St. John to the end of the cycle, they are extremely marked. The Apostle was assured of "abiding" until the return of Christ in glory; and it is under the name of John that the last Book of the Bible is placed, symbolically relating the events which must precede this proclaiming return of the restoration of the primordial state.

Freemasonry, however, is not placed under the sole patronage of St. John the Evangelist, but under that of the two St. Johns, the Evangelist and the Predecessor. Now

¹⁰ The esoteric role of John is clearly suggested in the official texts of the Roman liturgy. In the evening office, for example, there are several ancient retrievals, responses and verses, formulas such as the following, used on the feasts of St. John:

- This is John, who during the Supper reclined on the Lord's breast; happy apostle to whom heavenly secrets were revealed!
- Blessed John is worthy of great honour, he who, during the Supper, rested on the Lord's breast.
- John has raised the living waters of the Gospel, from the sacred spring of the Lord's heart.
- This is John, Apostle and Evangelist, who deserved to be honoured more than the others by the Lord, the privilege of a chosen love. He is the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who, during the Supper, rested on his breast.

Well, the latter is also closely connected with the end times. The son of Zechariah (who, receiving his name, "restored" the word to his father, who had lost it) who was told to "walk in the spirit and virtue of Elijah", the prophet lifted up to heaven in a chariot of fire, and who is also, together with Henoah, one of the two "witnesses" spoken of in the *Apocalypse*, who are the forerunners of the second advent. Christ Himself has said of John the Baptist: "He is Elijah, who must come".

Of all the characters in the New Testament, there is none that has such an intimate relationship with the end of the cycle as the two St. Johns¹¹. And it can be deduced that an Order placed under his particular patronage must also have some connection with this end. We think that we need not look for the why this Order has been constantly "chosen" to become "the Ark" in which the "crowding" of all that has been truly initiatory in the Western world has taken place¹².

Such "destinies" could not but attract the attention of René Guénon, whose Work, we believe, could only emerge in view of the end of the cycle. In numerous writings of his youth, and where all his future Work is, in some way, outlined, Guénon never speaks of the approaching end of time. But since 1914, i.e. 600 years after the drama of 1314, he has had a clear vision of the abyss into which the world is plunging, and in all his works, with one or two exceptions, he mentions these fears, which will become ever clearer and more present.

And these fears were still alive with regard to what is still traditional in the West, namely the Church and Freemasonry. And he saw, with disquiet, the multiplication, within these institutions, of "infiltrations" by representatives of neo-spiritualism and even of counter-initiation. He had perceived their ambitions, notably with regard to Freemasonry, where "psychic influences" could be used for anti-traditional purposes.... If only the Almighty, in the words of St. Augustine, "did not prefer to bring good out of evil, rather than to allow no evil to come"¹³.

¹¹ The Summer and Winter solstices, on which the dates of their Saints are fixed, mark, in the annual cycle, a reversal of the trend. Now, the "reversal of the poles" is the capital event which indicates the passage between the two *manvantaras*. And is it not truly curious that it is only in the twentieth century that "sages", having no spiritual concern, have dreamed of examining the magnetism of archaic rocks and have discovered that these rocks bear irrefutable traces that polarity reversals are produced by several resumptions in the course of geological ages?

¹² We use this word "crowding" by analogy with the "overcrowding of the species", an expression of Fabre d'Olivet, which Guénon has taken up in *The King of the World*. This reminds us that a profane critic of Freemasonry, not at all hostile to the Order and very intelligent, had written, fifty years ago and with some commiseration, about the Freemasons: "We know their art, which only resembles heteroclite and tasteless figures". Obviously, the "Lodge Paintings" and the Coats of Arms of the Scottish Rite degrees could not fetch the prices of a Rembrandt or a Picasso on the "art market" - what an expression! But Masonic art can, by this and any other criticism, estimate the purely profane art that modern art has become; exactly what Dante's poetry was to that of the poets of his time, of whom Alighieri said that "they beat foolishly". The accumulation in the "Lodge Pictures" and Masonic coats of arms of apparently heteroclite symbols is the exact equivalent of the crowding together in the Ark of the "species", which are henceforth alien, and even hostile, to one another. From this point of view, there is in the Ark, as it were, a reflection of the primordial state or of the earthly Paradise, and also a prefiguration of these messianic times foretold by Isaiah.

¹³ *Manual*, part three.

After the death of Guénon, the situation of Freemasonry has worsened considerably. It is useless to give details which would be distressing and which everyone knows; is this a reason for strangers, who, according to Guénon's secret vow, have asked for and received Masonic initiation, to despair of the Royal Craft? We must remember that "it is when all seems lost that all will be saved", and that the "birth of the Avatar" takes place in the heart of the blackest night of Winter's shadow, just as the Resurrection takes place when the Shepherd has been struck and the sheep of the flock scattered.

*
* *

It will no doubt remind us that Guénon affirms the "necessity of exotericism" and that, after several centuries, Catholicism and Freemasonry are incompatible. But it is known that an evolution has begun and that certain Freemasons influenced by Guénon's work, such as M. Jean Tourniac, have taken an active part in it. We will not intervene, therefore, in such discussions. For us, in fact, the "reconciliation between the Church of Peter and Freemasonry is inevitable, and will appear more and more inevitable as we approach the end times. And we base our assurance on a sacred text which will enable us to recall it here.

Peter comes, by a threefold declaration of love, to express his threefold denial, and, consequently, has received from his Master, the office of Shepherd of his lambs and his sheep. Then "Peter turned and saw the disciple whom the Lord loved coming behind them, the one who, at supper, had reclined on the Lord's breast and said to Him, 'Master, who is he that betrayeth You? And Peter said to Jesus, 'Lord, what will you do with this man? Jesus answered him, If I will that he tarry till I come again, what will I do to you? As for you, follow me. The noise that spread among the brethren is that this disciple would never die. However, Jesus did not say: He will not die, but: If I want him to remain until I come back, what about you? It is this same disciple who testifies to these things and, we know, that his testimony is true. Jesus has done even many other things which are not related in this Book. If they had been, I don't think the whole world could hold the accounts of what He has done. Amen.

Is it necessary to comment on this admirable page, which concludes John's Gospel in a surprising way, which a Church Father called "The flower of the Gospels", the Gospels being, in themselves, "the flower of the Holy Books"? We find in the affirmation both the primacy of Peter and a certain independence of John, as well as the assurance, given to the latter, of his "dominion", which, like that of Peter in an earlier promise, cannot succumb to the harm of the "gates of Hell".

As for the last verse of the quoted text, it seems well to be the manifest proof of the existence of an "oral tradition" in Christianity; and assuring that the unwritten teaching of Jesus is more vast than the "whole world", it is the equivalent, according to the spatial condition, of what is expressed, according to the temporal condition, by the sentence which ends Christ's prediction of the ruin of Jerusalem and the end of the world: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away".

* * *

With the exception of three chapters, the present work is a collection of articles and reviews, generally reorganised, which appeared, for the most part, in *Traditional Studies*, a review to which we contributed from 1950 to 1953, and then from 1966 to 1977. We have endeavoured to be faithful to the teachings of René Guénon. However, it is obvious that any errors that may be detected are due to us alone.

We are particularly grateful to two of our friends, who have provided us with fraternal support for the production of this book.

INDEX

Foreword	5
Chapter I - Pythagoreanism and Freemasonry	13
Chapter II.- The Temple, Christian Initiatory Order	21
Chapter III.- From the Temple to Freemasonry through Christian Hermeticism.....	43
Chapter IV.- On some aspects of the so-called "Scottish" Freemasonry.....	51
Chapter V.- Templar Masonry, Jacobite Masonry and Scottish Masonry	57
Chapter VI.- On the Relations between the Church and Freemasonry	67
Chapter VII.- On the Reading of the Sacred Books.....	75
Chapter VIII.- "To the glorious memory of the two St. Johns	79
Chapter IX.- René Guénon and the Lodge "The Great Triad"	85
Chapter X.- Questions of Rituals	117
Chapter XI.- The work of the "Villard de Honnecourt" Lodge on René Guénon	125
Chapter XII.- "Euclid, disciple of Abraham".....	131
Epilogue	137

CHAPTER I

PYTHAGOREANISM AND FREEMASONRY

Among the many initiatory organisations from which Freemasonry claims its heritage, one of the most frequently cited is the Pythagorean Order. It is known that the reason for such a claim is the presence, in Masonic symbolism, of emblems used by the disciples of the Master of Samos: the most commonly cited are: the five-pointed star, as far as Latin Masonry is concerned, and the *Past Master's* jewel, as far as English-speaking Masonry is concerned. The latter jewel even brings together two important Pythagorean symbols: on the one hand, it contains the graphic demonstration of the theorem on the square of the hypotenuse; and on the other hand, this demonstration is made with the help of the 3-4-5 triangle¹⁴, whose importance in Pythagoreanism is well known

The fact that the starry pentagon is not necessarily associated with the name of Pythagoras, and that many Latin Masons do not even know that the outline of this figure was the sign of recognition of the Pythagoreans, while, on the contrary, the theorem on the square of the hypotenuse is universally known under the name of the Pythagorean theorem, is a consequence of the fact that Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry has kept the memory of its connection with Pythagoreanism much more vivid than Latin Masonry; This fact, we said, was the consequence of Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry having kept, much more vividly than Latin Freemasonry, the memory of its connection with Pythagoreanism. Moreover, the matter had been made easier for him because certain ancient documents, called *Old Charges*, make express mention of Pythagoras as the introducer of Freemasonry in Europe. However, it is an Italian Freemason - now deceased - Arturo Reghini, who has published, on the relations between Freemasonry and Pythagoreanism, the only work of value, as far as we know¹⁵.

Before referring to the good in this book, we must advance a criticism, and a serious one at that. Its author was completely ignorant of Christianity, even though he was in the right place to know it, at least under one of its forms. How can one express oneself when one sees an author stigmatising "*the sexual obsession*"¹⁶ widespread in religions derived from Judaism and found in Christianity, such as circumcision, to which the first day of the year is consecrated, and in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception"¹⁷?

This passage is truly incredible. It is impossible to accumulate more errors in so few words. If the Western Christian calendars bear, on January 1st, the mention "Circumcision", it is not to consecrate a Mosaic observance which Christianity, for its part, has abolished, but simply because Christ, placing

¹⁴ In *Past Master's Jewel*, the squares built on the sides of the triangle are checkerboards with 9, 16 and 25 squares respectively.

¹⁵ *The Sacred Names in the Pythagorean-Masonic Tradition* (Archè, Milano, 1981). Thirteen letters from René Guénon to Arturo Reghini are published as an appendix.

¹⁶ In the original edition, the word 'obsession' was in French and underlined in the text.

¹⁷ Ch. VII, pg. 166 of the French translation.

traditionally his birth on December 25, he was circumcised, according to the law, on January 1, and that all Christian Churches have the custom of celebrating the events of their founder's life¹⁸. And circumcision is, to say the least, the effect of a "sexual obsession" of Israelite origin, practised, not only by Jews and Muslims, but by many other peoples, civilised or savage. In Australia, for example, in the "puberty rites", certain tribes practise circumcision; in other tribes they practise the extraction of a tooth; but we do not believe that the former tribes are more sexually "enchanted" than the latter.

And, as far as the Immaculate Conception is concerned - which, by the way, is a dogma only in Roman Catholicism - we do not see how believing that the mother of Christ was exempted from original sin could have any link whatsoever with sexuality.

These reservations, which every man of traditional spirit naturally makes, and which every Freemason should make *a fortiori* because, while respecting all religions, he must especially respect the one to which the vast majority of Freemasons belong, should not prevent us from recognising the exceptional merits of Arturo Reghini's book. The author, if he had a poor knowledge of Christianity and the "monotheistic tradition" in general, had a remarkable knowledge of mathematics (profane and traditional), literature and the Greco-Latin tradition, and Pythagoreanism in particular. He had also studied Hermeticism, the works of Dante and the "Files of Love". This is how he was able, before his death, to write this precious work, indispensable for anyone interested either in the science of numbers or in Masonic doctrine.

* * *

It must be understood that a book of this kind, comprising numerous mathematical demonstrations and geometrical figures, cannot be summarised. The author studies successively the Pythagorean *Tetraktys* (which is equivalent to the luminous *Delta* of Freemasonry) (chap. I), the pentalpha (five-pointed star) (chap. IV) and the tripartite table (which is the planchette to be traced) (chap. VI), i.e. three of the fundamental symbols of the symbolic degrees. In addition, he examines at length such questions as the "synthetic numbers" (chapter II), the first numbers (chapter III), the arithmetical powers (chapter V), the Great Work and palingenesis (last chapter).

Reghini compares at length the ternary 1-2-3, which is the only *successive* numbering ternary, whose sum of the first two numbers ($1 + 2$) is equal to the third, with the "Egyptian ternary" 3-4-5, the only successive numbering ternary, whose sum of the squares of the first two numbers ($9 + 16$), is equal to the square of the third number: 25. Following considerations on the one-dimensional geometry (symbol of the "linear" manifestation), on the two-dimensional geometry (symbol of the "surface" manifestation), which leads to the taking possession of the Earth. He also explains that the passage from the ternary 1-2-3 to the ternary 3-4-5, makes the Lodges of first

¹⁸ Moreover, the first Christians varied a lot the date on which they started the year: 25th March, 25th December, 1st January, etc...

degree are illuminated" by the three-pointed "radiant Delta", and that those of the second degree are illuminated by the five-pointed flaming Star¹⁹.

Other considerations are possible for the numbers 3, 4 and 5, whose corresponding geometric figures are the triangle, the square and the circle. Indeed, the Arabs, who have transmitted their numeration to the western world, associate the number 5 with a circle. In the *Fugitive Atlantean* by the Rosicrucian Michel Maier, these three figures are associated with the hermetic problem of "squaring the circle" and, according to ancient texts, were particularly venerated by operative Freemasons. It is moreover probable that this is why the "four crowned saints" were chosen as secondary patrons in Freemasonry, because of the relationship of the number 4 to the square, of the word "saint" to the triangle (because of God "thrice holy") and of the crown to the circle.

The author gives interesting details about the *Tetraktys* "where all names are included in principle":⁽²⁰⁾ it is known that Pythagoras takes an oath for it

René Guénon has often spoken of this figure, "the source and root of eternal Nature", which we shall confine ourselves to mentioning, after Reghini, a question from the "instruction" of the Acousmatic Pythagoreans: "What is in the sanctuary of Delphos? The holy *Tetraktys*, for therein lies the harmony where the Sirens reside". And the author specifies that the Sirens, in a very ancient age, symbolised the harmony of the spheres²¹.

On the *pentalpha* or five-pointed star, the Book we are analysing brings to light the many remarkable relations which link together the various elements of this figure, and which "mark" it, as it were, as the "law of harmony". These relations are such that each element of the *pentalpha* is the "golden section" of another element. And the author, quoting Cantor, emphasises that this golden section was of great importance in architecture before Pericles.

Chapter VI contains long considerations on the plate to be drawn on the tripartite table, which is also the "key of letters"²². The author looks at the table of the mathematician Théon de Smyrne, and shows his links with this Greek numbering system. And recalling that the rough stone, the cubic stone and the tracing board are the 3 "immovable jewels", he adds that all 3 refer "to the construction of temples, which, after the ritual, is the task of Freemasonry". The planchette to be traced,

¹⁹ Chap. III. With regard to the Masonic expressions 1st, 2nd and 3rd degrees, let it be noted that the march of the Apprentice traces a straight line; that of the Companion determines a plane; and that of the Master traverses space.

²⁰ In Chapter I, he quotes the words of Lucien; "See, what you think of as four, is ten, and the perfect triangle, and our oath". Freemasonry gives the *Tetraktys* the name of *Delta*; and we will remark that the Greek letter *Delta* is the fourth letter of the Alphabet, which has the form of a triangle, and is the initial of the word *Deka* (ten).

²¹ It is strange that the Sirens have become - notably in Homer - monsters greedy for human blood, as if the meaning of this Orphic-Pythagorean myth had ceased to be understood since ancient times. Certain elements of the Homeric legend can easily be transposed in an initiatory sense: the gay and flowery meadows where the Sirens are seated undoubtedly symbolise the starry vault; the sailors with their ears covered with wax are the profane "*qui aures habent et non audient*"; the ropes that hold the feet and hands of Odysseus to the main mast of the ship probably symbolise the renunciation of action of the being who follows the way and thus identifies himself with the axis of the world. The "celestial" song of the Sirens is significant enough, since they claim to "know everything that happens in the wide Universe".

²² Tripartite board is *tiercel board*, which has evolved into *trestle board* and *tracing board*.

"recalls that this construction requires knowledge of the sacred numbers, and, by its very form, underlines the special importance of the ternary division" (pg.154).

He goes on to say: "let us perceive that the tracing board of the ancient Masonic corporation may be associated - if not identified - in a very simple and natural way, although vague and of relative interest, with the ancient Pythagorean abacus²³, the *deltos*, or *Pythagorean mensa*, later confused with the ancient Pythagorean table which, not so long ago, was taught in schools" (pgs. 158-159). And the author ends this passage by pointing out that, in the Romans, the word *mensa* means both a table of reckoning and a table for eating²⁴.

A. Reghini also recalls that the plate to be traced, after the ritual of the Apprentice, symbolises memory; and adds: "The goddess of memory, Mnemosyne, is the mother of the 9 Muses, those Muses who teach the Ursa to Dante, led by Apollo and inspired by Minerva (*Paradis*, ch. 2). Mnemosyne, in the Orphic-Pythagorean myth of the 2 rivers - or the 2 ways - is the source of life, the Dantean *Eunoe*, as opposed to the mortal source Lethe. Moreover, for Plato, understanding is an amnesia, a remembering. We must take into account this superior sense of memory in the ancients, if we want to understand why it is symbolised by the plate to be traced (pgs. 161-162)".

*
* *

The work contains many interesting considerations on music and the links between this art and the science of numbers. It quotes a tradition contributed by Diogène Alerce, who explains how Pythagoras, "listening to the sound emitted by the hammers of a blacksmith striking his anvil, observed that the intensity of the hammers depended on the size of the hammer, and then, testing with equally taut strings, he saw that the shorter the string length, the higher the elevation of the sound, and that sounds were obtained which the ear perceived as chords when the string lengths were in simple numerical relationships" (pg. 83).

A. Reghini thus pointed out that the simplest numerical ratios are those which have, as elements, the numbers of the *Tetraktys*: 1, 2, 3 and 4, and that the strings of the lyre of Orpheus, or the tetrachord of Philolaüs, in the ratio $1/2$ $2/3$ $3/4$. But it should also be noted that the legend contributed by Diogène Alerce attributes a metallurgical origin to music and, in particular, to the lyre; this same lyre by which Apollo regulated the movements of the stars, Orpheus appeased discord, Arion

²³ This word designates at the same time: the square tablet that forms the upper part of a capital; a calculating machine in the Romans; a table or shelf for crockery; and a basin for washing gold. The word abacus evokes, then, at once: architecture, the science of numbers, the reworking and metallurgy of gold. The word calculation, on the other hand, designates not only the art of counting, but also any stone located inside the human body (and thus symbolises the "hidden stone of the wise").

²⁴ On the truly curious relations that exist between the tripartite table and the eating table, let us quote the following passage from *The Private Life of the Ancients*, by René Menard (t.II, pgs. 188-189): "The Romans had three meals a day. The most important was the supper (*caena*) which was taken after the work was done. A proper supper should have 3 services. There were ordinarily 3 beds per table: this is what they called the *triclinium*. The regular *triclinium* was arranged for 3 persons. There was a certain order for the arrangement of the diners. The beds were placed on 3 sides of the table, and the 4th side was reserved for the needs of the service. The Pythagorean Varron, in a lost work of which Aulu-Gelle has preserved some fragments, says that the number of diners should begin with that of the Graces and end with that of the Muses, i.e. there should be at least 3, but never more than 9". It is useless to underline the analogy between the seating arrangement in a "Table Lodge" and that of the *triclinium*, the only difference being that the seats were for lying down.

He charmed dolphins and escaped shipwreck, and Amphion built the walls of Thebes⁽²⁵⁾.



Now we must address another question. We know that the five-pointed star, or *pentalpha*, was the sign of recognition of the Pythagorean school, i.e. its most important symbol. A.Reghini recalls that the members of this school corresponded to the vertexes of the figure of one of the letters of the word*in Greek* (health). And the author adds that health is to the body what harmony is to the whole being (pg. 125); this is true, but he seems not to have pointed out a curious peculiarity: each of the letters that make up the word*in Greek* (health), is a letter Pythagorean:

..., *upsilon* (Greek i), the Pythagorean letter par excellence, symbolising the "two ways of the right and the left", and "in an esoteric form, the myth of Hercules between virtue and vice"⁽²⁶⁾.

..., *gamma*, the letter G of Freemasonry, which is shaped like a square, the essential symbol (with the spiral) of the second degree, and of which Guénon indicated that it "represents the two sides of the right angle of a 3-4-5 triangle, which has (...) an entirely particular importance in Operative Freemasonry"⁽²⁷⁾.

..., *iota*, universal symbol of Unity²⁸.

+I, i.e. the mysterious inscription engraved on the door of the temple of Delphos, which, in response to the exhortation: "Know thyself", explicitly formulates the "solar doctrine of the Supreme Identity"⁽²⁹⁾.

And at the end A, *alpha*, the constituent element of *pentalpha*, the first letter of the alphabet, which represents the "return to the origins".

The symbolism of the succession of these six letters is worthy of study. Let us note that they are arranged around the 5-pointed star, according to the polar sense, which is perfectly normal, since Pythagoreanism comes from the Hyperborean tradition³⁰, in English-language Freemasonry, the "preparation of the

²⁵ On Amphion's lyre, cf. *The King of the World*, chapter XI. For the relations of Thebes with the Hebraic *Thebah*, cf. *ibid*. Concerning the role played by the Blacksmith in the construction of the lyre of Pythagoras, it is worth recalling that the Bible (Gen. IV 21-22) regards Jubal, father of the harp players, and Tubalcain, who was the first to work metals, as brothers. We know the important role that the latter plays in Masonic symbolism. In many American Lodges (we do not know if this is also the case in England) there is a painting depicting the story of the Blacksmith and King Solomon; this remarkable story seems to allude to a certain "reintegration" of the art of metalworking, of which we know both its dangerous and sacred character.

²⁶ *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, chaps. XVIII and XXXVII.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, ch. XVII.

²⁸ Cf. *The Great Triad*, Chapter XXV.

²⁹ It is Ananda Coomaraswamy who, for the first time, has expounded in the *Review of Religion*, the meaning that Plutarch only glimpsed... or did not want to divulge. (Cf. the *Reports* of René Guénon, *Traditional Studies*, October 1946).

³⁰ It is said that Pythagoras had tamed a Bear, which obeyed his voice. On the links of Pythagoreanism with the Delphic cult of Hyperborean Apollo (the geometrical God), cf. *The Crisis of the Modern World*, chap.

The "recipient" in the second degree seems to indicate that journeys of this degree should be made in a polar direction, which, moreover, was the direction of journeys in Operative Freemasonry.

What we have said about the probable reason for the choice of the word *in Greek* (health), should not prevent us from recognising the particular importance that health, and, more generally, bodily development, had for the Pythagoreans. It is known that Pythagoras himself did not disdain to attend the Olympic Games³¹, and the Father of Medicine, Hippocrates, established his science on Pythagorean foundations, as he himself expressly declared. The science of numbers (the theory of the "critical days") plays a major role in this Medicine, which, moreover, was a "priestly art" (exactly like the *Ayur-Veda* of the Hindus, with which it would be interesting to compare it); and the "Hippocratic oath", taken on 4 divinities (Apollo, Aesculapius, Hygie and Panacea) is modelled on the initiatory obligations, and involves - like the Masonic oath in particular - 3 essential elements: invocation, commitment and imprecation³².

We thought it might be interesting to compare these two sciences inherited from Pythagoreanism: Hippocratic Medicine and Freemasonry. And if some of our readers should find these considerations strange, we would ask them how they explain the fact that every operative Lodge, among its "accepted" members, was obliged to have a Physician⁽³³⁾.

*
* *

A. Reghini quotes on several occasions an expression from the Italian rituals, which speaks of the "sacred numbers known only to the Freemasons", and rightly sees an indication of Pythagorean affiliation. In France - where this expression is not found - there is, we believe, another equally significant formula. It is the greeting to be used by a scribal Mason to one of his brethren: "I greet you by the mysterious numbers which you already know". This formula clearly indicates that the Masons knew the "science of numbers", and that these are not the "vulgar" numbers of the profane, but rather "mysterious" numbers, in which the Pythagoreans saw the essence of all things.

But the "science of numbers" is not special to Pythagoreanism, we might say, and Kabbala and Islamic esotericism make constant use of it. It is true but, as René Guénon remarked, the Jewish and Muslim traditions consider number "arithmetically", whereas Pythagoreanism - born in the heart of a people

³¹ All games in Ancient Greece had an obvious traditional character; the victors of the Olympia entered their homeland "through the breach of the walls", symbolising, no doubt, the necessity of "violence" to win the "home country", which is the "kingdom of heaven".

³² "The Faithful of Love", in the third degree of their hierarchy, have a rite called *saluto* (greeting) or *salute* (*salute*). It is curious that these words: salute and salute, are two essential elements of the ritual of the "Lodge of the Table". It even seems that the number of "toasts" (to health), which has varied greatly over the years, must regularly be 5; for the last one, in Anglo-Saxon Lodges, a formula was used which goes back a long , evoking the "return to one's native country". And whatever happens after this toast is regarded as "extra-Masonic", as if to suggest that, with this return, the "aims of Freemasonry" have been achieved.

³³ Cf. *Appreciations on Initiation*, chapter XXIX.

The sedentary and, consequently, builder - considers them to be linked to geometrical shapes: triangle, cube, etc.... And it is clear that the same is true of Freemasonry.

*
* *

A. Reghini even cites silence as an element common to the Pythagorean and Masonic orders; indeed, it is a trait common to all initiatory organisations, but it is true that the Pythagorean neophytes spent three years - sometimes five - in silence and instruction⁽³⁴⁾. (34) And these numbers may recall the "ages" of the Apprentice and the Companion, who are subject to silence during their time of probation.

It is also worth mentioning that each of these 5 journeys of the second degree is said to represent each of the neophyte's years of study.

*
* *

Thus Freemasonry has, among its symbols and usages, several elements in common with Pythagoreanism: Delta, flaming star, planchette to be traced, 3-4-5 triangle, importance given to the theorem on the square of the hypotenuse, science of numbers, 5-year silence, use of ritual dinners, importance given to the health of the body³⁵. We understand that the author of the book under discussion here makes his own the statement of the Archpriest Domenico Anghera: "The Masonic Order is the same thing, absolutely the same thing, as the Pythagorean Order". A. Reghini, therefore, is well aware that there are Judaic, Johannine, Templar, Rosicrucian and Hermetic elements in Freemasonry; but, in his enthusiasm for Pythagoreanism, he considers all these elements as useless and even harmful adjuncts. And this leads him to depreciate the Master's degree, where Solomonic elements, as is well known, are predominant³⁶.

On the other hand, when it is considered that all the sacred words of Freemasonry are Hebrew; that the Masonic era and calendar are specifically Jewish; that the president of a Lodge is said to occupy the throne of King Solomon, and that his two advisers represent Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram-Abiff; that the legends of the third and subsequent degrees rest entirely upon events which preceded them at the same time or after them: Hiram, King of Tyre, and Hiram-Abiff; that the legends of the Third Degree, and of subsequent degrees, rest entirely upon events which have preceded them, at the same time or after the building of the Temple of Jerusalem, we may be led to think that the "Solomonic" character of Freemasonry offers no doubt.

Through Pythagoreanism, Freemasonry is linked to Orphism and even to the Hyperborean tradition preserved at Delphos.

³⁴ *Philosophumena*, II.

³⁵ There is a very important element of Pythagorean asceticism, which we regret not having found in present-day Freemasonry: it is music. Did operative Freemasonry, which used - like the *Compagnonage* - numerous songs, possess certain chants, with a particular rhythm, which allowed the singer to enter into communication with the harmony of the spheres? It is possible, but what has happened to us, at least in France, is that Masonic songs are at a level that would prefer not to talk about.

³⁶ A. Reghini seems to think that the Master's Degree was introduced after 1717, because, he says, Anderson's Constitutions ignore it. It is possible that Anderson may have ignored this degree, but in any case the elements existed long before the 18th century, for operative Freemasonry had a very pronounced Solomonic character.

Jewish tradition, then Christian tradition, have given it its definitive characteristics. The "legends" of Solomon, of the assassination of Hiram-Abi and of the great mastery of the two St. Johns bear witness to this. And this Jewish and, above all, Christian "impregnation" prepared the way for the numerous legacies that the Masonic Order was to inherit; legacies of which the most illustrious, the noblest and the most precious is that of the Templars.

CHAPTER II

THE TEMPLE, A CHRISTIAN INITIATORY ORDER

The question of the Templars and their possible links with Freemasonry has always been the subject of much discussion. In general, the different authors have approached it from a somewhat particular perspective, often hostile to the Templar ancestry. This perspective was not René Guénon's, who, on many occasions, recalled this ancestry. The action of Freemasons hostile to the Templar heritage is designated by English authors as *Masonic Anti-Templarism*. We know that the main manifestations of this Masonic anti-Templarism are linked to the action of Joseph de Maistre and, above all, of Willermoz, who replaced the degree of Templar of the Strict Observance with that of Grand *Porfès* of the Rectified Regime (Knight Benefactor of the Holy City). The anti-Templar purpose of such a substitution is, moreover, formally known in a letter from Willermoz to Joseph Maistre, and in an important letter to the Landgrave of Hesse, then vice-king of Norway. A century later, we find an echo of this anti-Templarism in the virulent campaigns of the occultist Tèder against René Guénon, accused by him of being linked to an "abolished" (Jaques de Molay). But in the present chapter, we wish to consider only the highly controversial question of the Templars' innocence or guilt.

A few months after Guénon's death, several of those who had been influenced by his teachings raised a number questions about the Templars. One of them, who had followed these teachings from the beginning, said: "As far as the presence of an initiation within the Templar Order is concerned, we have no more guarantees than Guénon's affirmation". And he acknowledged that this was already a lot. Another remarked: "It is possibly not because of Freemasonry that Guénon became interested in the Templars; it is possible that it is because of the Templars that he became interested in Freemasonry". But it did not occur to anyone to remember that, 600 years before Guénon, Dante Alighieri had - in all his essentially initiatory works - made abundant allusions to the Templar drama, a major crisis in the Christian West, representing the rupture that followed between esotericism and exotericism, through the symbol of the death of Beatrice.

It turns out that this date of 1314 is an essential date in traditional chronology. It should be noted, without insisting, that $1314 + 600$ gives 1914; the latter date is also obtained from the sum of $1806 + 108$. We know that 1806 is the date of the abolition of the Holy Roman-Germanic Empire by Napoleon I ⁽³⁷⁾. A few years earlier, the institution - in Charleston (South Carolina) - of the first Scottish Supreme Council,

³⁷ "The Peace of Presbourg, 1805, covered Austria, Italy and Germany.... Soon, even Napoleon no longer recognised the existence of the Germanic body. It was the end of the Holy Roman-Germanic Empire which had lasted since 962 (August 1806). Emperor François II had to resign himself to being no more than François I Emperor of Austria" (Jean Monnier and André Jardin, *Histoire de 1789 à 1848*). The importance of the 600-year cycle has been pointed out by Guénon in *The Secret Language of Dante and the "Faithful of Love"*, I (also collected in *Appreciations on Christian Esotericism*) and that of the 108-year cycle in *Man and his Becoming according to Vedanta*, chapter on *The Dream State or the Tajasa condition*.

had, so to speak, created the necessary conditions for the "reabsorption in germ" of the "primordial" symbolism of the Holy Empire⁽³⁸⁾.

In the 1960s and 1970s, some truly seminal works appeared on the Templars, and on their destruction. To begin, let us mention the work by MM. Paul Lesourd and Claude Paillat, entitled *Secret Dossier, the Church of France*³⁹, which provides extremely important reviews on the mission of the Templars, as well as on a large number of other historical points; let us mention in particular: the enigma of Joan of Arc, the secret societies of the 18th century, the condemnation of the Action Française and the consequences of the second Vatican Council. The main interest of such a work may be to provide pieces which show to what extent authentic history has been distorted in the service of political or other causes. When one has read these volumes, one wonders, for example, if Joan of Arc was burnt alive, if Louis XIV was really married to Madame de Maintenon, if the Jesuits - after their suppression - were not more numerous and active than before, etc... Often the authors are left in expectation, but, as they themselves say, it is sometimes a great novelty to simply ask oneself questions and refuse to admit, blindly, those legends that have only a long tradition (*sic*), not always disinterested⁽⁴⁰⁾.

*
* *

The chapter entitled "The Mystery, the Enigma, the Miracle of Joan of Arc" is a fascinating read, especially for those of our readers who have noted Guénon's allusion to the "multiple enigmas" in which this story is enveloped. The authors demolish the "imagery" which is mostly due to literary figures and, above all, to poets⁴¹. They also denounce the political exploitation of the cult of Joan of Arc by extremist political organisations⁴². But above all, they attach great importance to the action of a very energetic woman, Yolanda of Sicily, mother-in-law of the

³⁸ Recall that in the Scottish 33rd degree, where the ruling body was formerly called the "Supreme Council of the Holy Empire", we find, as symbols, the two-headed eagle and the delta with the number 33 surrounded by daggers (one of the meanings of this symbol is the death of Caesar, falling under the daggers of the conspiring senators).

³⁹ Taken from the Cité, Paris.

⁴⁰ The two authors have penetrated well into the tactics used at the beginning of our century by the protagonists of the "modernist crisis". They wrote: "Wanting to fill the gap which seemed to them to exist between the Church and the modern spirit, criticism and science... The modernisers were inclined to all favours and all benevolences for the adversaries of religion and its scientific or philosophical, as well as literary, productions, while they were severe and scornful towards Catholic works declared *a priori* inferior". And the authors very judiciously remark: "Do we not recognise, in this state of mind of the modernists, a certain air of resemblance with the current claims of certain ecclesiastical extremists?"

⁴¹ Let us mention notably the singular case of Charles Péguy accentuating the "*bergerete*" (shepherdess?) side of Jeanne ("Adieu, Muse, sleepy and sweet in my childhood") and making the heroine "The greatest saint after Saint Mary". (In the litanies of the saints, it is always Mary-Magdalene who leads the court of holy women, as, on Easter morning, she leads the *myrrhophores* on their first pilgrimage to Saint-Tombeau. Liturgically assimilated to Martha's sister, "she has chosen the better part, and this part will never be taken away from her").

⁴² The authors do not speak of even more dangerous organisations. Between the two world wars, on the day of the national feast of Joan of Arc, what they called "the traditional procession" gathered in the church square of St. Augustine in Paris, and the starting signal was given by the priest of this church, Mgr. Jouin, founder and director of the *International Review of Secret Societies*. On the cover of the *R.I.S.S.* one could read Jeanne's beautiful motto: "First serve God". It should also be remembered that Diana Vaughan's "conversion" followed a "prayer crusade" to Joan of Arc.

dolphin Charles. In the light of the facts underlined by the authors, Jeanne appears, in some way, as an agent of execution for the French cavalry⁽⁴³⁾.

What is most surprising in this chapter is undoubtedly the details of Jeanne's escape from the Armoise. The events were turbulent, notably the recognition (albeit temporary) by the two brothers of Jeanne d'Arc and, above all, by the notables and the people of Orléans. When Charles VII spoke of meeting the lady of Armoises, she eluded him. But does this prove anything? If Joan escaped the engagement, it could only have been by "playing dead" and, above all, by ceasing to intervene in public affairs. A very strange thing is that, after the epilogue of the affair, when Jeanne de l'Armoise formally acknowledged her imposture before Parliament, she was allowed to return home quietly, without being prosecuted for usurpation of identity or even for a crime of lèse-majesté.

MM. Paul Lesourd and Claude Paillat, who seem to be inclined to identify Joan of Arc with the lady of Armoise, did not seem to have any illusions about the audience they were likely to meet. In fact, it is difficult to admit that the Rouan ordeal was nothing more than a simulacrum. But what would be interesting to know is whether Joanne des Armoises really believed herself to be Joan of Arc. Similar cases can be found in history, and always in turbulent times. The best known examples are: the story of the false Louis XVII under the French Revolution and, much more recently, the false story of the Grand Duchess Anastasia, after the Russian Revolution. We wonder if certain "psychic residues" released after violent deaths could not be used and "directed" by people whose groups practised magic. The most "evocative" case is that of Louis XVII. We are unable to say whether the orphan of the Temple died in captivity or not. No doubt only Barras has known the end of our story, and has taken the secret to his grave^{7bis}. But the false dolphins have been legion, and the most famous of them, Naundorff, has not played a negligent role in a certain counter-initiatic "current" which goes from Martin de Gallardon to Vintras, and then to Boullan, and which, unfortunately, did not stop with the latter.

The authors provide a multiplicity of samples of unmentionable associations that stem from the Society of the Holy Sacrament, a secret society founded in 1627 by the Duke of Vetandur. Its activity and influence were enormous. "Bishops were pleased that the company was, more or less than themselves, what was going on in their diocese"⁴⁴. In 1660 it was dissolved by the cessation of Parliament⁴⁵. But an underground life was organised. A multiplicity of networks, designated notably by the initials "A.A." (ordinarily interpreted as "Anonymous Association") took their place. These secret societies, heirs of the Society of the Holy Sacrament... were for the Jesuits, after their suppression in France and in the United States..., the "A.A." (the "A.A.").

⁴³ It should also be remembered that Eudes de Mirville, in volume I of his work *On Spirits and their Psychic Manifestations*, speaking of the "tree and fairies of Domrémy" (the "beautiful May"), recalls that several young girls, daughters of the village, had previously presented phenomena similar to those of Jeanne.

^{7 bis} Cf. Barras, *King of the Directory*, Jean-Paul Garnier (Perrin Academic Bookshop).

⁴⁴ How can we not think of the analogous case of the "Sampinière" (*Sodalitium Pianum*), which, at the beginning of the 20th century, was linked to anti-Masonic organisations and also to "Action Française"? It was accused of spying on the French clergy. The Sampinière archives were discovered during the First World War by the German secret services in occupied Belgium (cf. the additional Note to the chapter "L'affaire Taxil", to be found at our next Work).

⁴⁵ It has been claimed that Molière's *Tartuffe*, which was first performed at Court in 1667, alluded to the clandestine dealings of this Company.

their dissolution by the Pope in 1773, a refuge which allowed them to subsist.... We have reason to believe, say the authors... that, at present, they still exist" (pgs. 564-565).

"All these Catholic secret societies were, in general, intended... to fight against other societies, no less secret, which aimed at de-Christianising France.... These societies of thought - not being Freemasonry, at that time, the most dangerous to Catholicism⁴⁶ - had for a long time been carrying out a sapping work against religion, at first underground and then in the open. From 1750 onwards, they adopted a kind of general offensive in favour of irreligion in all social classes.... It was materialism, secularism and unbelief that were making the assault on religion. At the end of the Revolution, we were witnessing a battle of secret societies throughout the kingdom" (pg. 567).

*
* *

Let us turn now to the way in which the authors dealt with the history of the destruction of the Order of the Temple. Their aims were limited to the study of French ecclesiastical affairs, and they did not look at all at the international European context, which we will briefly refer to: in 1245, the 1st Council of Lyon had condemned Emperor Frederick II - a figure as enigmatic as he was interesting - for having made Sicily, where he lived, a centre for the spread of Eastern thought. He died five years later. In 1254, Conrad IV, the last of the Hohenstaufen, died on his return and was not replaced: this was the beginning of the Great Interkingdom. In 1266, Manfred, son of Frederick II, was defeated by Charles d'Anjou, brother of Saint Louis, who, two years later, in turn defeated Conradin, Manfred's nephew⁴⁷. In 1273, the Great Inter-kingdom ceased with the election of Rudolph of Habsbourg. In 1282, the Sicilian Vespers hunted down the Angevins of Italy. In 1285, Philippe le Bel ascended the throne. Dante had been born in 1265; he had met Beatrice a year after Rudolph's election; and a year after the Sicilian Vespers had received "salvation"⁴⁸.

MM. Paul Lesourd and Claude Paillat are rather favourable to Philippe le Bel: their judgement of the Order of the Temple is worthless. Nor do they seem to have appreciated the "turning point" which the early years of the 14th century represented for the Christian West. This period marks, as certain ecclesiastical historians have seen it, the dislocation of Christianity, the awakening of nationalism, the secularisation of thought, the decline of the campaigns and the development of urban life, the birth of capitalism and, to say the least, "the reign of Mammon". Philippe le Bel's continual alterations to the coinage led to quarrels over

⁴⁶ The authors of this restriction must have had a bad taste in their mouths. Not only was Freemasonry, at that time, not anti-religious, but it was even fundamentally religious in spirit. On the other hand, it has always remained, except for about 1/10th of its members, notably in France, Belgium and Italy.

⁴⁷ In *The Decameron*, Boccaccio mentions Manfred and Conradin several times.

⁴⁸ These reviews can be found in the work of Antonio Coen: *Dante and the Initiatic Content of the New Life*. The author

-who, at the end of his life, was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of France, followed with sympathy one of the attempts to restore traditional principles in Freemasonry. We regret not having found in this work a reference to Guénon, for A. Coen was not unaware of his work *The Esotericism of Dante*. This should not prevent us from recognising the merits of the work to which we have referred, in which we find a number of interesting points of view, for example, in the symbolism of numbers, the "greeting" of the Faithful of Love, the death of Rachel, irony in the "Classes of Love", the "simulation". On this last point, it is reprehensible that the author has not made the comparison with the role played by the Appearance in *the Romance of the Rose*.

especially with the religious Orders which, like the Order of Cîteaux⁴⁹, depended directly on the Holy See. Things took a turn for the worse and the attack of Anagni took place, prepared by the first Estates General, organised by Philippe le Bel, where the deputies of the Church of France (with the exception, however, of the Abbot of Cîteaux) gave the king the upper hand against Pope Boniface VIII. In 1303, a French army commanded by the "legist" Nogaret, who had gone down to Italy, came in contact with a *condottiero*, Sciarra Colonna, an enemy of Boniface VIII, who was then in the small village of Anagni, and was exercising such odious violence against the old pontiff that the latter died within a short time. "Descending into the tomb full of insults, with bitterness and humiliation, the Pope could say that a terrible revolution had been consummated and that the principle was victoriously confirmed, and that, for many centuries, social influence had exalted the vicar of Jesus Christ"⁵⁰.

The successor of Boniface VIII, he had a very short reign. The next conclave was dominated by French bishops: the Archbishop of Bordeaux was elected and took the name Clement V; he left Rome and came to reside in Avignon. Many called this exile "the Babylonian captivity". Clement V had the sad honour of having allowed the destruction of the Order of the Templars.

*
* *

Let's take a look at some quotes from the *Secret Dossier*. The authors open certain perspectives on the role that the financial rivalries of capitalism could have played in the destruction of the Order of the Temple. "The Templars were, from certain points of view, a kind of rival of the Italian bankers, who did not look very favourably on them. Indeed, the Order, being a sovereign power, dealt with the princes on a one-to-one basis, and the transactions that took place with the Temple were always to a good end, whereas the dealings with the Italian bankers were at the mercy of a royal order, hindering the business of the Lombards.... During the Seventh Crusade, Louis XI had asked them for a lot of money and, after his return, through his intermediaries, he dispatched the funds in the Holy Land... Thus, under Philippe le Bel, the Order's favour was eclipsed, for the king took, as advisors, financiers from the Italian banks.... At no time was there any comment on the honesty of the knights; on the contrary, their signatures were sometimes requested as a sign of guarantee.... In the course of the trial, the Grand Master, Jaques de Molay, and not the Treasurer of the Order, Jean de Tour, will not be reproached for any misappropriation in the administration of the last kings... The financial scandals were not at the root of the trial, the real reasons for which remain a mystery (pgs. 152 and 153)⁽⁵¹⁾.

⁴⁹ Let us remember that the Order of Cîteaux, founded by Saint Robert, recognised as its other founders Saints Aberic, Etienne Harding and Bernard. The latter two led the Council of Troyes, where the Order of the Temple was created, and it was Saint Barnardo who gave it its rules of procedure.

⁵⁰ Cf. Kurt, *The Church around History*, pgs. 83-84.

⁵¹ Was it not in the fourteenth century that the Roman Church ceased to excommunicate those of her sons who practised "usury", i.e. lending at interest? We know the consequences that the freedom thus granted must have had on the evolution of the Western world. This first "degeneration of the currency" was clearly the beginning of the "reign of Mammon", according to the expression mentioned above and taken from certain particularly clear ecclesiastical authors. We also know how much the taxation of the Popes of Avignon, and notably of John XXII, has

This last sentence will obviously have a very different resonance for the Guenonian Freemasons from that of the other members. They did, however, provide certain clarifications which could help to solve the mystery: "It is true that the rivalry between certain Orders of Chivalry was largely due to the failure of certain crusades and the final loss of the Frankish colonies in the Latin East. The property of the Temple, after several years of doubt, was finally placed at the disposal of the Pope, who gave it to the Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, the rival Order, known today as the Knights of Malta. *I think this is where the key to the enigma lies, and no one has yet pointed it out*⁵². The two military Orders had identical aims. Their rivalries were partly due to the failure of the Crusades, as they could be seen in their alliances and diplomacy⁵³. After the Crusades were over, rivalries continued. Philippe le Bel had tried to merge these two militias, which were both religious and military, into a single military Order⁵⁴. The Templars had rejected this, opposing it with pride and clumsiness⁵⁵. That the Hospitallers of St John should have tried to lose their rivals by going so far as to suppress them, of which they intended to take material advantage, was not at all shocking. It would have been the final phase of a centuries-old struggle. In any case, the Hospitallers made no gesture inclined to defend the Templars, who were certainly no worse than they were (pg. 154).

In the chapter to be entitled "Cagliostro, Freemasonry and the Orders of Malta", to appear in our next Work, we will recall the strange interest of the Order of Malta, inherited from the Hospitallers, towards certain branches of Freemasonry, whose Templar heritage is particularly highlighted.

contributed to the development of anti-clericalism in France. The dire consequences of the "primacy" of economics must have been strikingly illustrated in Dante's own city. Soon - a sad consequence of the partisan struggles, which had taken the poet from his homeland and forced him to "climb the foreign ladder" - a family of bankers, the Medici, had established their tyranny (in the Greek sense of the word) in Florence. The Templars had financed the crusades of St Louis, *Côme the Elder or Ancient*, financed the strange council of Bâle. This truly tentacular family "infiltrated its members everywhere. It gave popes to Christendom and, to France, two queens who have not left a pleasant memory; the second, Mary, being the one who made the fortune of Cardinal Richelieu, who, in his turn, knew how to thank her. But the Medicis' most nefarious work was undoubtedly their "cultural" action, as we would say today. They are glorified for having "enriched the arts and letters". The truth is that they greatly favoured the rise of humanism and the artistic renaissance, thus contributing to the disappearance of medieval spirituality and to the honouring of a false Antiquity, a shoddy Antiquity deprived of soul, a "residual" Antiquity in the full sense of the term. From this point onwards, the arts and literature - hitherto the privileged vehicles of esotericism - only reflected this esotericism incidentally and, for the most part, without the scribes and artists being aware of it. Classicism, and later Romanticism, aggravated the decline. In the 20th century, influences re-emerged in the "second stage" of anti-traditional action (psychoanalysis, surrealism, *Teilhardian* evolutionism, etc.) and stepped in to take the place vacated by the vanished intelligentsia. , literature and the arts "*d'avant-garde*", as they say, seem to be close to victory, and do not hide the fact that their real aim is not at all "art for art's sake", but the establishment of a new order, which, moreover, can only be anti-traditional.

⁵² This sentence, of which it is superfluous to stress its importance, is underlined in the text. Let us remember that, in the later degrees of Scholasticism, hostility towards the Order of Malta was much more marked than against Clement V and Philippe le Bel.

⁵³ It should be recalled that the Templars had made alliances with certain Islamic initiatory organisations. The most frequently cited example is that of one of the chiefs of the Ishmaelites, the "Old Man of the Mountain".

⁵⁴ These words are worthy of meditation. In short, the king wanted to take away from the Templars what was their *raison d'être*: the link to the one Principle, from which the Temporal Power and the Spiritual Authority derive.

⁵⁵ It is well understood that the authors did not consider the hypothesis that the Templars could have had, within their Order, "something" that would have been bad for the Hospitallers. We will return to this question in our next work on Cagliostro.

Let us now turn to the crimes attributed to the Templars:

"It is vain to try to know whether or not the Templars were guilty of the crimes of which they are accused, and which, strangely enough, resemble those imputed to Boniface VIII⁵⁶. Their innocence is now more or less certain. Their confessions obtained by torture mean nothing. What would they not have confessed to avoid torture! Besides, few of these confessions were later retracted. *And above all, it was only in France that the Templars were considered guilty, since abroad, nothing could be held against them*⁵⁷. The measures taken by the papacy were nothing more than relentless pressure from the King of France. The Pope allowed himself to be begged and influenced, and yielded only to a tiresome and boring war" (pgs. 154 and 155).

We could read in *Dossier Secreto*, the strange procedures put in place to make the Templars confess to the alleged crimes that should lead them to perdition. It is shocking, reading the energetic lines of the two authors, that the Masons, full of good intentions, sometimes give the impression of being angry about the ritually affirmed links between the Temple and their Order⁵⁸. The Archbishop of Sens, whose Bishop of Paris was then suffragan, was particularly fierce: was he not the very brother of the very famous Enguerrand de Marigny, Philippe le Bel's superintendent of finances⁵⁹?

The accounts given of the council of Vienna, the 15th ecumenical council, where the Order of the Temple was suppressed, deserved special attention. "When the council opened, nine Templars, sent, according to them, by fifteen hundred or two thousand Templars, retired in the mountains of the Lyonnais region, presented themselves and asked, before the council, to take charge of the defence of the Order⁶⁰. Without listening to them, Clement V ordered their imprisonment, but he asked the council the following question: should we agree that there should be defenders of the Order? The majority answered in the affirmative. Only a few French cardinals and prelates were not of the same opinion. Clement V was confused and uncomfortable. *The foreign pontifical surveys had all been favourable to the Templars*⁶¹" (pgs. 156 and 157).

In the end, the Templars were not allowed to defend themselves and the Order was suppressed. It must be said that Philippe le Bel had attended the council with his brothers, his three sons and a large entourage. This council took place in 1311. Three years later, Grand Master Jacques de Molay and his principal dignitaries were burned in Paris, at the western end of the Île de la Cité. It is known that, according to tradition, they should have summoned the king and the pope to appear at the judgement of God before the end of the year; and the prediction came true⁶².

⁵⁶ Such a coincidence should not surprise us. Hell, in its calumnies, has always shown a deplorable lack of imagination.

⁵⁷ This entire sentence is underlined in the .

⁵⁸ Albert Lantoin who, at the end of his life, became interested - in a very original way, moreover - in Masonic-ecclesiastical reconciliation, by referring to the responsibility of the High Degrees in the divorce between Church and Freemasonry.

⁵⁹ Moreover, a year after the execution Jacques de Molay, and under the reign of Louis X le Hutin, Enguerrand de Marigny, accused of embezzlement, was hanged at Monfaucon.

⁶⁰ This strange fact may lead one to think that certain legends about the origin of the Strict Observance may not have been entirely stripped of a basis of truth.

⁶¹ This entire sentence is underlined in the .

⁶² A resounding tragedy was to befall the last days of Philippe le Bel. His three sons, who, from 1314 to 1328, succeeded each other on the throne and died without offspring, before he married Marguerite, Blanche, and

We should not consider this work by MM. Paul Lesourd and Claude Paillat. It is apparent at every point in history, whatever the tendencies of those who show them, that it is "a permanent conspiracy against the truth". Traditional spirits, when they read this book, will often recall certain allusions to René Guénon. Naturally, "sacred history" has particularly manipulated, and the history of esoteric and initiatory organisations even more so. The question of the Templars is so important that it is not surprising that it has taken more than 600 years to elucidate certain mysterious points concerning the relationship between this Order and the Masonic Order.

Although the Freemasons will obviously continue to think that, guilty or not, the Templars are by no means the origin of Freemasonry, they have illustrious references: a Joseph Maistre, a Willermoz, an Albert Lantione. They have for themselves illustrious references: a Joseph de Maistre, a Willermoz, an Albert Lantione. Others, like us, have no other authority than that of the rituals and that of René Guénon... The Masons, opponents of Templar affiliation, are recruited both through rationalists and through Brothers of exactly opposite tendencies. Despite the fact that Freemasonry, a fertile mother of all kinds of fruitfulness, abounds in positive spirits who, at the sight of a nice steaming plate of lentils, will never fail to exclaim: "What good is my birthright to me?"

II

Shortly after the publication of the work of MM. Paul Lesourd and Claude Paillat, which offers a new aspect on the tragedy of the Templars, by clarifying certain important facts hitherto neglected, the review *Acheologia* devotes its entire issue of March-April 1969 to the publication of a series of articles on the Templars. An editorial underlines the enigmas that obscure their history: the obscurities of their trial, their possible survival thanks to multiple complicities, the interest shown by their judges in the reception rites, etc... Then M. El

Joan of Burgundy. However, in the course of the king's festivities at which he armed his knightly sons, Philippe's daughter Isabella (wife of Edward II, King of England) accused his daughters-in-law, Marguerite and Blanche, of having adulterous relations with two young ladies of the court. Did things go as far as the austere Isabella intended? The accusation against the two princesses can be doubted, and attributed to quite mistaken motives.

Whatever it was, the alleged accomplices, daughters-in-law of the King of France, were tortured, and confessed to whatever was wanted. Philippe le Bel's revenge was terrible. The culprits were flayed alive, and then quartered. Marguerite and Blanche were imprisoned in Chateau-Gaillard in inhuman conditions. Jeanne de Bourgogne, accused of having facilitated the illicit trade of her daughters-in-law, was taken to Durdane. -Elizabeth led a horrific life with her husband, a vile and depraved man. In the end, with her lover Mortimer, she stirred up a revolt of English men, which triumphed. The king's favourite was flayed alive with the whip; the ordeal lasted for hours, and Elizabeth witnessed the death of her "rival" at close quarters. Edward II was imprisoned, Elizabeth and Mortimer became regents. After some time, the two lovers thought it best to get rid of the king. The thing was done with such monstrous cruelty and such foul abjection that it is better not to dwell on it. Only the daughter of Philippe le Bel could have imagined this. When Edward II and Elizabeth's son, Edward III, who must have revealed himself in a different way from his sad parents, came of age, he had Mortimer killed and his mother thrown out of court. Elizabeth died much later, despised by all. The worthy daughter of the executioner of the Templars, she was nicknamed "The She-Wolf" by certain English historians. One might find this rather impolite epithet for wolves. We mean: unpleasant for she-wolves. If, in fact, the she-wolf, under her malefic aspect, prevents Dante from "climbing the hill of delights, the beginning and source of all happiness", - the she-wolf is also, under her benefic aspect, the noble companion of the animal which, even more than the bear, is the symbol of the "primordial" light; the suckling of Romulus and Remus is the symbol the Hyperborean influences that preside over the foundation of the city of the seven hills, which was later to become the seat of the Holy Empire.

⁶³ Cf. Genesis, XXV, 32.

duke of Levis-Midepoix, gives a summary of his history and, above all, of his trial. This author is known to be, so to speak, a "specialist" of Phillipe le Bel⁶⁴.

A great admirer of this king, he was often led to give credibility to everything that could "charge" the Templars, and to minimise their honour. We are not speaking from a certain very modern "point of view", which, moreover, is quite understandable in a historian, so to speak, officially "consecrated". For example, for him, the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem, established by the Crusades, was a "masterpiece of the French spirit" and an "advanced place of the West". He quotes liberally from the orientalist Ren  Grousset, who reproached the Templars for forming "a Church, in Church"; it is true that the latter accusation could be seen as an allusion to the esoteric doctrine of the Temple. This hostility in the eyes of the Templars could even be seen in certain subtitles of the article⁶⁵.

A rather unexpected criticism is the following: "Nor were they far from Byzantium and its subtle and floating Christianity. They inhabited the land of sects - both Christian and Muslim - in infinite and dangerous shades". Does it not seem that, for M. L vis-Mirepiox, the only form of Christianity exempt from danger is Roman Catholicism? We do not really see who could consider Greek-Slavic Orthodoxy as a floating Christianity. It is true that in the Holy Land all the Christian Churches have an establishment; this is normal, since Jerusalem is the "centre" of both integral Christianity and Judaism; and it is not simplicity that we find in the Centre, but complexity.

*
* *

Drawing conclusions about the Order with Phillipe le Bel, the author writes: "The king tried some steps to have him appointed Grand Master. It was a daring solution, but it did not prove that he was part of the destruction of the Order. The *Chapitre* categorically refused". We should not be surprised by the intransigence of the *Chapitre*. Really, Phillipe le Bel, Grand Master of the Templars? It is as if Louis XV, instead of suppressing the Jesuits in his kingdom, had thought of appointing him superior general of his Company...

Phillipe was resentful. But let us listen to the following: "A rather serious event was added to this uneasiness. During the revolt in Paris against the variations of the coinage - variations which the king had taken the liberty of publicly encouraging - the people complained so strongly that the sovereign, who normally did not disdain to go for a walk on foot and entertain himself with the *ribauds*, had to seek refuge in the Temple. The humiliation he suffered before the Order, it not, in fact, more painful than the revolt

⁶⁴ He has published, notably, an excellent study on the Anagni attack. There are often little-known accounts of the pressures that Phillipe le Bel exerted on Clement V, in a domain that in no way exceeded the competence of temporal power.

⁶⁵ For example, when we read in the subtitle: "The silver men", we are talking about soldiers of the Temple, and not about the king of the false treasury and his advisors. - Let us look at another subtitle: "Phillipe le Bel, a believer and a patriot". But weren't the Templars, they too, believers? As for the patriotism of Phillipe le Bel, it differed fundamentally from that of Saint Louis. His grandfather's patriotism was free of any territorial ambition, while that of his grandson could be called by another name: "nationalism".

Parisians?" - It is possible. But imprisoning, torturing and slandering them, those who have saved your lives, is not very gentlemanly behaviour.

The author underlines the role played by Nogaret. This legist, after the Anagni attack, was excommunicated and remained so until his death. For him, excluded from the Church, if he managed to denounce and extirpate an inheritance that not even the Holy Father himself had suspected, "what a triumph, what a rehabilitation before Christendom". It can be seen here that the drama of the Temple is intimately linked to that of Anagni.

Nogaret, using a more or less spontaneous denunciation, wisely organised the trap designed to realise his dark plans. And these are the real, preliminary surveys, which lasted seven years, from 1300 to 1307⁶⁶. The Templars, the author tells us, "knew perfectly well that the malevolent legend, treated by them with disdain, was transformed into a dangerous accusation. The Grand Master had already protested publicly, and the disgrace came expressly from Cyprus, to be exposed to the Holy Father, as well as to oppose the reunion of his Order, with that of the Hospital, which would have saved him.... Pride hid the danger from him. They saw it without believing it". It has always been a mistake to underestimate the "possibilities" of calumny.

The non-culpability of Clement V, concerning the arrest of the Templars, is well clarified by M. de Lévis: "On the same day, at dawn, throughout the kingdom, the Templars were arrested.... On the eve of 18 October 1307, the Grand Master had been among the princes carrying the coffin of the Countess of Valois⁶⁷. On the morning of the 19th October, Guillaume de Nogaret himself arrested him.... This undoubted news was communicated to the Pope by his astonished waiters, who had heard them proclaim at the crossroads. He received it as a grave offence, did not admit the oratorical precautions expressed to his consideration, refused to bow to the unfulfilled fact, and addressed to the king a more severe letter than Boniface VIII ever wrote. The states of the kingdom, summoned, approved and took a threatening attitude to the Pope's respect". All these details are really interesting.

For seven years, from 1307 to 1314, the Templars, individually or in groups, were judged by both pontifical dignitaries and diocesan tribunals. From the shadows, the haughty and sinister profile of the king watched over all this. "In Paris, the Archbishop of Sens, brother of Enguerrand de Marigny, presided over one of the tribunals. Several condemnations were pronounced, short penitences, temporary or perpetual imprisonment. A group of these unfortunates, believing that the danger had passed, retracted their confessions. They were condemned as rebellious and put at the disposal of the secular arm, which meant the penalty of fire. There were 59 condemned... At the gates of Paris the bonfires were raised. This dreadful and impolitic execution, derived in astonishment and admiration, the tenacious unpopularity that enveloped the Templars".

We will move on to the Council of Vienna, which put an end to the official existence of the Templars. But let us listen to M. de Lévis Mirepiox explain the epilogue of the drama. In a few words, the historian makes us relive the enormous tragedy:

⁶⁶ We see that the surveys started before the Anagni event (1304).

⁶⁷ The Countess of Valois is married to Charles of Valois, brother of the king and stem of the Valois branch, who must have succeeded the Capétiens, just after the death of the last son of Philippe le Bel.

"There remained the Grand Master. The Pope was annoyed at his fate. He agreed that his life would be spared, as were the three dignitaries of the Order, imprisoned with him, and that they would end their days in a light prison. They were only asked to agree in silence to the reading of their previous confessions.

Molay, a grieving old man, stands between the three knights. He does not seem to have come out of his torpor, when he suddenly stands up and makes indications of wanting to speak.

And it is, to the general astonishment, to proclaim, before God and before the crowd present, the innocence of the Temple!

Put back at the disposal of the secular power and condemned as rebellious, Jaques de Molay and the orderly of Aquitaine who had followed his gesture, were burnt on a small island in the Seine, asking for their hands to be untied so that they could join them in prayer. The other two condemned men had kept silent.

Molay, transfigured, was stricken with fear and despondency, and, with his companion, did not cease to maintain, to his last breath, this immortal protest, which remained spread like a mantle over the ruins of the Temple.

*
* *

M. de Lévis Mirepoix, however, does not believe in the innocence of the Templars, and thinks that Jacques de Molay, by retracting his confessions, wanted to save, before the court of history, the "reputation" of his Order. This seems to us to be attributing rather "modern" concerns to the Grand Master. M. de Lévis, taking up Michelet's thesis, points out that, in the interrogations of the Templars, "the denials are almost always identical, as if dictated by an agreed form, and that, on the contrary, the confessions are very different, with a variety of special circumstances, often naive, which give them a particular character and veracity. The opposite would have been the case if the confessions had been made under torture, in which case they would have been almost all the same, and the diversity would rather be found in the denials"⁽⁶⁸⁾. This is a psychological argument which, we believe, will not necessarily influence everyone's conviction. MM. Paul Lesourd and Claude Paillat, who seem to us to have a more correct idea of the Christian and, above all, ecclesiastical mentality of the late Middle Ages, wrote of the Templars, a year before M. de Lévis: "Innocence is now more or less certain. The confessions obtained by torture mean nothing.... And above all, it was only in France about the Templars, because, abroad, there was nothing against them". But there is more; in this latest issue of *Archaeology*, the other contributors do not all share the views of M. de Lévis. The , for example, explains Phillipe's hostility to the Temple by the patriotism of the king, who was rightly alarmed by the power of the knights. He writes: "The power and the threat, they are the ones who depend on no one in this kingdom and who therefore constrain it, its fortune and its men in a net of stone and iron....

⁶⁸ These lines are by Michelet, who has published parts of the Templars' trial.

The king is mean against them, with his dispersed and temporary troops, if a conflict should break out". However, in the following article, immediately after this one by the eminent scholar, an article by Mme Marion Melville, entitled "Two aspects of the architecture of the Templars", this author has the loyalty to rectify one of her assertions, supported by her in a work published in 1951, and written as the conclusion of her study: "The specialists agree in thinking that the future of historical research lies in the practical collaboration between archivists and archaeologists, the two disciplines clarifying and complementing each other. In the precise case we will examine here, their joint testimonies oppose the thesis according to which the king could have feared the financial or military power of the Templars, or even their international autonomy. It is not the strength, but the weakness of the Temple that explains the coup of 13 October⁶⁹, and the ease with which the King's men penetrated, demonstrates the peaceful nature of the French *commanderies*, which the examination of the sites confirms each time we return to it"⁷⁰.

The following article, by M. Raymond Oursel, director of the Archives of Saône-et-Loire, deals with the churches of the Templars. This study does well to bring to light the "conflict of architectural trends" that have been discovered in the numerous vestiges left by the disappeared Order. On the one hand, the influence of Circassian asceticism, which, after Saint Bernard, had under suspicion the excess of artistic decorations, in all the buildings where the various communities of the great Abbot prayed; on the other hand, a reverse trend, possibly inherited from Cluny, which aimed to multiply the burst of ornaments and the splendour of the chants, and, so to speak, what an author a century ago, not very sympathetic in the eyes of the Templars, called "luxury for God". This latter tendency, in the Templar militia, seems to have been frequently worn. The author recalls: "Questioned by the pontifical commission of enquiry, on the Friday before St. Andrew's Day 1309 (28 November), Jacques de Molay, proclaimed in front of his prelates, not without courage, that he knew of no other religion [in the sense of religious order] in which the chapels and churches had the best and most beautiful ornaments, relics and objects of worship". -AND M. Raymond Oursel, commented of the Templars, "the taste for luxurious goldsmiths, reliquaries and objects of worship in precious metals, rich fabrics, all inherent in medieval sensibility", and adds: "More than one testimony of the trials that were ignominiously attempted against them, insinuates that they were reproached for enveloping these images in an almost superstitious veneration: A pretext which quickly became an accusation of idolatry, a certain esotericism of profession ceremonies and, more generally, the jealously guarded secret of the Order, behind the walls of the closed *commanderies*, which they helped to nourish".

⁶⁹ That is to say, the arrest of the Templars, M. de Lévis gives the date of this event as 19 October. It is known that the same "fluctuation" exists for the date of the torture of Jacques de Molay: some say 17 March, others the 11th of the same month, etc...

⁷⁰ The remarkable article by Mme Marion Melville highlights the fact that, although the Templars built many castles in Syria and Palestine, where they obviously felt it was necessary, they were no different from those in France. "The rural *commanderies* were, essentially, agricultural holdings.... The urban *commanderies* served as warehouses for the sale of crops and products from the harvests of the Temple lands.... When it comes to the French assets of the Temple, to speak of a Templar "castle" is always risky: either the term is inappropriate, or the attribution is erroneous, as the Templars did not own any military organisation in Europe on this side of the Pyrenees... The construction and maintenance of a castle in a Christian country would have entailed useless expenses and would have diverted the purposes of the Order from its true objective, which was to meet the needs of the crusades and pilgrimages".

*
* *

Still in the same review, M. Laurend Dalliez studied "the Templars in the Iberian Peninsula", under the architectural aspect. He recalls that in Spain and Portugal, it was not the Hospitallers who received the goods of the spoliated Order, but other knightly Orders, in particular the Order of Christ and the Order of Montesa. The author rightly criticises certain "lucubrations" in relation to the Templars, for example, about the role played by the number 9 in their constructions, and about the constant dedication of their churches to the Virgin Mary. He denies any connection of the Order with the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, which we will discuss later; but he certainly goes a little far when he writes that "Saint Bernard had nothing to do with the foundation of the Temple". This is a historical point that cannot be disputed.

Charles Darras, honorary president of the Société Archeologique et Historique de la Charente, in his article "The *Commanderies* and chapels of the Templars in the Charente region", provides interesting details on several points, which, remarkably, go hand in hand with some of the statements made by the previous contributor. Let it be judged: "We were fortunate to have many *commanderies* in our region. The Templars also had the mission of guiding the pilgrims to Santiago - many of whom became crusaders -, to provide them with lodging and to ensure their safety on the way... They also had the burden of financially supporting the Crusades, a difficult task that they were practically the only ones to assume. Possessing vast domains in Aquitaine, the profits from lands not indispensable for local life, as well as the gifts and alms they received, were returned to the Commander of the province, who transmitted them to the treasury of the Temple in Paris.... The Order of the Templars was not only military in character, it was also monastic; the rules of observance differed in no way from those practised by the Cistercians.... If we remember that Saint Bernard had contributed greatly to its foundation and that its rule was inspired by that of the Cistercians, we are entitled to think that, in terms of architecture, its dominance was not negligible. The imprint of the Templars' past remains alive in our monuments. Their chapels, impregnated with a totally Circassian atmosphere, evoke, with grandeur, the strong spirituality of this monastic knighthood which had performed so valiantly throughout the Crusades.

Indeed, there can be no doubt about the Temple's links with the "doctor of honeyed words". Moreover, the sons of Saint Bernard, even today, have not forgotten the kinship which once linked them to the suppressed Order. For example, the "Reformed Cistercians of strict observance" (commonly called "Trappists"), in their "*menologe*"⁷¹ - where the illustrations of their Order are recorded for each day - praise (on 24 May) Saint Jean de Montfort, "soldier of the Temple militia", and, on 14 June, the Templars executed together, their leader having renounced to save his life by having Saladin's nephew freed⁷².

⁷¹ The Menologe is a semi-liturgical book that seems to belong to the Cistercian Order. Its use dates back only to the 16th century. It was read in the refectory during the religious' supper.

⁷² This issue of *Archaeology* is abundantly illustrated with portraits and reproductions of various monuments. - In the following issue of the same journal (May-June 1969), M. Raymond Mauny studied the graphics of the tower of Chinon, attributed to the Templars. This article draws heavily on L. Charbonneau-Lassay's study on the subject. The author recalls that, if the tower of Chinon did indeed serve as a prison for the

*
* *

The various contributors to this issue of *Archaeology* have only touched in passing on the question of relations between Templars and Hospitallers, and the impact of these relations on the loss of the Holy Land 1291⁷³ and, possibly, on the destruction of the Temple. But one thing struck us. All of these contributors, while putting forward sometimes very different points of view, have not expressed any intention of denying *a priori* the existence of esoteric teaching and initiation within the Templar Order. Such a reserve contrasts happily with the attitude of certain historians at the beginning of the 20th century. For example, Albert Lantoine, using the voluminous Templar bibliography recovered by Marie Dessubré, had nothing but sarcasm for those who admitted the existence of this initiation⁷⁴. Would it have changed anything? This would be as remarkable, if not more so, than the "proof" of the reality that a Templar "secret" does not belong to the historical or archaeological order, but to a very different one. As René Guénon thought, this proof is to be found, first and foremost, in the work of Dante. Only, in order to attribute to this work the scope it really has, we must not see in Alighieri a "poet" in the modern sense of the word, but rather a poet in the sense given to him by the Ancients, i.e. in the sense of an interpreter of the Divinity. It is only under this condition that the Divine Comedy justifies the qualification of "sacred poem" given to it by its author. But it must be admitted that such an intellectual attitude is very difficult for our contemporaries.

III

In order to elucidate some enigmas, the in-depth examination of certain ancient monuments is sometimes as useful as the decipherment of written documents. Thus, the journal *Archaeology*, in its issues of January-February and March-April 1970 and January-February 1971, published interesting studies on the Templars, written by M. le Chanoine P.-M. Tonnellier. Tonnellier. This ecclesiastic made a discovery at the Château de Domme, in Périgord, which he says "seemed to him capable of making even the most experienced searchers pale with jealousy". He found, in several rooms of this castle that served as a prison for the Templars, "an abundant series of pious engravings", a treasure "which is dated and signed in the name of the Temple". The date 1307, which is the date of the arrest of the Templars, and especially 1312, which is the date of the suppression of the Order, are clearly visible. The articles in *Archaeology* reproduce the essentials of this very interesting illustration, commented on by the author with a great deal of knowledge and prudence. Let us reveal the presence of the Templar cross, among the figures uncovered, the

Jacques de Molay and other dignitaries of the Temple, was also later occupied by other different characters, and that it is therefore risky to attribute the graphics to one in preference to the other. The presence, in these graphics, of extreme oriental symbols such as the Ying and bel Yang, must offer extremely cautious interpretative attempts.

⁷³ Let us remember that, according to the *Vita Nuova*, the "death of Beatrice" occurred "in the year of the century in which the perfect number 10 is multiplied by the number 9, that is, in 1290.

⁷⁴ It is a pity that these major works by R. Le Forestier share the same narrowly rationalist spirit. The author, extremely respectful of all these university "dogmas" (we should rather say "pseudo-dogmas"), uniformly qualifies as "occultism" everything that, in the domain of ideas, does not fall within the framework of either philosophical or religious thought... Hence the titles of these works: *Occultism and Scottish Freemasonry*; *Occult Freemasonry in the 18th century and the Order of the Élus-Coëns*; and, finally, *Templar and Occult Freemasonry in the 17th and 19th centuries*.

Jerusalem cross, the double *enceinte* with the Templar cross in the centre, the host, the chalice (assimilated by the author to the Holy Grail), and, above all, a multitude of representations of the crucifixion. "It would seem, writes M. Tonnellier, that each of the prisoners wanted to display his own in the place where it was usually found".

The representation that seemed to be the most important, was not only because of its dimensions, for as the author describes it: "It is like a fresco, with four characters lined up in the foreground: from left to right, Saint Michael wielding the sword, the Virgin holding the flower of Lys, Christ showing the host and the chalice and Saint John, carrying the cup.... Each accompanied by his name... Christ and the Virgin are seated". The author insistently stresses that the presence of St Michael and St John is proof that this illustration is of Templar inspiration. For, he says, St John was "the patron saint of the Temple, although some seem to have doubted it". As for St Michael, he was the patron saint of all knighthood, although "especially that of the Templars".

It is striking that this essentially religious representation is, so speak, confusedly overlaid by another composition depicting a battle scene; the two figures "completely interpenetrate each other, to such an extent that one can only be seen through the other". Let the author add a few hints: "It is a happy symbol... that this exhibition, which seems extravagant.... As if, in this way, one wanted to translate the Templar's double vocation, that of a religious and that of a soldier.... Is not the whole soul of the Templar to be found there?

There are also numerous allusions to the drama experienced by the prisoners: "*Descrutor Templi Clemens V*" returns, obsessive, "echoing in all the echoes". M. Tonnellier sees the testimony of the painful indignation experienced by the Templars, thinking of what could happen to them "at the hand of those whom they had always served with the noblest fidelity and in whom they had believed they could place all their trust"... The author, it seems to us, interprets the feelings of the prisoners very justly: "Clement V has taken away from them their whole reason for being in this world; he has committed the inexpiable crime of entering the Order. He has dared to suppress the Temple. So they regard him as a traitor to the Church he was supposed to defend".

It must be agreed, on the other hand, that the attitude of Clement V in this matter was unworthy of a vicar of Christ. The Sovereign Pontiff told the Templars, in the three days after the arrest, that they would have the maximum guarantees of a happy solution of these facts, asking them not to despair and not to think about fleeing... We could say that the great mistake of the Templars (a greater mistake than a crime, Talleyrand would have said), was that, being innocent, it was enough to fear nothing from justice".

M. Tonnellier wrote at the time: "These energetic men, who had hitherto known how to control their anger, even concerning their personal honour or their lives, consider themselves freed from all coercion the day they touch the honour and the life of the Order. At the abolition of this Order, they are suddenly unchained, for it is for them the scandal of scandals, the abomination of the desolation in the Temple, foretold by the Prophet Daniel. To touch the Order, the Order of Notre-Dame, the Order of St. Bernard, the Order, the glory and pillar of Christianity, the Order, only reason for living, the Order, the only reason to live, the Order, the only reason to live, the Order, the only reason to live, the Order, the only reason to live, the only reason to live.

Take away from them the coat under which they would not even have the consolation of being buried one day"!

We can even read: "It is good, it is salutary, to hear the Templars cry out their revolt and their disgust, to breathe out their rancour, to nail Clement V and Phillipe le Bel to the pillory. They did not consider themselves guilty and cried out to heaven for vengeance!"

A very suggestive assimilation is that of a two-headed hydra, obviously representing Clement V and Phillipe le Bel. The author's assessment of the latter character is absolutely identical to that of René Guénon, and in complete contrast to that of most "official" historians. He writes: "Deeply imbued, the lay princes and *régaliens*, like his relatives, the Pierre Flotte, the Dubois, the Enguerrand de Marigny, the de Plessis and the Nogaret excommunity, Phillipe was already the archetype of what, today, we would call anti-clerical Catholicism. He wanted the pope to eat in his hand and march to the sound of his whip. And he could now have, after Boniface VIII or Benedict XI, a French pope. Let's bet that the trial of the Templars would not have taken place if Boniface VIII or Benedict XI had won.

M. Tonnellier has described the Templars, on the basis of his discoveries, with an unforgettable scope and which admirably puts things back in their place: "We are very far from the libertine soldiers that, without any right, a certain history has wanted to illustrate to us. There is reason to be thoughtful and to wonder - once again - how such men could have been brought before the Inquisition; by what machinations such a trial could have been mounted. I have confessed that I am not one of those who believe in the purity of the motives which guided Phillipe le Bel, that pious prince. -we say - that he would have acted only in defence of the faith. Anagni and the excommunication the king had to endure are too easily forgotten".

The author carefully binds himself to ruin the most infamous slander that hell has invented against the Temple militia: the one that accused them of profaning the cross. He writes: "What do we see in Domme? Its secret archives - secret after 650 years - reveal to us, all at once, the ardent love of the Templars for the Crucifix. These men put everything, for honour's sake, in the dungeon. Cross, Crucifix, crucifixion scenes abound and form the basis of the prisoners' meditation.... The Cross itself is surrounded by honours, and glorious rays emanate from its arms; are these men who, on a solemn day, would have spat on this same Cross, on the same Crucifix? The walls of Domme tell us of the spiritual life of men who were incontestably lovers of the Cross.... All this has not been done for the needs of the cause: it is all very true and cannot be misleading".

M. Tonnellier, commenting on an inscription: "*Sancta Maria Mater Dei ora pro me Peccator*", reproduced three times in a representation of the cross, thinks that the illustrator wanted to express his remorse "for having confessed a fault he had not committed, but that he did it to save his life, to have confessed that he despised the Eucharist, that he profaned the Crucifix, when it was not true.... He wrote this on the stone, in the cabin of the guards, so that it could be read later, for the honour of the Order, to deserve, in his last hour, the indulgence of the Mother of God, Patroness of the Templars, for the confessions that, in a day of inhuman anguish, he had ended up consenting to".

We think it is important to insist on the following observation. If the Templars - whose deep faith and ardent piety cannot be doubted - had truly disowned Christ and profaned the Cross on the day of their profession, Then the walls of their prison would have been covered with written testimonies, confessing their shame and their repentance. Possibly they would not have dared to represent the sacred symbol of the cross, and, in any case, Clement V would have appeared to them as the just avenger of an exceptionally grave fault, one of those forms of sin against the Spirit, of which it is written that it shall not be forgiven. This is not what we see on the walls of Domme.

On the end of the prisoners, the author writes some moving lines: "It is possible that they died quietly, one after the other, in the prison. The latest date we have reveals that it is 1320. And they would certainly not have been very young at the time of their arrest in 1307. And, in prison, you get old fast.... They would go away praying with all their souls to Christ and the Virgin, Saint John and Saint Michael... and taking with them to the grave an intense fidelity to the Order of the Temple and a hatred, no less solid, in the eyes of its destroyers.

M. the chanoine Tonnellier can congratulate himself on his happy discovery; and all friends of the Truth, must know the extent of the clear testimony rendered by him to these Templars, truly "crucified" by the difficulty they had to go through to remain faithful, in spite of the king or the Pope, faithful in spite of everything to this motto of chivalry, which the author recalls:

"To God, my soul, -My body, to the king, -My heart, to my Lady, -And, my honour, to mi".

IV

After the publications to which we have referred, and whose main merit is to have defended the memory and innocence of the Templars, there appeared, in 1974, two works by two authors whose tendencies are as opposite as possible, and which seem to us to be adequate to complete some points in the shadows; notably (and this applies to the second of these works) concerning the question of the secret doctrine of the Temple.

The first of these works⁷⁵ is by Madame Régine Perdoud. This author, who is the curator of the Archives of France, recounts, in this book, the entire history of the Templars, after their foundation in 1118. There is a great deal of historical information taken from "authentic documents, from certain materials, which our archives and libraries hold in abundance". The role played by Saint Bernard is mentioned (and, moreover, an uncle of the great Abbat, André de Montbard, was one of the nine founders of the Order). A rapid expansion brought the number of *commanderies* to 9,000 in Europe (3,000 in France). The riches of the Temple, which have been so much reproached and which, according to the author, must have excited the "greed" of Phillipe le Bel, are understandable, since they constituted the cash box where the financial resources were centralised and administered.

⁷⁵ Régine Pernoud. *The Templars* Collection "What do I know?" Presses Universitaires de France, Paris).

The whole process is examined with the most scrupulous attention, and Madame Régine Pernoud stresses in particular the financial aspects; already in Palestine, the Templars had to deal with the intrigues of the bankers of Venice, Genoa and Pisa.

The main actors in the tragedy are described, and certain very significant details are revealed. With regard to Nogaret - a lawyer appointed knight by Phillippe - it is stated that this king "arbitrarily attributed this title to the legislators he surrounded himself with - a practice which clearly defines the disappearance of knighthood proper, and that it was no more than a title, similar to a decoration". The sign is important, but those concerning the Popes of the time are even more so. It is recalled that "the accusations launched against the Templars are more or less the same and directed in the same style as those launched against Boniface VIII: heresy, sacrilege, betrayal of the Church, etc...; the same procedures and almost the same terms are found in the various manifestos addressed to the assemblies convened by the king, to make known and approve his position". These assemblies included the first Estates General, for the last ones - five centuries later - were to deal the fatal blow to this absolute monarchy, which Phillippe le Bel's legislators had inspired.

Boniface VIII's successor, Benoît XI, "was quickly killed on the evening of the day when he was preparing to excommunicate Nogaret". After the work of M. Guy Fau, of which we will now speak, the Pope died "for having eaten an excess of figs", and "the question of the investigation as to whether or not the figs were poisoned was never clarified".

A tragic incident must have marked the events that followed the election of his successor Clement V, elected and consecrated in Lyon. "After this coronation, which took place in the presence of the King of France, the pontifical procession was passing along a narrow road bordered by a wall where the crowd of spectators had massed, when the wall collapsed. The Pope, fallen from his horse, was able to get up and pull his tiara, which was rolling on the ground, out of the rubble by himself. Twelve people were killed in the accident, including the Duke of Brittany and one of the Pope's brothers; Charles de Valoi, the King's brother, who had his palfrey by the bridle, was seriously injured. This "*intersigne*" brings to mind the two even bloodier catastrophes that mourned the festivities of the accession of Louis XVI and Nicolas II in 1894. And what is really curious is that the reigns of Clement V, Louis XVI and Nicholas II marked the decisive stages in the process of usurpation by the *Kshatriyas*, the *Vaishyas* and finally the *Shudras* of the authority previously exercised by the caste immediately above them.

The author is absolutely persuaded of the Templars' innocence. The trial was nothing but a caricature, and the fact that "outside France, no brother of the Temple could be found to tell, or to sustain, the lies uttered against the Order", was sufficiently revealing in this respect; as was the absence of pieces of conviction, apart from the searches carried out in the houses of the Temple during the arrests.

Madame Régine Pernoud, does not forget the arguments that can be drawn from the charts left by the Templars, and in particular those recently discovered at

Domme. Here are other proofs that she has collected from her adversaries, those Muslims whom they have fought against. The esteem in which they held them is not in doubt. The knights were pious men, who approved of fidelity in the given word, declared Ibn al-Athir, who testifies that the guarantee of the Temple was sufficient for the execution of past treaties between Christians and Muslims. Ousamâ also pays homage to the spirit of tolerance, and testifies that the Templars reserved a mosque in the territory, in Jerusalem, in which Muslims could pray freely.

The author follows, step by step, the vicissitudes of the martyrdom endured by the Templars, during the seven years that elapsed after their arrest (Friday 13 October 1307), until the day (18 March - others say 17 March - 1314), when Jaques de Molay and Geoffroy de Charnay, led to the present site of Pont-Neuf, "after having asked for the power to turn their faces towards Notre Dame, acclaimed once again the martyrdom they had endured, when Jaques de Molay and Geoffroy de Charnay, led to the present site of the Pont-Neuf, "after having asked to be allowed to turn their faces towards Notre Dame, once again proclaimed their innocence and, before a crowd captivated with astonishment, died in the calmest of spirits".

The consequences of the king's infamous scheme are well known. "It is understandable that the captivity based on the idea of a religious and chivalric Order, totally corrupt and collectively practising the worst horrors, could have shaken the whole of Christendom". But if the consequences for the prestige of spiritual authority are obvious, those concerning the destiny of temporal power are no less so. "By destroying the Order of the Temple, Philippe le Bel confirmed a tendency towards absolutism, towards totalitarian power. It was the first step along a path followed by all those who, after him, transformed royal power into monarchical power: to subjugate spiritual power according to a line drawn by legislators imbued the cult of the State, was alien to the feudal mentality. The gesture is the same as that of François I, who, by the Concordat, took upon himself the nomination of bishops and abbots; or that of Louis XIV by revoking the edict of Nantes, or by aiming the arms of the soldiers escorting his ambassador at the Farnese barracks in Rome, in order to intimidate Innocent XI... It is the case today that no absolutism, no totalitarian power, would not know how to accommodate a spiritual power of which a part remains with man, the importance of which does not escape our age, in which endless internment and brainwashing have been invented to respond to it.

Another heir - notable in financial terms - to Phillipe le Bel was Richelieu, who destroyed the French people by taxation. But, no doubt, we will have noted how many of Madame Régine Pernoud's observations are reminiscent of the theses set out in *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*. However, it must be said that the author - at least, as far as we can see - does not admit the existence of a secret teaching within the Order of the Temple. And this last point leads us to examine another work of historical scholarship.

*

*

*

In this work⁷⁶, the author, who is president of the Ernest Renan circle and a renowned jurist, "has gone through all the documents of the Templar trial, in their chronological order, has reread all the interrogations; in short, he has reworked the investigation without preconceived ideas". Known rationalist, he was sent to justify the positions and actions of Clement V", and clears Phillipe Bel of the accusation of "having - together with his advisors - assembled all the pieces of an unfounded accusation". He acknowledges that "the dignitaries had a hidden doctrine, political or religious, the nature of which can only be hypothesised, none of which is satisfactory. They were, logically, condemned for heresy". M. Jaques Madaule, who - the thing is neglected - wrote the preface to this work, found it "perfectly worthy to be recommended to all those who seek only the Truth". At the same time, he is "surprised that the scandalous practices attributed to the Templars and so easily confessed by them, have not been known, after so long, outside the Temple, and, consequently, denounced". De Molay's mediocrity, he says, "would lead one to believe in the existence of a hidden hierarchy, even if its existence could not be proved". He concludes: "The mystery of what the Temple really was remains totally unknown".

Two authors, one a rationalist and the other a Catholic specialist of the medieval Church, agree that the Templars possessed an occult doctrine, and that their existence and their history constitute a "mystery" that 660 years of discussion have not succeeded in elucidating. On the question of the secret rites, M. Guy Fau brings together a number of arguments drawn from various English provisions. It is likely that the important points are mentioned "in scripts which, before the arrest, Jacques de Molay had taken the trouble to destroy". Several testimonies speak of this secret rule destroyed by Molay, and M. Guy Fau thinks of admitting its existence, while acknowledging that the Grand Master and his dignitaries "revealed nothing on this point".

The author does not know how to conceal the shortcomings of his research, especially with regard to this famous secret. These difficulties are due in particular to the near impossibility of "placing himself in the spiritual state of the men of the Middle Ages".

The case of the Templars, says M. Guy Fau, "is unique in the history of religions". And "we must recognise our powerlessness to reach a truth that eludes us. All explanations appear to be fanciful or adventurous". But "the dignitaries of the Order refused to answer" on the question of their particular rite "and died with the secret...". Unless the archives of the Temple are discovered by chance (if they have not been destroyed), it is probable that we shall never know the full extent of these things".

The darkness surrounding the life and death of the Order of the Temple also surrounds the personality of Master Jaques de Molay. Referring to his last recantation, M. Guy Fau writes: "Until the end, this devil of a man (*sic*) will remain a mystery".

The author - who could not admit the tradition that Molay, before his death, had summoned the pope and the king to the tribunal of God - gives some very curious details about these two dead men. Clement V, who was ill with cancer, was cured by means of

⁷⁶ Guy Fau. *The Work of the Templars* ("Le Pavillon", Roger Maria editor, Paris).

"ground emeralds", and died "of this evil or of this remedy". Phillipe le Bel, on a hunt, "was attacked and wounded by a wild boar, in consequence of which he died".

According to Guénon, "what men call luck is nothing but ignorance of causes"⁷⁷, those causes, the knowledge of which Virgil identifies with "happiness". What emerald on Lucifer's forehead, symbolising the "sense of eternity", is the cause of death of a Pope who destroys a spiritual centre of high importance; and that a wild boar, symbol of spiritual authority, kills a king who sets an example of revolt against this authority? These are mere chance events for modern historians, but for those who follow Guénon, it is clearly different.

Guy Fau's work is rich in historical quotations on issues such as the "great refusal" of Celestine V, the Nogaret case, the various currents to which the Templars were linked, etc... The author does not believe in the relationship between Dante, whom he considers to be a "scholar", and the "military-banksmen of the Temple"... Just as it is criticisable that he has not taken into account, in this regard, the formal reference made to the Templars by another "Faithful of Love", Boccaccio, whose father had been an eyewitness to the torture of Jaques de Molay!

The author, a convinced rationalist, thinks that the Templars were crushed by that infernal machine that has always constituted a dogma, generator of intolerance and persecution". Rather than this very modern judgement, we will retain a few details about the Templars' piety. The author points out, in fact, the extreme veneration for the Virgin and for the apostle John". Is it not incomprehensible that these Templars should have outraged the son of the Virgin and Master of John, and that they should have profaned that very cross, at the foot of which Mary and John were given, by Christ, to each other, as mother and son?

On the walls of the Domme prison, the Templars have depicted the four "principal" objects of their fervour: Christ, the Virgin, St Michael and St John. The archangel holds the sword, symbol of method, St John carries the cup, symbol of doctrine: it is the cup of the Grail, the cup to which, according to the Gospel text, only the "sons of thunder" can be called by the Father to drink with Christ.

*
* *

Madame Regine Pernoud, renowned historian and M. le Chanoine Tonnellier, catholic researcher, are persuaded of the innocence of the Templars; M. Guy Fau, learned jurist, and M. Jaques Madaule, catholic historian, are persuaded of the contrary. We know well that Guénon would have concluded such divergences. The fact is that the "limits of history" are rigorously insurmountable from the moment they deal with problems which exclusively reveal the mysteries of "sacred history".

⁷⁷ *The Crisis of the Modern World*, chap. VI.

CHAPTER III

FROM THE TEMPLE TO FREEMASONRY BY CHRISTIAN HERMETICISM

Génon has written that the links between Freemasonry and pre-existing organisations are extremely complex⁷⁸. In addition to the "Pythagorean and Templar heritages, which are very often attributed to the Masonic order, there is another which also claims it: that of the Rosicrucians. The reality of this heritage has been the subject of much controversy. And if the Templar heritage was able to pass into Freemasonry, it was largely due to the intermediary of authentic Rosicrucianism; , according to René Guénon, "after the destruction of the Order of the Temple, the initiates of Christian esotericism reorganised themselves, according to the ideas of Islamic esotericism, to maintain, as far as possible, the bond that had apparently been broken by this destruction; but this reorganisation must have been done in a very hidden way, invisible in any way, and without taking support from any externally known institution, which, as such, could have been the cause of a new destruction"⁷⁹.

In an old article⁸⁰, one of the best current historians of Freemasonry, M.G.-H. Luquet, addressed this question by analysing the various texts on which it has been attempted to prove that the Rosicrucians played a role in the transition from operative to speculative Freemasonry. Various poems, pamphlets, letters and journal articles were selected from 1638 to 1730⁸¹. Although it seems, as M. Luquet says, that each of these writings, taken on its own, does not prove much, it is strange to see that in six of the nine texts analysed, the name of the Freemasons is close to that of the Rose-Crucians and, in a seventh text, to that of the Cabalists. This set of coincidences is worth examining, if one considers the habit of certain Rosicrucians to proceed by allusions, to attract attention in order to divert it later, to propagate, themselves, the discrediting of their own works.

The eighth of the nine texts studied, which M. Luquet analyses in depth, is entitled *Long Livers* (which could be translated as "Those who are endowed with longevity"), published in London in 1723, under the name of Eugénienus Philalethes junior. It is a translation of a Hermetic treatise by Arnau de Vilanova, a translation dedicated to "the Grand-Masters, Masters, Watchers and Brothers of the very ancient and honourable Fraternity of Freemasons of Great Britain and Ireland". On the identity of this work, which is otherwise very interesting, M. Luquet says: "Calling himself Eugénienus Philalethes the young man, he has the appearance of wishing to place himself under the patronage of a

⁷⁸ *Dante's Esotericism*, chap. IV, *in fine*.

⁷⁹ *Appreciations on Initiation*, Chapter XXXVIII.

⁸⁰ *El Simbolismo*, June 1951.

⁸¹ These data are interesting. 1638 is three years after the "French period" of the Thirty Years' War, a period which must have seen the irreparable destruction of the Holy Empire, after which the Rose-Crucians left Europe and went into Asia. When, in 1730, it is 13 years after the foundation of the Grand Lodge of the "Moderns".

Older Eugénus Philalethes. Finally, the books printed from 1650 to 1657 were signed Eugénus Philalethes. His real name was Thomas Vaughan. But the question becomes more complicated. Works of the same genre as those of Eugenius Philalethes were published in Amsterdam and London from 1664 to 1678 by a certain Eirenaeus Philalethes, "English by birth and cosmopolitan by residence", whom we have not been able to identify. Several authors have confused these two Philalethes, but they are more excusable than has been said; Eirenaeus himself would have taken the name of Eugenius for one of his works. It would not be surprising, therefore, if this Eugenius Philalethes the younger had made the same confusion, and, placing himself under the sign of Eugenius, had been inspired by Eugenius and Eirenaeus at the same time". In short, everything has been done perfectly, and very perfectly, to "burn the clues" so that nothing can be found. Those who want more information about the two (or three) Philalethes, "young" or not, who appeared, here and there, under the names of Georges Starkey, Dr. Zheil, Childe, Carnobius, can consult certain works by René Guénon⁸² and Sédir⁽⁸³⁾.

Be that as it may, *Long Livers* must have had a certain repercussion in the Masonic world, for M. Luquet teaches us that, five years later, a high dignitary of Welsh Masonry, Edward Oakley, delivered, before the London Lodge "On the Three Measures", a speech which was printed in an official document, and in which, not only did he take *Long Livers'* ideas, "but even inter-commentary textual passages".

We will point out three points which have not been mentioned in M. Luquet's articles, and which, it seems to us, are of some importance. In the first place, it is quite clear that *Long Livers* makes no mention of the Rosicrucians, and that this work is not "signed" by them, for in a part of the preface preceding the one translated by M. Luquet, he speaks of certain persons "whose name must be scratched (*removed?*) forever from Book M". This is obviously the "Book M" of the Rosicrucians, which has been interpreted as *Liber Mundi* or even *Mutus Liber*, and which is the only book that they, who write nothing, consent to read about. Next, mention is made of the *Long Livers* and of "Brother" Eugenius Philalethes, in a work published in London in 1723 "for the use of the Lodges" and entitled *Ebrietatis Enconium* ("*In Praise of Enthusiasm*"). Finally, many authors have thought that Eugenius Philalethes was a certain Robert Samber, who lived in the entourage of the Duke of Montagu, successor to Désaguliers as Grand-Master of the "moderns".

* * *

According to Guénon, the doctrine professed by the authentic Rosicrucians was revelatory of "Christian hermeticism"⁸⁴. However, it is remarkable that the Masonic degree of Rose-Cross, which is found in almost all high degree systems⁽⁸⁵⁾ is especially hermetic and Christian. It is especially hermetic and Christian. So much , that the sign of recognition of the

⁸² Notably in *Theosophism*. In chapter IV, he mentions that, in an 18th century, and therefore very late, Rosicrucian organisation, the "Golden Rose-Cross", he even prescribes that "each brother shall change his names and surnames after he has been admitted, and shall do the same whenever he changes his country". On Eugénus Philalethes, see the same work, pgs. 55 and 56.

⁸³ *History and Doctrine of the Rosicrucians*, chapters VI and VII.

⁸⁴ *Appreciations on Initiation*, chap. XXXVIII and XLI.

⁸⁵ In the Scottish Rite, the full denomination of this degree is as follows: "Knight of the Eagle and Pelican, Sovereign Prince Rose-Cross".

This degree clearly alludes to the adage of the *Maradigna Tabula*: "What is above is like what is below, and what is below is like what is above". The Christian character of the degree is marked by the fact that the "sign of the order" is called the "Sign of the Good Shepherd", and that the "ritual age of the Brothers is 33 years". The word of passage is "Emmanuel", and the sacred word, which is not pronounced, consists of the four letters "I.N.R.I.", whose meaning is clearly both Christian (*Jesus Nazareus Rex Judeorum*) and hermetic (*Igne Natura Renovatur Integra*)⁸⁶.

Let us now turn to the almost unfathomable mystery surrounding all that concerns the Rose-Crosses. Guénon has underlined the fact that the very birth of this "College of Invisibles" must have been carefully concealed, in order to avoid a renewal of the drama of 1314. This is, in fact, the immediate and, one might almost say, "historical" reason for the secrecy concerning the origin of the Rose-Cross, and also of the various activities of which it may have been the inspiration. Luigi Valli, through remarkable works, has managed to decipher the secret language of Dante's contemporary initiates, for whom, for example, the word "cry" means, in reality, "dissimulate". This dissimulation could go a long way, since, in the *Romance of the Rose*, a role, so to speak, a beneficent one, is attributed to the character of the False Appearance⁸⁷. But it must be remembered that this is a purely contingent reason for the initiatory secret; a secret which has, above all, its own nature, which makes it inexpressible in profane language.

It is evident that, while Freemasonry received in inheritance⁸⁸ the "initiatory deposit" of another organisation which disappeared as such, an absolute secrecy about the "transfer" had to be kept for the two reasons we have just indicated. In principle, an organisation does not disappear, at least generally speaking, unless it is beset by external hostility, and this hostility could be reported to an inheriting organisation if it were known⁸⁹. Moreover, such a transformation corresponds exactly to a death followed by a rebirth, that is to say, to a change of state, which can only take place in the dark.

⁸⁶ The Christian elements are further emphasised in the "agape" of the eighteenth degree, where the table must be in the form of a Greek cross and takes the name of "altar", the vessels are designated by the name of "chalice", _ and, above all, in the "mystical supper of the Rose-Crosses", which is celebrated on Holy Thursday. The initiations of the I.N.R.I. are also interpreted in a third way in the "questions of order" of the degree. Here are the four questions: "Where do you come from?" From Jerusalem _ Where are you going? To Nazareth: _Who is your guide? The Archangel Raphael. _ Of what tribe are you? From Judah. The first two answers obviously have a pronounced Christian character. The third has a hermetic meaning, for Raphael ("God's remedy") alludes to the elixir of long life, that is to say, to the "true medicine" (the *veram medicinam* of the acrostic *Vitriolum*). As for Judah, it was the royal tribe of the Jews.

⁸⁷ The two Gospel characters who play a part in the legends of the Round Table and the Holy Grail are Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who, in Scripture, are said to have been disciples of Jesus, but in secret for fear of the Jews. This mention of secrecy, it is evident - since, in the scriptural context, it cannot be said to be complimentary - that it has led to the two disciples being singled out as repositories of esoteric secrets. And it is for the same reason that several of the symbolic loves of the Grail knights are secret and sometimes guilty loves. The most typical example is the love of Lancelot of the Lake for Queen Guinevere, a love whose secret character was even preserved, in the episode of "Ordalie", by the mastermind of a particularly serious lie, which, moreover, justifies the harsh expiations in which the two heroes ended their days. Needless to say, to take these rather particular forms of symbolism, - like those, so analogous, which we find in Boccaccio and Rabelais, for the true eulogies of drunkenness, lying and adultery, - would simply be to show oneself incapable of breaking the bone and sucking out the substantial marrow".

⁸⁸ In certain rituals the Brethren of the 18th degree are called "Sovereign Princes of Heredom", and here the word Heredom alludes, not to the *Harodim* of operative Masonry, but to the heritage (*heirdom*) and, in particular, to the heritage of the Templars.

⁸⁹ This is, in particular, why Templar heritage is shrouded such obscurity.

*

*

*

We would now like to draw attention to an important point. Guénon underlines the fact that the institution of the Rose-Cross was the result of an agreement or alliance of Christian initiates with Muslim initiates. This is, moreover, quite natural, since the Templars - the matter is well known - maintained continuous relations with certain Islamic organisations⁹⁰. Now, if the Rose-Cross is linked to Christian hermeticism, it must be remembered that there is also a Muslim hermeticism, since, according to Guénon, hermeticism is a science of Egyptian origin, clothed in a Greek form, which was transmitted to both the Christian and Muslim worlds, and, to a large extent, to the first of these two worlds, through the intermediary of the second⁹¹. Hermeticism, like Freemasonry, is the "Royal Art", and one should not be surprised by the relations of the Rose-Cross with the "Holy Empire". It was at the end of the Thirty Years' War, 333 years after the ruin of the Templars⁹², that the Rosicrucians deserted Europe, where the Holy Empire was nothing more than a "diplomatic fiction". In the 18th century, the creation of the "Council of the Emperors of the East and West" paved the way for what was to come when Napoleon had dealt the coup de grâce to the Romano-Germanic Empire, the "Supreme Councils of the Holy Empire", whose rituals bore clear traces of an inspiration marked by the stamp of the highest spirituality⁹³.

⁹⁰ While the Templars' relations with the Muslims have never been questioned, is it not strange that there has hardly ever been any discussion of the relations that might have existed with the Christians of the "Byzantine" Churches, knowing that the Emperor of Constantinople was, at least nominally, the sovereign of the States founded by the Crusades?

⁹¹ Cf. *Appreciations on Initiation*, chap. XLI. The links between Christian hermeticism and Islamic hermeticism are symbolised by a famous "anecdote" in the history of Charlemagne. Just after his consecration, the founder of the Holy Empire received an embassy from Haroun al-Rachid, the *Abbasid* caliph of Baghdad, who brought the sovereign the "keys of the Holy Sepulchre". It is known that the "power of the keys" is a notion that is specifically hermetic.

⁹² On the number 333, cf. *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*, pg. 168. It is like 666, in relation (beneficent or maleficent) to the figure of Caesar, the first founder of the Roman Empire. could also be said about the number 111 and its various multiples. The *Prediction of the Popes*, attributed to St. Malachy, which is, with the *Centuries* of Nostradamus, the only non-scriptural prediction to which Guénon has given some importance, is a list of 111 currencies. Regarding the *Centuries*, it is rather distracting to see the current attempts at interpretation. With the exception of a small number of very shocking coincidences, such as the one concerning the death of Henri II and the five or six stanzas that Napoleon evidently wrote down, it is possible that all the rest is nothing more than pure "filler". In this case Michel de Notre Dame must have amused himself by anticipating the painful efforts of his future commentators; he, who wanted nothing more than to pay attention to the two dates he has written about "clearly": the date in prose and the date in verse. As for the "prediction of the Popes", recent research seems to prove that dates from the same period as St. Malachy. It should not be considered useless to offer a few details about the latter. He was a Cistercian monk, a close friend of St. Bernard, who was elevated to Archbishop of Armagh in Ireland. Returning to Rome, he passed through Clairvaux, where he died in the arms of St. Bernard. He was buried in the Abbey cemetery, where Bernard later accompanied him. In the revolution, the graves of the two saints were violated, and their bones were mixed up. Even today, the relics of the Templar legislator and those of the author, under whose patronage the prediction of the 111 mottoes is attributed, are venerated together in a church in Troyes. Finally, let us remember that Guénon recognised that the work of the Templars was not unrelated to the prediction attributed to St. Malachy.

⁹³ Michel Valsan, in the *Traditional Studies* of June, July-August and September, 1953, and under the title of *The Last High Degrees of Scottishness and the Descending Realisation*, has given a remarkable article on certain symbols of this degree, which are in evident connection with the primordial Tradition.

* * *

According to Guénon, there is an essential distinction between the Rose-Crucians and the Rosicrucians. The former have reached a very high degree of spiritual realisation, do not write, and left the West in the middle of the 17th century, i.e. shortly before operative Freemasonry began to become speculative. As for the Rosicrucians, they played a much more "active" role, and were undoubtedly the "organs" of the true Rosicrucians, who are the real "Unknown Superiors"; And that is why the attempts made in the 18th century to establish contact with the latter failed miserably, just as the Strict Observance, which was at the origin of these attempts, had committed the shameful and almost sacrilegious blunder of assigning, as the end of its activity, the discovery of the Templars' treasures. Monetary" treasures, of course, and Phillepe le Bel's hands would have shuddered with envy if he had heard the news! But it is a treasure of a high "value" and also of a very high "significance", that the initiates, who watch in Freemasonry, have been allowed to collect the inheritance. At the moment when this Freemasonry was on the point of losing its operational character and of assuming its "speculative" transformation, and as if to understand, to some extent, this undoubted degeneration, the numerous initiatory organisations and, above all, the chivalric organisations still subsisting, were to find, within the Lodges, a safe and definitive refuge.

* * *

We recalled earlier that the esoteric doctrine that existed in the West before the appearance of Rosicrucianism "had characteristics that allowed it to be classified as what we generally call hermeticism"⁽⁹⁴⁾. Guénon continued: "the history of this hermetic tradition is intimately linked to that of the Chivalric Orders, and was preserved by initiatory organisations such as those of the *Holy Faith* and the *Files of Love*", and of the *Massenie* du Saint-Graal.

M. Jean-Pierre Berger has examined in a long article⁹⁵, the relations between the two organisations that have direct links with Freemasonry, namely the Loyalists of Love and the Templars. Like all of this author's studies, this article touches on questions of the highest importance. M. Berger knows Guénon's work very well; but he wanted to make personal research "in order, he says, to confirm and specify the adhesion that could be made to the word of a man of whom it would not be very reasonable to have a blind "faith", even if it is trustworthy in almost all cases". It is true that a "passive" attitude is not entirely appropriate for such a work; and no one has ever claimed blind "faith" for traditional truths. Guénon once said to Oswald Wirth: "In the matter of metaphysics, one can

⁹⁴ Dante's *Esotericism*, chapter IV.

⁹⁵ Appeared in the magazine *El Simbolismo*, October-December 1969.

understood or not understood". Adherence to the principles, which is practically translated by a certain understanding of symbolism (which is "the language of metaphysics"), is, in short, the main condition required to reap any fruit from the reading and, above all, the study of Guénon's work, and it is entirely futile to wonder whether the author believed "at face value" this or that of the allegations of Henri Martin, Aroux, Rossetti and even Luigi Valli. Guénon's extraordinary "erudition", and the "materials" he drew from his readings in the five main languages of Western Europe, were for him only *occasions* to expound the ideas of very different origins. We have known Guenonians (or those who believed themselves to be such) who were "confused" to find that Guénon, in *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, differs from Dante, who, in his treatise, *On Monarchy*, maintains the independence of the two powers. Such "confusions" lead us to remember some Christians who are disturbed by the contradictions between certain books of the Old Testament and those, even more numerous, between the four Gospels. Be that as it may, M. Berger, in his study, wished to examine closely the question of the relations between the Faithful of Love and the Templars, "for, he says, it must be admitted that R. Guénon has not given the slightest indication to justify such clear and full of consequences statements" in these matters.

M. Berger does not pay the slightest regard to the work of Aroux and D.-G. Rossetti. Rossetti. We find him too demanding. It matters little what these two characters might be. Aroux (whether sincerely or not) is a sort of "ultra-integrist" Catholic, sworn enemy of the "old Alighieri", heretical, revolutionary and socialist! Rossetti, he, *joignait* to the fieriness of a *quarante-huitard* conspirator the lyricism of a romantic poet and a pre-Raphaelite painter. These two very different authors have brought together a considerable mass of facts, quotations, allusions, of which they have given their sometimes debatable interpretations, but which nothing prevents them from being "restored" in a traditional perspective. In this respect, they deserve to be cited in *Dante's Esotericism*, in preference to so many eminent "dantologists" whose work does not go beyond the domains of linguistics and literary criticism.

M. Berger has read the Italian authors cited by Guénon: Luigi Valli, Ricolfi and Scarlata. He was disappointed by the first one, of whom he says: "it causes too much blindness to be surrendered to Rossetti and Aroux". But how then did M. Berger read Luigi Valli? He seems to have sought in this author the mention of facts that establish in an indisputable and, so to speak, "official" way, the existence of relations between Templars and the Faithful of Love. This was not Valli's aim. The title of his work, *The Secret Language of Dante and the Faithful of Love*, sufficiently shows that it is a study of the initiatory "jargon" of the Faithful of Love. This study has been carried out with consummate skill. The meaning of the main terms of the secret language has undoubtedly been established by the comparison of a multitude of pieces written by authors, famous or obscure, of the *dolce stil novo*. It is by means of this eminently symbolic language that the whole search for the Faithful of Love must be conducted. Now, in this language, there are two terms of particular importance: they are the words "lady" and "weep". The lady symbolises, among other things, an initiatory organisation (Valli says a sect). The death of the lady is the destruction of this organisation. And "weeping", a term that is constantly repeated among the Faithful, means non-membership of the "sect". The

The dangers, in , were considerable, which is why it is useless to look for an *explicit* allusion in Dante's work to his connection with the Templars.

In an article in *Archaeology*⁹⁶, M. le Duc de Levis-Mirepoix wrote: "Another very interesting interrogation is that of Florence, studied in the Vatican Library by Loiseleur". It relates, after the depositions obtained without violence, the mysterious initiations which the Temple would have concealed. They are more or less related to Catharism, because of the number of Cathars who, after the catastrophe of their sect, had been introduced "by degree, or by force, among the Templars". There was, at the time, a *commandery* of Templars in Florence, and these Templars were regarded as heretical *puisque Albigeois*. We know how the latter were treated. The danger was mortal, for Dante and his friends, if they were recognised as his own.

*
* *

The second part of the article deals mainly with the work of André le Chapelain, studied by Ricolfi. M. Berger saw Champagne as a privileged province. Is this certain? In any case, when he tells us that there is an affiliation from St Bernard to Ruysbroeck and from Dante to Eckhart, it is highly improbable as far as the last two names are concerned: in fact, Dante's work is totally impregnated with symbolism, which is certainly not the case with Eckhart.

Regarding the symbolism of "rain" in Freemasonry, the author evokes what St. Bernard says about a passage from the *Song of Songs*: "Winter is past, the rain is gone, the flowers have appeared in our land, the time of the harvest of wine has come". This approach is interesting. But, to tell the truth, we think that the expression: "It rains upon the Temple", used in the collation of the degrees, when the candidate knocks "irregularly" at the door, is due above all to the fact that the Lodge Tablet (and, above all, the Mosaic Pavement), is said to represent "*Holy ground*", a substitute for the earthly Paradise and which did not rain in the garden of Eden.

Let us take this opportunity to mention a few important points. The *Song of Songs*, the epithalamium of Solomon's marriage to the daughter of the king of Egypt, has been the subject of a multitude of commentaries, both Jewish and Christian. Among the latter, the most remarkable is certainly that of Saint Gregory of Nyssa. This "*Cappadocian* father" integrated into his theology not only certain perspectives of neo-Platonist philosophers, but also the "orthodox" theses of Clement of Alexandria and Origen, who we know to have expressed, in part, early Christian esotericism. In Gregory of Nyssa, we find notions on the central position of the human being, on the true meaning of the "robes of skin", on the "transfiguration" of the Cosmos which can be operated by man, on the non-eternity of evil, on the superior meaning of darkness, etc... Gregory's thought has never been forgotten in the East. But in the West, this Father has only been translated into Latin by the blessed Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, disciple and biographer of Saint Bernard. Bernard and Guillaume wrote commentaries on the *Cantic*, in which they

⁹⁶ Cf. the chapter of the present work entitled "The Temple, Christian Initiatory Order".

is appreciated as an echo of Gregorio de Nysse. We do not want to get more out of these approaches than they can give. But is it not, to say the least, curious that the most metaphysical of the Greek Fathers (and possibly of all the Fathers of the Church) has been brought within the reach of Western Christianity, by a religious of the immediate environment of St. Bernard, the editor of the Rule of the Templars, who (according to authors as little akin to esotericism as René Grousset and the Duke of Lévis-Mirepoix) were in contact, in the East, not only with the "sects" of Islam, but also with those of Byzantine Christianity?

In the articles that M. Jean-Pierre Berger has published, we have always remarked that, after sifting through an often ill-founded critique of some of René Guénon's theses, he ends up providing a shocking "justification" for these same theses. This is not absent in the article that we have just commented on at length, and he has had the good idea to translate for his readers a major page by Luigi Valli, where this author exposes the only *fact* that can be advanced in favour of an affiliation between Templars and the Faithful of Love. This proof is taken from Boccacio. We cannot resist the pleasure of reproducing the essentials. It is Valli who speaks at first, and who then quotes Boccacio..:

"Finally, an argument, in my opinion of considerable scope, since it is not only a question here of rediscovering a Templar Dante, but of highlighting the hidden links of this whole movement (the Faithful of Love) with the Templars, is constituted by the hot, passionate and very noble apology that Jean Boccacio makes of the Templars in Book IX (the books are - by chance - nine) of his *Lives of Illustrious Men*. After having exalted the original purity, nobility and poverty of the Templars (...), after having narrated, in particular, the vicissitudes of the Grand Master Jaques, who considered himself worthy of death, not for having committed crimes, but for having let himself be forced, by torture, to make false confessions (...), after having given testimony of his father, present during the tortures, Boccacio makes certain "considerations on constancy", where he finds a very clever way to call, on several occasions, the Templars "ours" (...). He says: "numerous elders (...), for the teachings of the divine philosophy, or to acquire glory (...), were led to horrible torments. *Ours* were otherwise (...). What then will those say who marvel at the patience of the ancients under the tortures, if they had seen the considerable endurance of *ours*? They would have had no choice but to be upset".

After reproducing these texts by Valli and Boccacio, Jean-Pierre Berger adds: "It may come as a surprise that Boccacio (born, no doubt, in Paris around 1313 and died in 1375) speaks of the Templars using the words "ours", when there was no longer anyone in his living Order of the Templars. We should suppose that this adjective refers to the fraternity of the Faithful of Love, of which he was a member". Jean-Pierre Berger was right to point out that Boccacio's father, like Dante, was probably in Paris during the drama of 1314. As to whether the Templars no longer existed in 1375? Let us say, like Boccacio himself (regarding another subject) in the 3rd tale of the *Decameron*, that "the question is still pending, and possibly will be for a long time to come".

CHAPTER IV

ON SOME ASPECTS OF SO-CALLED "SCOTTISH" FREEMASONRY

Jean Palau, who disappeared in 1967, had specialised in the study of certain aspects of the French Revolution and, notably, in studies of the Roberpierre movement. But he had also written a work on Freemasonry⁹⁷, of which the editor said in the introduction: "This book is less a history of the Masonic Order than an original study of Freemasonry considered in its real plan, that of initiation". This book is indeed "original" as far as the purely traditional spirit is concerned. But has the result fully responded to this intention? Certainly, the book is dedicated "To the memory of René Guénon", and the author has visibly read and meditated on the Master's Work (and especially the Masonic Work). We will, however, make some reservations, for Palau, always in agreement with Guénon on the principles, separates from him on the point which touches on the very essence of Freemasonry. But this should not mark the obvious merit of such a Work. For the first time, Freemasonry was presented to the French public, by an author who believes in the value of initiation; and, what would possibly have surprised Guénon himself, is that this author was a historian and, moreover, a university student.

The Work was written before the publication of *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*, this incomparable "mine" of teachings and insights, without which it is inconceivable that it would henceforth be possible to write usefully on the Royal Craft. Had he written after this publication, Palau would certainly have filled in some gaps and corrected some errors⁹⁸ which are certainly no more than inaccuracies, and which, moreover, are almost inevitable in a work of this kind⁹⁹.

The history of Freemasonry, and especially that of French Freemasonry, occupies eight chapters, and the study of the symbolism of the "blue" degrees, only one. But the historical part is peppered with symbolic considerations, notably in the higher degrees.

⁹⁷ Jean Palau, *La Franc-Masonie*, Payot, Paris).

⁹⁸ Among the lacunae, we will cite the fact of speaking of the Cerneau Rite (pg. 275), without mentioning that this forgery is at the origin of the most "sinister" of irregular Freemasonry, and, notably, in the organisations of the pseudo-sir Aleister Crowley. Among the errors, we will point out two. The chapter on the Rite of Misraïm is worded in such a way as to suggest that this Rite could exist. Then (pp. 92 and 105-106), speaking of the signs of the third degree, does Palau not make a certain confusion between the "sign of horror" and the "Great Royal Sign"? It is the latter, it seems to us, which recalls the "blessing of the Kohanim", but with a notable difference, for it represents the equilateral triangle surrounded by flames, an obvious allusion to Hermetic "sublimation" and to the "ontology of the burning bush". ⁹⁹ Even if it is not an error, we are surprised to see Jean Palau (pg. 226) arguing that the Grand Orient of France has the right to practise the high degrees of the Scottish Rite "when, he says, the first three degrees practised in the Grand Orient work the French Rite". And he adds: "This goes against all the initiatory principles which want there to be only one esoteric teaching, conducted by the rites and symbols of a single Rite. The Grand Orient, by this, has refused that feat of erecting a Tower of Babel of Rites, which is absolutely contrary to Masonic initiation, which is one". See, if initiation is an effect, it is not "systematic"; and uniformity is not Unity. Moreover, A Grand Orient, at least in principle, is a federation of Rites. And then, did Palau dream that, if his way of seeing was universally received, no English or American Mason, could practise the high degrees of the Scottish Rite?

degrees, towards which Palau shows a declared predilection. "We have wished, he says, to scrutinise the esotericism proper to Freemasonry, and we have particularly attached ourselves to the profound study of the symbolism of the high degrees of Scottish Freemasonry, which offers a new field of research that is properly unlimited (pg. 15)".

Precisely one of the author's theses, which is likely to make many "specialists" frown, is his opinion on what Lantoine¹⁰⁰ calls "the greatest enigma in the history of Freemasonry", namely the origin of the so-called "Scottish" High Degrees. After having enumerated the various theories issued on this subject, and shown their inconsistency, the author proposes a personal explanation. Rejecting (possibly without much nuance) "the Scottish geographical origin", he links the Masonry so called "to the very ancient Forest Masonry", from which derived, according to him, both wood building (a notable practice among the *Culdéens*) and Charbonnerie⁽¹⁰¹⁾. In support of this, he refers to what Guénon wrote about the Church *Culdéenne*, and also to the ritual of the degree of "Royal Knight *Hache*, or Prince of Lebanon" (the Scottish 22nd degree), whose "second flat" bears the name of "Council of the Round Table". And the author believes he has found, in the French province of the Marche, names of places which confirm this supposition.

We do not know what the Freemasons' opinion will be on such a hypothesis. But Palau may be more right than he thinks he is. We are not surprised that, even though he has spoken on pages 131 to 133 of the sacred geography of the symbolism of the forest, of the Templars, of the *Culdéens*, of the Round Table, and even of the "cartographic" similarity between Scotland and Greece (whose common patron saint, Saint Andrew, is also the patron saint of the high degrees of the Scottish Rite), the author has not thought of making a synthesis of all these elements, and has instead thought of a certain forest which is not situated in the Marche, but in the "Celtide": Brocéliande forest, or rather Calydon forest in Etoile, inhabited by a white boar, hunted by Méléagre, Atalante and the kings of "heroic" Greece. In his article "The Boar and the Bear" (cf. *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, chap. XXIV), Guénon writes: "The name Calydon is found exactly in *Caledonia*, the ancient name of Scotland". And Palau certainly did not leave unnoticed certain things that René Guénon wrote only once.

¹⁰⁰ Jean Palau is naturally combative, and he treats authors with whom he does not share his point of view with no compunction. This makes his book extremely "lively". His favourite "victim" is Albert Lantoine, whose name he cannot mention without adding a few uncharitable hints. Alluding, no, to this author's taste for anecdotes, Jean Palau calls him "the G. Lenôtre of Masonic history", and adds, "But G. Lenotre wrote well. It is known that G. Lenotre is considered the "master" of the "little story". It seems to us, therefore, that Albert Lantoine wrote his language correctly, and the question of whether he wrote "well" is merely a matter of individual judgement. And why so much badmouthing of the little story? G. Lenotre, precisely, has written about *Martin de Gallardon*, a work that says more about the tenebrous "baseness" of certain events of the 19th century than the dusty tomes of the most vainglorious masters of the "Great History".

¹⁰¹ The existence of this organisation poses more than one problem. It has never been incorporated into the Compagnonage (CF. Luc Benoise, *The Compagnonage and the Officials*, pgs. 348 and 39), and its rituals are the closest to Freemasonry. The Lodge was replaced by a Venta (symbolically composed of twenty members) and the Grand Lodges by a High Venta. The Temple was called a "barrack" (close to what the operative Masons called the *faculty of abrac*, and the dignitaries did not carry a mallet, but an axe). On the site of the columns, there were two trees on which a ladder rested. The "Lights" of the Lodge were replaced by the "fires of the burning ember", which burned unceasingly during the work. In the heading of all the writings, instead of "To the Glory of the Great Architect of the Universe", there was the formula: "Under the Eye of God". The passion of the Good Cousin Christus" and, above all, his crown of thorns, was given in the legend of Hiram. Before opening the works, it was said: "Let us cleanse the forest of wolves", that is to say: "Let us rid it of the profane". It can be seen that the "Christianisation" of this Order was far more intense than Masonry has ever been.

There is another problem about which the author seems to have "sensed" the solution. Speaking of "Frederick II of Prussia" and his role in the "official" history of the Scottish Rite, he has seen that it is not about the victor of the Seven Years' War. We think that the Prussia spoken of here is the land of the Boruses, ancestors of the present Prussians, who are said to have come from the North. How, without this, can we explain the name given to a Scottish degree: "*Noachite* or Prussian Knight"?

*
* *

Palau (and that is why his work cannot be described as "Guenonian") departs from Guénon's teaching on some points that we believe to be essential. The chapter on the Templars certainly deserved to be modified. But we will rather examine another question: Anderson's role in the early years of speculative Freemasonry.

The author (pg. 107, n. 21) admits that he "does not quite understand the efforts (*sic*) of Guénon and other Masonic historians with regard to Anderson, which tend to deny, in the latter, any traditional sense". On the contrary, he thinks that "traces of quite profound esoteric knowledge are to be found scattered in Anderson" (pg. 91). And he bases his conviction mainly on two passages from the *Book of Constitutions*.

The first, which is well known, and which can only be found in its full version in the 2nd edition (1738) of the *Constitutions*, is as follows: "A Mason is bound, towards his tenure¹⁰², to obey the moral law, in true *Noachite*, and, if he understands the Craft well, he will never be a stupid atheist, nor an irreligious libertine¹⁰³".

The second passage, is an excerpt from the "Legend of the Craft": "Among the Pagans, where the noble science of geometry was duly cultivated, before as after the reign of Augustus, and down to the fifth century of the Christian era, Masonry was held in great esteem and veneration: and while the Roman Empire knew glory, the Royal Craft was propagated with care and devotion, as far as the *Thule*, and a Lodge was erected in almost every Roman garrison".

*
* *

Far be it from us to minimise this Masonic reference *to Thulé*¹⁰⁴ which, in our opinion, is only to be found in the so-called *Constitutions*. Why should we want to give credit solely to Anderson? This allusion, like the one to the Noachites, where else could it have come from, if not from the ancient documents (*Old*

¹⁰² This term can mean: "ritual obligation".

¹⁰³ We know the shocking "fortune" of this text. The obediences which admit atheists declare that they do so by virtue of the spirit of the Constitutions of Anderson, whom their rivals accuse of having violated that spirit. And the obediences which admit "deists" do so by virtue of their own Constitutions, which are not Anderson's at all. The greater number of the latter Obediences, moreover, come from the "Grand Lodge of Athol", said of the "Ancients", who abhor Anderson. It is understandable, under these conditions, why the discussions between and the other of these Obediences constitute a veritable dialogue of the Kissing Birds.

¹⁰⁴ The text preserved by Anderson is, moreover, very interesting. After him, the Romans would have successfully propagated the Royal Art "To the *Thulé* End". However, Jean Palau knows very well where the Roman legions stopped (possibly for reasons that were not exclusively military) their conquering march towards the lands of the North.

Charges) which they had amassed to use at their convenience, and which disappeared so conveniently in the fire at "St. Paul's" Lodge?

Let it be understood. What irritates us is when he wants to inoculate Anderson, on a certain fact provided by Palau himself (pgs. 120 and 121): "no *Old Charge* speaks of Hiram, or even alludes to him; and H.F. Marcy is right in pointing out that, until 1717, he never appeared among the Traditions of the Craft and the ceremonial of the Lodges. The name of Hiram appears in the early history of Freemasonry, given by Anderson, at the beginning of the *Book of Constitutions* of 1723".

What Jean Palau was probably unaware of when he wrote these lines is that, if the *Old Charges*, imbued with a Christian spirit, ignored Hiram-Abif¹⁰⁵, they recognised as "Prince of Architects" and third Grand Master of the Masonic Order, a personage called Amon (or sometimes Aymon). Guénon, in one of his last *comtes-rendus* that he wrote, listed the links that may exist between this Amon and the Egyptian god of the same name, and has formulated striking parallels with the triple sacred word Jah-Bel-On, the Egyptian city of On (or Heliopolis, famous in the legend of the Phoenix) and the "royal name" of Osiris (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t. II, pgs. 176 to 178) and the similarities between the legend of Hiram and the myth of Osiris are well known.

We think that the substitution of Hiram-Abif for Amon, definitively consummated by Anderson, is a characteristic attempt to alter the universalistic and supra-confessional character of Freemasonry. Anderson thus believed, possibly in good faith, to "serve" Christendom. He has not served it, and has inflicted on the Order a wound which might have been irreparable, by depriving the "blue" degrees of all reference to the noble Egyptian tradition - noble and holy, as are all traditions, great or small, dead or living, and which had made Freemasonry the badge of honour of choosing it, in some form, by "arch", in order to preserve the "germ" (or, if you like, the "spirit") of a civilisation of builders, whose monuments defy even the usury of time.

The "Christianisation" of Western Freemasonry was done once and for all, probably around the 5th century AD, by initiates particularly qualified for such an important and difficult work. What they have allowed to remain of the

¹⁰⁵ It is indeed Hiram-Abif, the "son of the Widow", and not Hiram, king of Tyre, and it does not seem that the name has been altered in the *Old Charges*, while that of the "third Great Master" may have taken the form of Amon, Adon, Adoniram and Hiram successively. It should also be noted that the innovation attributed to Anderson by the authors to whom Jean Palau refers, could have been prepared long ago, and possibly, since the beginnings of the speculative "mutation", by the percussionists of the "very fastidious Scottish Compagnon". A change of such a magnitude does not come about abruptly, at any rate, Anderson has attributed to it a "definitive" character, since, today, the name of Amon is absolutely unknown in universal Freemasonry. The innovation, moreover, concerns only the legend of Hiram, i.e. the story of his assassination, the search for his body and its discovery. But his role in the ornamentation of the Temple - a role confirmed by the Bible - must very probably have found its place in the ancient rituals. The "legend of the blacksmith and King Solomon", still highly honoured in American Freemasonry, in which the blacksmith is presented as the "son of the Great Tubalcaïn", may have facilitated Amon's "slip" to Hiram. Let us note - and this has nothing to do with Anderson - that this legend seems to have inspired its rites - a very curious thing - for the installation of the Venerable One, certain Obediences coming from the "Ancients". It should also be noted that the Egyptian and Chaldean traditions have a particular link with the Temples of Israel and the "redemption of captives". It is after the fall of Babylon that the second Temple was built. All this is related to the very complex symbolism of the Holy Royal Ark, the only degree of "office" that retains a formal allusion to the "sacred" character of the three traditions: Hebraic, Chaldean and Egyptian.

Masonry of the *Collegia fabrorum*, as well as of Polar symbolism, are the references to Pythagoreanism and to the Celtic, Chaldean, Egyptian and Greco-Latin traditions, all of which have been seriously damaged by the nefarious action of Anderson and his pale imitators. And - we return here to Jean Palau's concerns - would it not be precisely in order to repair these "wounds" that "Scottish Freemasonry" would have been instituted?

CHAPTER V

TEMPLARY MASONRY JACOBITE MASONRY and SCOTTISH MASONRY

The geological and palaeontological discoveries which are multiplying in our time unanimously confirm the "scientistic" theses of those who operate them, i.e. generalised evolutionism and man's descent into animality. The repercussions of these discoveries on the mentality of our time are considerable. We know, for example, the influence that the leaves of R.P. Teilhard de Chardin, on which he based his philosophy, have exerted on the current teaching of the Catholic religion, where the ideas of progress and evolution now have the force of law. Guénon has given the very simple explanation of this confirmation by the facts of the most anti-traditional theories of modern science. These results are the consequence of the "solidification of the world", which makes the Cosmos more and more similar (at least in appearance) to the image made by the "scientistics" who reign over the daily thinking and behaviour of our contemporaries. Palaeontologists and pre-historians cannot bring to light, through the vestiges of ancient civilisations, that what they have extracted from the "grossier" material way, the vestiges of the spiritual activity of the first men, have totally disappeared.¹⁰⁶ Guénon himself, however, has remarked that, in our own day, a large number of documents come out of the shadows and confirm, in an explosive manner, certain of the positions of traditional science. For us, this is due to the fact that "when the gates of hell open, the gates of heaven open as well". This updating is very often the work of seekers who have no doctrinal concerns. This is particularly visible in the field of Masonic studies, where recent publications have come to support, in a rather neglected way, a large number of Guénon's ways.

That is why, when we heard, during a discussion on Freemasonry¹⁰⁷, the announcement of the publication of a posthumous work by René Le Forestier, in which this author, the undisputed authority on historical matters, was making a clean sweep of the "fable" concerning the Templar ancestry of the Masonic Order, we were taken by surprise. For the first time after Guénon's death, Would one of the ideas that he held most strongly be beaten into the ? When Le Forestier's book appeared in the early 1970s, we rushed to buy it¹⁰⁸.

*

¹⁰⁶ Cf. *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, chapter XIX.

¹⁰⁷ This discussion will be dealt with in the chapter of the present work entitled: "On the relations between the Church and Freemasonry".

¹⁰⁸ René Le Forestier, *La Franc-Maçonnerie templariaire et occultiste, dans les XVIIIème et XIXème siècles* Editions Aubier-Montaigne, Paris).

*

*

In the preface to this work, M. Antoine Faivre retraces the brilliant university career of René Le Forestier, who was a professor at the Collège Sainte-Barbe, and who had a curious attraction for this Freemasonry, which it seems never intended to enter. The book, "cramped with unpublished documents and the fruit of twenty-two years of work" (pg. 9), was completed in 1950. M. Faivre is visibly an enthusiastic admirer of the "methods of historical research currently being practised". We are surprised, at the same time, at the confidence placed in psychoanalysis for the interpretation of Masonic legends and symbols, which, he says, "deserve to be studied, according to the comparative methods of Mircea Eliade, and could serve as an example to illustrate an analytical psychology, which C.G. Jung has already enriched, through his studies of alchemical texts" (pg. 13).

It is true that M. Eliade, who criticises Freud's theses at the slightest opportunity, admires Jung's theses with conviction. But it is M. Alec Mellor, presented by M. Faivre as "one of the authors who has dealt most profoundly with the Masonic problem as a whole" (pg. 7), who was entrusted with the task of writing the introduction to the work.

We are familiar with the ideas of M. Alec Mellor, who considers the Masonic secret to be "fictitious" (pg. 15). In his introduction, he advocates the establishment of a new science, which he proposes to call "Masonology". This science, he tells us, would follow the paths that "German science has had the honour of tracing" and "would finally apply to Masonic history the methods of modern scientific history". For the realisation of this design, M. Alec Mellor relies heavily on official organisations. "There is a lack, he says, at the Sorbonne or at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, of a clear history of Freemasonry and a research seminar, and the C.N.R.S. should point its researchers in the direction of this as yet untapped mine" (pg. 16). In short, "Masonology" would simply be the study of Freemasonry, from an exclusively profane point of view, in accordance with the "postulates of rationalism", carried out according to the methods, in honour of university circles. Such a diligence is perfectly normal in the modern world; and all those who do not see any value in the matter of initiation from a profane point of view, will always have the right to consider the considerations of "Masonology" as null and void, as soon as it claims to be outside its own domain, where Masonry is considered as one society among many others, and not as an initiatory organisation first and foremost.

M. Alec Mellor, tells us that Le Forestier, whom he regards as a master of this new science, has shown remarkably how, at the end of the 18th century, "repressed religious feeling, in the psychoanalytic sense, had come to the surface in its psychopathic, and sometimes insane, forms" (pg. 17). Explanations other than psychoanalytical ones could be given (and have been given) for the irruption of psychic phenomena in Freemasonry¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁹ M. Alec Mellor is justly severe on Willermoz and the *Nodo-Raabs* of the "Chosen and Beloved Lodge". And he writes: "For years, the highest initiates had been led by a real alienated Mme. de Vallière, a somnambulist who wrote inexhaustibly on the dictation of the Beyond. It was in the course of a session of the Society

As is natural in an opponent of secrecy, M. Alec Mellor has nothing but contempt for those who admit a possible affiliation between the Order of the Temple and Freemasonry. The judgements of this author are definitive and severe. The "Templar hoax", he says, is an absurd legend, rejected by all authentic historians" (pg. 17), and the work of a "*faussaire de génie*" ("false genius?"). It even seems that M. Mellor, with the Templar legend, rejects all the other "legends"¹¹⁰ incorporated into Masonic rituals, and also those that have been preserved for us in the *Old Charges*, namely the "legend of the Craft", which is obviously not to be taken literally, but which has an extremely important symbolic meaning¹¹¹.

Perhaps we will have remarked that the positions of MM. Antoine Faivre and Alec Mellor are the same ones that Guénon has fought against from one end his Work to the other, and that constitute, in a way, the ideological "armour" of the modern world. Our readers are not waiting for us to begin the accomplished work by the one who has masterfully denounced: the illusions as to the possibilities of the "scientific method" applied indiscriminately to all domains; the modern superstitions of evolution and Progress, which have ended in a real make-up of history; the nullity of "external" erudition in matters of initiation; the harmful consequences of any ignorance of Nature and of the "value" of the "real secret"; the disturbing character of psychoanalysis, etc.... It is much more useful to take René Le Forestier's text and examine whether it really corresponds to what its presenters wanted to see.

*
* *

What suddenly struck us on reading the book is that the content does not correspond in any way whatsoever to what we are entitled to expect.

The Lyonnais Journal of the History of Medicine, on 26 March 1958, that this aeropagus of specialists clarified the Great Arcanum and gave it the form that suited it, that of a diagnosis" (pg. 20). That the Canoness de Vallière was a sexual obsessive is not in doubt. Was she a "real alienated person"? On this point, let us refer to the eminent specialists mentioned by M. Mellor. Modern medicine, as is well known, sometimes makes diagnostic errors when it deals with the living, but never when it deals with the dead; and the patient in question (the canoness of Vallière) has been brought down to earth over the next two centuries.

¹¹⁰ We recall that, etymologically, "legend" is "that which must be read". Such is also the meaning of this word in the language of the Catholic liturgy, notably when it speaks of the "legend" of a saint. This is why Jacques de Voragine has entitled his work *Golden Legend*. A great number of facts led to the legends of the saints, possessing a marvellous character, the word "legend" has come to designate an extraordinary fact, then unbelievable, and finally, fabulous.

¹¹¹ Apart from the Legend of the Craft, which, in short, has an "official" character, other Masonic legends have come down to us through various channels. M. Alec Mellor, and later Albert Lantoine, quote the following from the English author Oliver: "The ancient Masonic tradition asserts that our society existed before the creation of this globe through the various solar systems" (pg. 16). This assertion, only apparently extraordinary, can easily be interpreted in this way, through the traditional doctrine: if, outside the planet Earth, there are other life-bearing globes in our world, this life must involve, for each globe, a "central" state analogous to what, on this earth, is the human state; and beings in possession of this state must have at their disposal something comparable to what Masonry means to Western man today, and, in a more general way, to what initiation means to the kingdom of man. It is well understood that, when we use "if", we do not forget that life is one of the five conditions of bodily existence, and that, consequently, everything that is body is alive. The biologists, paleo-biologists and astro-biologists of today, who make life dependent on narrow conditions of temperature, chemical composition and the like, have no idea of the possibilities of the manifestation of Life, possibilities which are really indefinite.

to be expected, given its title. This content, in fact, deals only with the German Strict Observance and the Rectified Regime, which is far from constituting Templar Freemasonry. The latter includes, above all, the *Knight Templar* degree, which is extremely widespread in English-speaking countries and, above all, in America (where it is the last degree of the York Rite), and the 30th and 33rd degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, a Rite which is widespread throughout the world. That in the 975 pages that make up Le Forestier's work, the author has not even thought of devoting to it a single one of the last degrees of the two most universally practised Rites, is one of the inconsistencies that are not surprising to profane scholars; but, we confess, this leaves us somewhat perplexed¹¹².

Books II, II and IV are devoted to Willermoz and the Rectified Scottish Rite, and Book I to the principles of the Strict Observance. These subjects, after fifty years, have been so frequently dealt with in all their aspects, that they are in danger of being of interest only to those who are curious about Masonic scholarship¹¹³. It is entirely different in Chapters I and II of the first Book, which deal with essential questions as to the origin of Templar Freemasonry.

And, in principle, it must be said that the events recounted do not seem to us to correspond to what M. Alec Mellor announced in his introduction. He wrote, with regard to the Templar legend: "What *faussaire de genie* (genial falsehood?) had affected him? It must have been such that it delayed the extremely difficult problem that R. Le Forestier had taken by the arm, and, then, it can be said that he had given the solution". And, a little further on, alluding to the sometimes arduous nature of reading certain pages, M. Mellor added: "There is no denying it, the reading of such chapters calls for a real effort, and we calculate that it must be the author's effort. At least we are amply repaid for our pain by the dazzling contemplation of the treasure he has discovered for us" (pg. 21). This is the enthusiasm. But when one reads Le Forestier's text, one realises that this historian - and it is to his credit - is under no illusions about the profound scope of his discoveries, and, in any case, does not boast of having solved the enigma constituted by Masonic Templarism. For example, speaking of Baron de Hundt¹¹⁴, whom he declares to be afflicted with "madness

¹¹² In Le Forestier's work on the *Élus Coëns*, the most debatable pages were those of Part II, where the author had sketched a history of what he called the "occult tradition". Such a "reproach" cannot be directed at the work that is the subject of the present chapter, and it goes without saying that the defects pointed out by Guénon in the former are much less apparent in the latter. It is known that Guénon attributed these defects to the author's university education, an education in which the anti-traditional tendencies were particularly accentuated between the two wars.

¹¹³ There is, in particular, a not inconsiderable mass of information on the "Clerics of the Temple", the (Russian) Rite of Melesimus, the Swedish Rite and the (German) Rite of Zinnendorf.

¹¹⁴ Here are some indications about Baron Hundt, which we take from a study appearing in *The Symbolism* of July 1968 and formed by *Eques a Zibelina*. Hundt, born in 1722, was initiated in Frankfurt in 1742 and came to Paris the following year to convert, it seems, to Catholicism. In 1745, he would have been received into Templar Masonry by the Stuart Pretender, at least after his claims. In 1755, the Strict Observance was founded in Germany and soon acquired an extraordinary expansion. Suddenly, however, "very indefinable" characters such as Rosa and Jonson appeared. An "economic plan" to resume the search for the Templars' treasure was launched in the convent of Oltenberg. From then on, the decline began. Convents succeeded convents. Stark and the Clerics of the "Long Observance" intervened, which contributed to the disorder. Hundt lost all his prestige when, on top of that, he wanted to establish a contact

Masonic", because of his taste for high degrees, sees in him "the introducer on the scene of a gigantic mystification". But this does not prevent him from recognising, very loyally, the obscurities which abound in all that surrounds this matter: "The origin of the German Rite, which adopted the name of Rectified Masonry, is one of the most obscure. Its founder was no common adventurer..... At least he did not burn the trail¹¹⁵ at will... and it seems that it was only a borrowed name, behind which were discreet collaborators" (pg. 103). A little further on, Le Forestier adds, with regard to the rituals of the new Regime: "The fundamental theme of the system was the Templar-Jacobite legend. How had it reached the depths of Saxony and why did it appear suddenly, when there was nothing to foresee its entry on the scene? The problem remains unsolved to this day" (p. 111). And it is precisely with regard to this Jacobite legend, which only influenced the Strict Observance, that Le Forestier remarks: "By what association of ideas was the Templar legend linked to the Jacobite legend, when it was impossible to establish it in documentary form? In any case, the association of the two legends undoubtedly occurs in France, but it will only be echoed to a few isolated degrees" (pg. 197).

We see that, when M. Alec Mellor tells us that Le Forestier has "given the solution" to the enigma constituted by the origin of Templar and Jacobite Freemasonry, Le Forestier tells us: "The problem remains hitherto unsolvable". We would now like to dwell a little on three points which attracted attention at the beginning of the work. Points that have been brought out by the survival of the Order of the Temple, in Scotland, with the appearance of the first Templar degrees and Jacobite Freemasonry.

*
* *

Concerning the Templars' relations with Scotland, we find a curious remark made by Le Forestier to W. Begemann, a German author, whom M. Alec Mellor (pg. 16) recognises as a "true historian". Here is the passage: "Begemann remarked that there had been Templars in Scotland until 1563, when they had joined the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, whose Grand Master officially represented them" (pg. 107). Does one perceive the scope of such an indication? The main argument against the hypothesis of a transmission between Templars and Freemasons lay in the "gulf" that exists between 1314, the date of the ruin of the Temple, and 1750, the approximate date of the appearance of the first Templar degrees. And yet, according to a "true historian", this gap is more than half filled! If we consider that, shortly after 1563, several "Rosicrucian" organisations began to appear, some of which, a century later, were very probably related to the principles of speculative Freemasonry, we must agree that the chasm is very close to being completely bridged.

with the Unknown Superiors, and failed after his pretender Start. He died in 1776. Soon the convent of Wilhelmsbad, and later the convent of the Gauls, was to consummate the reconciliation of all Templar affiliation.

¹¹⁵ We are thinking here of Amor Bocaccio's Fiello who, when questioned by the humanists of his time about the identity of Dante's Beatrice, got out of trouble by saying that she was the daughter of Signor. Portinari. This "legend" had such an impact that it survived for six centuries before Luigi Valli made it sink into ridicule.

*
* *

The whole of Chapter I of the first book describes the author's attempts to discover traces of Templarism in German Freemasonry, which was previously the Masonic activity of Baron Hundt. These searches were to no avail. From 1733, the author tells us, there was in Germany a Rite, notably practised by the Berlin Lodge "The Three Globes", which followed the three symbolic degrees of two other degrees: the Knight of St. Andrew of Chardon and the Knight of God and his Temple. The latter had a distinctly Templar character (pg. 85 *sqq*).

The link between the Temple and Scotland, whose patron saint is St. Andrew and where the highest knightly dignity is the Order of Chardon, is already pointed out here. But the most important thing is that since 1733 there has been a Templar degree in Germany. We must therefore abandon the thesis generally accepted by historians, according to which no trace of a high degree in Freemasonry can be found before 1740⁽¹¹⁶⁾.

But the date of 1733 is interesting in yet another aspect. 1733 is the year in which speculative Freemasonry was introduced into Germany¹¹⁷. Its first Lodge was founded in Hamburg. Since, in this same year, a workshop is found in Germany practising at the same time the three Blue Degrees and two High Degrees (one Scottish and the other Templar), we are entitled to ask whether the five degrees were not "imported" at the same time from England, the Blue Degrees "officially" and the other two secretly. To this question, we cannot, for the moment, give an affirmative answer. But the very fact that it can be posed at all, pushes one singularly to the comfortable systems, which many historians of Freemasonry perpetuate assiduously, copying one another. For intellectual conformism, in Masonry, does not constitute the fact of those who have, first and foremost, to refer traditional principles.

*
* *

¹¹⁶ Let us quote, for example, Marcy: "The madness of the High Degrees begins about 1740" (*Essay on the Origins of Freemasonry and History of the Grand Orient of France*, t. II, pg. 61). This thesis is based on the following decision, promulgated by the first Grand Lodge of French Freemasonry, on December 11, 1743: "Having learned, of late, that certain Brethren present themselves under the title of Scottish Masters, in certain Lodges, and claim their rights and privileges of which no trace exists in the records and usages of all the established Lodges on the surface of the Globe, the Grand Lodge, in order to maintain the union and harmony which should reign among all Freemasons, has decided that all Scottish Masters, unless they are not Officers of the Grand Lodge or of any other particular Lodge, shall be considered by the Brethren as equal to other Apprentices or Companions, and shall wear the custom without any sign of distinction".

¹¹⁷ "Findel says that from 1730 temporary Lodges, devoted to the diffusion of Masonic science and the study of ritual, were formed at various points in Germany. But the first regular Lodge was founded in Hamburg, in 1733, under a charter from Lord Strathmore, Grand Master of England. This Lodge, however, did not really become active until four years later. Its progress was slow at first" (Mackey's *Encyclopaedia*, t.I, in article *Germany*).

Let us now return to the association between the Templar and Jacobite legends¹¹⁸, which Le Forestier acknowledges to have been made in France, and declares the processus "impossible to establish in documentary form". History is here exposed to one of its "limits", which shows that not all of them are chronological. The link between the Templars and the Jacobite movement is both historical and symbolic: this link is Scotland, which is the last refuge of the Templars, but also the cradle of the Stuarts, and the refuge of their last supporters. The fact that the association of the two legends was made in France and, more precisely, in Paris, indicates that another symbolic correspondence can be seen here. For it is from France, and above all from Paris, that the Templars left to take refuge in England and then in Scotland; and it is from Scotland (and also from England) that the Jacobites came to take refuge in France. It must be understood that the Jacobite "legend" in Freemasonry has, above all, a symbolic significance, which does not prevent the supporters of the Stuarts, and the Stuarts themselves, from a very real influence on the external structure, and also on the destinies of the Royal Craft⁽¹¹⁹⁾. Even today, in the scale of the 33 degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, there remains a degree which bears a trace of this influence in its name. This degree is that of "Grand Scots of the Sacred Widow of James VI", which is the 14th degree of the Rite and the last of the "degrees of perfection"⁽¹²⁰⁾. Its symbolism has nothing to do with the history of the Stuarts, but rather with the primordial tradition. Indeed, we find the cubic stone of *pointe tronquée* (*truncated point?*) (hieroglyphic of the Pole), and the ritual evokes the sacrifice of Abraham on Mount Morhia (the Jewish equivalent of Mount Meru). The Lodge is forbidden to represent the Holy of Holies, "who is illuminated neither by the Sun nor by the Moon", because he is outside the succession of days and nights, indeed, outside any succession, i.e. in the "eternal present"¹²¹.

¹¹⁸ The history of the Jacobite movement is so closely linked to the politico-religious vicissitudes of Great Britain that it should not be considered useless to recall the succession of the Stuarts from their accession to the English throne: James I (James V, in Scotland), Presbyterian, son of Mary Stuart and Darnley; Charles I, Anglican, son of the preceding, who was dethroned and beheaded during Cromwell's "protectorate"; Charles II, Anglican, son of the preceding, who was destined to the throne, by General Monk; James II (James VI in Scotland), Catholic, brother of the predecessor, who was dethroned by his son-in-law William of Orange and took refuge in France, where Louis XIV offered him residence in the chateau of Saint-Germain; William of Orange, a Calvinist, who reigned jointly with his wife Mary, daughter of James II; Anne Stuart, an Anglican, another daughter of James II. Before her death, Anne appointed to succeed her, not her brother James, called the "Knight of St. George", but a member of another branch of the Stuarts, the Elector of Hanover, who took the name of George I. All those who, after the deposition of James II, attempted to restore him to his throne, and who, after his death, fought for the favour of the knight of St. George, are designated under the name of Jacobites. Some historians, among whom is Albert Lantoin, have sometimes confused William of Orange with George I.: for scholars, they too, may have lapses. James II (the James VI of Scottish Freemasonry) led a life of exile in France, accompanied by great piety. He had notable relations with the Cistercian Abbot Armand de Rancé, the formator of the Trappa. In this regard, it is curious that certain Trappist manual signs, and in particular the one that designates both the word "bread" and the word "God", are absolutely identical to some of the most important Masonic signs. It is also worth noting, but as a mere curiosity, that in the *Aphorisms* of Chamfor, and unnoticed in such a place, we find the following statement: "King James II, living at Saint-Germain, by subsidy from Louis XIV, went to Paris to treat scrofula, which he only cured as King of France".

¹¹⁹ Guénon thought that the Stuarts had played, in Freemasonry, at least "a role of utensil" (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*, t. I, pg. 298).

¹²⁰ It is, a very important degree, so that certain Supreme Councils have them conferred in their ritual fullness, and not "by communication", as is practised in the lesser degrees.

¹²¹ In order not to be accused of lack of fidelity to the rulers of the house of Hanover, the English had to change the name of this degree, which, for them, has become "Grand Chosen, Perfect and Sublime Mason". The Americans have followed suit.

But the Jacobite movement has not only influenced the Masonry of the higher degrees, Blue Masonry has also been affected, but it must be made clear, as Le Forestier pointed out, that it is only French Freemasonry. The latter had therefore been imported from England by the "modern" Freemasons, very much opposed to the Stuarts. Its first Lodge, "A Louis of Silver", dates from 1725. From 1735, French Freemasonry provided a Grand Master. Who did it choose for this dignity? Sir Hector Maclean "baronnet" of Scotland", a Jacobite. And who replaces him in this office? The Earl of Derwentwater, another Scotch Jacobite¹²². And these first two Grand Masters were not lukewarm Jacobites. A brother of Derwentwater had fallen to Stuarts, and Derwentwater himself, after having resigned the Grand Mastership, went to Scotland with the pretender Charles-Edouard¹²³, fell prisoner in the disastrous battle of Culloden, and then fell under the executioner's axe, after having addressed to his wife, who remained in France, an emotional letter of farewell⁽¹²⁴⁾.

But how is it that Désaguliers and the other leaders of English Freemasonry, all determined supporters of the Hanoverian dynasty, did not react to see their "first-born daughter", French Freemasonry (whose workshops they frequently visited), choose as Grand Masters such compromising characters, and, for not keeping quiet, conspirators who had put their swords at the service of the Stuarts and fomented revolt after revolt in their native Scotland? What a strange complicity between Orangemen and Jacobites! As strange as Anderson's *Constitutions*, recounting the founding of the Grand Lodge of 1717, debuting with the words "*After the rebellion*", as if to emphasise that this Grand Lodge was constituted after (and, no doubt, in reaction to) a Stuart revolt¹²⁵. Maclean and Derwentwater, on the other hand, do not seem to have escaped any Jacobite propaganda among French Freemasons. We see that there is no lack of enigmas in the history of Masonic origins. But, for those who do not believe in chance and think of revealing certain "correspondences", how these enigmas "speak"!

If we doubted the particular importance in the history of French Freemasonry of the action exercised at its beginnings under the "cover" of the two Jacobite Grand Masters, a supplementary argument could be drawn from singular events which occurred in the first decade of our century. Relying on resolutions (accepted as unappealable oracles) of the convents of Lyon and Wilhelmsbad, an irregular Mason, who was at the same time an occultist of some talent, Charles Détré (Téder), undertook, in his journal *Hiram*, a campaign of extreme violence, directed both against Masonic Templarism and against René Guénon - at the beginning of his life - and against the Masonic Templarism.

¹²² Cf. H.-F. Marcy, *Essay on the Origins of Freemasonry and History of the Grand Orient of France*, t. I, pg. 87 *sqq.*

¹²³ Nicknamed the "Young Pretender": he was the son of the knight of St. George.

¹²⁴ On the Jacobite activity of the first Grand Masters of French Freemasonry, an interesting documentation can be found in the following work: *The First Desecration of the Masonic Temple*, by Pierre Chevalier (Bibliothèque philosophique J. Vrin, Paris). See especially Chapter IV: "The End of Jacobite Hopes".

¹²⁵ The director of the *Archives de Trans-en-Provence*, Jean Barles, had once made interesting deductions in this respect in his journal. Guénon alluded to it (*Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonnage*, t. I, pg. 260).

¹²⁶ - and against the Grand Orient, which was notably reproached for mentioning in its "yearbook", at the head of the list of Grand Masters, the names of two Jacobite Scotsmen. The Grand Orient had the weakness to give in to the cries of its opponents and consequently modified its yearbook. It was only a few years later, with the discovery the "Swedish documents", of indisputable authenticity, that the French List of Grand Masters was again supplemented by the addition its two Jacobite supporters¹²⁷. The counter-initiation to which Téder belongs would most probably not have developed such an effort if Maclean and Derwentwater had been no more than mere loyalists of the unfortunate offspring of James II.

*
* *

There are still other interesting things in Le Forestier's posthumous work¹²⁸. But, from now on, we can see that the "Guenonian" Freemasons have nothing to fear, quite the contrary, from the documents contained in this book, no more (if we may hazard such a prediction) than they might fear the documents which might eventually be brought up to date by the dear university students of "Freemasonry", whose foundation M. Alec Mellor wished to found. For the moment and before concluding, we will recall three principles brought to light by Le Forestier, and we will confuse them with a fourth fact, on which he has given us occasion to reflect:

1) The Order of the Temple is perpetuated in Scotland at least two hundred and fifty years after its official suppression;

¹²⁶ The attitude of the counter-initiative, in the eyes of René Guénon, deserves to be noted. This attitude, he has varied the personal attacks by the "conspiracy of silence". But Guénon has always considered such behaviour as a "privilege" for him. Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, pg. 125.

¹²⁷ On these discussions concerning the Grand Masters of French Freemasonry, interesting details can be found in the *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*, t. I, pgs. 283, 284 and 296. It should not be considered useless to bear in mind that, prior to Sir Hector Maclean, French Freemasonry had at its head (no doubt with the title of Provincial Master) the Duke Philippe de Wharton, who was, in England, the spokesman of the operatives. After M. Pierre Chevalier, Wharton and his wife, during their stay in Paris, frequented the Jacobin milieux assiduously.

¹²⁸ The history of the "Unknown Superiors", for example, deserves our attention. The work of Le Forestier is so rich from the documentary point of view that a careful study of it will enable us to solve several problems of Masonic history. For instance, we think that we can never say, henceforth, that the first idea of the knightly degrees is to be found in Ramsay's speech. This very famous speech was delivered in 1737, or earlier, and, from 1733, the degrees of "Knights of St. Andrew of Chardon" and "Knight of God and His Temple" existed. Here, then, is an error, which Guénon fought against from 1910 (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*, t. II, "The High Masonic Degrees") to 1950 (id, t. II, pgs. 125 and 126), and which, 20 years after his death, is irretrievably ruined by an explicit document. Another thing. The Templar legend, as told in the degree of "Knight of God and his Temple", is already very elaborate. This is the moment to remember that "when we know that the first known mention of such a degree is to be found in a document dating from such and such a year, we are not really any further advanced in our knowledge of the real origins of this degree" (*Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*, t. II..., pg. 126), pg. 126), as these older documents may have disappeared, and the degree may then have been practised before the document is mentioned. Finally, one question always remains: what is this "*fausserie de génie*" (falsehood of genius?), which, according to M. Alec Mellor, would have "invented" this "absurd legend": the "Templar hoax", and of which Le Forestier would have refused to reveal the incognito? Well, we cannot believe that it was Baron de Hundt. In 1733, he was eleven years old, and, however precocious children may be about the Ancien Régime, they would never reach this point.

2) The High Degrees are older than is commonly thought: examples are known from the earliest years of speculative Freemasonry; and these examples are Templar or "Scottish";

3) The Templar legend, in Freemasonry, has been "married" to the Jacobite legend; and this "marriage" has taken place in France;

4) French Freemasonry, founded by English "Orangemen", had as its first leaders Scottish "Jacobites".

How can we not relate all these facts to the extraordinary "fortune" that the word "Scottish" has known in Freemasonry? We have always thought, because of a fleeting allusion by Guénon in his article "The Boar and the Bear" (chap. XXIV of *The Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*), that we could associate Scotland (*Caledonia*) with the mythical forests of Calydon and Brocéliande, and that, consequently, historical Scotland may have sheltered, until a very advanced period, a spiritual centre in connection with the *Last Thulé*. In a work by Françoise Le Roux, we find indications that seem to corroborate our feeling: "Thulé is, in all ancient texts, the name of the most southerly of the Shetland Islands, in the North of Scotland"¹²⁹. It should be noted that Shetland etymologically means "land of Shet", i.e. "land of stability"; and we have no doubt that this archipelago, far to the north of the Scottish coast, was the kingdom of "Galehaut, sir of the far islands", through whom Lancelot communicated with Queen Guinevere¹³⁰.

By way of conclusion, we would like to propose a hypothesis which we have not seen formulated anywhere, but which seems to us to correspond exactly, not only with what we already know about Jacobite Freemasonry, Templarism and Scottishness, but also with the information of German origin which Le Forestier's work makes available to French-speaking readers. Here is this hypothesis: "Jacobite" Freemasonry could be a "cover" used by the extensions of Templarism subsisting in Scotland, to influence speculative Freemasonry (and the former, close to the origins of the latter) in a traditional sense, and to repair the tear of 1717, by the attachment, to "Craft Freemasonry", of a totally different superstructure (the "Craft Freemasonry"), to a totally different superstructure (consisting mainly of numerous vestiges of knightly initiations), to which, because of the relationship between Scotland and the *Last Thule*, with the Temple and the Stuarts, the name "Scottish Freemasonry", which has been universally given to it, is perfectly appropriate⁽¹³¹⁾.

¹²⁹ Françoise Le roux, *General Introduction to the Study of the Celtic Tradition*, t. I, pg. 77, n. 57.

¹³⁰ Galehaut, whose name has an obvious Celtic character, is, together with Lancelot, the only one of the Knights of the Round Table, who is mentioned in *The Divine Comedy*: it is on the occasion of Dante's reunion, in the second circle of the Inferno, with his cousin Fancioise de Rimini. The story of the latter, of her fatal affair with Pau Malatesta, ends like this: For us, the book (The Loves of Lancelot of the Lake) and the one he wrote being Galehaut. We see that Dante underlines here the role of intermediary (of "bridge") played by Galehaut. It is understood that the morally reprehensible story of Lancelot and Guinevere is to be interpreted symbolically. Lancelot is the candidate for initiation; Galehaut is the initiatory organisation (linked, at least virtually, to the "distant islands"; and, Guinevere is the sovereign Beatitude, assimilated to enthusiasm, as in certain Rosicrucian texts (such as is like the *Ebrietas Encomium*) spoken of in Freemasonry.

¹³¹ Needless to say, all this must have been done absolutely outside the Grand Lodge of Scotland, a strictly "symbolic" Obedience (i.e., no legislator except in the first three degrees).

CHAPTER VI

ON THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND FREEMASONRY

We know that in France in the 18th century, Masonic Lodges included a considerable number of Catholics and even ecclesiastics. The regular clergy was also abundantly represented. After Albert Lantoiné, all the religious Orders had some of their members under the columns of the Temples, with the exception of the Jesuits, the Order with the most members in the Lodges being the Bernardines, a designation applied in the 18th century to the Cistercenses, the Order of Saint Bernard. The following explanation has been given for this fact: By virtue what has come to be called "the liberties of the Gallican Church", the decisions of the Papacy had, in order to be applied in France, to be approved by Parliament. And Parliament always refused to sanction the Bulls of Clement XII and Boniface XIV which contained condemnations of Freemasonry. French Catholics could therefore pretend to ignore these condemnations. But did they really ignore them? We very much doubt it. Numerous French bishops, in fact, fulminated against the Order in their mandates¹³². On the other hand, French Freemasons had access to foreign Lodges during their travels and also during wars, and were able to find out about the Roman prohibitions.

The explanation usually given as to the presence of Catholics in French Lodges is therefore insufficient. Moreover, we always forget that the most illustrious and Catholic of all the Catholic Masons of the time, Joseph de Maistre, was not French, but Piedmontese; and in Piedmont, of course, there was no benefit whatsoever to the liberties of the Gallican Church. Around Joseph de Maistre, in the lodge "La Sincérité" in Chambéry and in many other Piedmontese lodges, almost all the members were Catholics. Their presence cannot be explained by the behaviour of the Paris Parliament.

Certain opponents of Freemasonry described those who frequented the Lodges in this way as bad fathers and religious¹³³. Sometimes it has even been insinuated that they contributed subversive ideas, which they then spread throughout the Church and the world. Such calumnies do not deserve to be contested. The Fathers and religious Freemasons were no less fervent than their confreres, who remained outside the Order. Nothing prevented the Lodges from having sheltered, more often than one would think, Catholics and priests who had reached the highest degree of sanctity.

*

*

*

¹³² We will cite as an example the bishop of Marseilles, Mgr. De Belzunce, the same who illustrated himself by his sacrifice, when the plague devastated his episcopal town.

¹³³ Let us cite as an example an editor of the *International Review of Secret Societies* who, under the of "Hiram, published a work on *Willermoz* and the *Templar Rite in the East of Lyon*. The canons of the noble chapter of the cathedral of Saint-Jean, and Willermoz himself, have been treated as false Catholics, and even accused of Satanism!

Towards the end of the 1960s, this question of relations between the Church and Freemasonry was the subject of a work entitled *The Freemasons*¹³⁴, written by MM. Jean Bayot and Michel Riquet. The former was a high dignitary of the French National Grand Lodge and the latter a reputed preacher of the Society of Jesus. In the form of a dialogue, their book attempts to refute some of the prejudices against Freemasonry current in France, especially in Catholic circles. Numerous small facts show that, even under the Second Empire, pontifical condemnations often remained a dead letter¹³⁵. It has also been shown how erroneous is the assertion that Freemasonry - especially in France - has always been considered to be in sympathy with "left-wing" ideas¹³⁶. From a strictly traditional point of view, it would be preferable for a Freemason, like any initiate, to abstain from political action, whether "right-wing" or "left-wing". But it is well to remember that, far from having encouraged the Revolution, Freemasonry was, on the contrary, "the first victim"⁽¹³⁷⁾.

But let us return to the religious question. One privileged case among all the others will suffice to illustrate the high virtues of faith and courage which, sometimes in the ordeal of the revolutionary storm, these French Freemason fathers of the 20th century were able to manifest.

XVIII. "The Lodge of Laval counted, in 1786, on the eve of the Revolution, five priests among twenty-two members. And, of these five fathers, all were opposed to the civil constitution of the clergy; four were deported, the fifth, Jean-Marie Gallot, was guillotined at Laval on 21 January 1794" (pg. 21).

R.P. Riquet omitted to add¹³⁸ that Jean-Marie Gallot was beatified in 1955 by the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius XII. Throughout the beatification process, was the "promoter of the faith" (that ecclesiastical dignitary, familiarly known as "the devil's advocate", whose role is to search out and submit to a value judgement, everything in the cause to be investigated, which does not bear the stamp of sanctity) aware of Jean-Marie Gallot's Masonic quality? Probably not¹³⁹. Whatever the case, "*Roma locuta est, causa audita est*". Pius XII has placed on his altars, as a martyr for the faith, a Freemason father¹⁴⁰.

How we would like to know, for each Lodge in France at this terrible time, the attitude of the clergy who were part of the civil Constitution's point of view.

¹³⁴ Beauchesne, Paris.

¹³⁵ "Grand Master of the Grand Orient of France, Marshal Magnan, was given a solemn funeral at the Madeleine in 1862, celebrated with the dignity befitting his office. On the catafalque, beside his baton and decorations, were his insignia of Grand Master of the Order" (pg. 20).

¹³⁶ Let us simply cite two facts recalled by the authors. The chief artisan of the foundation of the Grand Orient of France in 1773, was the Duke of Luxembourg, a Freemason, devoted to his Order beyond expression. "Now, the Duke of Luxembourg has been the president of the nobility of the States General; he has been the only nobleman to refuse any meeting of the Orders, and, when it failed, he was the first of the emigrants" (pg. 36). It is generally ignored that the Duke of Berry, son of Charles X, and father of the last legalist pretender, Henry V (the Count of Chambord, called, "the miracle child"), was a Mason, and would have been Grand Master of the Grand Orient had he not been assassinated in 1820.

¹³⁷ Cf. *Studies Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t.I, pg. 110.

¹³⁸ This omission was corrected at a radio conference on 26 February 1969, in which M. Jean Baylot, Mme Alec Mellor and M. Pierre Mariel also took part.

¹³⁹ The account of the Masonic activity and martyrdom of Jean-Marie Gallot, has been reflected in *La Histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie en la Matenue*, by A. Bouton and M. Lepage.

¹⁴⁰ The situation is even more piquant: the only member of (speculative) Freemasonry who can be invoked liturgically is a Freemason of the Grand Orient of France!

of the Clergy! This Constitution, let us remember, was essentially aimed at removing the French clergy from the authority of the Pope, considered as a foreign sovereign¹⁴¹. Let it be well noted. The five Fathers Masons of Laval and all those who, in the other dioceses, should have acted like them, did not obey the Pope when he forbade them to belong to Freemasonry; and they were ready to die for him, when a temporal power, more or less legitimate, imposed its hand on the prerogatives of spiritual authority.

*
* *

Regarding the present attitude of the Catholic Church vis-a-vis Freemasonry, R.P. Riquet explains that it is governed canon 2335 of the Code of Canon Law, which is expressed in these terms:

"Those who give their name to a Masonic sect, or other associations of the same kind, which are engaged in scheming against the Church or her legitimate civil powers, incur *ipso facto* the excommunication simply reserved to the Apostolic See".

R.P. Riquet interprets this canon as follows: "The offence is essentially constituted by adhering to a group "plotting against the Church or its legitimate civil powers". As English Freemasonry, and all Freemasonries in correspondence with it, always refrain from conspiring against the Church and its established powers, it follows, according to R.P. Riquet, that these Freemasonries do not come under the pontifical condemnations".

Such a statement, coming from an eminent member of a renowned Society, because of his absolute devotion to the directives of the Holy See, carries obvious weight. Unfortunately, other Catholic authorities, also very well placed, give a very different interpretation to the canonical prescriptions. The book by MM. Baylot and Riquet, was printed in September 1968. And, on March 18th, *Le Figaro* (a newspaper in which R.P. Riquet has written numerous articles on "spiritualist" Freemasonry), published the following information:

"The Church does not consider modifying the canonical provisions in force concerning Freemasonry. A communiqué from the press service of the Holy See, which is said to have been authorised by the competent *dicastère* in the office of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has declared unfounded the information which has appeared both in Italy and abroad, according to which it would be permitted for persons converted to Catholicism, in a certain country, remain in Freemasonry, and that the Holy See intends to modify profoundly the canonical provisions in force concerning the latter. It is known that the excommunication of Catholics who are part of Freemasonry is one of these provisions".

¹⁴¹ It was one of the manifestations of the exacerbate nationalism of the revolutionaries, as Guénon recalled. It is known that what led to the final downfall of Louis XVI was his veto of the measures taken against the refractory fathers. His enemies took advantage of this to accuse him of a lack of patriotism.....

In order to appreciate the full value of this information, the following clarification should be made: The "certain countries" in question are the Scandinavian countries, and in particular Sweden; however, as R.P. Riquet reminds us, "it is well known that, in Sweden, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge is the King himself" (pg. 47), and that, consequently, Swedish Freemasonry does not conspire against the political authority of its country⁽¹⁴²⁾. We see, then, that, in the eyes of a Roman **Dicastery**, whose Prefect, let us remember, is the Sovereign Pontiff, in person, the members of this Freemasonry are all excommunicated, as members of Latin Obediences, which have fallen into the tragic errors of politicisation and anti-clericalism.

Freemasons in Latin countries, at least those who want to practise in its fullness the normal religious exotericism of their country, i.e. Catholicism, must be uncomfortable and confused. What should they believe? Their bewilderment is understandable. We can say with certainty that, in this matter, the Catholic authorities lack a truly "universal" doctrine. Between those who claim that Masons of the English type should not be targeted for condemnation, and those who claim that all Masons should be excommunicated, who is right?

*
* *

If we now return to 18th century French Freemasonry, we can say that these members behaved as if they had the "feeling" that the Roman authority, by condemning their Order, had gone beyond the limits assigned to its jurisdiction and had ventured into a domain beyond its competence⁽¹⁴³⁾. In any case, this would explain the presence in the Lodges of proven Catholics, who seem not to have to question the legitimacy of their way of acting⁽¹⁴⁴⁾.

After the Revolution and throughout the 19th century, Catholics became less and less numerous in the Masonic Temples. The fervent ones abstained. Consequently, as the Church forbade Masons to receive the sacraments, they began to abandon all religious rites, while maintaining the most elementary and indispensable of all: prayer, which no pontifical decision could prohibit, neither for her nor for her benefices. Also, in Latin countries, and especially in France, Belgium and Italy, certain Masonic organisations, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, ended up taking an anti-clerical and sometimes anti-religious attitude.

Today, efforts have been attempted in various ways to remedy a de facto state of affairs that is as difficult, if not more difficult, to change than, in reality, the "divorce" between

¹⁴² Swedish Freemasonry practises a particular Rite which is not without analogy to that of the Strict Observance. The last degree of this Rite, "Vicar of Solomon", can have only one holder: the King.

¹⁴³ Such a view might be justified by the lack of seriousness of certain pontifical anti-Masonic decisions. The most extraordinary case is that of Leo XIII who, at the time of the Taxil affair, in full disorder, Freemasonry and rather harmless associations such as the *Odd-Fellows*, the "Chevaliers de Pythias" and the "Sons of Temperance".

¹⁴⁴ Another case that would be interesting to examine is that of Ireland. The "Isle of Saints" had a thriving operative Freemasonry, which seems to have been in connection with the "*Culdéens*". Shortly after 1717, the transformation to speculative was effected, and it is known that Irish Masons, in England, brought about the foundation of the Grand Lodge of Ancients in 1751. Catholics, and in the many leaders of the Independence movements, such as *Sinn Féin*, continued to frequent the Lodges until the Bull *Humanorum genus* of Leo XIII.

Catholicism and esotericism, which goes back much further than the condemnation of 1738¹⁴⁵. We cannot say that the Roman Church practises the "chain of secrecy". But, in any case, those who speak in its name are afraid of secrecy, and this because they suppose that secrecy must be hostile to the faith and a danger to dogma¹⁴⁶. To speak symbolically, we would say that Peter and John, who both "follow Christ", could not really meet and look at each other face to face except "in the deepest of valleys, which is the valley of Jehoshaphat"^{15 bis}.

What will become of the current attempts by both Freemasons and non-Masons to bring the Church back to its condemnations? Some have already stopped listening. M. Yves Marsaudon, after many years of persecution, and who had hoped for much from Second Vatican Council¹⁴⁷, has ended up by

¹⁴⁵ It is rather curious that the recent recollection of the pontifical condemnations, to which we have referred, are dated 17 March 1968. And March 17th is often given as the date of the torture of Jacques de Molay; is a coincidence, or is it to be regarded only symbolically, as the date of Cagliostro's arrest, September 27th, 1768? In this connection, let us make another indication which has no connection with Freemasonry, but which certainly has a connection with the Templars. The letter of Gargantua to his son (*Pantagruel*, ch. VIII), considered by secular critics as proof that the romance of Rabelais (like *The Romance of the Rose*) "is a profound work out of trivial character", is dated "De utopia, this seventeenth day of the month of March". ¹⁴⁶ It is true that, if Freemasonry were to renounce secrecy, or even declare that its secrecy does not cover any profound reality, the Church would see no inconvenience in overturning the condemnations. But a Masonic organisation taking such an initiative would exclude from itself, from the bosom of universal Masonry, the secret, being the most "intangible" of all the *Landmarks*, and identifying itself, in some way, with the initiatory "bond" and Masonry itself, as we can see notably in the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, in which the opening of proceedings opens by saying: "Brother First Warden, what is the bond that unites us? A secret. What is this secret? *Freemasonry*. In order to give these expressions the scope which they really have, and which most of those who repeat them do not suspect, it is well to refer to one of the notes in Guénon's *The Great Triad* (chap. II), concerning the relations of the *cable tow* with the "initiatory bond". Let us also recall a fact mentioned by Luigi Valli: in the "Faithful of Love", certain symbols designate at the same time the initiatory rite, the esoteric doctrine and the depository organisation. This triple equivalence corresponds rigorously to equivalence (asserted by the "Scottish" formulae referred to above) between the "bond", the "secret" and "Freemasonry".

^{15 bis} All that the Gospels give concerning the Apostle John is susceptible to esoteric interpretations, to often very interesting. One of the most enigmatic episodes is what is called "the request of the mother of the sons of Zebedee" (Matthew, XX, 20-28): a request which, because of its exaggerated nature, raises unworthy protests on the part of the other ten Apostles. It should be noted that the exorbitant request of Mary-Salome was not formally rejected by Christ, who responded evasively and limited Himself to expressing some doubts about the conscience that the two brothers and their mother might have about the true extent of such a diligence. As for the cup that James and John claim to have drunk, like Christ, the latter's statement confirms that it is very difficult to accept the explanation usually given, namely that the two *Boanergès* were supposed, like Christ, to drink from the "cup of bitterness", the sufferings of the Passion. Indeed, of all the Apostles, it was James and John who met the least painful end. While Peter and Andrew were crucified and others were flayed alive, stoned or pierced by arrows, James was "simply" beheaded; as for John, he died passively, at a very advanced age, in Ephesus.... It had happened, according to tradition, that he was immersed, in Rome, in a vat of boiling oil, but he did not feel any harm. The cup promised by Christ, then, must have meant something quite different from torments. We think that it is, in fact, the cup of perfect Knowledge, and it is known that the traditional representations of St. John show him with a cup in his hand. For it is John, and not James, who was the full beneficiary of the promise made by his Master, which is seen in the behaviour of the well-beloved disciple during the Supper and also at the foot of the Cross with Mary. In short, if the demand of the mother of the sons of Zebedee was not accepted in its entirety, it is that Christ, when He returns in His glory, at His second coming, will not be surrounded by James and John, but rather by Peter and John, the respective representatives of Christian exotericism and esotericism.

¹⁴⁷ At "Vatican II", one of the Fathers stood up one day in the conciliar hall to suggest that the Church should revoke the bulls of excommunication. It was the bishop of Cuernavaca, in Mexico. (This same city of Cuernavaca was to become, shortly after the closing of the Council, the theatre a strange affair: the Benedictine monastery was adding, to the exercises prescribed by its Rule, other exercises borrowed... to psychoanalysis. It was Saint Benedict "improved" by Sigmund Freud! The scandal was huge and the bishop was summoned to Rome. Finally the Abbot of this monastery, truly "at the cutting edge of progress", was "reduced to the status of a layman") and the bishop of Cuernavaca had said to his confreres: "Freemasonry expects a gesture from you". Such a way of looking at things is faulty. Freemasonry, as an initiatory Order, does not expect anything from the Church, which is an organisation

lost its courage and joined the Byzantine orthodoxy¹⁴⁸. However, the Church is currently undergoing such a mutation that all "twists and turns" are possible¹⁴⁹. Certain Masons of a traditional spirit (in the sense in which we mean these words) are sometimes concerned at the prospect that the Catholics of the *aggiornamento* may very soon apply en masse for initiation into the Lodges¹⁵⁰. We believe that these Masons do not have much confidence in the "robustness" of their institution, which, "based on Force"¹⁵¹, has known other vicissitudes down the ages. In the West, Freemasonry has a "providential" role. Of pre-Christian origin¹⁵², it has "gathered together, after the Middle Ages, the heritage of many organisations". What is to be said about the fact that it has taken up a considerable part of Christian esotericism? In the face of such a precious "brew", one needs a cup cut from the hardest of precious stones. No doubt it is not for nothing that the Johannine Gospel - the very formula, so to speak, ritualistic - underlines the two episodes of the pierced heart, from which blood and water emanate, and of the promise of "perpetuity" made to St. John's inheritance¹⁵³.

*
* *

Let us return to the rather curious point of the thesis of MM. Bayot and Riquet: according to them, Freemasons of Anglo-Saxon or apparent obedience would escape the excommunications launched by Rome. It is very difficult to follow them. If Rome has only been able to condemn those Obediences "which are engaged in scheming against the Church" (according to the formula of canon law, reproduced above), then no current Obedience would be condemned, including the Grand Orient of France. But, on other hand, it is evident from the *official* texts of the Church that no distinction has ever been made between deist Masons and more or less non-believing Masons¹⁵⁴.

purely exoteric. In their view it is neither "repentant" nor even "demanding". All we can say is that many Masons in Latin countries dream that the Church will allow them to live their "faith" integrally.

¹⁴⁸ There is a published work entitled *From Masonic Initiation to Christian Orthodoxy* (Dervy, Paris), which reproduces in appendix some letters exchanged between the author and M. Alec Mellor.

¹⁴⁹ On the fourth of April 1969, Good Friday, an eminent theologian of the Society of Jesus - created, a few days later, a cardinal - was answering, on the radio, the questions that listeners put to him on the telephone. The last question was: "What is the Church waiting for in order to change its attitude towards the Freemasons? The questioner replied that he could not speak of Freemasonry as a bloc and that there were Catholic Freemasons. It would seem, then, that some of the highest dignitaries of the Church are in favour of R.P. Riquet's thesis. But, obviously, they can only speak in a personal capacity and not in the name of the Church, as the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith does here.

¹⁵⁰ This was perhaps the case with one of the most outstanding contributors to *Symbolism*, François Ménard. In one of his last writings, he gave an account of the work of a Belgian Mason, M.L.J. Piérol; a work entitled *The Cowan*, and directed against M. Alec Mellor (Editions Vaten, Paris). Menard has excellently revealed the glaring inadequacies of this work. We will add this: the English Masonic term *cowan*, nowadays, designates a layman who listens at the doors of a Lodge. And who, as a consequence, tries to know the "secret" improperly. This could not apply to M. Alec Mellor, for ideas cannot be divided, but must be agreed that his information about the Order (which was great even without being a Mason) was not obtained by fraud and is available to any layman who wishes to acquire it.

¹⁵¹ We refer here to one aspect of the joint meaning of the "sacred words" of the first two degrees.

¹⁵² This truth, which is sometimes established, is easier to establish by the evidence of ritual order than by that resulting from the careful examination of the *Old Charges*.

¹⁵³ The incorporation of Christian esotericism into Freemasonry takes place, let it be understood, in a symbolic way, and, above all, in the High Degrees. The presence of these High Degrees considerably disturbs the rapprochement with the Church; Albert Lantoine had already noted this.

¹⁵⁴ We cannot repeat ourselves enough: at the time of Clement XII, Benedict XIV and other Pontiffs who fulminated excommunications against Freemasonry, all Obediences were "deist". The first to take a "non-deist" (we do not say atheist) attitude was the Grand Orient of France (cf. the chapter entitled: "1877", to appear in

There are Masons for whom only one thing counts as proof of genuine "traditionality": belief in God. These Masons are scandalised when they perceive that René Guénon, speaking of the Grand Orient of France, did not overwhelm this Obedience, and sometimes even defended it¹⁵⁵. (155) This attitude of Guénon is easy to explain. His "function" was related to the particular characteristics of his timewhen the "second stage" of anti-traditional action was beginning to replace the first. From then on, atheism, materialism or rationalism were no longer the great enemies of initiation in the West. But other fearsome ones were to reveal themselves as new "perversions" of the modern spirit, apparently compatible with "spiritualism", and which, as a result, were already beginning to "invest" certain fractions of Western exotericism. Since, on the other hand, the "rationalist" tendencies of French Freemasonry had not altered the validity of its rites, Guénon's attitude and his refusal to pronounce an exclusivity in either direction is perfectly explicable⁽¹⁵⁶⁾.

*
* *

One rather surprising thing is that, reading the above-mentioned Work, one might believe that the two interlocutors see in Freemasonry nothing more than a means of establishing relations, and thus liken it to the Rotary Clubs, the Lions and the Kiwanis. These very recent organisations, narrowly confined to the so-called "business world", are devoid of ritual, even more devoid of symbolism, and evidently have no secrets whatsoever. To compare them to the Royal Art is absolutely inadmissible¹⁵⁷. But, on the other hand, what is Freemasonry, where does it come from and where is it going? No one, before René Guénon, had given a satisfactory answer to these questions, which are, moreover, very natural. The two authors of the book we have just analysed do not seem to have the air of dissipating much sympathy for Guénon. Have they made any effort to understand him? We may doubt it, reading a certain passage of the Book¹⁵⁸. It does not matter. The work of MM. Jean Bayot and Michel Riquet constitutes, in a certain way

We will not discuss for the moment another thesis of one of the authors, Jean Baylot, who identifies, purely and simply, the "regularity" of an Obedience with its recognition by the United Grand Lodge of England. Regularity, in the sense in which René Guénon understood it, depends essentially on the maintenance of the traditional rites.

¹⁵⁵ When the second volume of *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage* was published, a well-informed and competent critic expressed some reservations about the appropriateness of having reproduced Masonic articles offered by Palingenius to *La Gnose*, articles in which the Grand Orient was spoken of with sympathy. We do not agree with this criticism, and would even wish that, on the occasion of a later reprinting of the work in question, other articles written by "Le Sphinx" would also be included in *La France Anti-Masonique*.

¹⁵⁶ This attitude, moreover, has had a twofold practical result. Deist Masons have not forgiven Guénon for what they call his "weakness" for "non-deist" Obediences; and the latter have not forgiven him for his evident sympathy for certain aspects of Anglo-Saxon Freemasonry. Guénon, on the other hand, seems little moved by the incomprehension shown him by the great majority of the Order's high dignitaries. He did not love the Obediences, which he considered as a "necessary evil". The Obediences had him in their sights....

¹⁵⁷ Let us reproduce, as a curiosity, the following passage. Jean Baylot: "Here, I think, is what we can say about Freemasonry. It is in appearance, if you like, a sort of club, like all the other clubs that exist in the world..." _ R.P. Riquet: "It is, I think, a sort of club, like all the other clubs that exist in the world..." _ R.P. Riquet: "The Rotary, the Lions' Club..." _ Jean Bayot: "Which you know well from having spoken often, and, I even believe, to be ... member" _ Jean Bayot: "...there is a new chain of clubs in function, which are called the "Kiwanis"; it is a term adopted from the Indian vocabulary. And these international, universal clubs are developing at such a speed that it seems to me that they respond to a need..." (pgs. 65 and 66). ¹⁵⁸ Here is this rather enigmatic passage (pg. 60). Jean Bayot says: "Our age fuses illustrations, which are no doubt fragile, because it is tempted by fashions. Freemasonry has avoided this pitfall, it has avoided the pitfall of wanting, as René Guénon at one point in his life, to join in, to become part of a particular tradition, to adopt a particular tradition."

The book is a tribute to René Guénon, as it ends with a very stimulating masonic bibliography. Out of the sixteen authors mentioned, we mention names who, without being at all Guenonian, have sometimes dedicated some of their works to Guenon, "To the memory of René Guénon", and have even considered it a promise to try to introduce Guenonian ideas in Masonic circles in France and Italy. Let us thank MM. Jean Bayot and Michel Riquet for having given space to such authors in their bibliography: they have thus shown that, from now on, it is no longer possible, in France, to treat Freemasonry seriously while ignoring the work of René Guénon.

*
* *

We could not end this chapter without recalling that, for Guénon, "the less exotericism is concerned with esotericism, the better. From Clement XII to Leo XIII, all the popes have renewed, by encyclical, the condemnation addressed against Freemasonry in 1738. But Leo XIII's successor, St. Pius X, did not renew the previous condemnations, and the popes who followed him imitated him. Of course, article 2335 of canon law will always remain, but we have seen that its text leaves the field open to a "lax" interpretation, and the religious who have upheld this interpretation have not been censured by the hierarchy. Is it really desirable for the Church to go even further? And the current situation, with all the difficulties as well as the advantages of ambiguity, does it not correspond, in short, to the vow expressed by Guénon?

a style.....". R.P. Riquet says: "like Oswald Wirth". And M. Jean Bayot reproves: "Oswald Wirth has not dissociated himself from our traditions, but he was an occultist at the beginning of his life".

CHAPTER VII

ON THE READING OF THE HOLY BOOKS

It is quite evident that for a correct understanding of Christianity and also of Freemasonry in Christian countries, a rigorously traditional interpretation of the Bible is absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, modern commentators have a tiresome tendency to disregard the works of their predecessors in order to adopt individual ways which are supported by no other justification than blind "faith" in the "god" Progress.

Such excesses are not without provoking very strange reactions. At the beginning of 1973, for example, a book appeared, published by a Jewish author who signed it "Emmanuel"¹⁵⁹.

This thick work of 400 pages, "divided symbolically into 613 paragraphs" (to represent the number of obligations of the Mosaic Law), is intended for Jews who practise their religion and, consequently, read the Scriptures with piety and love. But it can be said that non-Jews, and particularly Christians, do not find much to learn from this reading.

The author warns from the outset, that his Book "owes more to midrash¹⁶⁰ than to science, more to reflection than to research". He writes: The science called biblical is of recent creation. It made its debut with the Renaissance, when some men of the nations [i.e., non-Jews] learned some Hebrew... they laboured much and understood little, for they were not helped either by tradition, or by disinterested love of Scripture.... The biblical scholars, in every generation, erased everything that had preceded them and began a useless and disappointing exegesis.... They went round and round the text without ever penetrating and deepening it, and they turned to a weak science, which could not free them what they had brought before... Later, in the century that was called the Age of Enlightenment, the Bible was only considered as a literary monument. It is men who have composed it, it has come to be said.

This "text-criticism" applied to the Bible, of which German scholarship must have given the full measure of its arrogance and incomprehension, is the origin of the famous theory of the two "sources" of Genesis; sources described by the learned as "Jahwist" and "Elohists". Here is what Emmanuel thinks: "Returning to the account of the flood, to the extent of his very fertile imagination, "a biblical scholar concluded that two different scribes had written the same account, at times distant from each other. And that a third came later to merge the two versions into one. Such a fantasy is based on the fact that, in the account in question, the divinity is designated, both by the tetragrammatonic name (which is expressed in the translations

¹⁵⁹ Emmanuel. *For a commentary on Genesis* (Pyot, editor, Paris).

¹⁶⁰ i.e. to the rabbinical commentary on Scripture.

modern by Jehovah or Yahweh) as by the name Elohim.... "But this hypothesis of the two sources, more ingenious than sound, was doomed to failure". New theories were built up. "The fusions, divergences, exaggerations, and sometimes extravagances, are better proofs than the sterile controversies, their fragility, and often their puerility.... These speculations were at first called hypotheses and theories, and later discoveries and certainties¹⁶¹. They filled whole avenues, by means of which the biblical scholars who indulged in these demonstrations were able to refrain from meditating on Scripture... the whole of the biblical scholars' construction is flawed by its basis. [Their error stems from their own] radical misunderstanding of the use of the divine names".

The author continues: "Biblicism is a wheel that turns without stopping on itself, sweeping over its celestials in a circular motion that has no exit." But "if this quest is sterile, it is not near to having an end. Such is man's attachment to what he calls disinterested study..... It is the Protestants who began this work... but the Catholics followed in their footsteps, especially after the second Vatican Council. Most of them firmly believe in the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, in his miraculous birth and in his resurrection. And yet these miracle-makers reject the most indubitable miracle _ the same miracle that Jesus believed: that the five Books of Moses were dictated to the prince of the prophets by God on Mount Sinai..., as it is said by a millenary tradition" (#208).

We will not dwell on Emmanuel's relentless demolition of the main fables presented by the biblical scholars as sensational and refutable discoveries. He sets the record straight. His assertions, he writes, "do not stand up to a simple reading, let alone a study of the text" (#114). All his arguments are "inconsistent" (#115) One senses that the author is righteously indignant, seeing the worst profane, we mean the possessors of the famous "historical criticism", bring a reckless hand to bear on the most admirable passages of the Holy Book.

Christians who have the book must have been shocked by many passages in Emmanuel. Indeed, the author, placing himself strictly in the perspective of Judaism, strongly criticises the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament and, notably, the notion of original sin, on which the whole economy of Christian theology rests. Let us listen to him: "The idea of original sin which, in the Christian consciousness, is so intimately linked to the story of Adam and Eve, has no resonance in the religious philosophy of Israel. It is strange to note that the name of the first man is, so to speak, absent from Scripture". Outside of Genesis, Adam's name appears only once in the Old Testament, in the 1st Book of Chronicles, at the head of the list of Patriarchs. "As for the story of Adam and Eve, no other allusion is made either in the *Thora*, or in the Prophets, or in the Writings, since, for Judaism, it has no religious significance.... It is in the post-biblical sapiential literature that we find, for the first time, some allusions to Adam, favourable, moreover, to the first man. The question of his sin is never raised. On the contrary, in the Book of Ben Sira¹⁶², for example, the knowledge of good and evil is presented as a benefit granted to man by God. An interest

¹⁶¹ Emanuel mentions here a procedure frequently used by the opponents of Tradition. Many other recent and even current examples could be cited. It is a "technique" where "performance" is assured.

¹⁶² This is a Book, the original of which is not in Hebrew, which Catholics call *Ecclesiasticus*.

religious life would only be conferred for nascent Christianity and, more especially, for the work of the Apostle Paul" (#136).

It is well known that the Jewish religion does not admit the conception of original sin. But Emmanuel's work is useful in that it emphasises the fact that such an attitude can vindicate the authority of the "letter" of the Old Testament taken as a whole. Christians would not be able to ignore the weight of such an argument. They can only escape by affirming, with their own Scriptures (the New Testament), that the Bible must be read according to its "spiritual" (i.e. symbolic) sense. But the "children of the Promise", especially those who, like Emmanuel, claim to be of strictly exoteric Judaism¹⁶³, will always be able to reply: You speak of gold. And we would be ready to agree with you if, in this Bible dictated by God to our people and in our language, in the inspired Prophets, and in that Isaiah himself whom you regard as a fifth Evangelist, you could show us a single verse in which the deliverer of Israel, so long promised and always awaited, is presented in relation to the sin of Adam. Would you have us admit that the Word dispensed for two millennia by the Bridegroom of Israel to his tenderly beloved Bride, was a snare, like the deceitful word consecrated by the Psalmist, of sharp arrows and consuming coals"¹⁶⁴?

To all this, Christians can reply: Indeed, if Adam and his wife, in disobedience to the one command that God had given them, have done a lawful act, Why, after this action, have they covered themselves with garments, instead of remaining naked as they were created? Why did they hide themselves when they heard the voice of the Lord, who walked in the evening breeze in the garden of Eden? Why were they condemned to death? Why did God declare the earth cursed and destined to produce thorns and brambles, so that man could not obtain his bread, except by the sweat of his brow?

Why, above all, was the original couple expelled from the garden of delights, at whose gate the Cherubim armed with the flaming sword stood "to guard access to the Tree of Life"? On the other hand, it is not true that the Old Testament never presented the Messiah as destined to repair the catastrophes caused by Adam's failure. Isaiah, precisely, in the picture he gives us of the messianic era, insists on the fact that in these happy times, the ferocious beasts themselves will be rid of their ferocity. And would this not evoke the state of perfect harmony in which Adam lived with the animals and with all creatures?

There are thus at least two ways (Jewish and Christian) of reading the story of Adam exoterically. Emmanuel did not want to speak of the esoteric Jewish reading, which is that of the Kabbala. As for Christians, we believe that no one better than Guénon has provided him with the necessary keys to a profound understanding of the mysteries that abound in the story of our first fathers. The relations between the trees of paradise and the three crosses of Golgotha, the symbolism of the serpent coiled in a spiral around the Tree, the meaning of the eyes that open after the fault, the nature of the skin tunics that served later as a "limit" to the couple dispossessed of the primordial state, the necessity of resorting to a "non-human" intervention to find again the "lost Paradise", _ to all this Guénon, from his very first

¹⁶³ The Work of which we speak refers (as we said at the beginning) exclusively to *midrash*, and not to the Kabbala.

¹⁶⁴ We have very loosely summarised the author's arguments, which are spread over several chapters of his work.

article written at the of 23, had given the higher meaning, and specified that its equivalents are to be found in all authentic traditions.

These paths are obviously far removed from those of Emmanuel, whose work contains interesting indications, and which lead to paths that often lead to other traditions, especially Christianity, Greek-Latin religion and Hinduism. The author's fervour for the Book of Books has inspired him with accentuations of undeniable greatness. Let us quote, as an example, the following passage (#208):

"For me, Emmanuel, a Jew in heart and spirit, writing is not only the history of my ancestors, which so pleases strangers to occupy themselves incessantly; it is also and above all, the bread of my soul, the meaning of my life, the light of my eyes, purest love of my spirit, the object of my constant study and the liturgical music that accompanies my evolution until my death. This law of God, I will pass it on to my children and my descendants, as I received it from my parents and my elders. The researches of the biblical scholars in no way elevate my bond and in no way shake my certainty and my fidelity. They will never cut mine; they are fixed in a direction which I have not chosen and which I will never follow; however much they will pursue themselves, for centuries, they will not succeed in changing a sentence, a word, a letter of the immutable word which contains the universe and which gives the only coherent explanation".

It would be desirable that all the "People of the Book" should testify to their respective Scriptures with the same confidence and the same fidelity.

CAPÍTULO VIII

"TO THE GLORIOUS MEMORY OF THE TWO SAINT JOHNS".

"It is you, in principle, whose memory we celebrate, John the Baptist, son of "Zacharias, you who have borne witness to the Light. Receiving thy name revealed by "an angel, thou hast enabled thy father to regain the word which he had lost. Thou art "clothed with that of the spirit and virtue of the Chosen One, the prophet who ascends to the heavens "in a chariot of fire, and who must return, with Henoch, to bear witness before the "last day. For you are a prophet and more than a prophet. He to whom you bear "witness, has borne witness to you in these terms: There is none greater, among "those born of women".

"We shall now celebrate the son of Zebedee. John *Boanergès*, whom the true Light "has loved among all. He is the son of thunder, the depositary of the secrets hidden in the "heart of wisdom, the son of the mother of the Word, the Evangelist of Light and of "Love, the seer of Patmos. He is the faithful and perfect friend who, in the dark hour when "the sheep of the flock are scattered, has the privilege of hearing the voice of the "Shepherd, at the very foot of the Cross.

"Happy our Order, to which it has been given, to have such protectors in heaven!"

These "honours", used by the Guenonian Masons, gathered on the occasion of the solstitial feasts for the Paralituelic celebration of the "Lodge of the Table"¹⁶⁵, bring together the principal traits which make the Precursor and the favourite disciple of Christ, the perfect "types" of the true initiate. It will be remarked, at the outset, that the very names of these two holy personages have, as initials, the letters J and B, which are inscribed on the two columns of the Masonic Lodges, recalling the names (Jakin and Boaz) of the columns of the Temple of Solomon. Independently of this original significance, these letters also have adventitious meanings in Freemasonry, some of which are very interesting. They are the initials of the words "Judah" and "Benjamin", the names of the two tribes which, in the earthquake of Jeroboam, constituted the kingdom of Judah, thus remaining faithful to the descent of David. But above all, the B is the initial of Bethlehem and the J is the initial of Jerusalem, the cities which witnessed the birth and death of Christ. This last significance is crucial, since the role played by the two Saint Johns in Freemasonry underlines the fact that this institution is the most important of the initiatory paths open to Christians. The legend that makes John the Baptist and John the Evangelist the successive Grand Masters of the Masonic Order, most probably expresses the relative ease with which

¹⁶⁵ Guénon thought that the Table Lodge was of operative origin, but that "the people of 1717" had given it an inordinate importance. He advised, however, that it should be practised above all at solstitial feasts, for this, he said, "is surely much preferable to a profane banquet".

that the colleges of builders, originally consecrated to Minerva-Athena¹⁶⁶, began to be "Christianised" even before Constantine's conversion¹⁶⁷.

Moreover, the two Johns are sons: one of Zechariah and the other of Zebedee, names whose initial Z is the hieroglyph for lightning. Would John the Baptist also be the son of thunder? This is evident, since he is clothed with the "virtue" of the Chosen One, who brought down the multitude that consummated the oblation offered to the Lord on Mount Carmel, a prodigy that the 450 priests of Baal could not achieve by means of their spells¹⁶⁸.

The story of Zechariah losing the word because of his unbelief, and regaining it because of his obedience, is already too well known for us to dwell upon it. Its application to the "lost, and then found, word of the Freemasons, is obvious.

The "eulogy" of John the Baptist quoted at the beginning of this chapter speaks not only of the Chosen One, but also of Henoch. This personage (sometimes described as a "solar hero" because, according to Genesis, he "did not appear again, being raised up" by God at the age of 365 years) plays a great part in the legends of Freemasonry. According to the best known, he would have learned that the world was soon to perish, but he did not know whether by fire or by water. He built two columns, one of brick to resist fire, the other of bronze to resist water. He engraved on his pillars the principles of all sciences, that is to say, what remained after the fall, after the primordial revelation, etc... In Noah, after the little sons of Henoch, the flood came, and it was the pillar of bronze that survived. It was discovered by Hermes, others say by Osiris. Michel Vâlsan, in an outstanding article on the high degrees of Scotus¹⁶⁹, reveals and comments on the three curious allusions made to Henoch in the ritual of the 33rd degree.

Finally, let us remember that we have, under the name of Henoch, a Book longer than any of those of which the Bible is composed, and that almost all the Christian Churches do not know whether they should consider it as apocryphal or as "semi-canonical". Indeed, a passage from this Book is formally quoted in the *Epistle of St. Jude*, which is universally recognised as canonical¹⁷⁰. (170) Nevertheless, this *Book of Henoch* is admitted into the official "canon" of the Scriptures by the ancient Coptic Church of Ethiopia. But what matters above all, in our view, is what this Book relates, with numerous details, of the "descent" of the angels on the mount

¹⁶⁶ *The Palatine Anthology* contains the text of a kind of ex-voto which reads: "A level with a plumb line, a solid axe to open the stumps, a red string resounding in the fingers that lift it, here is what the carpenter *Léontique* consecrates to you, young goddess with her eyes, for the years have given her the strength to use them". Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, war and the arts; these three attributes correspond exactly to the three pillars of the Temple: Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

¹⁶⁷ Masonry's patronage of the "Four Crowned Saints", honoured as martyrs, alludes, on the contrary, to the struggles between the old and the new law. It has been pointed out that the word "four" corresponds to the square, the word "holy" to the triangle (because of God, "thrice holy") and word "crowned" to the circle. The square, the triangle and the circle evoke the hermetic operation of "squaring the circle", to which a famous *sixsain* of the *Atlantean fugitive* alludes.

¹⁶⁸ II of *Kings*, XVIII.

¹⁶⁹ "The Last Degrees of Scottishness and Downward Realisation", *Traditional Studies* 1953 (Nos. 308, 309 and 310).

¹⁷⁰ Here is the passage: It is of them [the false teachers] that Henoch, who is the eighth patriarch from Adam, has prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with his holy armies, to bring them into judgment," etc... (*Jude*, verse 14 and following).

Hermon, to "seduce" the daughters of men", an episode of which only two fleeting allusions are made in the Bible⁽¹⁷¹⁾. Some of the giants born of these unnatural unions escaped the flood, and it is from them that the "children of Enak" descended, who frightened the twelve watchmen sent by Moses in the land of Canaan. Most of these emissaries, on their return, dissuaded the Hebrews from attacking such adversaries, beside whom they seemed but "grasshoppers". Fortunately, two of them spoke another language, and the conquest of the Promised Land could be effected quite easily.

Another survivor of the Giants was Goliath, who so despised his little adversary, David. To defeat the monster, Solomon's father had only a child's play: a slingshot. If we have referred to these traditions about the giants, it is because Guénon considered the story of the descent of the angels on Mount Hermon as the symbolic expression of the antediluvian origin of counter-initiation⁽¹⁷²⁾. And all that the Bible says about the Giants carries a "lesson" of the highest importance. The servants of Truth often find, before them, other children of Enak and other Goliaths, who endeavour to intimidate and discourage them with their bluster. They are not to be reckoned with. When the victor over Goliath returns to his people, the Israelites sing: "Saul has slain a thousand, and David ten thousand". The number ten thousand must be taken here, as in the expression "the mother of ten thousand beings" of the *Tao-te-King*, as meaning an indefinite number, i.e. the whole of the beings of the whole world. And we can apply to all what we have just said, the initiatory motto: *Vinci omnia Veritas*.

*
* *

As for John the Evangelist, if he is the "son of thunder", it is because Christ Himself gave him this mysterious name at the time when he formed the College of the twelve Apostles¹⁷³. But John is also the "son of the Virgin", and it is again Christ who makes the appointment a few moments before his death, saying to Mary: "Behold your mother", and saying to Mary: "Behold your son". It should be noted that it is not a question of a filiation "by adoption or by grace", but rather of a filiation "by nature". Christ, being the Word of God *per quem omnia facta sunt*, his word is *creatrice*, and we can say that St. John - at the solemn hour when his Master utters the most important, no doubt, of the "seven words" he uttered on the Cross - became the son of Mary, just as effectively as at the Last Supper, celebrated at the vigil by Jesus and the Twelve, the bread and wine became the flesh and blood of Christ.

*
* *

The Virgin Mary, in the Catholic Liturgy, is sometimes called the *glorious Regina*

¹⁷¹ "When men began to multiply upon the earth, the children of God, seeing that the daughters of Men were beautiful, took to wife those whom they liked best [...] Now there were at this time giants upon the earth; for after the children of God were joined to the daughters of men, there arose a race of mighty men in the days of old" (Genesis, VI, 2 and 4).

¹⁷² Cf. notably chapter XXXVIII of *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*.

¹⁷³ *Mark*, III, 17.

mundi. The title "King of the World", according to René Guénon, applies to a "function" which is actually exercised in the "three worlds"¹⁷⁴. However, if Mary is often called "Queen of Heaven", and if her dominion over the globe would not have been in conflict with Christian piety, we do not think that she has ever been qualified "Queen of Hell". But what exotericism has not yet dared to do, esotericism may have done, if we admit that Villon, as Guénon has suggested¹⁷⁵, was connected with a Hermetic organisation of the type frequented by Rabelais, organisations in which they were recognised by their use of the "argot of the shell".

Thus in the famous "Ballade" which Villon made at his mother's request to pray at Notre Dame, the dispatch consists of an acrostic on Villon's own name¹⁷⁶. Now, the use of the acrostic was familiar to the Hermetic schools: one need only remember the word VITRIOLUM, which is found in Freemasonry. In short, the acrostic is nothing more than a variant of the traditional procedure of which Guénon speaks in connection with Cesare de la Riviera¹⁷⁷.

The ballad of which we speak begins thus: "Lady of the heavens, earthly regent, Empress of the infernal *palus*. It is very likely that only an initiate could describe Mary as the "Empress of the infernal swamps", where she undoubtedly watches over the faithful of her son John, to deliver them from the dangers of the "fall into the quagmires".

As we write these last lines, we think of an episode from the *Divine Comedy*¹⁷⁸. Dante, crossing in a boat with Virgil and Charon "the marsh called Styx", is exposed to the attacks of a condemned man, who tries to lure him to him "in the mud", where he resides. Virgil stops his companion, and suddenly embraces him, saying: "Noble soul¹⁷⁹, blessed be the bosom that bore you". Strange words, for, at first sight, we do not perceive the connection between Dante's mother and the danger her son is in. In our opinion, it is necessary to operate here, in the eyes of the carnal mother of the initiates, a transposition analogous to that carried out by the Faithful of Love, in the eyes of their "lady". Just as true Christians, in the saying of St. John, "are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God", so the true birth (the "second birth") of the Christian initiates makes them children, not of their mother according to the flesh, but of Mary; and they become, by this "adoption", brothers of St. John (the *John's*

¹⁷⁴ "The three worlds are Hell, Earth and Heaven". (*Dante's Esotericism*, chap. VI)

¹⁷⁵ "Apropos of Pilgrimages", in *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, Volume I.

¹⁷⁶ Here is the text of this dispatch:

"You brought, Virgin, worthy princess,
Jesus reigning, who has neither beginning nor
end; the Almighty, taking weakness,
He left the heavens and came to succour us,
Offering to death his youth so clear, Our Lord
so is, so he confesses,
And this time I want to live and die.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *Comptes Rendus* de René Guénon, pg. 7 (*The Magical World of Heroes*, by C. De la Riviera, presented by Juluis Évola, Editions Arché).

¹⁷⁸ *Inferno*, canto VIII, vers. 43 a 45.

¹⁷⁹ We think that this word should be given here the meaning it has in Hindu doctrine, where, in principle, at least, only the three higher castes are entitled to the title of *Arya*, and, consequently, can receive initiation. It is evident that, after a long time, in the East as well as in the West, the "mixing of castes" has yielded such a distinction only theoretically.

brothers of English Freemasonry). "The initiate is the son of the Virgin", Guénon reminded us, who also mentions Mary's links with the *Shekinah*⁽¹⁸⁰⁾.

In certain exceptional cases, the spiritual motherhood of the Virgin is symbolised by the privilege of "lactation", of which Saint Bernard, according to a "legend", was notably favoured for a long time in the Cistercian Order. The symbolism of milk is multiple. On the one hand, it evokes the "state of childhood" (*bālya*) of the Hindu tradition¹⁸¹. On the other hand, in the language of the Old Testament, the Promised Land (a substitute for the earthly Paradise) is "the land flowing with milk and honey". These two foods correspond to the nectar and ambrosia of the Greco-Latin tradition, where *manducation* conferred immortality. And it should be noted that St. Bernard has a particular relationship with both milk (through the privilege of the "lactation" of the Virgin) and honey, as he is called *Doctor mellifluus*, Doctor from whom emanates a doctrine as sweet as honey.

In the Hindu tradition, *amrita* (the ambrosia of the Greeks) is produced by the "butter of the milk *mer*". And we must also remember the important role played in Hermeticism by the "milk of the Virgin"¹⁸².

These lines on the two holy protectors of Freemasonry are evidently but a faint outline of what could be said about a subject in close connection with the symbolism of Janus, of which Guénon underlined the importance and complexity. The considerations found in *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science* open the way to innumerable discoveries in this field of research, such as, for example, the multiple meanings of the two columns, in remarkable relation to the twelve labours of that other "solar hero" Hercules. St. John the Baptist presides over the "gate of men", or *Janua Inferni*; this is why it is said that, when Christ descends into hell, the first "just" he freed was John the Baptist, condemned to death, in fact, shortly before the Passion; St. John the Evangelist presides over the "gate of the gods" or *Janua Coeli*. And this name "Gate of Heaven" is, in Christianity, given par excellence to the mother of John, notably in the "litanies", where this term appears among those of the "Ark of the Covenant" (place of manifestation of *the Shekinah*) and of the "Morning Star" (sign of the dawn and growth of the day)⁽¹⁸³⁾.

¹⁸⁰ "The Secret Language of Dante and the "Faithful of Love", I, in *Appreciations on Christian Esotericism*.

¹⁸¹ We can also recall the well-known Christian text: "As newborn babes, eagerly desire the spiritual milk, which will make you believe" (I Peter II, 2).

¹⁸² The "milk of the Virgin" is also called "virginal milk", or even "milk of the moon". It is in connection with the operation of the Great Work called "multiplication", which may lead one to think of the conception of the Virgin Mary, mother of all Christians (in the exoteric view of Christianity) and mother of all initiates (in the view is otteric).

¹⁸³ It is not only in the "Litany of Lorette" that Mara is called *Joana Coeli*. In a large number of texts that were very "popular" before the recent liturgical upheavals, we find equivalent expressions. For example: *Felix coeli porta* (in the hymn *Ave maris stella*); *quae previa coeli porta menens* (in the Antigone *Alma Redemptoris*); *fulgida coeli porta* (in the prose *Inviolata*). The epithet *fulgida* is particularly worthy of consideration because of the intimate relationship of the lightning (*fulgur*) with the spiritual influence communicated by initiation. There would be a whole study to be made - which would undoubtedly reveal some surprises - of the initiatory "modifications" in Christian liturgies, both Western and Eastern. Guénon thought that the cult of the Sacred Heart had, in its origins, an esoteric character. The same could be true for certain aspects of the cult of Mary, for we know how important it was for the spiritual "current" to which Saint Bernard and Dante belonged. For the latter, any desire for the outpouring of grace, without going through Mary, "wants to fly without wings". Such an expression is related to the words put into the mouth of Ulysses, in the XXVth canto of the *Inferno*: "The oars do not *make* us *fines* of those for a mad flight". In the language of the Faithful of Love, "madness" (antithesis of Wisdom) is, at the same time as "boredom" (*noia*), one of the "marks" of the profane vision of things.

The solstitial gates, as Guénon has emphasised, determine, in the circle representing the annual cycle, what we may call its "vertical axis", which corresponds - if we pass from temporal symbolism to spatial symbolism - to the axis of the world. In the Hindu and Tibetan traditions, the axis of the world is represented by the *vajra*, a symbol that has both the nature of lightning (because of its character of "celestial light") and that of the diamond (because of its purity and hardness). Hardness, and more precisely, stability, is indeed the essential attribute of the axis of the world, and also of each of the intersections of this axis with the successive planes, which symbolise the multiple states of being: the intersection with the human plane is the terrestrial Paradise.

Let us return to the two essential qualities of the diamond: its purity and its hardness. Christian tradition has always attributed absolute purity to the two St. Johns, in the of virginity. As for hardness, or rather stability, it is the heritage of the axis and the centre; it is Holy Scripture itself that bears witness to this, in the eyes of the two protectors of the Masonic Order. At the beginning of the Gospel according to Luke, the Archangel Gabriel announces to Zechariah the birth of John the Baptist, foretelling him that his son "will unite the hearts of the fathers with the hearts of the children". Now this expression is also found at the end of the Old Testament, in this verse of the prophet Malachi: "Behold, I am sending you Elijah the prophet before the fearful day of the Lord comes. And he will unite the hearts of the fathers with the hearts of the children". If we remember the symbolic analogy between the heart and the centre, we see that the "joining of the hearts of the fathers to the hearts of their children, of which Malachi and Luke speak, is but the "specification", in the eyes of successive generations of mankind, of the role played by the axis of the world, This is why the "conflict of the generations", of which so much is said in our time, is, in short, nothing more than a very natural consequence of "bringing the traditional principles under the bushel".

As for the son of Zebedee, Jesus said of him: "I want him to remain until I come". This expression, "I want him to remain", is repeated twice in the Gospel, no doubt to underline its importance. John's particular function could not be endangered, it "remains" until the end of the cycle: that is why it is said that "the Lodge of St. John is in the valley of Jehoshaphat". And since it is perfectly in accordance with traditional symbolism that the organisation "chosen" to "house" such a function had, as its original activity, stone building, i.e. the art of constructing the most appropriate buildings to ensure the "stability" of the "permanence" of men.

CHAPTER IX

RENÉ GUENON AND THE "GRAND TRIAD" LODGE

By giving the title of one of his books, *I Know Nothing but Spelling*¹⁸⁴, a formula taken from the ritual of the Apprentice's degree, M. J. Corneloup had no doubt wished to make an act of humility. Such a title does not seem to us to be very fortuitous. For a High Mason, "Master of all the degrees" and "decorated with all the honours", as was said before, to plead his inability to "reunite the dispersed"¹⁸⁵ could risk being considered as a public declaration "fixed" and, so to speak, "satisfied" in "ignorance". It would be serious in an Order which, from the second degree, invites its members to "know the letter G", and makes them say in the third degree: "The acacia is known to me". And we could make the following remark to M. Corneloup - who once compared initiatory organisations with one another: his father, who was a Compagnon of the Tour de France, would never have declared, once he had received "Companion *fini fini*?" in his art, that he was incapable of "mixing" the various "materials", typical of a body of work, in order to model a "masterpiece".

The author would possibly have told us that the Masonic and Compagnonic degrees and dignities do not confer knowledge, but do no more than communicate the symbols of this knowledge. This is true, but it is no reason to ignore the "hierarchy" of these symbols. After all, when M. Corneloup entered a Lodge [in the degree] of Apprentice, he wore the apron of Master; and if a Mason, unknown to him, had asked him for information of his rank in the Order, we do not believe that it would have occurred to him to say to him: "I am three years old".

If we have dealt with this question of humility, it is because M. Corneloup, in his Work, speaks of René Guénon's "pride". He does it through an interposed person, reproducing *in extenso* a letter of François Menard, dated 27th August 1946. And we will say in passing that we are not sure that Menard would have appreciated the use of this letter, written 20 years before his death. But this chart is not so surprising. Based on astrological considerations in the manner of Oswald Wirth¹⁸⁶, Menard reproaches Guénon with an "immense intellectual pride", "the aggressiveness of the last Books" and, above all, the preoccupation of this counter-initiation, this pan-Satanism that he denounces with increased vigour". The reading of *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, says Menard, "is properly intolerable".

Here is what Menard wrote in 1964, at least in a private letter after having read *The Reign of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, which he had just finished

¹⁸⁴ Editions Vitiano, Paris.

¹⁸⁵ Cf. *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, Chapter VI, *in fine*; and Chapter XLVI, *in fine*.

¹⁸⁶ "Saturn in exile with Cancer in its second house.... predominance of the Moon in the fourth house, ... combat of Mars exalted towards Aries, in seventh. The Sun in Scorpio, conjunct Venus in exile". We shall see later, after Corneloup himself, what to think about the value of Oswaldian astrology, not to mention its dangers as a divinatory art. But Menard, at least here, did not predict the future, and contented himself with "explaining": Guénon's first marriage, his departure for Egypt and the like.

to appear. He declared himself in complete agreement with M. Corneloup, but why did the latter, after having reproduced his letter, not add that Menard, on the eve of his death, was not at all in agreement with the corresponding 1946 letter, and did not mind proclaiming it openly? The thing, therefore, has its importance. If we were not afraid of lengthening this chapter, we would have rummaged through these last texts of Menard's, and found a good number of indications showing that, before passing to the eternal East, he revised his position on many points, and that, in the main, he had returned to the Guenonian doctrine. But let us look at the piquancy. Menard, who, in his letter to M. Cordeloup, deplored the importance given by Guénon to counter-initiation, was the creator, in *The Symbolism*, of a "Chronicle of counter-initiation" which he wrote personally. We have just added that he showed a severity, which we may find somewhat excessive¹⁸⁷.

In the October-December 1966 issue, *El Simbolismo* published a review, signed "The Letter G", in which Menard, eight years before his death, commented unceremoniously on the book by M.L.-J Pierol, entitled *The Cowan*, and especially on the introduction that M. Corneloup had decided to write for this work. We will quote a few passages from this review, which will suffice to show the evolution of this author's spirit.

"It is when we go to the heart of the , that is to say, to the problem of the understanding of the Order, that we perceive, distressed, that, in spite of the good will of the authors [MM: Pierol and M. Corneñoup], they have passed by the real answer to be formulated to M. Alec Mellor. This is why this careful analysis, this scattering of selected arguments, this scientific method which opposes another scientific method, seems to us an extraordinarily empty call, a hollow shell, full of dead thought, and the hour of choice which they announce to us seems to us a vain promise! The term "choice" is, moreover, very revealing: it tends to make us believe that we can choose between truth and error. What is the quality of this truth, which is not capable of "convincing" and deeply enlightening and which can only be chosen, like any other garment? You can see how all this is relative and mental. I know that this superficial judgement will seem to its venerable authors to be a sacrilegious and offensive idea, and that both Corneloup and Pierol think they have understood Freemasonry and have paid it, in this book, a tribute worthy of it. Do they not see that their ways ... contradict each other, so as to give Freemasonry a false and totally inadequate image? And this is because they refer together to secondary, outdated and profane considerations (sociological, moral, political) which constitute this dead thought, which the modern world constantly remarks: without any interest whatsoever? Where is the Spirit, always alive, in all this?

What is Freemasonry? It is, first and foremost, an initiatory society. Where is the question of initiation in the considerations developed here by MM. Corneloup and Pierol? There is talk of freedom of thought, atheism, morality, Catholicism, anti-communism, French or English deviations We talk about everything but

¹⁸⁷ Here is how this "Chronicle" debuted in *The Symbolism* of July 1964: "It is remarkable, but also frightening and frightening, to see how easily the counter-initiation progresses around us. It is obvious that the publishers lend themselves to this subversion". There follows a good critique of the then recent publications; and Menard ends by praising the work of a university student who "does not hesitate to falsely inscribe himself against the doctrine of official evolutionism, nor to proclaim that savages do not exist and that man is not descended from the ape, and to underline the role of traditional civilisations in communication with the Sacred". Why did M. Corneloup give Menard an image that in no way corresponds to reality?

initiation, that is to say, what constitutes the *raison d'être* of Freemasonry. You exaggerate, it will be said to me. Look at the pages...dealing with symbolism. The exoteric method is mentioned as a sociological fact and a very timid situation of the *Vers Dorés* is corrected by other very symptomatic quotations.... But real initiation is rigorously absent".

"Now, it is precisely here that one would have had to respond.... But, for this, it would be necessary to enter into the ideas of Guénon, this Guénon who admits, without laughing, to "blindness" with regard to certain historical documents, when it is known that he has described history as a "vain science"⁽¹⁸⁸⁾.

To make this domain useful, "it would be necessary to speak the "language of the initiated" and to bring to the surface the inadequacy and mediocrity of sentimental, political and theological arguments. Unfortunately, how many Freemasons are there who are capable of using this language correctly? We have the impression that the Venerable Brethren are far from being able to enter into these ways and to the extent of using this medium. It is therefore very easy, but not very convincing and effective, to call Voltaire, recognising his "admirable courage". Under these conditions, the sterile polemic can continue for decades, to the great delight of the Order's adversaries. And what is the point of this?

We recall that these lines, signed "The Letter G", are the last that Menard wrote to be published. Eight months before his death. It is obviously an intellectual testament"¹⁸⁹.

¹⁸⁸ Menard alludes here to a passage in M. Cornéloup's introduction to the book *Le Cowan*. It is a discussion, of no great importance in substance, on certain documents relating to the beginnings of French Freemasonry. This is M. Cornéloup's passage: "I would add that, if we can - even if we exaggerate a little - speak of the "blindness" of Guénon and Luquet, quoted by Maître Alec Mellor, it would not be right to accuse another historian, whom the latter unforgivably forgot: Marcy". _ On the other hand, we would have remarked on the confusion committed by Menard. History, which is a "vain science" (or an "ignorant knowledge"), is obviously that of modern historians, is not linked to any higher principle, and can only accumulate uselessness, followed by insignificant facts, often interpreted according to philosophical, political, religious or anti-religious "convictions". But there is another story. Just as modern chemistry is the "residue" of a sacred science, Alchemy, just as modern astronomy is the residue of traditional astrology, modern history is nothing but the "desecration" of another sacred and traditional history. The distinction between the two is easy to make if we remember that, according to Guénon, false historians are also symbols. Understanding that the history of the moderns deals only with the appearance of events, it has no idea of the "subterranean history" where, in particular, counter-initiation manifests itself, and believes the "spontaneous revolutions" to be as hard as iron. The old "sacred geography", of which traces are still to be found in such authors as Pausanias and the Ancient Pliny himself, has become something quite different, where economic considerations occupy the first rank.

¹⁸⁹ We will allow ourselves to give some indications on François Menard, who is the author most often quoted and "praised" in *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, with the exception of Charles Clyde Hunt, Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Iowa, and editor of the *Speculative Mason*.

Born in 1901 in a small village in the commune of Indre, he soon entered Freemasonry. Very studious and with an insatiable intellectual curiosity, he became acquainted with the work of René Guénon at a very young age, and visited him on several occasions when the Master was living in Paris, rue Saint-Louis-en-l'Île. Marius Lepage has told us that Menard has disappeared, and that only one friend of his remains, M. Léo Merigot, who has had, as a Mason, direct relations with René Guénon, but it must be understood that other persons, still alive, who knew Guénon, could later enter Freemasonry. We would like to know more about the conversations that this young Mason of the Mixed Obedience "The Human Right" had, at this time, with the Master, already recognised, who was then preparing to leave Europe, without his interest in Masonic matters diminishing in the least, on the contrary. As far as we know, Menard, who was discretion and modesty personified, kept silent about these interviews. It was Menard who introduced M. Lepage to the Guenonian work. From 1931 onwards, the two worked side by side, notably in a "wild" Lodge - that is to say, in a workshop made up of Freemasons from various backgrounds, who met occasionally without a "patent of constitution". The meetings were held, in the present case, at the very Headquarters of the Grand Lodge of France _ presided over by Oswald Wirth, and which was working on the "restitution" of a traditional "Scottish" ritual. But it was above all as editor of *The Symbolism* that Menard's Masonic work became important. It was in October 1930 that this collaboration began. The first article by Guenon to be considered appeared August 1931 and was signed "François Menard and Marius Lepage".

A Guenonian would not have spoken in any other way than this Mason of "The Human Right". But in this review, the "form" did not seem as evocative as the substance. Menard could have said: "He understood everything, he forgave everything"¹⁹⁰, but here he is scathing and even aggressive in his expressions. "Dead thought", "vain promises", "false and totally inadequate image", "mediocrity of the arguments", etc... We can say that the "Venerable authors" take them for their degree, and even for the "high degrees". How could M. Corneloup have explained such a change of attitude? We think that Menard, at the end of his life, recognised the total justice of Guénon's conceptions, notably far as Freemasonry is concerned, and turned his back definitively on the Wirthenian conceptions designated by the rather improper terms "Masonism" and "Constructivism".

*
* *

If we have dwelt so long on this question of Menard's letter, it is because it shows very clearly how the interpretations of M. Corneloup are to be distrusted. And the occasion for this demonstration has been aided by a text of Menard's concerning Corneloup, the omission of which would have been unforgivable.

That said, the problem of Guénon's "pride" will no longer hold us back. Of the doctrine he expounded, he was not the "inventor", but the interpreter, and he claimed for himself only the errors and imperfections of his exposition. That this doctrine may be haughty, aristocratic, irritating, to the modern mentality, is possible. But those who have had the honour of corresponding with Guénon know how affable, fraternal, totally devoid of vanity he was. Once he had given his confidence - which he did very easily - the tone of his letters immediately became almost familiar, even jovial. On rereading them, it often strikes us that a spirit whose exceptional qualities would have enabled him to impose himself on any intellectual activity could have responded in this way, with inexhaustible patience and without being discouraged or repelled misunderstandings - not to mention betrayals, conscious or unconscious - to so many correspondences scattered over five continents.

which had as its title: *The Church and Freemasonry*. From then on, Menard's collaboration in *Symbolism* continued for many years, and only ceased with his death. From Cairo, Guénon followed his work, quick to "criticise" when necessary, and happy with whatever he approved, always sympathetic and affectionate. In November 1948, Menard, still writing under his patronage, began to sign "The Letter G", a series of articles concerning what we might call the "attitude" of the initiate in the face of the contingencies of the modern world. Guénon had time to speak with esteem in the first four studies: "Marxism", "The Initiate's Opportunism", "Tolerance", "Wisdom and Initiation". In our view, the articles and reviews, signed "The Letter G", are among the best of François Menard. But all of Menard's articles contain interesting avenues, for he was undoubtedly the most "Guenonian" of the authors of *Symbolism*. Guenonian, Menard was, to the extent that he had recognised Guénon, an exclusive servant of Truth, and he, for whom friendship was priceless, knew, at right moment, how to tell his friends sometimes unpleasant truths, for he considered that friendship has no higher rights than those Truth. As an example of the interest of Menard's articles, we will cite his *Contribution to the study of the tools*, of which Guénon has said that "it could serve, in some way, as a basis for a restoration of the rituals of the degree of Companion, in which many divergences have been introduced as to the number of tools involved and the order in which they are numbered" (*Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t. II, pg. 172).

¹⁹⁰ We find this expression in the article that Marius Lapage devoted to Menard's death (*The Symbolism* of July 1967).

*
* *

M. Corneloup's work is divided into two parts: the first, entitled "Masonic Recollections", and the second, "Retrospects and Perspectives". The first part, by far the most interesting, ends with a chapter (Chapter IV) devoted to "The Great Triad and the Work of Guénon".

Before examining carefully the merits of this Chapter IV, let us go through the rest of the Work. M. Corneloup was an excellent "narrator" of memories, and defines the Masons he met as extremely vivid portraits. The most accurate is certainly that of Albert Lantoine, Arragois by birth and Montmartrois at heart, somewhat bohemian and of an execrable character¹⁹¹. He entered Freemasonry through dilettantism, had a brilliant career in the higher degrees, wrote historical works which retain their value, and, one day, had the rather trivial idea of proposing to Pope Pius XI a "white marriage" (*sic*) between the Church and Freemasonry, and this in order to... to combat communism(191). to combat communism¹⁹²!

For this considerable undertaking, Lantoine "thought he had found in R.P. Bertheloot, of the Society of Jesus, the personality who would be the ear of the Roman upper echelons".

M. Corneloup, I thought it was a mistake. It was, after all, very severe for the Reverend Father. Wasn't it a bit severe? Bertheloot (whom we have only met once), joy leads him to indignation. He has rushed into his daze of such charming stories! Some of them could have been embellished. We are so often in love with the rich...

*
* *

What to say now about M. Corneloup's "philosophical" conceptions? He speaks of "English metaphysics" (pg. 86), refers to "the masterly work of Professor Monod, Nobel Prize winner in 1965, on *Chance and Necessity*" (pg. 86, n. 1), asserts that "thinking humanity emerges from animality" (pg. 160), and, in a general way, criticises Guénon's theses, for which "Bergson himself did not become a citizen" (pg. 178). should Bergson be particularly careful?

Speaking of the theory of cosmic cycles, the author thought he found in Guénon contradictions with the Hindu doctrine. If he had been aware of the article "Some reviews on the doctrine of cosmic cycles", M. Corneloup would have seen that the difficulty he points out concerning the zeros is non-existent.

According to the author, the true initiatory doctrine has always been that one must initiate oneself and that it cannot be done by else" (pg. 90). The author "does not

¹⁹¹ The author amused himself by telling how, on two occasions, he was received "like a dog" by "a disenchanted Lantoine". The spicy thing is that, the second time, M. Corneloup came to announce that Lantoine had been elected as a member of "l'Académie des Philalèthes". This international association, founded in 1928, comprises forty Freemasons, chosen from among those who have made a name for themselves by their works. Among them are Rudyard Kipling, Arman Bédaride, Oswald Wirth and M. Corneloup himself, who, in passing, has perfectly exposed the "theosophist" origins of this organisation, which has no links with the Masonic Obediences, to the light of day .

¹⁹² The author has explained in *Schibboleth* the contacts he had with two religious, interlocutors of Lantoine and Wirth. One of these religious would later leave the Roman Church.

attributes more than a very secondary value to metaphysics, and considers moral teaching to be very important". He also speaks of the "devaluation of life which theology has inherited from Buddhism" (pg. 96). This brings to mind that Oswald Wirth called Eastern wisdom a "wisdom of neurasthenics", for Wirth had a great sense of humour in his formulas.

As far as Freemasonry in particular is concerned, we shall see - in the second part of our study, devoted to the Lodge "The Great Triad" - that M. Corneloup is closely linked to the occultist conception of the "egregors". It is understood that the history of the Order, as he sees it, is strongly influenced by the rationalist point of view. On some points, however, we find, to our surprise, insights that depart markedly from the beaten track. For example, he mentions arguments that are little known in France, and which tend to prove that the Master's degree predates 1717¹⁹³, and that the higher degrees may well predate 1730¹⁹⁴. In all that he then dealt with, within Freemasonry, M. Corneloup discerns the action of the Hermetists and the Rosicrucians, who have notably marked his imprint on the degree of "Prince Rose-Cross" (pg. 159 to 168).

M. Corneloup, although opposed to Guénon's teachings, recognised their importance and seemed to have "measured" the greatness well¹⁹⁵. It is above all the "critical" part of this work that he appreciates. Indeed, he was very concerned about the accelerated evolution of all the things that so strongly mark our time. In a whole section of his work (pp. 191 ff.), he denounces the obsession with production, insistent advertising, the madness of speed, the worship of numbers, industrialisation to the extreme, fierce competition, the irremediable distortion of the human "environment", the imbalance of the economic function, dragged into an infernal circle, where the learned specialists of competitiveness and the cheerful prophets of universal happiness for tomorrow splash about, each one better than the next. And he wrote:

"For generations and generations, the masses have been inculcated with the conviction that science and technology could solve all material problems and secure the future of the world.

¹⁹³ "The alterations that began, from 1717, to be made to the rituals, did not go unnoticed and, in *Ahiman Rezon*, Laurence Dermontt truculently denounces them. But it is quite remarkable that the dreaded polemic seems to believe that the Master's degree predated 1717" (pg. 153). Laurence Dermontt was the animator of the Grand Lodge of the "Ancients"; and *Ahiman Rezon* designated the "Book of Constitutions" of this Obedience.

¹⁹⁴ The author could have elucidated this question considerably if he had been aware of Le Forestier's discoveries, which provided irrefutable proof of the existence of the high "Templar" degrees at least since 1733. ¹⁹⁵ This "esteem" for Guénon, which we attribute, perhaps unduly, to M. Corneloup, was the fact, in any case, of six of the seven founders of "The Great Triad". In spite of their ultra-modern training and their rationalist views, they considered Guénon as a "thinker" of genius, whose work, without equal in the history of ideas, concerned all fields of knowledge. They discovered, not without pleasure or fierceness, that, for this author, Freemasonry was the noblest of all Western institutions, and that, in any case, it was practically the only channel through which Westerners could gain access to initiation. They presented, sometimes very cleanly - and with a sympathy the memory of which still revolts us - that, without any doubt, the Order would remain, in the future, deeply "marked" by the Guenonian doctrine, which "justified", in particular, the existence of the initiatory "secret", as the greatest grievance directed at Freemasonry by its adversaries. Such was the point of view, regarding Guénon, of almost all the founders of "The Great Triad". But, among the founders, there was one who was different from the others, and who, moreover, was the promoter of this foundation: he was a Russian in exile, Count M... (we give him his title to distinguish him from the other founding members with the same initial). He was truly a "Guenonian", that is to say, he did not consider Guénon only as a "giant of thought", but rather as the "transmitter" of a non-human doctrine, expression of the primordial Tradition, "mother and teacher" of orthodox traditions, without exception, which earned this interpreter the hostility of a good number of exotericists, exclusive and militant.

How can we begin now to make people understand, then to say, and then to affirm that this is nothing at all, that progress should stop and that even a certain regression would be indispensable? (pg. 197).

To this tableau traced by the author, we can, from a Guenonian point of view, add three indications. First, the alteration of the "public" mentality in a large number of domains is a much more serious symptom than all the purely material ones listed by M. Corneloup. Next, the uneasiness of the "masses" about the dangers they increasingly run the risk of turning into "panic-terror", which is likely to lead them to adopt the most desperate solutions. Finally, the remedy proposed by the author seems to us to be illusory, because the situation in which the modern world is struggling is not the result of an unfortunate combination of fortuitous circumstances, but the "result" of a plan wisely hatched and remarkably executed by a "power" that has been in place for centuries, and which we call - with François Menard "the last way" - the counter-initiation.

*
* *

There is also chapter VII, where M. Corneloup deals with astrology. He expounds the rules, less after Oswald Wirth, and relates a story which the latter was happy to explain to almost all his visitors. Here is the story:

An assistant, a friend of Wirth's, had supplied him with the necessary elements to draw up his son's horoscope. Wirth made and redid his calculations: it turned out that the unfortunate son was destined to live ill in a very cramped place. Wirth then announced to the terrified parents that their offspring would spend in prison the clearest days (if one can call it that) of his existence. They hastened, as soon as possible, to assign the young man to the navy. He made a fine career, enclosed... in a cabin, reserved for the ship's radio officer. Wirth, explaining this story, seemed very satisfied that his calculations were not wrong.

After having given this incredible story, M. Corneloup concluded: "I dedicate these lines to present and future astrologers. They can find satisfaction, for your self-respect and your good conscience. And to excuse the harshness, which you will think you have a right to reproach, in my diatribe, I will confess to you without dissimulation, that its basis is largely sentimental: I detest astrology to death, for all the harm it has done to one of my dearest friends" (pg. 188).

All those who, after reading M. Corneloup's work, understood what he was referring to, will have shared his feeling. The dangers of the "conjectural sciences" are particularly keen in our days, where soothsayers and fortune-tellers do not have the discretion of a Mélampe or a Tirésias. It is true that Mélampe understood the "language of birds", and that Tirésias, having met, seven years apart, two intertwined serpents, had been given, in the form of a poetess by the mythographers, the spiritual state of the Hermetic *Rebis*¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹⁶ M. Corneloup, as a good disciple of Oswald Wirth, did not conceive that traditional astrology could be anything than a simple "divinatory art". For another conception we can turn to two works by Jean Richer:

II

Before turning to Chapter IV of the first part of M. J. Corneloup's book, it is necessary to give some indications contained in the ⁽¹⁹⁷⁾*Dictionary of Freemasons* published by Mellor

We have already mentioned the work by M. L.-J. Piérol, prefaced by M. J. Corneloup and entitled *Le Cowan*. Under this title, the two authors reproach M. Alec Mellor for speaking of Freemasonry without being a member. What did M. Mellor do then? He had himself received as a Freemason. Thus, no one could treat him as a *cowan* and, belonging to an Obedience connected with the Grand Lodge of England, he turned the coin back on MM. Pierol and Corneloup, describing them as irregular Freemasons and even, depending on the occasion, as "pseudo-Masons".

The reply, it must be agreed, is not without salt. We must, however, remember that regularity, as understood by M. Mellor, has nothing to do with the "initiatory regularity" referred to by Guénon. For the latter, what counts is only the validity and, consequently, the efficacy of the rites. For M. Mellor, whose essentially "juridical" conception is the same as that of the United Grand Lodge of England, what makes the regularity of a Masonic group is recognition by this United Grand Lodge and by the other Obediences in relation to it.

From one end of the *dictionary* to the other, this question of regularity plays a central role. It is, for the author, a real obsession, and this leads him to make assertions that will certainly be contested by both sides. In any case, we can assure M. Mellor that, contrary to what he has written, the National Grand Lodge of France, before 1965, did not impose re-initiation on members of other French Obediences who had attained their ranks; unless they formally requested it, it was content to "regularise" them. Describing this regulation (pgs. 191 and 192), a formality which consisted of taking a new oath. M. Mellor seems to think that the oath is the essential rite of initiation. And the essential rite of initiation is not the oath; in French Freemasonry, for example, the Venerable, consecrating the recipient, by the mallete and the flaming sword, says: "I believe you, I receive and constitute you an Apprentice Mason"; and then, ceasing to say "Sir", he says: "My brother, you shall henceforth bear no other name amongst us, etc...".

*
* *

It is therefore a happy idea of M. Mellor's to publish this dictionary, for works of this kind are always defective in French-language Masonic literature. The author has not wished to give the equivalent of Mackey's Great Encyclopaedia - for it would have required a team effort - but his work is very manageable,

Sacred Geography of the Greek World (Hachette Bookshop) and *Delphes, Délos et Cunes* (Editions Julliard). See the additional note at the end of this chapter.

¹⁹⁷ Editions Pierre Belfond, Paris.

of a beautiful typeface, abundantly illustrated¹⁹⁸, might have provided useful information, and helped to dispel the ignorance of the many Masons vis-a-vis, of the "external" history of the Order; having been able to rise above the rivalries of the Obediences, to say nothing of their violently anti-Genonian sentiments.

The work comprises three parts. First, there is a short historical account, supplemented by a study of the current state of the Rites and Obediences in France. This is followed by the dictionary proper, which contains a special article devoted to the Lodge of the Grand Triad. The last part consists of a collection of bibliographical notices on the most illustrious Freemasons. The article on René Guénon, one of the longest, occupies a whole page.

*
* *

We will return later to some of the many points where the author attacks Guénon's positions. The question of initiatory secrecy has already been raised here. It appears, however, that, on this very important point, M. Mellor has notably rectified his judgement, as on the Templar question, and, above all, that he formulates it in much less dense and abrupt terms. His article on the Templars ends as follows: "The Grand figure of the Grand Master Jacques de Molay, restored to his truth, appears as a sublime allegory of man, right up to his death; under this title and only under this title, we can say that he has a place alongside the other great figures, which the Order proposes to human meditation¹⁹⁹".

Concerning the secret, M. Mellor mentions, among others, a conception which, in short, is Guénon's: that of a "state of inner illumination attained by initiation and which human language would not know how to translate, therefore, to betray, for the words corresponding to these concepts, and initiatory knowledge, transcend conceptual thought". That the author has announced this point of view, without criticising and reiterating his previous statements on the "fictitious" and harmful character of the Masonic secret, is indicative of a particularly interesting development. The author must have realised that the Masonic secret is an unassailable "diamond"²⁰⁰.

¹⁹⁸ Five of Gabanon's engravings are reproduced, which are of particular interest for the knowledge of 18th century Freemasonry.

¹⁹⁹ When it is known that, a few years earlier, M. Mellor had graciously called the "inventor" (supposed by him) of the "Templar hoax", also described as an "absurd legend", "*fauserie de genie*" (*genial falsehood?*, false *genius?*), we can see the road travelled. He is no less dedicated to the edifice of the high degrees which, for M. Mellor, is founded on a historical imposture. This is a judgement which we leave to him to make.

²⁰⁰ M. Mellor, in his interesting bibliographical notice on Casanova, reproduces (after Mackey) the extraordinary lines in which the Venetian adventurer speaks, in almost Guenonian terms, of the Masonic secret. It is truly strange to find, under the pen of a character whose writings are possibly more "profound" than we might have supposed, one of the most truly initiatory pages in the whole of 18th century Masonic literature. Here is the gist of it: "Those who are not determined to be received as Masons, except to come to know the secret, may err.... The secret of Masonry is inviolable by its very nature, for the Mason who knows it, knows it only by guessing it. He has learned it from no one. He has discovered it by going to the Lodge, by observing, reasoning and deducing. When he has arrived at it, he is very careful not to share his discovery with anyone, even his best Masonic friend, for if the latter does not have the talent to penetrate it, he will not have the talent to make the most of it by learning it orally. This secret, therefore, will always be a secret. All that is done in Lodge must be secret; but all those who do not scruple to reveal it are not really revealing the essential. How can they reveal it if they do not know it?"

M. Mellor's general conception of Freemasonry is obviously the antipodes of the Guenonian thesis, which is not surprising, given the author's admiration for the "historical method"²⁰¹. Among the most characteristic articles in this respect are some passages from the one on the ancient mysteries and their possible links with the Masonic Order. The author rightly criticises certain exaggerations, but uses them as a pretext for condemning his own idea of the ancient origin of Freemasonry.

"Excusable in the eighteenth century..., these digressions are no longer so today, where generations of Hellenists and historians have restored to the ancient Mysteries their true meaning.... The main error of many has been to believe that the ancient Mysteries involved a highly philosophical teaching, destined for an elite of thinkers, and then to place this false hypothesis in the context of Freemasonry, and more particularly of the High Degrees.... The mysterious science of the ancients was of the least interest. The mystery religions were shrines of the *tangible* [underlined in the text].... It was not in the Mysteries that the higher spirits sought esoteric teaching, but rather in the oral or written teaching of the philosophies.... It is quite right that a Hellenist as well-informed as A.-J. Festugière, has opposed the cultural Mysteries to the literary Mysteries... A total difference separates the modern conception of Masonic initiation, which is totally subjective, from the practical initiations in Eleusis or other centres, objective in their essence and *raison d'être*.... Charlatans have all the time for mystery and credulity. Freemasonry has not been saved for these miscreants of the spirit, whose work of counter-initiation [underlined in the text] is even far from belonging to the past. Excusable at a time when the admirable work of scholars had not yet brought to light the true meaning of the ancient Mysteries, the candour with which the fables were formerly admitted would today be nothing but ridicule.

M. Mellor's serene confidence in the certainty of the "acquisitions" of modern historical science will always surprise us: does it not seem that, after the "admirable works" of R.P. Festugière, there was no longer any enigma about the doctrine and liturgies of the Mysteries of antiquity? But to fully appreciate the scope of the author's ideas, it is useful to dwell a little on the historical introduction to the Work, where the following passages are revealed:

"In a preceding book, we have claimed for our vows the advent of a new science: Masonology..., the scientific methods subsisting in the tottering of empiricism.... To give an example, it is very easy to decree the existence of a certain tradition, in the origin of societies, so contrary to primitive Revelation, that it testifies to Scripture, only in the gifts of science on the appearance of life and the origins of man, after arbitrarily modifying the meaning that the French language gives to the adjective "traditional", and, finally, to reconstruct, starting from these ways, the whole of history. A similar effort - for there are illustrious examples - postulates... contempt for the historical method, for historical truth, and leads to the

²⁰¹ At a round table gathering several well-known historians, one of the participants declared: "the historical method desacralises everything it touches". In the spirit of the speaker, this was a compliment. In any case, none of his interlocutors issued a different warning. On this desacralising (and therefore moral, for all that is sacred) character of the "historical method", today's most eminent representatives of this method are in perfect agreement with René Guénon.

intelligences to the state of pre-logical thought.... But that, in the age of computers, dreamlike conceptions persist, in matters of history or symbolism, is a scandal of reason.... German science, so outstanding in the historical research of the 19th century,... had to make giant strides".

The medieval guilds of builders do not derive from *Collegia opificum*, as the Belgian historian H. Pirenne shows here... A contradiction in terms, but an outright legend, like that so often used, which consists in confusing: "operative Freemasonry with Compagnonage". Our eminent friend N. - certainly the most complete specialist on Compagnonage for half a century - when he was in charge of the Masonic Fund, in the department of the National Library, fulminated against it without despair".

"Historical criticism has demystified from our days, what generations have believed; the mystery of the Rose-Cross was nothing more than a joke of humanists of enormous dimensions".

We repeat that this "florilegium" has not been included in the *Dictionary* as a whole, but only on five pages of the historical introduction (pp. 16, 17, 21, 22 and 25). But indeed all the common threads of modern mentality, described by Guénon as "superstitions" and "prejudices", are to be found. Nothing is missing. The homage to reason, the contempt for the forms of traditional thought, qualified as "pre-logical thought", the enthusiastic admiration for German science, which is advancing by leaps and bounds in historical research, the authority accorded to the "Belgian historian Pirenne" in the matter of initiatory transmission, the affirmation that the data of science on the appearance of life are reconcilable with the Judeo-Christian Scriptures, the hopes in the conquests awaiting "Masonology", the explicit belief that "the age of computers", in which we are privileged to live, is intellectually superior to everything else?... What more could we wish for?

*
* *

It is, of course, very interesting to examine the reactions that this ultra-modernist vision of Freemasonry - which is that of M. Mellor - can give when it comes into contact with Guénon's work. We reproduce the bibliographical notice devoted to the author of *Appreciations on Initiation* in its entirety, and we interrupt it frequently to insert, between inverted commas, some indications, rectifications or complements of information.

"*Guénon* René (1886-1951). Philosopher. Of the Masonic aspect of his work, only the present article is of interest. Twenty years ago, he abandoned the preparation of a licence in mathematics [here, error imputable to P. Charconac, because Guénon had his licence in mathematics], to enrol in the school of hermetic sciences of Papus (Dr. Encausse), and was, for a time, a follower of the Martinist Order; by which, the latter, declared to reprove the teaching of Martinez de Pasqually, the Unknown Philosopher". [No. The Unknown Philosopher was not Martinez de Pasqually, but Louis-Claude de Saint-Claude de Saint-Quentin.

Martin. We are well aware that such errors are inevitable in a work like the one we are discussing. But this one is so strong that it must be a small slip of the tongue²⁰²].

Initiated a Freemason in 1907, elevated to Master in 1908, the materialistic and politicised Freemasonry of the time disappointed his idealistic aspirations. He also played an important part, in spite of his age, in the famous convent of spiritualist Freemasonry in Paris in 1908, a veritable fair where Swedenborgians, neo-Templars, Misraimites, Spanish Rite, etc., under the direction of Téder (Détré), met without profit". [Fair without profit, it is possible. But Guénon had, at least, the opportunity to announce certain truths, and, for example, that, of all the Masonic Obediences that existed in the world, there is not one in whose origin any irregularity can be discovered²⁰³].

"Téder had him excluded from the Martinist Order, under ridiculous pretexts of complicity with both the Jesuits and the Grand Orient. Changing his platform, he collaborated with an anti-Masonic review, *La France anti-Masonique*, under the name of "Le Sphinx"; his aim was, even at this price, to serve the ideal Masonic cause effectively, and, as he conceived it, not to establish a polemic". [Guénon has been so often attacked on these two points that it is convenient to reveal the very impartial interpretation given here by M. Mellor. But there must be deeper causes for Guénon's incursion into occult, anti-Masonic and even counter-initiatic circles. He himself has sometimes alluded to the reasons for this "penetration", from which we would have a certain tendency to compare it to a "descent into Hell"].

"It belonged for a time to the traditionalist Lodge Thébah, then under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of France (nowadays linked to the French National Grand Lodge)". [The great merit of this Lodge was to use a particular Ritual, enriched with interesting elements of ancient origin. Let us cite, for example, "the office of Deacon", to which Guénon attached great importance, as belonging to the operative origin].

"When Oswald Wirth founded *Symbolism*, a spiritual bond was established between them, but it did not lead to collaboration. He had to gradually move away from the Lodges and follow a long career, the last stage of which was his adherence to Islam, conceived in a very subjective way, according to the Islamic orientalists". [Guénon's adherence to Islam was not "the last aim" of his long career: this adherence dates back to his youth; he must have been 25 years old at the time.]

"Guenon's fundamental thesis is that there was a primordial tradition, whose religions and metaphysics were only the residues. To rediscover the Tradition, such would be the purpose, properly understood, of initiation. Applying these ways to Freemasonry, Guénon develops the idea that every craft is, in itself, susceptible of a higher and deeper meaning. It is the Hindu *Swadharma*. Operative Freemasonry, building Cathedrals, was, in this sense, initiatory. Freemasonry

²⁰² Among other errors of the same kind, here is a very surprising one (pg. 213). At the end of his article on the "Earth", M. Mellor wrote: "The symbolic sign representing the Earth in Hermeticism is the following". And he reproduces the Hermetic symbol of air. But the symbols of the other three elements are correct; it is therefore a simple material error.

²⁰³ What gives the regularity of a workshop, then, cannot be its membership of this or that Obedience. On the other hand, the operational Lodges were completely free. The system of Obediences only dates back to 1717, but it should be added that it has become practically indispensable, for example, in order to exercise the right of visitation.

speculative, on the contrary, with its fictitious constructors, leaves only a totally *theoretical* parody of initiation (*Appreciations on Initiation*, pg. 194)".

[After M. Mellor's fairly accurate sketch of Guénon's Masonic activity as a whole, we are tempted to summarise the initiatory doctrine of this author. But why is it necessary for him to make such a tendentious exposition? How can it be coldly written that, for Guénon, "speculative Freemasonry allows to subsist only a totally theoretical parody of Initiation"? In the text to which M. Mellor explicitly refers (*Appreciations on Initiation*, chap. XXIX), Guénon is very clear: "The passage from the operative to the speculative... implies, not necessarily a deviation properly speaking, but at least a degeneration in the diminutive sense". Once again, M. Mellor is carried away by his usual impetus: he has transformed the diminutive sense (lessening) of the text he was commenting on into "parody". And since, for this author, Progress is an indisputable dogma, let us now see how he qualifies as "strange intervention", the Guenonian position on the relations between "operative" and speculative-"].

"This strange inter-version has no less seduced certain circles of the Grand Lodge of France, to the point that one Lodge has adopted the name of a Book of Guénon: The Grand Triad (J. Corneloup, in *I Know Nothing but Spelling*, has set out the history of this Lodge and its tendencies, the rationalist point of view of a Grand Orient Mason, not devoid of irony, but also with good sense)".

"Considered as a certain philosophy of work, Guénon's praise of Operationalism presents no shock. There is not an operative Mason who has not understood or recognised it". [What is it that allows M. Mellor to affirm that all operatives have the same idea of his Craft as he himself, and that there was not among them at least an elite capable of rising above the current conceptions in Freemasonry today? M. Mellor glories in being a modern-minded spirit. Guénon, who has spent his life denouncing and criticising such a mentality, was certainly much closer in all respects to the builders and other initiates of earlier times than M. Mellor could be].

"His hypothesis of a supposed primordial tradition has nothing original about it, in spite of the pedantism with which certain Guenonians have presented it. It is the golden age of the ancient cosmogonists", [That the doctrine expounded by Guénon has "nothing original" is evident. He himself has always refused to produce original works: it was a glory, which he left to the philosophers].

"From the point of view of Masonic, and also non-Masonic terminology (it is the hypothesis of a supposed primordial Tradition), it has angrily scrambled the meaning of the words: tradition and traditional, giving them a totally deviant meaning. From the philosophical point of view, it is a pure way of the spirit. From the historical point of view, the hypothesis remains unprovable and even contradicted by the sciences of man" [May we be allowed to make M. Mellor see that, "from the modern "philosophical point of view", the "mysteries" of the Christian religion (Incarnation, Redemption, Trinity, etc...) are also a pure way of the spirit", whose expressions, in the form of dogmas "remain unprovable" and even unprovable, and that

the most notable representatives of the "sciences of man" do not bother to proclaim that the historical assertions of Christianity (as of other religions) do not stand up to the rigorous methods of "historical criticism", the incomparable flower of "German science"]?

"From the religious point of view, this hypothesis of the primordial Tradition is a contradiction of the first Revelation and the fall". [It is understood that, when M. Mellor says: "from the religious point of view", we must understand: from the point of view of the Christian religion. To this we reply as follows: Guenon would have considered his doctrine as void of value, if it had been reconcilable only with Christianity, and not with *all* present and past religions; and he would have considered it as of no interest, if it had not been in harmony, as perfectly with Christianity, as with every religion].

"Also, from the Masonic point of view, many think that Guenonism has been an intrusion, aggravated by the dogmatism of such Guenonians, who have qualified, even as Counter-initiation, all rebellious thought furiously devoted to the hierarchies of the daggers - symbolic! It has left deep wounds".

The wounds inflicted by the Guenonian Freemasons, eager for Templar vengeance, are indeed particularly malignant. M. Mellor ends his article with a bibliography that mentions only the articles written by Guénon for *Traditional Studies* and the work entitled *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*²⁰⁴.

We now turn to the article on the Lodge "The Great Triad", which we reproduce *in extenso*:

"A Lodge founded under the obedience of the Grand Lodge of France, by a group of followers of René Guénon, and whose Venerable was, for a long time, the talented painter Ivan Cerf. Joan Corneloup, 33rd degree of the Grand Orient of France, former Grand Commander of the Grand College of Rites, has narrated the disappointing history of this Lodge, in his book *I can only spell* (chapter IV), which could only astonish. The Guenonian postulate of the primitive Tradition, his requisition against speculative Freemasonry and the firm will of his disciples to qualify as counter-initiation anything that clashes with what they understand as orthodoxy, could only underline the mistake made by the Grand Lodge of France in favouring this creation. J. Corneloup explains that the members of the "Grand Triad" went so far as to ask non-Masonic Guenonians to join it, a real recruitment, not only anti-Masonic for this reason alone, but also because of the danger to intellectuals. A good example of Masonic deviation and of the ineluctable consequences of ignorance of the principles".

²⁰⁴ It would be desirable that future editions of *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage* should make mention of the very numerous articles of Masonic interest scattered in several of Guénon's other works. Ideally, all the innumerable allusions and references to Freemasonry scattered throughout Guénon's work should be compiled. Such a "corpus" (which began to be published at the beginning of the "Grand Triad" Lodge) would constitute, we are not afraid to say, an incomparable "working tool" for Masons of a truly traditional spirit.

What struck us above all in the reading of M. Mellor's *Dictionary* is a sort of "gradation" in the animosity he shows towards Guénon and the extensions of his Work. This is what we mean. If he constantly criticises the author of the *Appreciations*, who, according to him, would have exercised a harmful influence on Masonic life, he is nevertheless visibly impressed by the greatness of the Work and its current influence. With the "Guenonians", he is much more comfortable, and goes so far as to reproach them for likening everything non-Guenonian to counter-initiation, which is what many people would actually do. Among Guenonians, the most dangerous, according to him, are the Guenonian Freemasons, ignorant of the true principles of the Order. But the abomination of desolation is when Guenonian Masons decide to found a specifically Guenonian Lodge, as was "The Grand Triad".

And so this is how things are. In spite of the comfortable "classifications" which do not want to see in Guénon more than a philosopher like so many others, and place him in his chronological place between Bergson and Bachelard, there will always, and more and more, be "strict" Guenonians, for whom the Work to which they refer reveals neither philosophy, nor modernist historical criticism, nor the "sciences of man", because the doctrine expressed by this Work is neither philosophy nor modernist historical criticism, nor the "sciences of man", the Work to which they refer reveals neither philosophy, nor modernist historical criticism, nor the "sciences of man", because the doctrine expressed by this Work, like all religions and like Freemasonry itself, is of "non-human" origin ⁽²⁰⁵⁾. These Guenonians, as they better assimilated the Work of their Master, felt more and more drawn towards Freemasonry, which was, practically with the Compagnonage, the only Western initiatory organisation "that could claim an authentic traditional origin and a real initiatory transmission"⁽²⁰⁶⁾. In short, Why should these Guenonian Freemasons, when they have the opportunity, not constitute Lodges specialised in the study of Symbolism and ritual, two of the subjects that Guénon treated with predilection during the last years of his existence²⁰⁷?

*
* *

All this, you will tell us, is fine and dandy. But it is clear from M. Mellor's work that Freemasonry, with its Guenonian tendencies, has no future, and that its first "attempt" ended in failure. In the face of such a "judgement", it is preferable not to respond. It is M. Jean Bayot, who was one of the highest dignitaries of the Obedience of M. Mellor himself. He has written lines which, by a curious coincidence, seem to respond, rather than to the errors, to the criticisms and attacks of the *Dictionary*,

²⁰⁵ If Guénon were (to use an expression recently read in a foreign magazine) no more than a "giant of Thought", he would be of little interest. For us, Guénon is something else. His Work inaugurates, at the providentially fixed hour in the development of the cosmic cycle, the remanifestation of this primordial Tradition, whose symbol par excellence is the Pole Star. It must be made clear that Guénon's Work could not be considered as the sacred Book of this Tradition. On the other hand, the primordial Tradition has no sacred Book, if it is not the *Liber Mundi* of the Hermetist philosophers. Indeed, if the various traditions, in their origin, were always oral (cf. *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, chap. I, first note), a fortiori the primordial Tradition, essentially "original", can only be oral. Moreover, what is most "central" to each tradition is always the oral transmission, when, at least, it can be transmitted. Hence the impossibility of accessing the essence of any tradition through archival research or other things of the same kind.

²⁰⁶ Cf. *Appreciations on Initiation*, chap. V. _It must be pointed out that the Compagnonage is only addressed to certain bodies of office. Moreover, it does not seem to be very much alive in France at the present time. But we must remember its importance, because of the possibility it offers for solving the question - which will doubtless arise with ever greater urgency - of female initiation in the West.

²⁰⁷ Such Lodges, in short, are what the English call *Class Lodges* (an expression which could be translated as "specialised recruiting Lodges"). An interesting chapter is devoted to them in the work of J.-T. Lawrwbee. Lawrwbee, entitled: *Highways and By-ways of Freemasonry*.

both as far as Guénon is concerned, and as far as his disciples, the Guenonian Masons and the Lodge "The Great Triad" are concerned.

However, in the work that Jean Bayot had written in collaboration with R.P. Riquet²⁰⁸, there was nothing to suggest that this author had any taste for Guénon's teaching. Thus, in an article entitled: "Guénon, a Freemason?"²⁰⁹, we note that, on the whole, this Freemason shows an evident understanding. He begins as follows: "René Guénon's relations with institutional Freemasonry appear vague, chaotic and disconcerting. We warn here, whatever they may have said, that they were never hostile and that the Guenonian work remains essential to the Masonic intelligence of the present and the future. The philosopher of tradition exercises a magisterium which has not yet borne fruit. We forget this impact on the resonances, even in propagation, in order to retain only the minor incidents, born of misunderstanding, misinterpreted or amplified".

There is only one reservation to make: Guénon is not "the philosopher of the tradition", he is an interpreter. In any case, it is true that Guénon's early Masonic activities are shrouded in fog - as are the origins of Freemasonry itself. There are other defects of terminology in the remainder of this article. It cannot be said, for example, that Guénon, in the years 1907 and following, "assembled the first fruits of an original metaphysics". Nor do we agree with the consideration that M. Bayot seems to give to Papus and all that revolved around him, and does he not go so far as to write that "the young Guénon ended up in this milieu, having met the Master again at the School of Hermetic Sciences"²¹⁰? Speaking of the foundation in 1910 of the review *La Gnose*, M. Bayot underlines that "its texts contain, potentially, all the great themes around which Guénon's work will abound". This is one of the great enigmas of Guénon's life. It should not be forgotten that he was then 23 years old. Shortly before, some of his published letters were no different from the ordinary productions of occultists and even politicised and anti-clerical Freemasons of the time. It was at this time that the young man's intellectuality was transformed from top to bottom, and this transformation even had repercussions on his way of writing, which then became, as Jean-Claude Frère rightly observed, "that of one of the great masters of 20th century style".

For us, this transformation is linked to the founding of the renewed Order of the Temple, which provokes the violent attacks of Téder, in the journal *Hiram*, of which Papus was the editor; but Guénon's companions were three and not two, as Bayot wrote. It is true that Téder's campaign was ridiculous; but there are indications that allow us to glimpse the direct intervention of the counter-initiation. As for the "operations" of the renewed Order of the Temple, we believe that they are not related to any of the possibilities considered in the *Spiritual Error*.

In this connection, we also find it inappropriate that M. Bayot, who speaks at length of Guénon's relations with Papus, Guaita, Sédir and other occultists,

²⁰⁸ Cf. the chapter of the present work entitled: "On the Relations between the Church and Freemasonry".

²⁰⁹ Published in *Planet Plus*, dedicated to René Guénon (1970).

²¹⁰ The author refers to the *Compagnons de la Hierophanie* (Nice, 1977, reprint) by Victor-Emile Michelet; he also seems to have had access to the voluminous Works of Swinburne Clymer, where a document of the Masonic Spiritualist Convent of 1908 is reproduced.

make no mention of those with F.-Ch. Barlet (Albert Faucheux), who was one of the French members of the *H.B. of L.*, an organisation more serious than all those which made so much noise and propaganda in Parisian pseudo-initiatic circles.

We will not dwell on the outline sketched by M. Bayot on the events that followed. Let us reveal, however, that Guénon could not have wished that "Catholicism should serve as an esoteric support for the elite"; for it was the exoteric support that was at issue. Having acquired the indications, it was a typographical shell.

Let us turn to the conclusion, in which the author asks whether Freemasonry, with regard to the work accomplished by Guénon, to raise an edifice "in his honour and for his glory", responded with an equivalent "gesture". Here he wrote: "The answer is clearly in the affirmative. In the fraction that takes the greatest care to safeguard the traditional essence of the Masonic Order, many are those who claim Guénon [...] Freemasonry in France has experienced a very marked return to these sources, out of necessity, without all those who aspired to it knowing it. Those who realised it, invoke Guénon. It is known that strong works do not reach true consecration until after a period of reserve, the proof is here very brief and conclusive. The association of his thought with Masonic life is an irreversible phenomenon: a Parisian Lodge called "The Great Triad"; this choice needs no comment. An example of the interest he maintained led him, after its creation, to a letter of congratulations. The Lodge asks its members to make a profession of Guenonian faith²¹¹, which is understood in the cultivation of fidelity and intelligence around his texts. Is all this not a glowing testimony of the links between René Guénon and Freemasonry, certified by the behaviour of the two parties? [...] Nothing is more comforting than the interest which the Masonic institution has honoured him - and which it pays him with fervour".

How we would like reality to respond in all its points to the picture sketched by Jean Bayot! Alas, where is the clear affirmative response (even limited to a small fraction of fidelity) of which the author speaks? Where is the attention to his repeated appeals? Where is the fervour?

If French Freemasonry were truly aware of the capital importance that Guénon's work has for it, it would have to express it in its works, now very numerous, published by active Freemasons who have something to say in their Lodges and Obediences. But what do we see? Most of the works pass over Guénon's name in total silence. Others dispute his Masonic qualifications, question the authenticity of his information, or simply accuse him of "blindness". And let us not speak of those who advocate the abandonment of Masonic secrecy, or who interpret the symbolism of the Order in the light (if we may say so) of psychoanalysis. Others still militate in favour of theses not very sympathetic to Guénon: the exclusively Christian origin of Freemasonry, the absence of any relationship between the Royal Craft and Hermeticism, the unreality of the Templar heritage, the legitimacy of the Willermocian innovations, etc....

²¹¹ This expression is defective. There can be no "profession of faith" in regard to a doctrine which does not require "faith" at all. In reality, it was agreed that only those who had acquired sufficient knowledge of Guénon's Works would be admitted to the "Great Triad".

Such observations can be made by everyone. The most regrettable thing is that Freemasonry seems to be, at present, the institution best suited to illustrate, for the West, the Guenonian "message", and to break the "conspiracy of silence", carefully maintained around this message, for all that, from near or far, it reveals of the modern mentality. We have just spoken of a "conspiracy of silence", and this is the moment to say why, despite the reservations we have just expressed, Jean Bayot's article seems important to us. For the first time, in fact, a high dignitary of the Masonic Order "publicly" proclaims the exceptional importance of Guénon's Work, and the need to have the resources to enable Freemasonry to "take over" its destiny. Such a take-over was neglected; it is a fair appreciation of "time" and "circumstances"; and it could have a certain impact. We very much hope that this will be the case, and that, in the near future, the ways of Jean Bayot will be confirmed, and that the restrictions which we thought we had to bring to bear will be disproved²¹².

*
* *

For M. Mellor, Guénon "has burned the meaning of the words *Tradition* and *traditional* by giving them an inverse sense". His doctrine is a "contradiction of the primitive revelation", and, on the other hand, "is contradicted by the sciences of man". Guénon, on the other hand, had nothing but contempt for present-day Freemasonry, which he considered to be a "parody". The Guenonian Freemasons, and in particular those of the "Grand Triad", are evil "intruders" who, through "ignorance of principles", have inflicted "deep wounds" on the Order.

For Jean Bayot, Guénon's work is "essential for the Masonic intelligence of the present and the future". Moreover, "nothing is more comforting than the interest with which Guénon has honoured an institution" and of which "he has affirmed his predestination" (and we think that Jean Bayot is alluding here to the "eschatological" destinies of the Order). "Those who claim Guénon still expressly mention the Lodge "The Great Triad", and take "vigilant care to safeguard the traditional essence of the Order". And the author states very well that "the influence of Guenonian thought on Freemasonry is an irreversible phenomenon", and that many Masons, among the best, accept the influence of this thought with "fervour".

We do not think that Jean Bayot was a "Guenonian". But a long Masonic career has given him a kind of "sensitivity", which made him "recognise", to speak, the "instinct", which is in accordance the essence of the Order, and can therefore be of benefit to him. That is why Masons of traditional spirit accept his "judgement" with recognition in the present and confidence in the future.

²¹² Reading the remarkable lines of M. Bayot, we feared that the author had been somewhat optimistic. We have since seen that the information that has reached us from the most diverse obediencial horizons shows that our fears were unfounded, and that Guénon's audience within French Freemasonry was often well established and in constant progression.

III

The importance attached to the "Grand Triad" Lodge by M. J. Corneloup, who devoted a whole chapter to it, out of the four that make up his "Masonic Memoirs", clearly shows that, for this author, the foundation of the first Guenonian workshop is an event of great significance. On the other hand, M. Alec Mellor, by inserting a special article on this workshop in his *Dictionary*²¹³, also testifies to the kind of interest (favourable or hostile) aroused in French Freemasonry by this event. A third author, Jean Bayot, had already testified to this interest to his two confreres in the special issue of *Planeta* devoted to René Guénon²¹⁴.

M. Corneloup has given the testimony of an assiduous and sympathetic visitor, an excellent observer and passionately attached to the Masonic Order. Nowhere in his Book have we noticed the slightest trace of the "irony" which M. Mellor thinks he has guessed. In any , the opinion which emerges from his work, even outside Masonic circles, seems, we believe, to require a great deal of fine-tuning. Chance" has indeed led M. Corneloup to address a multitude of questions, some of great importance. Moreover, this author seems to have been misunderstood by M. Mellor, who went so far as to reproach the members of "The Great Triad" for having signed up for a "recruitment", which is totally contradictory to Guénon's ideas on initiatory recruitment⁽²¹⁵⁾.

* * *

At the beginning of his chapter entitled "The Great Triad and the Work of René Guénon", M. J. Corneloup writes: "I have read attentively, approximately, all his Work, and, for years, I have been an assiduous reader of the review *Traditional Studies*, encouraged by Guénon and his disciples. Although I am far from approving all his theses, starting with the one concerning the origin of the Primordial Tradition, I know that I owe much to his teachings, which have forced me to deepen many of my ideas, and I pay a just and sincere homage to the monumental and profound work of this author. Also, since I became aware of the existence, in the Grand Lodge of France, the Lodge "The Great Triad", founded by a group of Guenonians, I have been very interested. I have already said this in *Schibboleth*, but I insist on it because the experience of this Workshop is full of teachings".

To tell the truth, "The Grand Triad" was not founded by Guenonians in the strict sense of the word. The Russian Mason, who came up with the idea of this foundation, did

²¹³ In this Work, we have reported that about ten Lodges have had this system of favour. They are, of course, the famous workshops of Masonic history: "La Anglaise" of Bourdeaux, "The Nine Sisters", "The Friends' Centre", etc....

²¹⁴ This famous issue of *Planeta* seems to have marked the end of the "conspiracy of silence" organised by Guénon's adversaries around his Work. After all, this Work has been passionately discussed in every possible way: by word of mouth, in writing, on the radio, etc... Guenonians can only congratulate themselves on this abrupt updating of a doctrine which, moreover, is self-sufficient, and whose universal character makes it worthy of being examined, with the greatest of care, by the holders of all intellectual disciplines.

²¹⁵ Regarding an article in *Symbolism*, entitled "Initiatory Propaganda", Guénon wrote that these two words "cry out when they are thus coupled together" (*Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. I, pg. 204).

was a Guenonian²¹⁶. Since the revival of the Masonic Order in France, after its slumber during the occupation, this Russian, M. f., estimating that the upheavals The fact that the war, which could further precipitate the march of the West, even of the whole world, towards a fearful destiny, he thought that the occasion might be propitious for an enterprise aimed at making known to the Freemasons the Work of Guénon and the interest it presents to Freemasonry. He had some of his Brothers read books such as *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* and *The Great Triad*. The interest he found was so keen that he was encouraged to have the same experience with some of the highest dignitaries of his Obedience, The Grand Lodge of France. The success exceeded his hopes. It was soon agreed to found a Lodge²¹⁷, the purpose of which was to receive candidates with "a certain knowledge of the Work" of Guénon²¹⁸. The Grand Orator, Ivan Cerf, and the future Grand Master, Michel Dumesnil de Grammont, were members of the Lodge. All his Brothers were recent "admirers", no doubt (for they owed their knowledge of Guénon to M....f), but real and sincere. None of them, however, was entitled to the qualification of "Guenonian"²¹⁹.

As a general rule, it is not in a few months of reading that one becomes a Guenonian, that is to say, that one gets a full grasp of the essentials of the message transmitted by René Guénon. Certainly, nowadays - and such cases will no doubt become rarer and rarer - we see young people suddenly understanding the most "arcanic" parts of the Master's Work. But M. f and his friends, they belonged to the generation which follows that of Guénon. The Guenonians of this generation, who were born in our century, were able to read his Work little by little and as it was published. As they were all of Western origin, their adherence was interrupted by multiple abandonments and frequent regrets²²⁰. For many, it was a real crisis of conscience when they saw Guénon rectify, very noticeably, his attitude towards the original Buddhism²²¹. Many Christians, likewise, have had scruples about following

²¹⁶ During Guénon's lifetime, we believe that no one would have dared to call himself a Guenonian. For the Master always insisted that he did not teach a personal doctrine, of which we could consider him as "its inventor". However, after Guénon's disappearance, the term "Guenonian" became indispensable for those who adhere to the integrity of his doctrine, and, above all, those who consider that this doctrine has a "non-human" origin.

²¹⁷ For this foundation, a derogation had to be obtained from the Federal Council, the body which administers Obedience between two *Convents*. Indeed, war, captivity, and resistance having opened numerous vacuums in the ranks of Freemasonry, most of the Lodges were skeleton in strength, and it was agreed that for several years no new workshops should be founded, in order that the new ones begun should come to reinforce the strength of the existing Lodges. This fact alone, , was sufficient to show the importance attached by the elite of the Obedience to the initiative of M....f.

²¹⁸ This assertion, which has sometimes been disputed, emerges on the evidence of a letter from Guénon to Marius Lepage, extracts of which have been published by Jules Boucher, just after Guénon's death, in the journal *The Chain of Union*.

²¹⁹ During a meeting which, before the holidays of 1947, brought together, at Ivan Cerf's house, the seven future founders and the three future first initiates - a meeting of which we remember the smallest details, and where interesting questions were discussed - Antoine Coën declared himself to be a rationalist. One of the founders (who, moreover, must have made some very pertinent interventions) pointed out to him that Guénon did not deny the importance of reason, but maintained that it cannot be applied outside its proper domain, and that there are certain orders of knowledge for which recourse to a supra-rational faculty is indispensable. Antoine Coën, whose high intelligence and open-mindedness were appreciated by all who knew him, declared himself fully satisfied with this development.

²²⁰ It is very likely that, during one of these "crises", François Menard sent to M. Corneloup the letter reproduced by the latter in his Book. The only letter we have collected from Menard, dated three months before his death, has, in any case, no trace of the reservations expressed with regard to René Guénon, twenty years earlier.

²²¹ About the time of the founding of "The Great Triad", one Guenonian asked another how he had received Guénon's "rectification" of the Buddhist tradition. And he received this answer: "With immense joy. For it is preferable that Guénon, informed by an Oriental (himself led, by Guénon's reading, by traditional concepts), has been able to rectify his position on such a fundamental point, that half of Asia is

Guénon after his article on the "mutation" in the Christian Church at the time of the Council of Nicea²²².

In the middle of our century, it was not possible to become a Guenonian in a few months. The founders of "The Great Triad" were experienced, and it must be said that their aim was rather vague. It is probable that none of them imagined the vicissitudes that the history of this Lodge would entail and the problems that its members would have to face. In any case, we can now mention an indisputably "beneficial" result of the foundation. Until then, the Work and even the name of Guénon were practically unknown within French Freemasonry. Since this foundation, on the contrary, and - why not say it - even because of the turmoil caused by certain events that had great resonance in the Masonic world, the diffusion of the main Guenonian theses on initiation has not ceased to be affirmed, not only in the Grand Lodge of France, but also in other French obediences.

* * *

Concerning the Guenonians, we would like to respond to two complaints made against them, not by M. Corneloup, but by M. Alec Mellor. The latter reproaches them, on the one hand, for having "aggravated" the "defects" of their Master's teachings, and, on the other hand, for "qualifying as counter-initiation any rebellious thought" to that of Guénon.

That the Guenonians seemed to many to be excessively annoying and fanatical must be considered normal. They console themselves by thinking that it is almost exclusively for them that Guénon has published his Work. For it is quite obvious that this Work has nothing in common with the, shall we say, philosophical pâtisserie, of which so many contemporaries indulge their delights.

As for the second reproach articulated by M. Mellor, we must say that we are a little surprised. The Guenonians who deliberately launched the accusation of counter-initiation were very unfamiliar with the Work they claim. Guénon gave indications that allowed us to recognise certain "marks" of the action of Satanism and, therefore, of counter-initiation. It is enough to read *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*, and also the complete review of Guénon's *Comptes-Rendus* (and, in particular, the account of his quarrels, both with the *R.I.S.S.* and with the famous Frank-Duquesne), to recognise, in all these stories, such significant and not uninteresting details, if we relate them to certain later events.

* * *

It is obvious that, in a Work like the Guénon, every rectification must have a certain "meaning".

²²² This mutation, which concerns, in a way, the "presentation" of Christian esotericism by the Church, is, in short, a simple application of the "power of the keys" (*potestas ligandi et solvendi*). This power, as we know, was entrusted by Christ to the Collective of Apostles, and in particular to Peter, after his "confession" in the fields of Caesarea of Philip; and the choice of a city bearing such a name is certainly not due to chance. But we must not forget to take into account the fact that the College of Apostles was originally the very incatic centre of the tradition founded by Christ and had the competence for such a "mutation".

M. Corneloup reproduced in his book the text of the letter he wrote to Ivan Cerf in December 1947 to express his wish to come as often as possible to visit the new workshop²²³. He wrote back a very fraternal and energetic letter, but which aroused in Corneloup a "mitigated satisfaction" and "a certain disappointment, in contrast to the rigour of the Guénonian principles". He thought he saw in Cerf's benevolent invitation the expression of a certain laxity which, he says, secretly disturbed him. And the author explains himself: "Was I to find in "The Great Triad" this kind of relaxation which renders the work of most Masonic Lodges insipid, these congratulations, these useless compliments which every contradictor feels obliged to lavish before stating his objections or criticisms? Without knowing exactly what, I expected something else".

M. Corneloup expected, then, much from "The Great Triad" and this, because of the very rigour of the principles expounded by Guénon. However, we were surprised by his scruples. A regular Lodge, i.e. one that respects the *landmarks*, would not know how to put an obstacle in the way of the exercise of the right of visitation.

But now we shall see how much M. Corneloup, in spite of his good will, has misunderstood Guénon's work. He wrote: His postulates, once admitted, we see that Guénon's doctrine develops with a logical rigour, which gives it its strength and interest. Among the consequences it could have, notably, is this psychic and mystical phenomenon of the formation of an egregore within an assembly of fervent and unanimous disciples; a phenomenon that would be capable of raising the spirit of the participants to a kind of transcendence which, thanks to participation, would multiply the possibilities of intuition and understanding. On rare occasions, I had already had the privilege of experiencing: like the fugitive approach of such a thing. Would the "Great Triad" challenge me to realise it in my presence?

What would my reaction be, would I be a mere witness or a participant? Deep down I doubted it, and, in a way, I doubted it both ways. Only experience could dispel this doubt. It is this experience that I asked of "The Great Triad". The very quick and very easily positive answer of your Venerable One gave rise to a vague uneasiness in me.

Thus M. Corneloup, a rationalist of a very great and tolerant spirit, but in any case a rationalist, expected from "The Great Triad" the verification, so to speak, of the occult theory of the "egregors", a theory of which Guénon had denounced innumerable times its absolutely illusory character²²⁴. We understand, then, why M. Alec Mellor, judging the experience of "The Great Triad" through the writings of M. Corneloup, has been able to qualify this experience as "disappointing".

* * *

²²³ He regretted that he could not be asked to join "The Grand Triad", as the regulations of the Grand Orient forbade delegates to its *Convents* to belong to Lodges of other Obediences. He also regretted that the overload of his occupations prevented him from being designated by his Lodge "The Students" as a "guarantee of friendship" with "The Grand Triad".

²²⁴ Cf. Notably: *Spiritual Influences and "egregors"*, chap. IV of the posthumous work *Initiation and Spiritual Realisation*.

M. Corneloup began immediately, i.e. from January 1948, his visits to the new Lodge. He wrote: "My first impressions were very favourable and encouraging. Worshipful Ivan Cerf was a master of the work. He added to his experience, his intelligence, and, to the touch of his natural qualities, the more indefinite effects emanating from his psychic aspect, marked with an ascetic touch, the traces of his expressive gaze, his noble-minded bearing²²⁵, his justly timed speech, his measured and precise gestures. From the moment he stood on the *plateau*²²⁶, everything in his attitude changed, and he took on an aspect that could be described as hierarchical²²⁷, with nothing to affect him. In all my life I have known only three people (one of them a Nun, Marjorie Debenham)²²⁸ who were so well suited to the high office of the first mallet. Ivan Cerf had this gift, and it is an important one, especially when the office is added to it. For it is an office, which a Venerable officiates".

The author was immediately won over by the seriousness and dignity of the work. The rites," he writes, "were punctually and intelligently observed, and the movements²²⁹ were carried out correctly, in the right direction and at the right pace. At the opening, the reading was given by the Speaker, from the prologue of the Gospel of St John, up to and including verse 13²³⁰. It is a text which, in its conciseness, is loaded with meaning and profound teachings, a text which we can rightly describe as initiatory²³¹ and which had its place in a Lodge such as "The Great Triad" of those times claimed to be: it created an atmosphere. It could have been the beginning of the formation of this *egregore*, which would have fully justified the attempt; but I regret to say that, in my presence, it never manifested itself. But wasn't this expecting the impossible?"

Let us continue our reading: "The quality of the work went hand in hand with that of the ritual²³². The average intellectual level of the members was certainly above that of the generality of the Lodges. Several Brothers possessed a real and wide-ranging culture. Thus, the subjects discussed were intelligently dealt with and the debates that followed were pertinent and courteous, thanks also to the exact discipline observed. Such a set of qualities could only seduce and, from the very first meetings, I was won over in the hope of being convinced. Alas, this did not happen, even though, during the whole time of my attendance, the general interest did not bend, which was not a bad thing.

* * *

²²⁵ In his psychic appearance Yvan Cerf was shockingly reminiscent of the American Mackey, whose portrait is reproduced at the beginning of the first volume of his Masonic encyclopaedia.

²²⁶ In French Freemasonry, the name "plateau" is given to the altar of the Venerable and the small tables before the Officers' chairs.

²²⁷ We have understood him to compare him to an "Egyptian *epopte*", and we are only half satisfied with this. Ivan Cerf, of Jewish descent, evoked rather the prophets of Israel, in whose words he was sometimes passionate.

²²⁸ This Sister, who signed herself "M.C.D.", was editor of the English magazine *The Speculative Mason*.

²²⁹ More ordinarily said, "circuambulations" or "journeys".

²³⁰ Here, M. Corneloup's recollections are faulty. At the beginning, this prologue was read up to verse 18; it is the new Guenonian initiates who have obtained that this reading stops at 14 (and not 13), inclusive. Those who report themselves to the sacred text will understand the universal scope of this modification.

²³¹ Yes, and that it even has a universal scope, if, at least, we limit it to verse 14.

²³² In accordance with the usage of many French Masons, the author calls Lodge discussions "work". In reality, the real initiatory work is the performance of the ritual.

There is one very important point that M. Corneloup omits to mention in his praise of "The Great Triad": the large number of visitors that their works attracted. As a rule, at each meeting, the number of visitors exceeded the number of members. On some days the crowds were so large that several attendees had to stand. Ivan Cerf had decided, with general approval, not to suspend the work during the holiday period. In spite of this, the quorum necessary for the opening of the work was never insufficient, and the number of Brothers present in the columns was always more than honourable⁽²³³⁾.

In our opinion, the "success" of "The Great Triad" was due to the interest that a correct exposition of the Guenonian doctrine and its application to the Real Art presented to the audience. The universality and "permanent topicality" of this doctrine made it possible to deal with problems of practically unlimited diversity²³⁴.

It is not our intention to explain our recollections of "The Great Triad": a whole volume would not suffice. After the preceding remarks on the foundation of the Lodge and on the interest of its work, we will now confine ourselves to giving our personal opinion on two incidents reported by M. Corneloup, and which have been linked to the bodily qualifications of the recipients and to the practice of exotericism.

The first of these incidents involved the more or less rigorous observation of the *landmark* concerning the psychic qualifications of candidates. A fairly elderly Mason, who had lost an arm in the First World War, applied for membership of "The Grand Triad" and was rejected. He considered his mutilation to be the cause of this event, and the matter caused a lot of noise. M. Corneloup disapproved of the attitude taken by the Lodge on this occasion.

Among the arguments he puts forward, some - of a purely sentimental nature - have nothing to do with what happened. Others are worthy of examination. It is clear, for example, that the *landmark* which excludes from Masonry any person affected by a serious bodily impairment, applies only to laymen seeking initiation. But a Mason who loses an arm, subtracts Mason. And furthermore, if a Lodge, ignoring the *landmarks*, or disregarding them, initiates a mutilated layman, this initiation is, possibly, illicit in the eyes of Masonic orthodoxy, but it is, nevertheless, an effective initiation. Such was the case of the Brother whose initiation has just been refused by "The Grand Triad".

It is known that before the remodelling due to "Vatican II", the impediments to ordination were practically the same as the Masonic disqualifications. A mutilated man could not become a priest. But a priest who lost an arm was still a priest, participating in the ministry of the One to whom the words of the psalm apply: "*Thou art sacerdos in*

²³³ The scourge of Masonic abstinence (*non-attendance in Loge*, as the English-speaking Freemasons say), was always unknown in "The Grand Triad".

²³⁴ In the course of a discussion on the future of mankind, M...f., having made a statement on the extent of deserts, M. Corneloup objected to him that we must be wary of statistics, which very often say what they want. He was right on this last point. But we know that he had to become less optimistic than at the time, when he was nourished by the beautiful illusions about "the mornings that sang", a strictly legitimate legacy of the "joyful way of our destinies", very fashionable in the 1930s.

eternum". We even believe that, if a mutilated man had been ordained by a dissenting Church (such as the Church of Utrecht, born of the Jansenist schism), such an ordination would have been considered by Rome as effective⁽²³⁵⁾.

The objections raised by M. Corneloup are not without foundation. But it is obviously an indispensable right for a Lodge to be the master of its recruitment. At the end of his argument, M. Corneloup, let it be understood that there was undoubtedly another reason which prevented him from affiliation. "The unfortunate candidate, he says, was a disciple of Oswald Wirth. I have often wondered whether this quality had not prejudiced him in the eyes of the strictly observant Guenonians, who dismissed my old Master because of what they called his moralistic plan" (pg. 105, #2).

To tell the truth, it was not only his "moralistic plan" that the Guenonians had the right to "reproach" Wirth for. There was something even more serious. Wirth is the inventor of the expression "playing at ritual" which he used with all the idea, notably, to criticise Anglo-American Masonic practice. Now, for Guénon, ritual is not something to be played at. Ritual is the very *raison d'être* and essence of Freemasonry. Those who think otherwise are too numerous to consider that they are the only ones to hold the truth. But a Lodge which prides itself on being a Guenonian Lodge has the right - M. Corneloup is right. Corneloup would certainly be right to dismiss from its bosom a postulant for membership who separates himself from it on such an essential point.

* * *

The second type of "disturbance" of which M. Corneloup speaks, was caused by a problem which, for our part, we think was prematurely dealt with. Corneloup, was provoked by a problem, which, for our part, we think was prematurely dealt with; that of the practice of exotericism by the Freemasons. This is what led Guénon to write his article entitled "Necessity of traditional exotericism"²³⁶.

About the same time, a dignitary of the pontifical court, whose name we have forgotten, but who had the title of "master of the sacred apostolic palaces", wishing to take part in the appeasement which was taking shape between the Holy See and Freemasonry, recalled, somewhat brutally, the Roman excommunications which had been withheld for two centuries. The disturbance caused by this recollection, in some Catholics who had recently joined "The Great Triad", surprised us, and we informed Guénon of our surprise. It seemed to us that the example of Joseph de Maestre, without taking into account at all the papal excommunications, and even more with the example of the Faithful of Love, who did not hesitate to "cry" in almost identical circumstances, should have calmed the consciences of the most scrupulous.

²³⁵ Among the more obvious Old Testament characters, there are initiates, but it is worth mentioning the patriarch Jacob. This man who "liked to remain quiet in his house", had a life, so to speak, "framed" by two great journeys, the first to Mesopotamia (where he married his two sisters: Leah, the active, and Rachel, the contemplative), the second to Egypt, a journey that would have no return. The first journey is itself framed by two events, the symbolic importance of which is exceptional. On the outward journey, it is the dream about the stone of Luz-Bethel, "the house of God and the gate of heaven", during which Jacob has his famous dream about the heavenly ladder. The second event is the "crossing of the waters", Jacob's wading, after which he wrestles all night with the Angel of the Eternal, then is consecrated "strong against God" and, at the end, "marked with the sign of the letter B". The ailment that struck him and that lasted his whole life had not altered either his initiatory character conferred at Bethel, or his prophetic ministry, manifested until his , where he announced to his children "what must come after the days".

²³⁶ Included as Chapter VII in his posthumous work *Initiation and Spiritual Realisation*.

A very demonstrative case is that of the Chosen Coëns. This was a Masonic regime which admitted practically only Roman Catholics. Pasqually, however, prescribed that in order to be able to perform the "operations", the essential rite and *raison d'être* of the Chosen Coëns, one had to be in a "state of grace"⁽²³⁷⁾. It is obvious that an excommunicated person could not be in a state of grace, and this fact alone was sufficient to illustrate the case that the Chosen Coëns - and, with them, all Catholic Freemasons of the 18th century - made of the pontifical condemnations.

We would like to dwell on this last point. It is obvious that the "definition" of the state of grace, by the exoteric authority, could not be discussed as long as this authority does not exceed the limits of its competence. For example, a criminal or any other sinner in grave matter could not be admitted to the Order of the Chosen Coëns; but one excommunicated for conceptions of a metaphysical and esoteric order, coming from exotericism, would not lose the fact of being able to be in a state of grace. We express this point of view on our sole responsibility. But we must say that we have never found any other satisfactory explanation to guarantee the "spiritual security" of so many Catholic Freemasons, some of whom, like the fortunate Jean-Marie Gallot, have "signed" their fidelity to the Church of Christ with their blood²³⁸.

We pause here to comment on M. Cornéloup's account of the early years of the "Great Triad". Afterwards, Guenonians who became Freemasons and Freemasons touched by Guénon's teaching multiplied in France and Italy. Unfortunately, these elements of a possible regeneration of Freemasonry are almost always very far from each other, and rare are the Lodges in which one could count more than truly Guenonian Brother.

Could we not at least hope that, one day, permanent epistolary contact would be established between the Brothers? When the Prince of Architects fell under the blows of three perjured companions, it was as a group, and not in isolation, that the Masters set out in search of his body, which they eventually discovered under the luminous acacia. The same is true for the constant and fraternal communion which Masons of traditional spirit can expect, clearing away the obstacles of adversaries, ready to take advantage of the slightest divisions, rediscovering and reviving the spiritual treasures hidden under the symbols of the "Lost Word".

²³⁷ Cf. René Le Forestier, *Occult Freemasonry in the 18th century and the Order of the Chosen Coëns*. The success the operations depended on three conditions: the state of grace, the supernatural virtue conferred by the "ordination" of the Rose-Cross, and, finally, "the symbolic cooperation at a distance" of other Rose-Crosses (pgs. 89 to 91).

²³⁸ It seems that the Catholic Masons of the eighteenth century never raised questions concerning the legitimacy of their participation in the Sacraments. The condemnation of 1738 probably did not cause the "disturbance" that we imagine today. It is worth remembering that Operative Freemasonry in England and the *Compagnonage* in France had been the subject of repeated episcopal censure for centuries.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON SACRED ASTROLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY

M. Cornéloup does not give the impression that traditional astrology has nothing in common with a "divinatory art". In this respect, we can find many interesting reviews in the works of M. Jean Richer.

In his *Sacred Geography of the Greek World*, the author, well known in archaeological and Hellenistic circles, quotes extensively from the "remarkable studies" of René Guénon (notably, *The King of the World* and *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*), and does not hide the satisfaction he has experienced, seeing these studies "confirm" his own discoveries. He even points to "approximations, which seemed to have been made". Let us quote, for example, what he writes about the Athenian procession of the Brauronies (a word in which the root *bro* is found), where the girls were consecrated to Artemis (a word in which the author finds the root *arth*), under the name of "the bear"; and also under the "oath of the boar" (taken notably by the concurrences at the Olympic Games), and which constituted, he says, an "oath for the pole, which does not change".

This work, enriched with letters and lavishly illustrated with numerous reproductions of coins, amphorae, shield straps, temple pediments and other objets d'art, also refers to ancient texts (especially Plato and Pausanias). Taking into account the locations of the main sacred sites in Greece, the author has been able to determine certain fundamental axes, of which the main one, passing through the *omphalos* of Delphi, the Acrocorinthia and Mount Ida in Crete, "truly points to Greece and offers the image of celestial Harmony". By a series of deductions, always justified by the examination of figurative documents, he establishes that, starting from the centre of Delphi, the six directions of space, marked by the location of particularly important sacred places, are to be found on Hellenic soil: Hyperborea, Crete, Delos, Leucade, Olympus (representing the Zenith) and Cape Tenare (where there is a "mouth of hells", thus representing the Nadir). It would be impossible to summarise the multitude of facts related by the author and which are convincing. For him, "very often, monuments are more eloquent than texts, and allow us to read and understand them better". This is why he believes that "there must have been true brotherhoods of initiated sculptors, capable of giving decoration of a temple the value of a sign and that of a magical imposition".

There would still be many things to point out in this book: for example, on the changes of symbols to effect the "resolution of opposites"; on the Big Dipper, called by the astronomer Aratus "constellation of Helix"; on a verse of the *Aeneid* "in which Virgil, once again, appears as the depositary of certain secrets", etc.... But it emerges, however, from the whole of the book and with resounding evidence, that astrology is truly the key to any profound understanding of Greek architecture, sculpture, ceramics, armoury and numismatics. Certain groups of their temples "tend to form a harmonious whole, like an image of the cosmos"; and a conception of astrological order "must have presided over the choice of the location of various constructions in the great sanctuaries".

From the study of "sacred geography", which is related to "qualified space", the author moves on to the examination of sacred calendars, based on "qualitative determinations of time". It is well known that these two disciplines are the focus of "priestly art", as well as the minting of coins, the design of religious buildings and, no doubt, the establishment of traditional political institutions. This is a far cry from the childish and dangerous games of astrology, in the manner of Oswald Wirth. Jean Richer's book should be placed alongside Jean Biès's *l'Empédocle d'Agrigente* (who makes a very complimentary mention of his confrere's work); both show what can be achieved with erudition, as soon as it allows traditional data to be taken into account. And it is not surprising that this demonstration is particularly shocking in the field of Hellenic studies. The reason lies in the links that connect the Greco-Latin tradition to the great primordial Tradition of Thule, completely lost sight of in the West before Guénon drew attention to it. Jean Biès is perfectly aware of this affiliation, as is Jean Richer, who ends his work with these lines:

"From now on, we hope to have clearly shown that Greece is linked to the great traditional civilisations and that its people, deeply religious, have striven for centuries to make their territory the very image of heaven, as their hundreds of monuments attest.

To recognise on earth the "traces" of celestial "influences" in order to model the earth on the "pattern" of heaven: such was the aim of sacred geography, the immediate application of traditional astrology. By thus accomplishing the Great Hermetic Work - according to the adage of the *Tabula Smaragdina*: "what is below is as what is above" - the adepts were conscious of collaborating in the realisation of the divine plan for the world; a realisation which responds to the demand formulated in the prayer common to all cults: "May Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven".

* * *

In his review of Xavier Guichart's work entitled *Eleusis-Alésia*, Guénon (in 1938) revealed as particularly interesting the fact that the loops, referred to and called by the author *alesiens*, were regularly arranged on certain radiating lines, describing the circle of a centre, and going from one end of Europe to the other". We could not help but think of Guichart's work when reading the book by Jean Richer, which appeared in 1970, and which is the continuation of his monumental *Sacred Geography of the Greek World*. In this study of three of the main religious centres of the ancient world, it is, in fact, continually a question of the radiant lines around the main or subaltern centres. Certainly, M. Richer's discoveries do not show certain reservations that Guénon had formulated about Guichart's (notably, about the role of "centre" attributed, by the latter, to the *Poupet* world). But *Eleusis-Alésia* remains the first attempt, made by a contemporary author, to restore certain elements of this "sacred geography", which Guénon said was, "among the ancient traditional sciences, one of those whose restitution would give rise, today, to the greatest

totally irretrievable difficulties" (*Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*, pg. 163).

In *Delphos, Delos and Cumes*, the author explains (pgs.14 and 15) the truly strange circumstances, which occurred at the origin of the discoveries, that led him to write his *Sacred Geography*. We quote them:

"I had asked myself a precise question: why does the traveller, arriving from Athens at Delphi, find, at the entrance to the sacred place, a shrine of Athena? The answer came in a dream of a Spring morning. A statue of Apollo... appeared to me, with its back turned, then slowly pivoted 180 degrees clockwise until it was facing me. In the next few minutes, I applied the method advocated in the *Timée*.... All I needed was a map of Greece, a square and a compass to interpret the dream. Did I have to do something for the geometrical gods? Still half asleep, I took the first map of Greece that fell into my hands. I traced the Delphi-Athens line, Oh, surprise! Prolonged, I arrived at Delos [Apollo's birthplace], and, naturally, I knew the story of the Virgins venerated at Delos. The discovery had been made, but, in order to draw the consequences, I lacked some years of reflection and research. It was only two years later, when I had gathered dozens and hundreds of facts and concordant observations, that I began to take it seriously and to dream of exploiting it..."

M. Richer shot his straights well and drew his fences well, during the years of which he speaks. But the result was truly surprising. His book cannot be summarised, as it is based on maps and reproductions of figurative monuments. We will limit ourselves, therefore, to pointing out a few points where the author makes a very appreciable contribution to the traditional theses. But we cannot refrain from mentioning one regret. The author sometimes gives the impression that he is only addressing himself to specialists in Hellenic studies. Some additional explanations could have made his work accessible to a large part of his readers. For example, it is probable that the Virgins venerated at Delos were of Hyperborean origin; and we should have liked to have all possible indications about the "theory", this sacred vessel which the Athenians, every four years, sent every May, and with great pomp, to celebrate, at Delos, the ritual games.

Among the great number of meridian axes (North-South) and parallels (East-West) that are studied in this work, many must have a particular importance. Thus, the meridian of Delos passes, to the north, through Mount Haemus in Thrace (where Borée lived in a cave) and, to the south, through the oasis of Ammon, where there is a famous oracle proclaiming Alexander the son of Zeus (i.e. "the new Dionysios" and son of thunder) and which marks the western limit of the Macedonian conquests. M. Richer sees this axis, Mont Haemus-Delos-Ammon, as having a solstitial character, in relation to the "world tree". He reproduces a relief, preserved in the museum of Delos, which depicts the serpent coiled around the Omphales and flanked by two trees.

Regardless of what constitutes the domain of your own searches, M. Richer provides, on many points, "judgements" in which he shows the independence of his spirit and which, at times, make a happy contrast with certain somewhat "conformist" opinions. Let us quote a few remarkable passages.

"We live in a rather strange age, where there are serious commentators on Plato, who mock a rather naive author for believing in divination by dreams, and who suppose him to be politically cautious or calculating, because, in the *Timée* and *Phaedra*, he has agreed his moral caution to the Delphic oracles (pg.13).... The modern mentality does not allow us to understand [certain] phenomena.... We are always ready to look for tricks, tricks of the trade, and to suppose that the ancients were more naive than we are. What exactly took place at the Delphi *mantéion*, what exactly the initiations of Samothrace and Eleusis consisted of, are two questions to which we will probably never have a complete answer". Then, M. Richer writes: "The symbolism used by Homer was based on astrology, because the initiates of Delphi, Eleusis, Samothrace, knew this language, and by adopting it, the aedo was sure that it was understood only by an elite. In these distant times, it was known that nothing was obtained without pain, and that the medullary bone must be broken before the substantial marrow could be sucked out.

The author gives numerous indications about the rites observed by the Greeks in founding their "colonies"; this reminds us of what Guénon wrote about the construction of ancient cities. The Greeks, before founding a colony, consulted the oracle of Delphi and the answer given (which specified the place where the new city was to be built) was preserved with the greatest care. M. Richer wrote: "Concerning the role played by the Delphic oracle in the foundation of cities, M. P. Amandry has pointed out that the fact that the text of the ancient oracles is apocryphal proves nothing against the authenticity of an intervention of the oracle. For our part, we would even say that an oracle fabricated *a posteriori* is almost more convenient than an authentic oracle, as far as the symbolic connection with Delphi is concerned" _Such an indication seems to us to be very fair and could be applied to other fields of sacred science and, first of all, to the interpretation of scriptural texts_, and the advocates of the famous "historical method" should cover their faces with horror. It is, in short, the question of the relationship between "truth" and "authenticity".

Let us cite still other interesting indications: "As if the idea of radiant whiteness, evoking what should be the purity of the candidate for initiation, were inseparable from the debut of the zodiacal cycle, all the ties symbolically linked to the vernal point, bear a name where the radical *Leuké* appears". The author illustrates his indication with a considerable number of references, going from *Leukai* (young initiated daughters of Aptère, in Crete, who practised ritual diving in the sea) on the rocks of Leucade (famous for the death of Sappho) and on the island of Leuké, at the mouth of the Danube (where Archille was transported after his death, having lived in a mysterious way). He even mentions that "at the extremity of the coast of Ireland, situated at the latitude of the Isle of Man (*omphalos* of the British Isles), is the island of Achelle". Such concordances are truly curious. M. Richey's survey, as we can see, goes far beyond the purely Hellenic picture. "Everything happens, he says, as if astrology had constituted the common denominator of the ancient religions (which explains, if one thinks, that it represents the extra-human or surhuman element) and as if there had been, among the clerics of the various religions, a tacit or explicit agreement, as to the directing lines and the constitution of the zone of influence and radiation, of each great religious centre" (pgs. 210 and 211).

We even think that the various "clerics" would have as a basis of agreement not only astrology, but above all metaphysics. Here is another point of interest. "The origin of the whole system of traditional centres, writes the author, seems to have been Babylon; from there, it went to Tushpa, capital of the kingdom of Ourartou, on the southern shore of Lake Van [a state which was, around the first millennium AD, in constant struggle with Assyria]. Tushpa is situated on the meridian of Assur and Nineveh, and on the parallel of Milid (capital of the kingdom of the Hittites, the Héthéens of the Bible), Sardis and Delphi. The very name of the Hittite capital, "Milid or Milidia", meant the middle; it is today's "Malatya" (pg. 211).

M. Richer, in referring to the importance of the *Omphalos* of Sardis (capital of Lydia), does not forget to point out that, according to Herodotus and Titus-Live, the Etruscans (who transmitted their religion to the Romans) were of Lydian origin. Moreover, the Lydians taught the Greeks of Asia Minor the art of minting coins and, most probably, the symbolism of coin decoration and the rules governing the choice of the signs that adorned them". Speaking, in this connection, of the Delphic oracles consulted by the Lydian king Créus, the answers to which Herodotus has preserved for us ("You will destroy a great empire" and "When a mule will be king of the Medes..."), M. Richey points out: "This step was, in a way, normal, if we consider that the Delphic oracle was the legitimate successor of an ancient oracle, which had its seat in Sardis, where, let us remember, Omphale had reigned in the time of Herakles" (pg. 213). Here, we are surprised that the author does not go further in examining the symbolic correspondences. Indeed, Heracles, "freed" from slavery, by Omphale, handcuffed her; and it is said that, having put on the queen's dress, he spun the wool at her feet, while Omphale, covered with the skin of the Lion of Némée, wielded the hero's mace. Here we have, in particular, an example that speaks of "hierogamic change": access to the *omphalos* (i.e. the centre) immediately implies the "resolution of opposites", symbolised here by the sacred wedding, as the Hermetic Rebbis might have been. It should also be noted that the distaff (held in the left hand) and the mace (held in the right) are both axial symbols that play, vis-a-vis the Herakles-Omphale couple, the same role as the two trees flanking the untied *omphalos*, and the crosses of the two thieves on either side of Christ's cross.

But we would never finish revealing all the details that sharpen the interest of any reader familiar with the science of symbolism. We read, for example: "The Greeks seem to have considered (and, in this, the Romans also imitated them) that the occupation of a country implies, first, the taking possession of the salient points or zodiacal lines which cut the coasts". It is probable that many other peoples (possibly all ancient peoples) acted in the same way; and this way of acting was sometimes followed right up to the Middle Ages. Guénon, and later Coomaraswamy, have spoken of an ancient Icelandic text, which expounded the rules of "taking possession of the land". M. Richer very happily exposes "the deep mystical meaning" of such ways of acting, which constitute an "immense collective work, followed for two millennia, by theocratically governed peoples: it is a question of divinising the surface of the earth occupied by men, of making it resemble the sky, of making, in short, an immense *mandala*" (pg. 213).

Throughout his work, the author alludes to the "persistence, through the centuries, of prehistoric religion" _ perhaps it would be more accurate to say: of Tradition.

primordial. He explains, by arguments which seem convincing to us, the site of the alignments of Carnac and the name of the gulf of Lion; he thinks that Glastonbury and Stonehenge correspond to the *enceinte* (*pregnancy*?) and the temple of the Hyperboreans, of which Diodorus of Sicily has left us the description. But we could ask ourselves whether the author's thesis also applied outside the "polytheistic" world, and whether Jerusalem, this city common to the three "aspects" of the monotheistic tradition, is also in a linear relationship with the religious centres of the "Gentiles". Extending the axis linking Jerusalem to Delphi, we arrive at Mediolanum (Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire), which was the *omphalos* of the Gauls. Thus, the spiritual centres of the three great traditions (Celtic, Hellenic and Judeo-Christian), which are the origin of traditional Western civilisation, are located on the same axis. Such an observation is obviously of great importance.

M. Richer, through numerous conclusions which his discoveries have led him to draw, emphasises: "We are obliged to conclude that, even if the ancients did not possess very good maps, they had a precise and exact idea of the configuration of the coasts and the respective situations of the capes and islands". Guénon (*op. cit.*, pg. 160) went much further, and thought that the ancients must have known precisely the true dimensions of the terrestrial sphere". He mentions that, for Xavier Guichart, "the knowledge possessed by the geographers of classical antiquity, such as Strabon and Ptolémée, far from being the result of their own discoveries, represented nothing more than the remains of a much older, even prehistoric science, the greater part of which was then lost".

Guichart had also insisted on the "distance markers", which can be located on the "itineraries *alesiens*", where they are arranged at fixed intervals, whose measure is in relation to the Greek stadium, the Roman mile and the Gallic league (cf. Guénon, *op. cit.*, pg. 160). This is one of the most important questions. Indeed, this regularity in distances, which expresses a kind of spatial rhythm, was to play, in sacred geography, absolutely the same role as the temporal rhythms, expressed by the doctrine of cycles, play in traditional history. Sacred geography, based (like astrology and alchemy) on symbolism, must be, like symbolism, an "exact science". It would be useful for the following research to be carried out in this respect. The researches that Guichart had pursued throughout his life, "with the joy, he tells us, of unexpected discoveries", could they not be confronted with the large number of facts established by M. Richer? The latter wrote in the conclusion of his work: "The day when specialists take the trouble to read us, we will see the examples multiply, and either obscure texts or legendary writings will become relatively clear".

Some of the "distance markers" identified by Guichart still bear names such as Millièrs, Myon, etc., which evoke the idea of the "middle". It is the same for the Mild of the Hittites and the Médiolanum of the Gauls. Moreover, Tolède, which M. Richar finds in one of his main axes, brings to mind Thulé; and Could we not also reproach this last word for Delos and Delphi? Thulé and Delos are both "centres" and "lands of stability", with the difference that Delos, the centre of a "derived" tradition, was first a wandering island before being "stabilised" in the centre of Cyclades. To put it in passing, the symbolism of Latone who, about to give birth, is pursued by the serpent Python and must take refuge on Delos, where she delivers Diana (the moon) and Apollo (the sun) to the world,

is very close to the Woman of the Apocalypse "clothed with the sun" and standing on the moon, who "cries out in travail", gives birth to a son and, pursued by the "Red Dragon", must take refuge in the desert. In both cases, it is the manifestation "in pain" of a new tradition, particular in the Greek myth, universal in the apocalyptic symbolism. And if we were to object that St Bernard formally assimilated *the Mulier amicta sole* to the Virgin Mary, it would be easy to reply that this only confirms the interpretation given above: it is well known that, in the Catholic liturgy, Mary is constantly identified with Eternal Wisdom.

We hope to have shown, from the two works of M. Richer, that true astrology cannot be assimilated to a "divinatory art", and that the principles and applications of this traditional science are intimately linked, notably, to sacred geography.

CHAPTER X

RITUAL ISSUES

René Guénon has never ceased to denounce the expression "playing at ritual", invented by Oswald Wirth, to criticise the behaviour of Anglo-Saxon Lodges, for whom, in fact, Masonic "work" consists first and foremost in the performance of rites²³⁹. Wirth, in fact, like many French Masons, thought that the real initiatory work consisted in the "plates", i.e. in the pompously qualified competitions of "architectural nibbles", where the Brethren, appointed in turn for the fortnightly service, debate, no matter what, on subjects, most of the time, alien to any idea of initiation.

If a plate, when it deals with symbolism, initiatory technique or "sacred" history, has its place in the Lodge, all that remains is the real Masonic work, which is the execution of the ritual. Guénon always answered with precision when questioned on this point, and deplored the mania of French Freemasons to proceed to the "modernisation of rituals". In this chapter, we would like to explain the doctrine of this Master in this matter.

Of the three regular rites in use in France (Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, French or Modern Rite, Rectified Rite), the first was his favourite, and among the many versions of this Rite, he particularly appreciated that of the "Thébah" Lodge, a workshop to which he had belonged²⁴⁰. He even recommended using this version as the basis for the truly initiatory rituals which, after the Second World War, he was asked to perform in France, Italy and an Arabic-speaking country at the same time.

²³⁹ Oswald Wirth explained an anecdote taken from Rudyard Kipling's Masonic tales. A London Freemason spent every evening in the Lodge, successively touring all the innumerable workshops of the English capital. Another impenitent visitor asked him: what charms could he find, repeating 365 days a year the same formulas? The questioner replied: "I await the faults". Knowing the Ritual by heart, he took the evil pleasure, when the time came, of pointing out to the Lodge Officers, after the work was done, the mistakes they had made. Possibly, this was not the means of penetrating into the deeper meaning of the ritual. But, after all, when you are English, you have the right to be original.

²⁴⁰ The fame of the rite of the "Thébah" is such that many texts circulate under this name which have absolutely nothing in common with the authentic ritual. The latter is not difficult to know, since it appears, in *Apprentice*, in an anti-Masonic work which made a great deal of noise before the first war: it is *The Spiritual Treachery of Freemasonry*, by Marquis-Rivière. It is worth noting that "Thébah" had re-established the office of the Deacons and that his ritual did not involve the reading of the prologue to the Gospel according to John at the opening of the work at all. It should be noted that the Thébah ritual is a simplification of a Scottish ritual from the First Empire, which contained certain elements that "Thébah" has not retained. For example, at the opening, the "circulation of the word of passage"; and, at the reception of the 1st degree, the "labyrinthine march" of the recipient, before his introduction into the Temple. Let us also mention René Guénon's three slight reservations about this ritual: for example, that the Venerable should not uncover himself when he pronounces the name of the Great Architect of the Universe. According to Guénon, if the Venerable must always remain covered, it is because he is always supposed to be working in the Master's degree, and that, this last degree, having a marked Hebraic character, everything (as in the religious rites of the Jews) must be done with the head covered. And he advised the suppression, in the course of the reception of the first degree, of the corpse covered with a bloody apron, which symbolises death to the profane state. Guénon said that this was a rather theatrical accessory".

For Guénon, when a Rite is chosen, its "characteristics", i.e. the signs, sacred words, marches, ritual ages, batteries and other things listed in the "*tuileurs*", must be rigorously preserved. Next, all "modernising" innovations, in general, easily recognisable, must be eliminated²⁴¹. Having concluded this, it is perfectly legitimate to introduce ritualistic elements, whose traditional character is recognised, even if they are taken from rites other than the one being worked on. Let us give some examples.

To the French formula "To the Glory of the Great Architect of the Universe", Guénon advised substituting the English formula: "In the Name of the Great Architect of the Universe". Moreover, instead of working in the three blue degrees under the invocation of the Great Architect, he considered it preferable to place the second degree under that of the Great Geometer of the Universe and the third degree under that of the Very High.

Another borrowing Guénon advised to make from the English rituals is that of the "Readings". These are much more developed instructions than the French "catechisms". They consist of 7 sections for the first degree, 5 for the second and 3 for the third. In the form of questions and answers, they deal with commentaries on the symbols and also on certain texts of the Scriptures. Guénon advised to adopt them and to eliminate their moralising character in favour of their initiatory significance. We also thought that there would be room for introducing the main facts of the "traditional history" of Freemasonry and, above all, of the "legend of the Craft", bringing out its spiritual significance.

Finally, Guénon fully approved of the introduction into French rituals of an English usage peculiar to the third degree. It is the "promulgation of the signs substituted" for that of "Most Respected Master" representing King Solomon, and which declares "that henceforth signs of recognition between Master Masons will be used throughout the land, as long as time and circumstances permit the original signs to be restored". These are terms in which it is useless to underline their importance.

Modern-minded Masons, who boast of being in the vanguard of Progress, will no doubt wonder what interest there can be in restoring the old formulas, the meaning of which is no longer understood. They are right: from this point of view, it is no longer of any interest. Traditional Masons, and especially Guenonian Masons, know that these archaic formulas can never be "out of date", for they are fully imbued with "spiritual influences", they constitute a "jargon", that is to say, the true "sacred language" of Freemasonry, and to forget them definitively would be an act of exceptional gravity. On the contrary, they should be given "strength and vigour", for this "concentration" (this "reintegration") of the "dispersed" elements of language, i.e. of the Masonic "verb", is a necessary condition for the discovery of the "lost Word".

* * *

²⁴¹ What to think, for example, of a ritual in which, when the Venerable asks: "What time is it?", the person questioned, looking at his , replies: 20 hours, 47 minutes? The expression "charitable funds" replacing "Widow's trunk" is not bad either. We could never finish pointing out errors, generally due to ignorance of the most elementary principles of symbolism, such as that which sometimes causes the "Lodge Pictures" to be suspended on the walls of the Temple, when the orientation of these pictures is precisely indicated, so that they are situated in the centre of the Lodge, where the "sacred ground" appears.

If the works dealing with the history of Freemasonry are numerous, the same is not true of the works devoted to its ritual and symbolism. The work of René Guénon surpasses all others in this field. An Italian, Arturo Reghini, has given brilliant studies, unfortunately often limited to numerical and geometrical symbolism. An English Mason, John-T. Lawrence, has published some works which, in England, have become "classics" of Masonic studies²⁴². Charles Clyde Hunt has given the *Grand Lodge Bulletin* of Iowa numerous articles, collected in 1938 under the title *Masonic Symbolism*²⁴³. And, more recently, manuals devoted to the first four degrees of the Scottish Rite have appeared in the Spanish language; works which, to put it bluntly, are far superior to the analogous works of Oswald Wirth, in of symbolism and ritual²⁴⁴. We propose to examine certain aspects which have attracted our attention.

In the Manual of the Apprentice Degree, for example, we find, in the letter B, as the first "cosmological" letter, considerations which recall in a special way what René Guénon has written about this letter, the first letter of *Bereshit* (the word with which Genesis begins, and also the Gospel according to St. John, translated into Hebrew). "Magister" emphasises that the Hebrew B is the letter *beth*, and that the word *beth* means "house". The Hebrew form of the letter *beth* is, moreover, considered to be a hieroglyph for the Temple. But one could have added certain considerations about Boaz himself, for the Bible states that he "built the house of Israel for the second time", and of whom it was said: "Manifest strength in Ephrathah, make a name in Bethlehem". Nor should it be forgotten that Christ's earthly life begins in Bethlehem, i.e. in the "house of bread".

Let us turn now to the second degree. Everyone agrees that this is the least rich of the three symbolic degrees; the least rich and also the one that has been the worst treated by the "modernisers" to the hilt. And yet the author has found the means to give us, on this disinherited degree, a volume of 220 dense and interesting pages, and, in short, worthy of the first. First of all, he is to be unreservedly praised for having passed completely under silence, the 5 famous "Philosophers" who, in certain rituals, have taken the place of the station between Heaven and Earth.

What the author says about the "nobility of work" is comparable to the studies of Coomaraswamy and Eric Gill, of which René Guénon has given an abundant account in *Traditional Studies* in 1938 and 1939, and also to the well-known passage of St. Paul in the two Epistles to the Thessalonians (III, 6-18). Let us mention in passing that this scriptural text is used in the opening of a Chapter of the "Holy Royal Ark", according to the version from the Grand Lodge of "Ancients". At the most solemn moment of the opening of the work, the "Grand Father" reads this text from the Bible, and all the Companions then form the "catenary ark".

²⁴² Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, pgs. 301 to 305.

²⁴³ Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. I, pgs. 144 to 145.

²⁴⁴ Here are the titles of these four Works: *The Apprentice's Manual*; *The Companion's Manual*; *The Master's Manual*; *The Secret Master's Manual*. These four volumes were published in Buenos Aires (Editorial Kier). The Author is designated under the pseudonym of "Magister".

The considerations of "Magister" in this respect are concluded by excellent indications on the "active" attitude, indispensable for access to mastery, and on the dangers of the reverse, i.e. "passive" attitude. "The active being acts *freely*, whatever the circumstances; the passive being is a *slave* to chance. And, in conclusion, it is precisely for this reason that *everything* in the initiate must be the fruit of a "ritual choice" (almost in the alchemical sense of the term) and *nothing* the consequence of "chance" (or rather of what we see from the earth as chance), for the recipient must be "born free".

The volume devoted to the Master's degree is possibly the least rejected of the four, for the author, leaning exclusively on the Scottish ritual, leaves out the many important symbols found in Anglo-American rituals, such as the "light of the Master Mason", the "visible darkness", the skylight, the torn veil, the rolled stone, the ark, the manna (the *basket*?), the dew, the incense cup, the lily, the beehive (the frowning ruffle?), the beehive (the frowning ruffle?), the dew, the incense cup, the beehive (the frowning ruffle?), and the bee-hive (the frowning ruffle?).), the dew, the incense cup, the laya, the beehive (the *ruffled* frill?). However, in this work on the 3rd degree, we find interesting notions, in particular on the "accusation of murder", retrogradation, the "mysterious march of the masters", the "traces" of Hiram-Abi's flight in the Temple, the obligations of the oath, the Master's cord, sublimation and, above all, Tubalcaïn. Let us also note that "Magister" has seen the importance of the "restitution of metals", the favourite work of the Great Master Hiram-Abi, "who made for King Solomon the two pillars of bronze and the sea of bronze". By this restitution, the metals cease to symbolise the vices, and henceforth symbolise the virtues; pride gives way to faith, etc...

The fourth volume of Magister deals with the degree of "Secret Master", the first degree of the "Lodges of Perfection". The author, considering that the 30 High Degrees of the Scottish Rite are in fact reduced to far fewer (the greater number being conferred simply "by communication"), deplors the fact that a large number of sometimes important symbols are thus practically eliminated from Masonic teaching. To remedy this, he proposes to reduce the number of High Degrees to 9, and to distribute the entire symbolic treasure of the Order. But in this way, the number 33, so eminently symbolic in itself, would disappear. It would be more judicious, we think, to recite, to each of the degrees conferred in their rituelic fullness, the "points of order" of preceding degrees, given by communication: the oral symbolism of these degrees would thus be safeguarded; as for their figurative symbolism, as it would not be a question of gathering together in a workshop, all the "Lodge pictures" of the preceding degrees, Could we not substitute the coats of arms of these degrees? Each Scottish degree has, in fact, harmonies which, at the present time, appear only in the workshop of the Supreme Council²⁴⁵. (245)²⁴⁶. It would be good to be aware of the degrees concerned, especially if we reflect on the importance of the knightly heritage in the Ancient and Accepted Rite

²⁴⁵ A friend of Guénon's, André Lebey, a high dignitary of the Grand Orient of France, has published, under the title of *The Masonic Blazon*, a compendium of the harmonies of the 33 degrees of Scotism, accompanying each one with a commentary in sonnet form. "A flawless sonnet is equivalent to a long poem..." Yes. Yes. But André Lebey's *The Masonic Blazon*, has 33 sonnets, not just one, wow! it is flawless.

²⁴⁶ Guénon has pointed out the relations of the "heroic art" (i.e., the science of blazon), with the "royal art" (i.e., Hermeticism). Cf. *Dante's Esotericism*, chapter III. The harmonies of the 32nd degree of the Scottish Rite, a degree of which Guénon has spoken at length in the chapter of *The Great Triad*, entitled "The City of the Willows", are figured on the cover of the present work.

Magister, according to the solution he proposes, studies in his volume on the "Secret Master", the symbols proper to the following degrees, and, notably, to the 5th degree: "Perfect Master", where the formula is found: "The Perfect Master knows the circle and its square". Then come the considerations on the tomb of Hiram, the transfer of the body, the laurel and the olive tree, the key, the centre point of the circle, the eye, the *tetraktys*, and finally the Kabbalistic symbols so numerous in the "perfection" degrees: the tree of the *Sephiroth*, the ark of the covenant, the seven-branched candelabrum, the ten commandments.

We do not know whether the South American Supreme Councils have followed up on these bold suggestions by the "Magister". Probably not. However, this author was well aware of the fact that, according to the well-known formula, "it is not in the power of anyone to make innovations in the body of Freemasonry". And his proposals aim, not at "modernising the rituals" - which is the worst kind of innovation - but, on the contrary, at maintaining or re-establishing the elements of Masonic "work" that have been abandoned or simply forgotten.

*
* *

The works of the "Magister" of which we have just spoken are the expression of a desire to return to the Masonic tradition. Such propositions cannot be assimilated with the real forgeries that constitute the Works of Anderson and Willermoz. Before concluding this chapter, we would like to mention two practices, the first of which has disappeared, the other of which is tending to spread in France, and which we can consider, if not as a rite in the full sense of the word, then at least as perfectly legitimate and even worthwhile practices.

Guénon spoke of the "Masonic code" and commented on the first article²⁴⁷. We have several versions of this code, which are all the diminutions, not to say moralising degenerations, of what must have been originally an "aide-memoire" of the initiatory method of Freemasonry, and had to be given to the neophytes after communicating to them the symbols of the Order, which constitute its doctrine²⁴⁸. Even if what has come down to us of this text is no more than a "vestige", it would probably be a good thing to preserve it (which could also become a germ) until time and circumstances allow it to be restored to the fullness of its original "efficacy"²⁴⁹.

After a few years, several French Lodges adopted the habit, at the end of the opening of the work, of reading the prologue of the Gospel according to John. This reading was done with a certain solemnity, the two Deacons (or, failing that, the

²⁴⁷ Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, "On the Great Architect of the Universe".

²⁴⁸ Every complete tradition (and also every initiation) involves both a doctrine (often symbolised by a cup) and a method (also often represented by a weapon: spear or sword).

²⁴⁹ Some "traces" of this initiatory method remain in the Code. Let us cite, for example, the admonition to "make, each day, a new progress in the art of Freemasonry" (the English Masons also knew this formula) and the advice to read assiduously the "Book of the Sacred Law and the writings of the ancient Sages". It should also be noted that the debut of the Code: "First of all, honour the Great Architect of the Universe by rendering him the worship due to him", is somewhat reminiscent of the principle of the *Vers Dorés*: "Always begin by rendering to the immortal gods the worship prescribed by law". The *Vers Dorés* are also an affable and moralising echo of the secret teaching of Pythagoras.

The Master of Ceremonies and the Master of Ceremonies) made, over the reader's head, a mock "vault of steel". There is nothing undesirable in this, except that, at the end of their lives, the Brethren will know the prologue in question by heart, without ever having heard in Lodge of the many passages of initiatory resonance, of the Gospel of John, of the other Gospels, and, in general, of all the sacred Books²⁵⁰. John -T. Lawrence has made a suggestion which seems to us much more judicious²⁵¹. Recalling that, in the English ritual, the Venerable, at the close of the work, asks three times if a Brother has anything to propose "for the good of the Order in general or of the workshop in particular", and that, ordinarily, no one says a word, he advises that an Officer should ask for a passage from the Book of the Sacred Law to be read. If we mention this proposition of Lawrence, it is because, in all traditional civilisations, the Holy Books have been regarded as the expression of divine Wisdom. In Latin countries, where the same request of the Venerable exists (but formulated only once and, ordinarily, without reply), this rite is followed by the formation of the "chain of union" (expression of the communal strength of the Brothers), then by the circulation of the Widow's trunk (manifestation of her charity, which is the theological virtue, corresponding to beauty). It can be seen that Lawrence's proposition, in accordance with the usages of the Latin Lodges, constitutes a solemn homage to the ternary: "Wisdom, Strength, Beauty", a homage which is perfectly "in place" at the close of the work, and which, no doubt, really existed in a more or less remote epoch²⁵².

We shall confine ourselves here to these reflections on rituals, which, in short, constitute the spoken symbolism, the "oral tradition" of Freemasonry. This oral symbolism has been much more abused over the years than figurative symbolism, because, transmitted, in principle, by word of mouth, it has often fallen victim to the incomprehension of the transmitters. But for anyone who wishes, in the school of René Guénon, the rigorous rules of this exact science, which is universal symbolism, have been learned, leaving no doubt that these sometimes altered words, these enigmatic formulae and these seemingly implausible legends, are the vestiges, gentle but always living, of a sublime doctrine and an effective method, inspired by a non-human Wisdom⁽²⁵³⁾.

²⁵⁰ At the end of the third volume of his *Masonic Encyclopaedia*, Mackey gives a long list of scriptural texts applicable to Freemasonry. And this list is far from complete.

²⁵¹ Lawrence's works deal with symbolism and ritual and are: *Highways and By _ Ways of Freemasonry* et *Side _ lights on Freemasonry*.

²⁵² Freemasonry, being open to men of all religions, necessarily means that, to use an expression of René Guénon, "the Bible, on the altar of the Worshipful, represents all the sacred texts of all peoples". Consequently, if, during the course of a meeting, a member (or even simply a visiting Brother) from an exoteric religion other than Christian exotericism were present in the Lodge, there would be no objection (and it would even be an act of simple curiosity) to have a passage read at the closing (preferably with an initiatory theme) taken from the Scriptures proper to the religion of this Brother. Here again, it seems that the approach advocated by Lawrence leads to something different.

²⁵³ This character of "exact science", always recognised by Guénon in true symbolism, is particularly recognisable, as we know, in the Hebrew Kabbala, which has speculated indefinitely on the number of the most important words of the Thora (for example, on the word "covenant") and, above all, on the numerical value of these words. As far as the New Testament is concerned, which is not written in a sacred language, it is rather curious that it is especially the Protestants who have been concerned with research of the same kind, but only on the number of words; and they have achieved rather shocking results. And in the "sacred poem" which is the *Divine Comedy*, Luigi Valli has discovered that the number of certain important words, from an esoteric point of view (such as the word "Madness", antithesis of the word "Wisdom"), is always a sacred number. In the ancient Catholic liturgy, the number of "signs of the cross" made by the priest celebrating the Mass was a sacred number; we do not know what it is in the present liturgies. It is therefore quite evident that, in the Masonic rites, which are as sacred in their order as the religious rites, they must also participate in this symbolic "exactitude". The number of strokes of the mallet, for example, cannot be arbitrary. It must be significant, at the same time, for the two numerical sciences, which are part of the "liberated arts": geometry (science of continuous grandeurs) and

CHAPTER XI

THE WORK OF THE "VILLARD DE HONNECOURT" LODGE ON RENÉ GUÉNON

Villard de Honnecourt is a 13th century master builder who participated in the construction of several of the great cathedrals of Europe, and who, above all, has left us an architectural album with numerous sketches²⁵⁴. Many specialists consider this work to be the oldest written record of French operative Freemasonry, and on a par with the British *Old Charges*. The French Grand National Lodge has given its name to a "Lodge of Research", founded in 1964, which publishes an annual detailed compendium of its work. According to the usage of English and American Freemasonry, these compendiums, which deal mainly with Masonic scholarship, are too accessible to non-Masons. In 1973, two meetings (out of the three that are normally held every year) were dedicated to René Guénon. We propose to summarise in broad outline what seemed to us to be the most remarkable of the propositions exchanged during these meetings.

In the inaugural address that followed its installation, the Venerable of the workshop said: "The work during the current exercise will be devoted especially to René Guénon. The personality and works of this author occupy a special place in the spiritual history of the 20th century. Numerous works have been dedicated to him... Noting that, until today, no author belonging to traditional Freemasonry has produced a comprehensive work, we thought it appropriate to dedicate two of our lectures to René Guénon".

At the first of these meetings, that of March 29th, one of the participants, M. X., explained the life of René Guénon, insisting on his childhood and early youth, and on the influences which the author thought he could discover, from this period, on the Master's Work. Among all these details, which do not omit poems of his adolescence (of which we are given a sample), we have really highlighted only an extract of a letter from Dr. Grangier, saying, in January 1928: Guénon [who lost his wife three days ago] is a human rag. The genius of his daily life, the admirable and modest companion, has disappeared. I received Guénon 8 days later..., and, immediately, he began a talk on philosophical and metaphysical matters.... Just watch it. Always the two Guénons: the discouragement in a short crisis and, almost immediately, the wonder of his new Book...". Yes: the wonder - let us rather say, the hard demands - of a great Work which he knew he had to fulfil.

arithmetic (science of discontinuous greatness). Moreover, this number could be related to the two main sources from which Freemasonry has drawn its teachings: the monotheistic tradition (i.e. "a Brahmic") and the Greco-Latin tradition, whose most complete expression is Pythagoreanism.

²⁵⁴ *The Villard de Honnecourt Album*, reprinted by Edicons Léone Laget.

^{1bis} Let us quote the terms used by M. X. An edifying end for us, who seek in thought a way of living. We are not indifferent that Nietzsche has committed suicide, that Antonin Artaud has sunk, and that, on the other hand, Guénon's life has been the sacrifice of his Work.

From the moment that Guénon settles in Cairo, there will be, so to speak, no more events in his intellectual life. M. X. recognised this, and he also recognised the "clarity" of the death of Sheik Abdel-Wâhid Yahia^{1bis}.

This conference was followed by several interventions. First of all, M. Y. De N., after having clarified certain points on Guénon's belongings, before 1914, declared himself "deeply surprised, disappointed, hurt and hurt by this enterprise of demolition of René Guénon's character". He fears, he says, that the university methods, in spite of his great work of erudition, some suppose... do not lead to underestimate the man and to disfigure the thinker" ⁽²⁵⁵⁾. And, after having pointed out "on various points his divergences of judgement with the positions of the lecturer", he prefaced this with the hope that the October conference would be "restorative". We shall see later that this vow was to be fulfilled in a manner unexpected by all.

After him, Jean Bayot intervened to say notably: "Guénon's comings and goings in the various Freemasonries, unheeded at the beginning of his career, do not prevent his Work from reaching an incomparable initiatory value. We have spoken a lot. In our days, we continue to speak more and more. Let us be sure that his credit will increase, and that it is precisely the debates surrounding his Work that fortify his reputation in the Masonic world". This is very accurate. Nothing would have been more dangerous for the radiation of Guénon's Work than disinterest and, above all, disinterest within the initiatory organisations. Some of the adversaries who kept silent about this Work were undoubtedly more aware of it than the people of the *R.I.S.S.* who "ate" from Guénon, as others in the past "ate from the priest".

*
* *

At the meeting of October 29th, after M. X. X. had expounded the main lines of Guenonian metaphysics, someone remarked: "It seemed to me, listening to you, that all the Vedantic concepts you mentioned have their exact equivalent in the Kabbala... Why, then, did René Guénon prefer the Hindu Vedanta to the secret Wisdom of the Judeo-Christian West, a wisdom came to us from the depths of the ages, via Egypt and Chaldea?"

The answer to this question has been given by Guénon himself, and M. Y. de N. has summarised this answer very well. If Guénon has based his doctrine on Vedanta, it is because he has seen two reasons: "the first is that he has found in Vedanta a purely metaphysical doctrine, therefore devoid of any philosophical or religious system. The second is that, in its purpose of alarming the West with regard to its degeneration from the traditional point of view, it has found no more suitable form of expression than that of Hindu doctrines"⁽²⁵⁶⁾.

²⁵⁵ M. Y. De N. I could have added that it would have been interesting to examine the symbolic scope of the main events in Guénon's life: his "crossing" of the pseudo-initiatic and counter-initiatic organisations, his passage from the West to the East, his western wedding and his eastern wedding, etc...

²⁵⁶ To this explanation, the following must be added: Guénon has written his Work, of universal scope, in French, and its translation into most Western languages is in progress. Moreover, if he had taken as his basis the exposition of a Western doctrine, would he not have given the West an exaggerated and absolutely unjustified importance? On the other hand, is it not eminently symbolic that the Muslim Guénon, "servant of the

M. Y. de N. He adds: "It is enough to read Guénon's work to realise how few writers or thinkers have been as familiar with the Kabbala as he was"⁽²⁵⁷⁾.

Finally, apart from the strictly kabbalistic field, the same participant, whose quality of his interventions has been noted, "is surprised that they seem to forget very easily that, without the concrete influence of René Guénon, many Brothers would never have been able to sit at the columns"⁽²⁵⁸⁾.

We will even quote a "judgement" of the Secretary of the Lodge, Jean Bayot, that certain of the exceptional qualities of Guénon's work served him "not only to remain, but to gain over the years, to the point that his clarity was never so strong and that it was evidently increasing". Everything would seem to indicate that the course of events is somewhat in the extension of this clarity.

*
* *

But what was most remarkable at this meeting on 29 October were the two communiqués from Professor Frans Vreede, of the Grand Orient of the Netherlands, whom the "Villard de Honnecourt" Lodge had just that very day elected as an honorary member, and who, a few months earlier, had participated brilliantly in the Ceriy-la-Salle colloquium. M. X. He had to recognise the seriousness of these contributions and also their importance, due to "the seniority and continuity" of the author's relations with Guénon; direct relations in Paris, at first²⁵⁹, then epistolary, when Frans Vreede went to settle in Djakarta, where he had been put in charge of a higher education. The second communiqué inserted here, entitled "Meeting with René Guenon", is truly fascinating reading, not only because of the author's criticisms of official orientalism²⁶⁰ and the details of his research with Guenon²⁶¹, but above all because of the clarifications provided on a point that several authors have perceived as enigmatic: "Guénon specifies to me that he was a member of a mastership, that is to say, of a group of Masters of all degrees, where, the oral tradition, went back to the craft era of French Freemasonry". After the turmoil that degenerated into

The One and Only", has formulated his message in the language of a Christian people, taking as his main bases the so-called "polytheistic" doctrines and, in particular, Hinduism and the Far Eastern tradition?

²⁵⁷ As in the rest of all the great traditions, without exception. "All the regular forms of the tradition without equivalents, and consequently the same things, though expressed in other ways, are found in Hinduism, Taoism, esoteric Islam, etc..." (*Comptes Rendues* de René Guénon, pg. 119).

²⁵⁸ The entry of several Guenonians into the various Obediences (an entry that Guénon had never ceased to dream of throughout his life), a dignitary of the Order (whose chequered Masonic career had particularly qualified him to give his point of view on the subject), Jean Bayot, declared it "irreversible. It is very interesting to note, in this domain, the interplay of "concordant actions and reactions". If the Guenonians allow themselves to be "distracted" by such reactions (coming from the most apparently opposite points of the intellectual or rather "mental" horizon), which would really be "confusing a rope with a snake"; for these reactions are normal and, so to speak, beneficial. It can be said, in any case, that if the Guenonians were to cease their interest in Freemasonry, their failure would be hailed as a resounding victory by the adversaries of Tradition.

²⁵⁹ Professor Vreede, then librarian of the Foundation, met Guénon almost every day for ten years.

²⁶⁰ The author associates himself with Coomaraswamy's bitter judgment; "A faithful description of Hinduism would consist in denying, categorically, all that European Orientalists have thought they understood.

²⁶¹ "We agreed to meet every week to read and study together the texts considered arduous or sibylline. This was the beginning of an intimate collaboration that lasted for ten years.

In order to prevent, in the future, any deviation, any divulgation and any betrayal, they decided to keep the ancient tradition completely pure. To prevent, in the future, any deviation, any disclosure and any betrayal, they decided on the anonymity of the members and that, from now on, there would be no more statutes, no more written documents; no more candidatures, but acceptance of new members by secret recruitment. I understood then," adds Frans Vreede, "from what authentic source Guénon had his extensive knowledge of the rituals and symbols of the ancient tradition of the cathedral builders and his geometrical science, attributed to Pythagoras, without which the Great Art could not exist.

The clarifications given by Frans Vreede provide very valuable clarifications on several problems concerning Guénon's Masonic connection, the Scottish degrees he held, the possibility of his "exaltation" in the Holy Royal Ark, etc....²⁶² These clarifications could also explain why Guénon, in spite of the severe reservations he formulated towards Clemens Stretton, has always recognised with exactitude (at least as far as the essentials are concerned) the disclosures made by the latter concerning operative Freemasonry.

But another problem immediately arises. Would not the organisation of which Guénon spoke to Frans Vreede have disappeared with Guénon himself? This should not come as a surprise, for events of the same kind seem to occur in certain epochs, notably that of Dante²⁶³.

In the rest of his communiqué, Frans Vreede adds how much Guénon deplored "the spiritual deficiency of the Order; a fatal consequence of a too defective mode of selection, and also, the "absence of a mental discipline applied to the Apprentices, in order to guarantee their balance of spirit, indispensable to face an authentic initiation". Finally, the author gives us a spiritual picture of Guénon, of which we will describe only a few outlines. "He had no self-love... He possessed two qualities of the state he had reached: *pânditya* (the triumph of the universality of knowledge over the egocentrism of individuality) and *bâlya* (the state of childhood, that is to say, the candour, the innocent spontaneity of the totally disinterested man). This candour did not prevent him from pointing out the hypocrisies of our society..., the neglect and denial of its spirituality. [But], superior to contingencies, his mind was fixed on the imperishable Reality".

*
* *

The Lodges of research are in the habit of exchanging their respective publications. Has the diffusion of the works of "Villard de Honnecourt" in Anglo-Saxon and Germanic Freemasonry contributed to the knowledge of René Guénon's initiatory work? It would be desirable, since the Obediences on the other side of the

²⁶² On the title of *Holy (and) Royal Arch*, cf. Notably, *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, ch. XXXIX, and "Lost Word, Substituted Words", in fine, in Volume II of *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*.

²⁶³ Here are some passages from M. X.'s commentary on the teachings: "The communication of Professor Frans Vreede, at the Cerisy colloquium, had already raised many problems.... The multiplicity of Guenon's initiations was known, as was the affirmation of the oral tradition as a source.... But we find no mention anywhere of the permanence, in France, of an operational Mastery. Hence the interest in M. Vreede's revelation. At the same time, the question arises, then, about the survival of operative Lodges, which he looked for so long in Great Britain". Yes; but Guénon was always persuaded of the anteriority of French Masonry over British Masonry. The indications of this anteriority are manifold.

There are a good number of fervent Freemasons on both sides of the Atlantic. Their attachment to the Order is not due solely to sentimental reasons. The best of them obscurely feel that Freemasonry is something more than a *peculiar system of morality*, that there is something in the Order which no other Western organisation could give.

CAPÍTULO XII

"EUCLID, A DISCIPLE OF ABRAHAM "**.

"As for the three laws given by God to the three peoples (Jews, Christians and Muslims), as to which is the true one, the question is still pending and may be for a long time to come".

Boccacio, quoted by R. Guénon.

The Tradition, of which Guénon was the exclusive servant and incomparable interpreter, has been described by him as "permanent and unanimous". We can say that Freemasonry shares in this perpetuity, inasmuch as its Lodges are to be found "in the highest mountains and in the deepest valleys"⁽²⁶⁴⁾. Moreover, the "universality" to which Freemasonry lays claim echoes, so to speak, the unanimous character of Tradition. This universality is well known, but we might well ask ourselves whether the generality of Masons, feel well all its implications. Freemasonry is undoubtedly the only initiatory organisation in the world which is not bound to a particular exotericism. And if, as Guénon says, this should not dispense Masons from binding themselves to one of the exotericisms existing today (for traditional man could not be a man without religion), it should incite them not to limit their interest to their own tradition, but, on the contrary, to study, thanks to the "key of universal symbolism, all the traditions of which they can become acquainted"⁽²⁶⁵⁾. (265) It is remarkable in this connection that a Masonic Lodge is the ideal place where men of different religions can meet on a perfectly equal footing to discuss questions of tradition and doctrine.

If all religions are admitted into Freemasonry, it must be recognised, however, that the more Eastern traditional forms (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism, etc.) are so alien to certain important aspects of the symbolism of the Order - aspects linked to the construction of the Temple - that the adherents of these traditions, in a way, alien to it,

*This text has been published in the journal *Renacimiento Tradicional*.

²⁶⁴ This expression, so well known in English-language rituals, is explicit in certain ancient documents, according to which St. John's Lodge is held "in the valley of Jehoshaphat," meaning that Masonry must be maintained until the Last Judgment, which will mark the end of the cycle. According to the same symbolism, "the highest mountains" must signify the beginning of the cycle; and in fact, the terrestrial Paradise, according to *The Divine Comedy*, is situated on the top of the highest of the terrestrial mountains, since it touches the sphere of the Moon. Likewise, when Christ expresses his desire to see St. John "remain" until his return, it is evident (and the Gospel makes it clear) that it is not primarily a question of the individuality of the beloved disciple; it is above all a question of Christian esotericism; esotericism, "personified" by St. John, and which is reabsorbed by Freemasonry. We can say that Christ's words to St. John confer on this Order the "promises of eternal life", just as those addressed to St. Peter are the pledge which the Papacy will finally take with it over the prestige of the "gates of Hell".

²⁶⁵ It is for this reason that Guénon, insisting on the necessity for every Lodge to have the Bible open on the altar of the Worshipful, made it clear that this Book "symbolises all the sacred texts of all religions".

displaced in the atmosphere of the workshops²⁶⁶. Indeed, it is the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), which have nurtured Freemasonry, with the greatest number of its sons and the most illustrious of its initiates.

All three monotheistic traditions derive from Abraham, and it is very significant that the divine name *El-Shaddai*, whose importance is known in operative Masonry (and which is not unknown in speculative Masonry), is precisely the name of the God of Abraham⁽²⁶⁷⁾. Guénon, in an essential page⁽²⁶⁸⁾, underlined that since the reunion of the Father of believers with Melchisedek, the name *El-Shaddai* has been associated with that of *El-Elion*²⁶⁹, and that this reunion indicates the point of contact of the Abrahamic tradition with the primordial Tradition.

*
* *

There is in the traditional history of Freemasonry, always that connected with the ancient documents called *Old Charges*, a singular assertion, which cannot fail to surprise those who know it: it is that made by Euclid, a disciple of Abraham²⁷⁰. As we had alluded to this "legend", we were asked for explanations, underlining the formidable anachronism it implies, that Euclid had lived in Egypt in the third century before our era, while Abraham's stay in that country was two millennia earlier.

It is precisely the inordinate character of this anachronism which shows clearly that we are not dealing with a historical fact in the sense that moderns give to these words²⁷¹. It is, in fact, "sacred history" which expresses a totally exceptional character and which, by its nature, can only be formulated in a language "covered" by the veil of symbolism.

If we remember that, in the Middle Ages, Euclid personified geometry²⁷² and that, moreover, in ancient documents, Freemasonry is often assimilated to geometry, it will be understood that Euclid was made a disciple of Abraham,

²⁶⁶ We should not fall into the spirit of the system by taking this assertion strictly at face value, for it suffers from very notable exceptions. Everyone knows that Freemasonry, introduced into India by the English, met with a lively success. Kipling, in his *Masonic News*, explained how orthodox Hindus initiated into Freemasonry behaved at fraternal feasts, so as not to break the rules which forbade them to eat with men of different castes.

²⁶⁷ The numerical value of this name is 345; the figures 3, 4 and 5, which serve to write this name, also express the length of the sides of the right triangle of Pythagoras, figured upon the jewel of the Past Master.

²⁶⁸ *The King of the World*, pg. 50.

²⁶⁹ The God invoked by Abraham is *El-Shaddai* (the Almighty); and Melchisedek was a priest of *El-Elion* (the Most High). It is important to remember that English-speaking Masons work in the 3rd degree, "in the of the Most High".

²⁷⁰ Mackey, in his *Encyclopaedia*, states that "all old building manuscripts" contain the legend of Euclid, generally called "The Worthy Sage Euclid". Here is how this legend relates to the *Dowland Manuscript*, a text dating back to 1550: When Abraham and Sarah went to Egypt, Abraham taught the Egyptians the seven sciences. Among his disciples was Euclid, who was particularly gifted". Legend has it that Euclid later took charge of the education of the king's sons; he taught them geometry and its applications, how to build temples and palaces. The text concludes: "Thus did he exalt that science called geometry, but which, later on, in our regions is called Freemasonry".

²⁷¹ It is moreover evident that operative Freemasons have always counted in their ranks a large number of educated people sufficiently familiar with the Scriptures to know that Abraham had behaved in Egypt more like a schoolmaster than a shepherd of flocks".

²⁷² The same as Aristotle with dialectics, Socrates with morals, Cicero with eloquence, etc....

that is to say that there is between the Patriarch and the Masonic Order, a relationship of Master to disciple, rigorously equivalent to a "spiritual paternity".

It is obvious that Freemasonry predates Abraham, since traditionally it goes back to the very origin of mankind. But it is well known that every tradition, as it moves away from its beginning, runs the risk of weakening, even of becoming corrupt: and then, if it is a tradition with "promises of eternal life", divine action must intervene to straighten it out and counteract the tendency to follow "the evil slope"²⁷³. Such is the case with Freemasonry, which, benefiting from the privilege of perpetuity²⁷⁴, has, in the course of its long history, known periods of obscurity, followed by spectacular ascents.

From these revivals, which each time have given it, so to speak, a new youth, Freemasonry must have retained certain traces, particularly in its "traditional history", and even in its rituals. It is quite likely that the divine names *El-Shaddai* and "Very High God"²⁷⁵ are linked to the transformation that must have taken place at the time of Abraham's vocation. Another crucial period for the Western world, both in the iniquitous and religious order, was that of the birth of Christianity, and it is evidently from this period that Masonry's veneration of the two St. Johns dates²⁷⁶.

At the time of the irruption of Christianity into the Greco-Roman world, and a fortiori at the time of Abraham's vocation, there were in the West a large number of initiatory organisations, linked to the practice of the trades, the best known being those of the *Collegia fabrorum*. Their sacred words, if they had any, were not copied from the Hebrew, and the solstitial symbolism of Janus, played, for them, the role of the two St. Johns. It would be rash to attempt to explain, for we cannot forget that, according to the Master whom we follow, and who was certainly the initiate with the most extensive knowledge in the field in question, "the transmission of esoteric doctrines" is effected by an "obscure filiation", so that the links of modern Freemasonry with earlier organisations are very complex²⁷⁷. This is why, rather than wishing to enter into the mysteries "shrouded" in the impenetrable veil of "traditional anonymity"²⁷⁸, it is undoubtedly preferable to seek out the marks of the respective influences of the three Abrahamic traditions in present-day Freemasonry.

²⁷³ Cf. Guénon, *The Crisis of the Modern World*, chap. 1.

²⁷⁴ This is what is expressed by the words of Christ, attesting His willingness to see John (i.e., to Christian esotericism), "remain" until He returns.

²⁷⁵ It is curious that the name of the Most High, who is the God of Melchisedec, is used in Freemasonry in the vulgar language and not in Hebrew; this could be related to the fact that Melchisedec belongs to the primordial Tradition and not to the Jewish tradition. In the same way, Royal Ark Freemasonry, in rite that is essential to it, to the Hebrew language, the two sacred languages that have disappeared (Chaldean and Egyptian) and, finally, to the ordinary language. Then, Guénon, commenting on Dante's treatise *De vulgari eloquio*, says that the ordinary language, which every man receives orally, symbolises, in a higher sense, the primordial language that was never written.

²⁷⁶ The legend which makes John the Baptist a Grand Master of operative Masonry, who, after many years of his martyrdom, would have been substituted for John the Evangelist, has evidently no more than a symbolic meaning.

²⁷⁷ Guénon, *The Esotericism of Dante*, chap. IV, in fine.

²⁷⁸ Just as each traditional work is closer to the true "masterpiece" the more the craftsman has "sublimated" his individual "I" to transform it into the "I Am" (cf. *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, ch. IX), so it can be said that the transformations to which we allude, the works of art, will be all the more perfect the more unknown are their craftsmen. The most recent case of such mutations seems to be passage of the traditional notion of the "Holy Empire" in Scottish Freemasonry.

*
* *

The signs of Jewish influence are too obvious and too well known to need to be insisted upon. The use of Hebrew for the sacred words, the continual references to the Temples of Solomon and Zerubbabel, the lunar-solar calendar, the working with the head covered in the 3rd degree, the ritual dating coinciding practically with the Hebraic dating, all these indications and some others, are here to attest the importance of the symbolic treasure inherited by the sons of the old covenant.

The Christian influence is of a totally different order. Certainly, in the High Degrees, mention is made of certain events in the history of Christianity, for example the destruction of the Templars. But, above all, it should be noted that it is in the Christian world that the Masonic Fraternity is most developed, to the point that a geographical map representing the "Christian density" of the various regions of the earth would coincide almost exactly with that representing its "Masonic density". We could almost say that Freemasonry is an organisation that works on mainly Judaic symbolic material, and whose recruitment is mainly Christian.

*
* *

If the Jewish contribution and the Christian contribution to Freemasonry are two essential and obvious facts, it does not appear, at first sight, that there is any Islamic contribution to this Order. Villaume's assertion that the Scottish acclamation is an Arabic word is erroneous.

Certainly, an Arab Sheikh could say that, if the Freemasons were to understand their symbols, they would all become Muslims; but a Rabbi could say the same, for the benefit of his religion, and a Christian theologian, for the benefit of his. Should we believe, then, that this "third" of Abraham's posterity - which the initiate Boccacio, via the Jew Melchizedek, declares to be as "dear" to the heavenly Father as his other two thirds - would have made no contribution to an Art placed under the patronage of "Euclid, disciple of Abraham"?

The answer we are going to attempt to give to this question will no doubt surprise many readers. But we would not be able to avoid it in this work on Guénon's conceptions of the "eschatological" role of Freemasonry. We believe, in fact, that this author's work, written in the proximity and on the way to the end of time, fills, at a single stroke and in a masterly manner, the void left until then by the Islamic tradition, of which Guénon was an eminent representative, in the Abrahamic heritage transmitted to Freemasonry.

It has sometimes been written that, before Guénon, everything had already been said about Freemasonry except the essentials. This is entirely accurate and we would like to add that no one had a higher idea of Freemasonry than that of the Master, who was ignored, plagiarised and attacked, particularly in France, by so many Freemasons.

We would like to draw attention to a very important particularity, which is common to all three traditions: Jewish, Christian and Islamic, as well as to Freemasonry. Muslims are indeed very conscious of the "totalising" character of their tradition²⁷⁹, due to the fact that Muhammad is the "Seal of Prophecy". What we sometimes forget is that Guénon attributed the same totalising character to Christianity, of which he said that "it has taken with it the whole heritage of previous traditions, which it has kept alive, as far as the state of the West has allowed it, and which it carries within itself and always, the latent possibilities"⁽²⁸⁰⁾. These are things which suggest that his insistence on making Freemasons aware of the plurality of their heritage and on preserving the "memory" in their rituals, explains his certainty that Freemasonry also has a "totalising" destiny.

To totalise is to "gather together the dispersed". Abraham, the father of monotheism, is also, according to the Hebraic meaning of his name, the "Father of the multitude", as Unity is the beginning of multiplicity. And, just as, at the origin, there is only the One who creates all things, so, at the end, all things must be reabsorbed into the Unity. If we now turn from the macrocosm to the microcosm, we find something rigorously equivalent in Hindu doctrine. "When a man is near death, the word, followed by the rest of the ten external activities [...], is reabsorbed in the internal sense (*manas*) [...] which is then withdrawn, in the vital breath (*prāna*), accompanied, evenly, by all the vital functions [...]. The vital breath, accompanied equally by all the other functions and faculties (already reabsorbed in it [...]), is withdrawn, in its turn, into the living soul (*jīvātmā*) [...]. As the servants of a king gather around him when he is about to set out on a journey, so all the vital functions and all the faculties of the individual, gather around his living soul (or rather in himself, from whence they all proceed, and into which they are reabsorbed) at the last moment (of life [...]) [...]"²⁸¹.

*
* *

Have we refused to let it appear that the "legend" linking Euclid, i.e. geometry, i.e. Freemasonry, with the Patriarch Abraham, is anything other than a phenomenal blunder which would testify, simply, to the imagination and ignorance of its "inventor"? We have merely raised the question. It may possibly make us remark that Freemasonry, in its present state, seems unworthy of the eminent role we seem to have wished to ascribe to it. But we can reply that this Order, placed under the patronage of the two St. Johns, of whom one is "the friend of the Bridegroom" and the other "the disciple whom Jesus loved", can therefore claim all the privileges conferred by friendship, and that its final "salvation" should be certain. We use the word "salvation" here in the sense given by René Guénon: it is, for a man, his permanence after death, in the "afterlife", in the "afterlife", in the "afterlife".

²⁷⁹ We believe that it is pointless to point out that what we are dealing with here has nothing to do with political conceptions qualified as "totalitarian". We know, moreover, how regimes which boast of such conceptions are in the habit of behaving towards Freemasonry when they come to power.

²⁸⁰ *The Crisis of the Modern World*, chapter VII.

²⁸¹ Brama-Sūtras, translated and commented by Guénon, in chapter XVIII of *Man and his Becoming according to Vedānta*.

"We can legitimately transpose this doctrine to a traditional, initiatory or exoteric organisation.

At the end of one cycle, the "salvation" of the "species" destined to be preserved for the future cycle, is assured by their "crowding" into the Ark or some other equivalent receptacle. It is probable that one of these equivalents is the "bosom of Abraham", or, in the words of the wicked rich man and poor Lazarus, that the souls of the righteous saved will rest after their death. That the Patriarch friend of God²⁸², blessed by Melchisedek and venerated by the three "Abrahamic" religions, is, at the same , the "preceptor" of Freemasonry, defines the latter as a very "honourable" tradition, but implies such "obligations" that this Order has no right to disregard it, nor to forget it.

According to Melchizedek in Boccaccio's tale of *The Three Rings*²⁸³, the heavenly Father has done something, so that each of the three equally beloved sons is perceived to have received the only authentic ring, the original ring handed down "from time immemorial". Two millennia of Western history are here to prove to us that, indeed, each of the three sons is quite sure to be the chosen one, even the only beloved one, the only one to have received the true ring, the wedding ring that seals the eternal betrothal. Such convictions dear to the Father must be respected. They have comforted the "faith" of each one, at the expense, no doubt, of fraternal "charity"²⁸⁴.

What about "hope"? It is written that at the end of time, faith will disappear and charity will be languishing. Perhaps this will be the time for Freemasonry, the "centre of union", to belong to the "spiritual posteriority" of Abraham, and to remember the motto which was, let us say, that of its operational ancestors: "In *El-Shaddai* is all our hope".

²⁸² The change of the name from Abram ("high father") to Abraham ("father of multitudes") is based on the victory of the patriarch over the adversaries of the kings of Pentapole and the destruction by fire of Pentapole itself. This destruction is naturally a "figure" of the final destruction of the world, and the role of intercessor played by Abraham in order to obtain from God a "limit" to the destruction, which deserves attention.

²⁸³ Decameron, 1st day, tale II. We see that among the "Faithful of Love", Boccaccio, in order to situate in his tales a sometimes somewhat elevated gallantry, those that had a doctrinal sense and that, certainly, were for him, those are the most important; he knew how to use the symbolism of numbers.

²⁸⁴ The symbolic "fable" used by Boccaccio is - like everything symbolic - susceptible to a plurality of interpretations. Here is one which, from a more elevated and properly initiatory point of view, undoubtedly corresponds more closely to the intentions of the initiate that Boccaccio was. While we must certainly respect the convictions of each of the traditions, insofar as they claim to have a privileged status in relation to one another, from a higher point of view, we should not be under any illusions about such claims. Indeed, this claim to choice reveals a necessity inherent in the exoteric perspective, and Boccaccio means, in fact, that the true faith is hidden beneath the external aspects of various beliefs, the true faith which is the one Tradition, of which Melchisedek is the representative. This true faith is the "holy faith", the *holy fede* of which Boccaccio, like Dante in the West, was one of the faithful.

EPILOGUE

As we asked one of our friends to go through the proofs of this little Book - in which the chapters related from very distant epochs sometimes bear traces of vicissitudes which have marked, during this last quarter of a century, the history of the Church and that of Freemasonry - this friend, a proven Guenonian, gave us the following indications:

"Do you not think that the majority of French Freemasons, who very often believe themselves to be "agnostic", will brand you as "dogmatic" because of your religious concerns? And might not many Catholic Freemasons fear that your insistence on the esoteric and initiatory character of Freemasonry will make more difficult the efforts you have been pursuing for so many years, by virtue of the rapprochement of the Church with our Order? Between these two opposing tendencies, the number of those who approve of you will be very small. In short, and to speak frankly, what use do you make of the cardinal virtue of Prudence?

We are conscious of deserving such reproaches, and of deserving still others. But just as, according to Scripture, it is "folly" that we should prefer to "worldly" wisdom, so we think that, in the age in which we are and in view of the changes that are coming, a certain "imprudence" may well be not without some "usefulness".

BERSERKER

BOOKS

