

**REFLEXIONS OF A CHRISTIAN
ON FREEMASONRY**



DENYS ROMAN

BERSERKER

BOOKS



"Does Freemasonry itself have a unique origin, or has it rather picked up from the Middle Ages the heritage of multiple earlier organisations?"

This indication by René Guénon is the central theme of Denys Roman's work: whether Pythagorean, Templar and Rosicrucian, Hebraic, Hermetic, chivalric or priestly, the various elements of this "heritage", "accumulated" over the ages in the Masonic Ark, in the form of deposits of all that has been truly initiatory in the Western world, constitute the "germs" for the cycle to come, which must be preserved with the utmost care.

But they are equally as many Holy Lands, which the qualified man can already conquer in the course of his initiatory journey.

Among these deposits, that of a notable part of Christian esotericism - of which, according to Scripture, St. John the Evangelist is the immortal Rector - illustrates par excellence the privileged "destinies" of the Order, which holds its deposit and custody.

*Denys Roman (1901-1986), correspondent of René Guénon, contributor to the review Traditional Studies between 1950 and 1986, was one of the first three initiates of the Lodge "The Great Triad". He manifested, both in his action and in his work, an unconditional adherence to René Guénon's teaching. Author of numerous writings, he gathered the most significant ones, according to his purpose, in the work published in 1982 on **René Guénon and the Destinies of Freemasonry**, which has just been republished, and in the major part of this posthumous book, which constitutes its continuation.*

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

*René Guénon and the
Destinies of Freemasonry,
1982.*

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PRESENTATION

Preliminary

After 1950, Denys Roman's work had appeared only in the form of articles and reviews, mostly in the columns of the review Traditional Studies, created under the impulse of René Guénon, but also in others such as Prisma, Auroras, Traditional Renaissance, The Notebooks of Hermes, and Towards Tradition, which, after the author's death on 21 March 1986, contributed to maintain the presence of this work in its publications.

It is at the suggestion of some friends that, from 1980 onwards, D. Roman gathers a selection of his previous writings, retouches them and enriches them with unpublished texts, in order to publish them in the form of a book. The abundance of elements dealt with gave enough material for the first volume in 1982: René Guénon and the Destinies of Freemasonry, and for the greater part of the present volume, which the author planned to add original chapters.

His disappearance deprived this Work of these last texts, and of the definitive choice of its title¹. Thus, we have added to it the most recent and significant publications of his work: the last four chapters and the first one, as well as chapters IV and X. We have also chosen as the title of this posthumous book two of the author's expressions which recapitulate the nature and purpose of his purpose. Only the adventitious notes, mainly bibliographical, which we thought it useful to insert for the attention of the reader, are marked by an asterisk and placed in square brackets.

These two volumes represent only a part of the total published works of D. Roman, of which a referenced bibliography is also given in the Appendix.

For those readers who have only a few elements on the whole of this work, we have wanted to present, in the following pages, the essentials of a sixty-year itinerary of unconditional adherence to René Guénon's "ideas", to which Mr Roman has devoted his fruits:

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

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This dedication, which opens the previous work by this author, bears the sensitive mark of his permanent concern, and particularly of his charity

⁽¹⁾[Among the titles initially considered: Masonic History and Rituals].

intellectual, in the full sense of the word. It is also a faithful "summary" of the insatiable traditional action which was his in a constant and marvellous union. It is, finally, the affirmation of his unfailing fidelity to the one whose work has been an "incomparable nourishment" in his spiritual life.

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Belonging to this generation that was born with our century, Mr Roman will follow the progressive appearance and development of R. Guénon's work, will give his full assent to the essentials of his message, and will actively follow, during the last years of this author's life, the traditional initiatives inspired from Cairo. He will become one of his correspondents and will be notably sought after for his Masonic works, and, later, as a collaborator in The Traditional Studies.

After several events following the death of R. Guénon, which led the author to interrupt his collaboration with Traditional Studies on several occasions, D. Roman will be remembered for having ensured the direction of the editorial staff during the last two years of his life.

With this last "return" to the heart of "Guénon's journal", which had been the "place" of his first writing, D. Roman will complete, in the hope of a "sort of resurrection of Guenonian thought"² and of a reunion between Masons of traditional spirit, the work begun thirty-five years earlier, at the request of the man who had inspired him.

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The fruit of the "reflections of a Christian", a Catholic "by birth and by taste", who became a Freemason after reading R. Guénon, D. Roman's work is presented as an interpretation, and even an "adaptation" in a Christian and Masonic way, of R. Guénon's work.

Starting from the first consideration of the imminence of the "end of time", whose "intimate, and already ancient, conviction" was consolidated by "R. Guénon's solemn clarion calls"³, D. Roman links, in the same "providential" perspective, the "function" of R. Guénon that Freemasonry is called upon to fulfil. By the constant "choice" in which it has benefited, by gathering the "multiple deposits" of previous Traditions, and in its belonging to the "spiritual posterity" of Abraham, "Father of the multitude", Freemasonry follows, in effect, a "totalitarian" destiny, of which, the author, underlines the importance: "constantly "chosen" to become "The Ark" in which the "cumulus" of all that has been truly initiatory in the Western world has been produced", "Freemasonry has allowed the relevant elements of dead civilisations to remain alive, and thus to become not only the "vestiges" of the past, but the germs of the

²Chapter one of this work: "33 years later".

³Volume I: René Guénon and the Destinies of Freemasonry, prologue.

future"⁴, always capable of being "reanimated", and "incorporated" in the "coming
"incorporated" in the "cycle
to come", when "everything will be new".

Among these inheritances, true "holy lands" - "the most illustrious, the noblest and the most precious of which is that of the Templars" - D. Roman highlights a privileged interest in Christian esotericism, "personified" by St. John the Evangelist⁵. The lofty figure of the "beloved Apostle", "Son and Guardian of the Virgin" and "Son of Thunder", "model and type of the initiates", Saint protector of Freemasonry alongside Saint John the forerunner, and who received, by the will of Christ, the "abiding" "promises of eternal life", symbolises, par excellence in his relations with the end of time, the "destinies" that the author sees as reserved for the Masonic Order.

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This central theme of the "eschatological" vocation of Freemasonry as "the living Ark of Symbols" is situated in the whole of a work which also deals with very varied aspects, which are, for D. Roman, as many occasions to return constantly to the traditional considerations which constitute the unity.

Relying on the metaphysical principles put forward by R. Guénon, and applying the rules of symbolism, "the initiatory language par excellence", based on the "law of correspondence"⁶ which links everything to the principle from which it proceeds, the author permanently operates the transposition, in a superior way, demanded by the initiatory nature of the considerations he expounds. Possibly, the philosophical, historical or research point of view in the history of religions is not his own, which indicates that one should not look for the "methodology" and "criteria" proper to these disciplines in his work.

D. Roman's work represents, in one of its aspects, an authentic application of traditional teaching, which undoubtedly makes it one of the few works that allow us to apprehend the Real Art, through the "openings" that it offers by applying this method of analogical transposition.

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The author's itinerary

Born in 1901 into a Loire family, Marcel Maugy - Denys Roman - received a Catholic religious education at a very early age, which would emerge from him in the profound study of doctrine and Scripture, and in a fervent practice that would nourish his taste for rites and for the beauty of worship.

Throughout a period that he described as "very painful", his reflection would come up against objections that his readings at the time would not allow him to eliminate, and to which the resources of the religious domain would not provide him with answers.

⁴Op. cit., foreword.

⁵Op. cit., chap. XII: "Euclid, disciple of Abraham", and chap. VIII: "To the glorious memory of the two St. Johns".

⁽⁶⁾R. Guénon, The Symbolism of the Cross, foreword.

"Guénon's discovery put an end to my problems and, moreover, has enriched the explanations to many secondary questions I was asking myself. Nor had I ever seriously stopped in front of new problems, which the Guénonian teaching does indeed raise. In my pre-1928 Catholicism, the "mysteries" I was taught at that time did not cause me any scandal. Today, I still admit that certain points of the doctrine expounded by Guénon are still obscure to me, while other points of his "message" have been, for me, a kind of enlightenment"⁷.

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From then on, and while still working professionally, M. Maugy procured all the books and articles that R. Guénon made appear after 1908, as well as the works, in six foreign languages, that he had already taken into account. Taking advantage of his great memory, he learnt only Spanish, Italian and the basics of Romanian as well as Sanskrit, which would be added to Latin and Greek. Over the years, he devoted himself to the study of writings that R. Guénon published successively, understanding them in a totally different way from today's readers, who have them in their entirety. This will lead him to devote a privileged attention to the circumstances that have motivated these publications and, notably, to the last ones which, from 1945 onwards, return with an increased insistence on initiation in general, and on Freemasonry in particular. And so it is that R. Guénon's circumstantial considerations in this respect will be totally decisive for the orientation of the author's progress along this path.

He described this whole period, which was to last twenty years, from 1926 to 1946, as "preparatory work", made up of meditation and deep study of the symbols, carried out "without haste" and without the "search for an immediate end".

It is in this period that the author's position in a Work, whose interpreter defined it as follows: "our Work [...] is exclusively an exposition of traditional data, of which we are only the expression; and furthermore, these data, in themselves, are in no way the product of any "thought", because of their traditional character, which essentially implies a supra-individual and "non-human" origin"⁸.

It is from this very understanding of the Work and of "Guénon's ideas"⁹ that the "unconditional" character of the author's adhesion stems: "I am not in favour of attaching a dogmatic value to this or that assessment of Guénon. I have never consented to make of his work as a whole a closed "system", from which it would be enough to extract one element for the whole thing to collapse. And this attitude has enabled me not to be shocked at all when I have seen him modify his appreciation of Buddhism"¹⁰. "I take the Master's teaching in its entirety, for this teaching corresponds perfectly to his own.

⁷Private correspondence, 1977.

⁸René Guénon, *Initiation and Spiritual Realisation, Chapter II: "Metaphysics and Dialectics"*; E.T. No. 285, July-August 1950.

⁹Volume I, already quoted in the foreword.

¹⁰Private correspondence, 1977.

to the questions I asked myself, before I met her. But I don't think I have the right to wonder why others, while admitting what is called teaching, tear it apart, more or less considerably, consciously or unconsciously"¹¹.

It is thus understandable that, while respecting the various positions, the author did not understand the contribution to a personal doctrine - to which one could give the name of its "inventor" - of a Work which bases the universality of its relations with the "primordial Tradition", "mother and teacher" of all orthodox Traditions without exception".

It is also understandable that, recognising such an exceptional nature to this Work, it is not surprising that it surprises, and even scandalises, many of those who take refuge in a Revelation, and particularly those of the Christian Revelation.

According to the author: "The truth is that the ideas expounded by Guénon are in perfect harmony with Christianity and with all Traditions, religious or otherwise, except on one point: that is when Christianity, or any other religion, claims to be the sole messenger of the Truth. [What matters above all, in our view, is the behaviour exercised, in Guénon's eyes, by the successors of the Apostle who received, according to the promise made in the fields of Caesarea, the keys conferring the pontifical power of binding and loosing. [...]] But Rome has kept silent: the Work of Guénon has not been entered in the index. [...] And just as it is unspeakable in the order of knowledge, it surpasses immeasurably all that can be expressed, so it can be said that Peter's silences are sometimes more full of meaning than his words"¹².

D. Roman, who claims to be a "strict Guenonian", did not use this term, except to the extent that - R. Guénon always refused to have disciples. Guénon always refused to have disciples - after the death of the Master, the terms Tradition, initiation and others have been so sullied that "it became indispensable to use the term "Guenonian" to designate those who adhere to the integrality of his doctrine and, above all, who consider that this doctrine is of "non-human" origin"⁽¹⁾ (3).

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At the end of the Second World War, M. Maugy decided to make contact with the management of The Traditional Studies, formerly The Veil of Isis, where some of those who corresponded with R. Guénon, who was then living in Cairo, met.

This reunion will end with the creation, on 14th April 1947, within the Grand Lodge of France, of the Lodge "The Great Triad", of which M. Maugy will be one of the first three initiates, the other two being Marcel Clavel and Roger Maridort; the latter will create, a few years later, his Tariqah in Italy¹⁴. In chapter IX of his

¹¹Private correspondence, 1984.

¹²Volume I already cited, prologue.

¹³Ibid, Chapter IX.

¹⁴Concerning R. Maridort, some have questioned his fidelity to the Work of R. Guénon, because of his participation in a pocket reprint of the Symbolism of the Cross, which authorised a preface hostile to the author of the Work; this eventuality concerning the "faithful among the faithful" was dismissed by D. Roman in the text entitled "33 years later", first chapter of the present book.

The first book, entitled: "René Guénon and the Lodge The Great Triad", the author relates, without going into his memories - "which would not fit in a whole volume", he writes - the foundation of the first Guenonian workshop, the interest of his works and two "incidents", among the events that will unfold.

It was then that M. Maugy asked, on the way to its adoption by the "Grand Triad" - and eventually by the Grand Lodge of France¹⁵ - for the drafting of a Scottish ritual of traditional inspiration; he took up this task (which he was to undertake at the end of his life) under the authority and control of René Guénon, with whom he maintained a continuous correspondence¹⁶, for several years, until almost the last days of the Master's death, and from which he was able to benefit for his reflection and his Work.

After his departure from the Grand Triad, M. Maugy belonged to the French National Grand Lodge, becoming a founding member of the Lodge "Les Amis Vigilants No. 38"; he then joined the Freemasonry of the Mark and of the Royal Ark; in the case of the latter, in the chapter "Perseverance No. 27" in the Orient of Neuilly, of which he became a member of honour.

It was in 1948 that he was due to meet Jean Tourniac; a long friendship developed over the years, which lasted until the author's death. J. Tourniac would move away from Traditional Studies and would publish, in particular, a consistent Masonic Work. Let us simply refer to their divergences, notably as regards their Masonic orientations and the resulting consequences: D. Roman gave preference, like R. Guénon, to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, whereas Tourniac had to work - at one time and as Grand Master and Grand National Prior - within the rectified Scottish Rite. J. Tourniac has even recently, in his last Work⁽¹⁷⁾ emphasised the respective choices and demands involved in relation to the Work of R. Guénon.

In 1948, Jules Boucher's work *The Masonic Symbolic* had just appeared. R. Guénon, who did not wish to review it¹⁸, suggested to M. Maugy

¹⁵A slightly modified version of this ritual was submitted to the Ritual Commission of the Grand Lodge of France. The speaker, Brother Marty, gave an excellent presentation at the Convent of 1948-1949. But the results were negative, and the ritual was finally rejected. The Grand Triad Lodge adopted another ritual, whose suspicious origin (but which raised no doubt as to the validity of the initiation transmitted) was quickly discovered; and it was replaced some time later.

¹⁶The publication of R. Guénon's correspondence always provokes lively reactions. Apart from the legal question, which is a matter for his heirs, the question arises as to whether it is opportune to make public, in the form of quotations, certain intentions which should remain reserved. Now that he intends to publish his correspondence (of certain interest, for various reasons) with Mme Maurice-Denis-Boulet, for example, it should not, in principle, present any inconvenience. As for the correspondence with the author, it deals largely with ritualistic points and Masonic notions; and, as such, it cannot be exposed to the public domain. When requested on several occasions, Mr. Roman always refused this publication, stating that R. Guénon would not have wished it.

¹⁷Paradoxes, Enigmas and Masonic Curiosities, Dervy, 1993. This work contains, in an appendix to Chapter III, extracts from letters from M. Maugy to J. Tourniac.

⁽¹⁸⁾ R. Guénon and D. Roman were evidently not unaware of the more than suspicious tendencies of J. Boucher, notably in "Le Grand Lunar" or "Very High Lunar", a Satanist secret society to which Dr. Rouhier, director at the time of the Vega bookshop, belonged. It is said that when J. Boucher wanted to get away from this sinister influence, he went to an exorcist who was none other than the famous ... J. Bricaud!

The fact that the author wrote this article on the basis of J. Boucher's work is explained by the fact that it was, at the time, the only work available that focused on Masonic symbolism in a general way, and that it was "far superior to those of the same genre that had appeared until then, at least in the French language";

commissioned for Los Estudios Tradicionales. This project finally developed into an article on Symbolism, which marked the debut of his collaboration with the journal. Here, for the first time, the author signed his name with the pseudonym Denys Roman, which he would use until his last article¹⁹. He retained this article to appear in the present book, of which it constitutes Chapter II. It is worth noting, when examining this text, that it already contains one of the essential themes that the author would develop throughout his work: the one on the destiny of the Masonic Order, which would be taken up 32 years later in the title of his previous work.

D. Roman will also follow in this journal, in 1952, a census started by R. Guénon and which his death had interrupted.

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D. Roman's collaboration with Traditional Studies was not without interruptions, sometimes quite long, linked to the events and changes of orientation that took place within this journal after the death of R. Guénon. When certain marked tendencies took hold and his freedom of Guenonian expression was very much undermined, the author preferred to interrupt his intervention and to entrust his articles to other journals²⁰. Finally, during the last two years of his life, after a change of situation following the eviction of M.F. Schuon and his disciples or friends from Traditional Studies²¹, he took over the editorial responsibility of this review, at the request of its editors. The marvellous balance between contributors belonging to Eastern and Western Traditions - which represented the original vocation of the journal - obliged him to turn to these authors, some of whom were well known in the Traditional milieu.

It was with "A Monk of the West": Brother Elias of the Grand Trappa, with whom D. Roman would correspond for more than ten years, thanks to a friend who connected them in 1976²². There is much to say about this correspondence, a reflection of an exceptional friendship whose ties were only broken by the disappearance of the author. Thus, over the years, and very often at the rhythm of the liturgical season, certain themes were elaborated and sometimes became the subject of publications. The richness of these exchanges was at the level of these authors. Mr Roman liked to say that this meeting with R. Guénon, whose teaching had led him to religion, and who, moreover, was the son of Saint Bernard - founder of an Order for which the author had very good reasons for

Fortunately, this is not the case today. R. Guénon's (private) criticisms were essentially directed at certain notions derived from J. Boucher's occult training, and at the presentation of the book, which did not take into account the hierarchy of the "degrees".

¹⁹The choice of this pseudonym refers to Denys L'Areopagite (Dionysius Areopagite), to the union of East and West, but also to personal considerations.

²⁰These journals, as well as the articles published by the author, are mentioned in the bibliography at the end of the work.

²¹This eviction was the direct consequence of a text by the "master" of Lausanne, published in the Dossier H, published in 1984 and devoted to R. Guénon, a text whose motivation remains, even today, quite inexplicable to many. A veritable "muddle", whose aim was to "defend Guénon against himself", the insolence and lightness of its content aroused almost general indignation.

²²We are highly indebted to this friend, so close to Bro Elias, for having given us access to a more precise knowledge of a particular aspect of the relations between these two authors.

had been, for him, an "event". Elias Lemoine, notably author of two works: *Doctrine of Non-Duality and Christianity*, and *Theology sine Metaphysics nihil*, collaborated with Traditional Studies from 1985 and would offer the readers of this journal a text whose spiritual and even metaphysical tone, inspired by the work of R. Guénon, was not lacking in surprises, once his monastic condition was known.

Among those with whom he was on friendly terms, Mr. Roman also spoke to Mr. Jacques Bonnet, a long-standing and esteemed collaborator of Traditional Studies, and author of very erudite works on Symbolism and the legends of various Traditions. His work, which also includes works on the Forez region - *Honoré d'Urfle* and its *Astrée* - reflects an inner life of meditation and renunciation, as well as a great delicacy of feeling. His works reveal a deep connection with Christianity, which never conceals a universal outlook.

Finally, Mr Roman will have it particularly close to his heart to address the "heirs of Roger Maridort, some of whom collaborated with the *Rivista di Studi Tradizionali* in Turin. Giorgio Manara was able to make contact and responded favourably, but his accidental death put an end to the beginning of an effective collaboration between the two magazines. A few months later, D. Roman died²³.

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We can see from the above that the author's attitude towards the last concerns that R. Guénon had formulated about the future of Traditional Studies, and which were published in the *Rivista di Studi Tradizionali* in 1970 and 1979, was not always easy: but his marvellous fidelity to the latter's work will always remain a priority.

Of course, there would be many events to write concerning this unstable period for many readers of R. Guénon, usually in search of a possible exotericism to practise, in accordance with the Roman condemnations in force. As the author writes in his first book, his adherence to R. Guénon's teaching "was interrupted by several abandonments and frequent regrets". Those who felt obliged to make an urgent choice, whether exoteric or esoteric (i.e. initiatory, in the Guenonian sense of the term), very often did so in conditions that were hardly compatible with the importance of the task; with an "inexplicable" feverishness, they took refuge in many - which was to be followed by confusion - whose current situation still shows dense traces²⁴; these characterise in a way

²³The "editorial staff" of R. Guénon's review (for we always consider it as such), must have rejected abruptly, from this time onwards, the possible prolongations of D. Roman's work.

²⁴This confusion manifests itself in many ways; one of the most significant examples is the use of R. Guénon's own vocabulary (which he himself has formulated or simply updated), to which a different, even opposite, meaning is attributed. Let us mention the terms "spiritual realisation" and "initiation", to name but two, which have been diverted from the precise meaning that R. Guénon attributed to them in his Work. Another example of this confusion, which many are not aware of, today as in the past, are R. Guénon's warnings concerning the "mixture of forms" and the importance of "choice"; we thus note the double "belongings" which generate, or aggravate, instability, if not worse. One of the marked incidents of this post-war period - which was fertilised by all sorts of conventions - is the famous episode of the "search" in Switzerland for the "Lost Word". The author did not feel the need to develop

negative, we could say, the post-Guénonian period, in the sense that - among other things - the constitution of a Western elite, as Guénon had considered it, is at least partly sterilised; it is certainly an apparent setback of 40 years in this domain²⁵. Of course, the author was, at one time, like most of those who supported the management of René Guénon's Work, confronted with a personal exoteric choice, which led him to the profound study of Protestantism and, notably, to the Works of Calvin. In fact, it was early Protestantism that must have seduced him, for a time, by its rigour, but also by its rejection of a certain clericalism that condemned all forms of esotericism and initiation. And, as Guénon recalled in a letter to the author, had Protestantism not been the refuge, after the 16th century, of a very considerable number of authentic initiates, victims, to a certain extent, of the growing hostility of the Catholic authorities towards all forms of esotericism?

The author, as far as he is concerned, remains faithful to Christianity as well as to Freemasonry. Therefore, requests of all kinds should not be lacking; the "call" of certain Eastern Traditions was equally vain. She who constitutes for Christians an "obligatory passage", the "Mediatrice of Grace"²⁶, the "Ark of the Covenant", the "Gate of Heaven" and the "Morning Star", watched over this discreet worker, in his abandonment to Divine Providence.

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The Work

As mentioned above, D. Roman has always considered that R. Guénon's insistence on the dangers of the end of time - notably exposed in *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times* - was part of a "message of a providential nature", concerning henceforth "the whole world"; this Work which seems to bear "marks" that are the testament of the totality of our cycle, and this, as much for the East as for the West²⁷.

This question in Chapter IX of his previous Work, devoted to the Lodge "The Great Triad", as he had at one time considered it.

²⁵This retrogression is possibly only apparent; it would seem to be a long "maturation" which, after the disappearance of R. Guénon, has allowed certain lower possibilities to be exhausted; from the microcosmic point of view, we could say, the most significant observation brings to evolution, from the Guénonian Work onwards, the best known individualities of the "traditional" milieu; for the most part, this appears as a disquieting regression. But the current period should indicate the approach of a healthy "return", as certain indications seem to show. It is possibly the time for all those who are aware that a cycle is about to close, to show the determination that the author expressed in the epilogue of his first work, when he stated: "(...) just as, according to Scripture, it is "folly" to be preferred over "worldly" wisdom, we think that, in the age in which we are, and in the face of the maturities that are announced, a certain "imprudence", might not be devoid of some usefulness".

²⁶Cf. Volume I, Chapter VIII: "To the glorious memory of the two Saint Johns", Dante, in his *Divine Comedy*, Paradise, 33rd canto, writes:

*"Lady, Thou art as great and mighty as the man Who
desires grace and does not turn to Thee.
He pretends that his desire flies without wings".*

²⁷Cf. Chapter One of this Book.

"In this contemporary West, where intellectual deficiencies, emanating from an unflappable security and ridiculous pretensions, have been uncereemoniously criticised, Guénon has found only two things that have retained his interest: Christianity (especially in its Catholic form) and Freemasonry. For him, Christianity was the Tradition of the religious form, proper to the Western world, and this Tradition, over the centuries, became exclusively exoteric and did not involve initiatory rituals. As for Freemasonry, it offers, today, this particularity of being an initiatory path open to people of all Traditions. It is therefore natural that Christians, who have not had, or do not have, an initiation of their own, should turn to Freemasonry in search of an initiatory link. And one can immediately see how the situation becomes abnormal when the Christian religious authority forbids its faithful to become Masons".

Here, we believe, are the author's main concerns. These will give rise, on the basis of certain statements by R. Guénon scattered in his Work⁽²⁸⁾ to a reflection based on the notion of "inheritances", which providentially have conjugated in Freemasonry; a notion without which, the author said, his purpose, even his work, would lose all meaning²⁹.

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1.- "The inheritance of multiple previous organisations".

The development of this theme follows the "question" that R. Guénon evoked in these terms in 1932, in a review in the Masonic magazine, La Grand Lodge Bulletin d'Iowa: "Does Freemasonry itself have a unique origin, or is it not rather an adoption, since the Middle Ages, of the heritage of multiple previous organisations?"

In this connection, in Chapter XI of the present work, entitled "The Masonic Manual of Vuillaume", the author highlights a major observation made by R. Guénon in his article "The Lost Word and the Substituted Words", an article whose importance will not have escaped those who question the presence of symbolic elements within the Order. Guénon formulated in these terms, in his article "The lost word and the substituted words", an article whose importance will not have escaped those who wonder about the presence, within the Order, of various symbolic elements whose origins derive from disappeared Traditions: "There would be much to say about the conservative role of Freemasonry and about the possibility it offers of sub-planting, to a certain extent, the absence of initiation, of a different order, in the Western world today"⁽³⁰⁾.

"We know", writes D. Roman in his first work, "that the most famous of these inheritances are the Orphism and Pythagoreanism of the Greeks, and the "Colegia Fabrorum" of the Romans, taken from vanished Traditions, and then the Order of the Temple and the "Invisible College" of the Rosicrucian Cross, taken from the Tradition.

²⁸These statements can be considered as real "germs"; some of which are still untapped.

²⁹He expressed himself in this way, in private, after an interview arranged with the magazine Auroras and in which approximately two lines were missing from a paragraph - where he expressed his intention on the "legacies" of Freemasonry - which was completely incomprehensible.

³⁰Studies on Freemasonry and Coimpagnonnage, volume I, and letter from R. Guénon to the author, September 8, 1949.

Christian. The colleges of craftsmen were founded by Numa (the Roman equivalent of the Vedic Manu), who had the temple of Janus, the god of the two faces, built, whose sanctuary was open during war and closed during peace. 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 elements gathered from dead civilisations to remain alive⁽³¹⁾ and thus cease to be merely "vestiges" of the past, and to remain "germs" for the future. [We think 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 only what is symbolically expressed in the ritual formula, according to which the Lodge of St. John is held in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. And this mention of St. John leads us to consider the inheritance that the Masonic Order has received from the monotheistic Tradition and, more particularly, from its Christian form, from which it has received, from its founder, the promise to subsist "until the consummation of the ages". [Of all the personages of the New Testament, there is none who is so intimately connected with the end of the cycle as St. John; and it may be inferred 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 reason that this Order has been constantly "chosen" to become the "Ark" in which the "deposit" of all that has been truly initiatory in the Western world has been produced".

Is it not remarkable that the last, in date, of the legacies which the author has evoked in chapter XXII of the present Work and which he considers as particularly important and significant, concerns the "idea" of the Holy Empire, which presents the "mark" of the Supreme Centre and communicates symbolically - if not actually - the intrinsic qualities and its exceptional prerogatives to the Masonic structure, which is officially the depositary, after the beginning of the 19th century?

D. Roman emphasised that Freemasonry has received certain inheritances - Pythagoreans and Templars, for example - which have nothing in common with the initiation of the craft, except for some of them to enter, for some of them, into the framework of the "lesser mysteries". This is a remarkable fact: Freemasonry as a whole, i.e. in all that it comprises and combines, is no longer limited to a specifically craft initiatory purpose, as has often been claimed. This is why R. Guénon, in one of his numerous reviews published in The Veil of Isis or in the Studies⁽³²⁾ posed the following "question", very enigmatic and full of meaning: "[...] it should be explained why Freemasonry, in spite of its craft forms, also has the denomination of Royal Craft"⁽³³⁾. This situation, which is unique among initiatory organisations, undoubtedly makes it a privileged field of study.

³¹To an author who seemed to wish to minimise R. Guénon's assertions about Freemasonry, made in the last period of his life, and notably concerning the "vestiges" which it had collected down through the ages, the author replied that these were "living" vestiges. In reality, they are real germs for the future world, but they can be actualised (i.e. find the fullness of their meaning and effectiveness) if the conditions favourable to their development are in place.

³²The reviews of R. Guénon are sometimes forgotten by the readers of his Work; this is a pity, for they were always the occasion for the author to expound doctrinal notions of a certain interest. And, alongside this, there are formulated indicative and directive elements, often circumstantial, which we can also qualify as "germs".

³³Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage, volume I, pg. 245. We know that Hermeticism is also a Royal Art par excellence.

for multiple paths that include, through the priestly vocation, from which, moreover, he has benefited, "an openness to the greater mysteries".

Thus, its qualified members can access this plurality of "repositories" and reap this not inconsiderable benefit. Let us refer to what the author notably said about Hermeticism: a cosmological component of the Egyptian tradition, it was incorporated into the Christian esotericism of the Middle Ages, to the point of becoming a truly "integral part" of Freemasonry, whether in its "Blue Degrees" or one of the "High Degrees". Its affinity with the Royal Craft is therefore closer. As for the Knighthood of the Temple, whose spiritual affiliation is so controversial and sometimes vigorously rejected within Freemasonry itself³⁴, is it not therefore the privileged initiatory component of Christian esotericism, represented by its illustrious Protector, the "beloved" Apostle, St. John³⁵?

As far as the high Scottish degrees of continental Freemasonry, in which these heritages are for the most part sheltered, are concerned, it must be remembered that R. Guénon formulated serious reservations; notably about the manner in which these "degrees" were practised, and about the state of some of their rituals. It is, however, well known that the severity of his judgement extended to other domains and - a sign of his vigilant interest - to Freemasonry in general, at least as to what it was, and not what it should be. In this, he was merely accentuating a particularly worrying situation; things do not seem to have improved after this time. As far as the corresponding rituals are concerned, no one today can ignore the situation after the publication by an author like Paul Naudon - a name suspected of "Guenonism" - of the "alterations and deformations suffered" by some of them in even more recent periods³⁶. (36) R. Guénon was obviously not against the institution of the high degrees and their *raison d'être*, since he affirmed that they could "be considered as representatives of vestiges, or memories, which have come to be added to Freemasonry, or to "crystallise", in some form, around it, of ancient Western initiatory organisations other than the latter" and he specified: "their *raison d'être* [...] is, in short, what can still remain of the initiations in question, in the only form in which it has been possible, after their disappearance as independent forms [...]"³⁷.

For those Masons who are inclined to underestimate the scope of these words and who might doubt the importance of the "conservative role" attributed by R. Guénon to Freemasonry - and in particular to the institution of the High Degrees, which constitute, in a way, its crowning glory - it is not without interest to recall what he said about the possibilities of "operational" restoration, in relation to the implementation of the "vestiges" of various origins, of which most of these degrees are constituted.

³⁴The reader will find the author's reflections on this subject in the present book, but also in chapters II and III of his first work: "The Temple, a Christian Initiatic Order" and "From the Temple to Freemasonry, through Christian Hermeticism". It is needless to insist that certain strong points of his work are, in some way, "to the glory" of this Order, which proceeds from the Supreme Centre.

³⁵The author, aware of the precariousness of the "times" and concerned about a situation of confusion in the traditional domain, stated: "If, after John-Paul II, there should be only two Popes, (he refers here to the "prophecy of St. Malachy"), then time has clearly come to vindicate (...) the rights of dominion reserved to John; a dominion which, according to an infallible word, should not matter to Peter". *Letter from the author to J.G., 15 January 1984.*

³⁶Cf. History, Rituals and Covering of High Masonic Degrees, *Dervy livres*, 1984, 3rd edition, fully revised and enlarged. P. Naudon uses other no less eloquent adjectives.

³⁷Cf. Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage, volume 2, pgs. 39 and 40.

The Ancients knew very well what they were talking about when they used symbolic language. True "superstition" in the etymological sense (quod superstat) is that which survives oneself, that is to say, in a word, the "dead letter"; but this very preservation, however unworthy of interest it may seem, is not negligible, for the spirit that "blows where it wills" and when it wills, can always vivify the rites and symbols and restore, with their lost meaning, the fullness of their original virtue"³⁹.

But taking into account these ritualistic and symbolic "vestiges" of the high degrees should not make us forget the very important elements present in the rituals of the Craft degrees, that is to say, the first three degrees of the so-called "blue" Masonry: these are of Pythagorean origin, whose importance is not always obvious from their appearance, and emanate from a progress by direct filiation; likewise for those of Hebraic and Hermetic origin, and for those - fundamental - of operative origin, on which it seems useless to insist. Thus it is that of the "Office", an essential and fundamental practice for the "blue" or "symbolic degrees" (but which, nowadays, is not entirely limited to these, since certain "complements of the Mastery" carry symbolic elements of a priestly character), the Office, we said, no longer has the common and universal basis of Masonic initiation, open to all Masons of all degrees. To forget the practice, in favour of everything else, could not, for the author, but constitute a serious lack of discernment.

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2.- Content of the Work.

The subjects dealt with in the first part of this work deal with symbolism and Masonic uses, but also with events and points in history, from the traditional point of view "updated" in the West by R. Guénon. They refer, with conviction, to Anglo-Saxon documentary and ritual sources, little known and largely forgotten at the time. But the author does not limit himself to these sources alone, for continental Freemasonry probably possessed, within itself, its own "heritages" and its specific elements, which are to be found in its rituals. Because they bear the mark of operative Freemasonry and carry certain symbolic elements, D. Roman stresses these forgotten usages and rites, and certain ritual particularities, usually neglected⁴⁰; he also examines - while drawing attention to certain important points - the content of certain "Old charges" and, notably, their "legendary" part, so misunderstood today and so often the object of ridicule⁴¹.

³⁸Let it be understood that it is ritual action which is here under consideration; it must adopt "Wisdom, Strength and Beauty", as "supports", and thus conform to the "dharma", i.e., the universal Order (or Law). Common action, in all its forms, is not taken into consideration in this very case, even if it is susceptible of sacralisation.

³⁹Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science, pg. 78-79.

⁴⁰It should be noted that some customs have been re-established after this period.

⁴¹It is sufficient to be aware of the indications advanced in this respect in the Hermes Notebook, which in 1992 was listed among the "Founding Documents" (of Freemasonry), pages 134 to 144 and 183, for example, in view of the interpretation given by D. Roman, in Chapter XII "Euclid, disciple of Abraham", of his first

The author insists on the importance of rituals, rites and symbols and on their methodical and doctrinal character. Accordingly, the active (conscious) implementation of symbolism - of which ritual is, in turn, the support and vehicle - requires prior recognition of its "non-human" origin, on pain of limiting oneself to an interpretation that leads to a simple psychological exercise or a vain intellectual game. This is why the author stresses the "operability" of Masonic rites and symbols. Without a supra-individual element, represented notably by "fulgurated" rites⁽⁴²⁾ which ensures the transmission of spiritual influence, initiation, even virtual, disappears.

Its purpose naturally leads us to ask ourselves about the Masonic life that we usually practise, and about the influence, almost general, that we observe vis-a-vis the initiatory nature of the Order⁴³. More and more people are considering the need for a prudent and safe restoration of the elements of doctrine and method which are likely to oblige each individual to develop harmoniously and to the extent of his qualifications, to the extent of his initiation.

As little as we are aware of the unique character of Freemasonry and its privileged position in the West, the chapters that make up this first part will remind us of the importance and urgency of preserving and enriching the precious deposits that it transmits for restitution - "when time and circumstances permit" - the fullness of its operative virtue.

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It is a work to note the indigence with which the legendary history of this organisation is approached by profane-minded "exegetes".

⁴²*It seems that the reality of these "fulgurated" rites (undoubtedly of operative origin) is nowadays called into question in one of their initiatory forms, known as "faculty of abrac". This is the circumstance of the study of the "Leland-Locke" manuscript, dated 1753, and identified, it seems, as being the work of something false; the annoying thing is that the symbolic elements it contains cannot have come from the imagination of a faker; on this point, obviously, it is quickly passed over, which gives the opportunity to take as a defect the "seriousness" of R. Guénon's information and that of his "commentators", and to take the "seriousness" of R. Guénon's information as a defect. Guénon and his "commentators", including the author of the present book (cf. Traditional Renaissance, January-April 1994, no. 97-98, p. 109). In their usual haste to reconsider "everything" systematically, it is to be feared that those who possess the method of historical criticism do not lose sight of the most elementary prudence, subordinating the interpretation of the content of the documents they "study" to their "singularly reductive prejudice".*

"All that I have told you about thunder, etc..., helps to justify the interpretation of the enigmatic "faculti of abrac" by the "baraq" (in Hebrew) or the "barq" (in Arabic), the lightning or the thunderbolt". Letter from R. Guénon to the author, 6 December 1949.

⁴³*If we refer only to those two Masonic practices, the practice of which conditions a not inconsiderable part of the "atmosphere", but above all of the effectiveness of the rites, we can certainly note that there is currently a noticeable deterioration. To give an example concerning the "economy" of the obedience structure, the decisions of which have the effect of diminishing the desired sovereignty of the Lodges, let us recall: the lack of respect for the annual Masonic cycle, with the resulting ritual consequences; the increasingly frequent abandonment of solstitial feasts in favour of "celebrations" of a profane nature; the absence of "teaching" by the Masters within the Lodge, on the pretext that this can only be done under the auspices of the higher degrees, etc. . . . One of the most destabilising practices for Lodges is the*

Continental Blue Lodges, which consists in reducing the time of the Veneratura to one year - a real "flight forward" - not to mention the quasi-obsession with recruitment, etc. Corresponding to calculations or simple negligence, all these deviations favour the intrusion and influence of the profane and worldly mentality in the Temple; they generate disguised consequences of a dissolving character, and, evidently, give rise to serious concerns for the practice and pursuit of an authentic initiatory march.

The second part of the work deals with situations and personalities associated with historical periods concerning the Masonic Order. The content of these chapters reveals certain aspects of the "underground history", which we will briefly mention here. It is clear that the actions of these characters, whether Frederick Desmond, Leo Taxil, Cagliostro, Anderson or others, have had, under various titles, sometimes considerable consequences, and are very well understood by the author, both as regards the Masonic Order and the secular domain. Moreover, an examination of the present Masonic situation reveals traces, in some cases, that are still very perceptible. The interest of this part of the book lies above all in the consequences that the author draws from certain approaches, in particular those that highlight the permanence, in the field of human activity - be it that of "minor history" - of the role of this "current of Satanism", described by Guénon as "counter-initiation". The occasion is also given by D. Roman when he refers to certain individual behaviours, which obviously do not come from chance, and which should be considered. Taken from this angle, common action and some of its modalities, usually proposed as an intellectual amusement for our contemporaries, take on, in this case, the character of a powerful means at the service of the Adversary. As the author points out, with regard to Cagliostro: "At the end of the 18th century, he seems to have compiled in his behaviour all the errors which Masonry, as in any other inmatic path, must guard against: individual considerations; the search for "powers"; ignorance of the rites; the foundation of an irregular Regime; confusion between the psychic and the spiritual; throwing holy things, like fodder, to the profane; recognising, in initiatory matters, an external authority". All this is the fruit of a dense sense and consequences, and to which he adds: "It is not to be wondered at if these "violations" of the traditional norms have given rise to terrible "consequences".

Let us return to this theme - an integral part of the author's entire work (as in R. Guénon's) - which is that of an "underground history" that can be considered as determinant. For those who do not believe in chance, regardless of the counter-initiatic current in history, many facts usually considered as "obscure points" of history and of the Order, remain inexplicable.

The same is true of the subtle "passage" that takes place (a real change of state, and, as such, only takes place in obscurity) of the integration of multiple deposits, of which the Order has been the beneficiary, in the course of the ages. The reader will discover, on a few pages of this book, the evocation of this "passage to the limit"⁴⁴ which constitutes these privileged "moments" of history, which usually escape all appearances; he will see to what extent D. Roman demonstrates, in this curiously forgotten domain, his outstanding discernment, and this followed by the precious indications given by R. Guénon, in the whole of his work. In this connection, the author does not fail to recommend the careful reading of The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times, which contains many indications and "marks" that allow a more sure apprehension of what the Hermetists call "separation", a particular form of discrimination, corresponding to the "putting into action" of intellectual discernment.

⁴⁴Concerning the "passage to the limit", present at every important stage of the initiatory journey and at every change of state, cf. R. Guénon, *The Principles of the Infinitesimal Calculus*, Chapter XIII.

Like R. Guénon, who did not place himself in the perspective of history, the author points out that modern historical research points to the limits of documentary evidence, a victim, as far as the method used by some is concerned, of a kind of "idolatry" of the document. To claim, for example, that a fact, event or situation cannot be considered or retained unless it is contained in a duly dated, classified, ratified and "certified" document is a "scientific" method, which the Ancients cared little about, since there is always evidence of a different order. "The historical facts themselves, and above all those of sacred history, in fact translate truths of a higher order, by reason of the law of correspondence, which is the very foundation of symbolism, and which unites all worlds in total and universal harmony"⁴⁵. On the other hand, this method is intensely desacralising; applied to the sacred texts, it leaves only an empty crust, whose literal completeness is not even profitable.

It is the same - as far as Masonic history is concerned - as forgetting the oral transmission which is specific to it (mainly because of what is central to it)⁴⁶, as to any initiatory organisation. This is why the author considered that the historical method - which, in spite of everything, has some favour in certain Masonic circles - has the limits of a profane science, and that its application proves "impossible and legitimate" in the field of initiation. To an author who described R. Guénon as "an uncritical historian and, moreover, a historiophobe", when the latter has always claimed not to examine, nor to deal with, historical events, D. Roman had to reply in terms that we wish to reproduce here today: "[...] Far from being a "historian without criticism and, moreover, historiophobic", he is a "historian", a "historiophobe". Far from being an "uncritical historian" or a "historiophobe", he projected, on what today has become history, the most lucid, the most constant and the most merciless criticism [...]; he denounced the serious damage of the "falsification of history", in the course of several centuries. Guénon, in no way a historiophobe, enunciated the conditions of a true "philosophy of history". Among these conditions, we must first mention the abandonment of evolutionist prejudices, and then the reference to the traditional doctrines of cosmic cycles and the successive domination of the different "castes of humanity" [...]. Present-day historians are obviously at the antipodes of such conceptions, and cannot take seriously an author who does not believe in chance, nor in spontaneous revolutions, who admits the existence of "a current of Satanism in history", who claims that the methods of modern scholarship have been invented to mislead those who use them, and who asserts that all contemporary history must be rewritten [...]"⁴⁷.

One recognises, in reading the chapters of this second part - in which the author's customary wit and humour are equally evident - that it is insufficient, in order to learn and understand Masonic history, to be content with "blowing" "the dust where the archives sleep".

Finally, let us emphasise the sometimes implicit "warning notes" contained in these chapters, in which the subjects themselves participate, in essence, in this

⁽⁴⁵⁾ R. Guénon, *The King of the World*, Ed. 1950, p. 81; and also *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, Ed. 1947, p. 23 and 24.

⁴⁶ In the religious domain, a similar case can be observed with regard to the mysterious words of the Eucharistic institution, which are always omitted in the ancient Gallican Books, in application of the ancient law of the arcane.

⁴⁷ *Traditional Studies*, no. 424-425, March-June 1971, pg. 141.

intention. Among these "fraternal" warnings, there are those which do not relate to certain situations which continental Freemasonry knows today, notably in its Christian aspect. Is it necessary to recall in this respect, the positions taken, in various places and mainly in England, against Freemasonry and, particularly, the calamitous ritual consequences which they have given rise to⁴⁸? Everyone knows that some are always ready, in their haste, to ask for any "recognition", to "sell their birthright for a plate of lentils".

Without any doubt, this part of the Book is an illustration of the traditional point of view, which enables the author, by drawing on historical points normally forgotten by profane-minded historians, to examine the action of certain "instruments", whether conscious or not, of the designs of the "adversary". It is accompanied by a discreet but present call to Vigilance, from which Masons, concerned for the perpetuity of the Order, could not be disinterested.

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To evoke the third part of this Book is to take into account the author's greatest concern, for, like R Guénon, he could not conceive of a "spiritual restoration" of the West⁴⁹ without Peter and John being reunited And it is clearly here that the temporal contingencies that generate antagonism and conflict become apparent. D. Roman thought that these "meetings" could only take place in the deepest of valleys, that of Jehoshaphat⁽⁵⁰⁾ Is it necessary to resign oneself to despair? Certainly, the *de facto* opposition, in the contingent, quasi-radical order between exotericism and esotericism (in its initiatory, i.e. Masonic, component), which constitutes the current Western situation, is abnormal, and not only for Christian Freemasonry⁵¹. If it undoubtedly, and in its own way, ingests the conditions

⁴⁸Notably, with regard to certain ritual elements of the "Holy Royal Ark of Jerusalem", of which R. Guénon has been able to say, by comparing it to a Scottish high degree, that "the "Royal Ark" degree of which R. Guénon has been able to say, comparing it to a Scottish high degree, that "the "Royal Ark" degree certainly has more reason than the latter to assert itself as the "Nec plus ultra" of Masonic initiation". (Cf. Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage, volume II, chapter: "Lost Word and Substituted Words", pg. 44). In this case, as in others, it is time to say, as the author reminds us: "The less exotericism deals with esotericism, the better" (in volume I, pg. 112).

⁴⁹The author said, in relation to the present temporal situation: "The Master saw, in the study of symbols, the means of operating "the reform of the modern mentality". Such a reform is not conceivable (...), but symbolism loses nothing of its virtue by reforming the mentality of each one of us" (in E.T. No. 432-433, July-October 1872, p. 230).

⁵⁰By virtue of the "law of correspondence", this statement is equally applicable to the microcosmic world.

⁵¹Does not the separation of the two domains (exoteric and esoteric) go back, according to the Gospel of St. John, to the very time of Christ? Needless to say, the present situation is abnormal because of the rejection of esotericism and initiation by the religious authorities. In this connection, there is currently a "tension" concerning the idea that some people have of "what Freemasonry should be": should it be specifically and solely Christian (see Catholic) or universalist, and more especially universal? This question is ill-posed, for if Freemasonry today does indeed have a universalist character, in this case it is a Christian component, and in its place, "according to the level". This is obviously not the case for the reverse proposition. A harmonious "coexistence" is therefore possible and desirable, provided that there is no unrealistic "claim", based on exclusive reasoning that is tainted by the spirit of the system, i.e. not taking into account, in this case, the real situation. Let us also make it clear that recognising Freemasonry's universal character does not mean admitting an agnostic or atheistic tendency. Now, to want to impute to R. Guénon the thesis according to which Freemasonry can only be Christian (and only Catholic, for certain exclusivists), reveals an erroneous interpretation of his Work. The author regretted the considerable damage done by the "joking companion" Anderson and his associates; on the contrary, he wanted, in the event that constitutes the Union of 1813, a "providential" fate for the Order, for, from this fact, any individuality qualified for access to the only Western initiation "based on the Force", subsists with a certain vitality. This is one of the reflections that we can advance to those who do not accept the de-Christianisation of the rituals carried out at the time of the Union. This one,

The "power of the keys", the power of "binding and loosing", which Peter holds and which he must apply in his own domain, is also the result of the application of the "power of the keys", which is the power of "binding and loosing". This situation, although worrying, did not prevent the author from expressing, in his writings and in his attitude, a firm and serene conviction. His position on Rome and his filial respect for her were (and are) not always well understood; we willingly admit that those who might wish for a "better world", i.e. normalisation "at all costs", are somewhat disconcerted by some of the author's positions⁵². Some were destined to make judgements, sometimes hasty ones, testifying to an insufficient knowledge of his work and its traditional situation. This is why we believe that the content of the present book can contribute, among other things, to a fairer appreciation of D. Roman's place in the Traditional milieu of yesterday and today.

In this last part, we have brought together his most recent writings, concerning, most notably, Christian esotericism, as he conceived it after R. Guénon, and those concerning the relations between the Roman Church and Freemasonry. These texts will never cease to amaze by their audacity and lucidity. They are the author's last published reflections on these two fundamental aspects for Freemasonry, whether it claims to be Christian or not. Their reading will reveal the spiritual "sensitivity" which is manifested in particular, as we say here, by his position vis-à-vis the Roman hierarchy which, by its incomprehension and its multiple abandonments, seriously compromises the normal relations between esotericism and esotericism, thus creating a situation of division, which the Adversary cannot exploit.

To conclude on this point of the relations between the Church and Freemasonry, we cannot fail to mention, albeit briefly, some current attempts to ensure a "rapprochement", which will undoubtedly be to the detriment of the latter; we also bring the wise words of the author: "Freemasonry, as an initiatory Order, expects nothing from the Church, which is a purely exoteric organisation. It is neither "repentant" nor "demanding". All we can say is that many Freemasons in Latin countries wish the Church to allow them to live their faith to the full"⁵³. For many Freemasons cannot remain, in spite of their

although regrettable to a certain extent, could not have happened without a compelling reason, an indication of the participation of the "Antiens" in this Union.

⁵²M. Luc Nefontaine, whose position is moderate, even if it seems to us somewhat unrealistic, considers certain solutions for a "dialogue" between the Masonic Order and the Roman Church, in his work: Church and Freemasonry, Ed. Du Chalet, 1990. The author, who presents himself as a non-Mason, seems to have a certain sympathy for Freemasonry, but he has an idea of the Order that is not in keeping with its initiatory nature, which can only distort the conclusions as to an eventual "reconciliation". It seems to follow from his purpose that it would be desirable and even indispensable for Freemasonry to renounce the obstacle of its approach, that is to say, its ritual symbolism, its high degrees (which are, in a way, the elective complement and crowning of its chivalric and priestly nature), its Oath and, evidently, its Secret; in a word, all that which distinguishes it from a profane society. Add to this the abandonment of its "universalist" character, which allows it to admit members of various Traditions, and it would be left with nothing but a wretched scrap, the residue of which would not long remain untapped by the forces of the "Shadow Satellite". In this context, the attitude of certain representatives of the Church is curiously tinged with levity, if not condescension. Thus, a respectable "mediator" who wrote: "Deep down, I think that Freemasonry is a sort of club where men seek their moral perfection and mutual help" (R.P. Riquet). (R.P. Riquet, The Disciplined Rebel, Trajectory Collection, 1993). "A sort of club?" Let us point out that such an "appreciation" is totally insufficient to explain and justify certain muffled annexationist ambitions. Nevertheless, it is inadmissible for those who are aware that Freemasonry is something quite different from this profane caricature, even if, in itself, moral improvement and mutual help are respectable and not foreign to the Masonic evolution. But if there were only this, what would be the raison d'être of symbolism and ritual?

⁵³In René Guénon and the Destinies of Freemasonry, pg. 108, note 16.

of all, indifferent to the purposes which follow: "The negative judgment of the Church on Masonic associations, remains immutable because their principles have always been considered as irreconcilable with the doctrine of the Church. The faithful who belong to Masonic associations are in a state of grave sin (another interpretation says: "in grave matter") and cannot have access to Holy Communion"⁵⁴.

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D. Roman had considered including, in the present work, unpublished texts dealing, notably, with certain continental ritual peculiarities, which we mentioned earlier, and which, apart from any historical consideration, lead us to question the existence and character of operative Freemasonry on the continent before the introduction of the speculative mode from England⁽⁵⁾.

R. Guénon, on the other hand, sometimes drew attention to the presence in continental rituals of practices unknown to English practices: the "Chamber of Reflection", the "purification by the elements", the "Consecration by the Sword", etc.... He pointed out that the absence of these points in the English rituals did not call into question the validity of the initiation. It is these indications which, while defining the "technique" of initiation and its necessity, reveal the true nature of the initiation.

*Although the subject was a very difficult one and was likely to arouse some passions, the author also intended to develop in this work some reflections on female initiation, an initiation whose absence in the West is not without its drawbacks. A careful reading of his work published in the *Études et autres revues*⁵⁶ reveals his care to deal more broadly with this subject, to which he will go so far as to propose some solutions in certain circumstances. But the appeals addressed to one of the two great Western initiatory organisations, the *Compagnonnage*, after R. Guénon formulated them more than half a century ago, remain unanswered today. D. Roman saw in Christian esotericism a "living source", close to constituting a ritual support for this initiation; a privileged support that would allow the inclusion of scriptural or other "legends", considering the "theory of gesture" to be fundamental⁵⁷. Without*

⁵⁴This passage is taken from the declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of 26 November 1983, the text of which was approved and its publication ordered by the Sovereign Pontiff. We are not unaware of the "juridical" reservations formulated in view of this text, which has not been pronounced "ex cathedra". It does not prevent the content of the considerations in the form of condemnations without appeal, directed - in this declaration - against Freemasonry, its "doctrine" and its rites, from being extremely serious; they reflect, not only a judgement, but, above all, a state of mind, which would undoubtedly be profitable, if it did not consist of a satisfied contempt, as is generally the case.

⁵⁵It is interesting to note in this connection that certain indications contained in the "Legend of the Craft" handed down by some of the "Old Charges" seem to attest to the anteriority of Continental Freemasonry over English Masonry.

⁵⁶Some of the author's reflections on female initiation can be found in *The Notebooks of Hermes, devoted to R. Guénon*, pg. 231, note 8; *R. Guénon and the Destinies of Freemasonry*, pg. 153, note 23; and in *Traditional Studies*, no. 404, pg. 285 and no. 489-490, pg. 224.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ R. Guénon has evoked the nature and the capital role of the theory of gesture, in some strange passages of his *Work; nature, which is linked to "the science of rhythm", this (...) "science of rhythm" whose role is extremely important in most methods of initiatic realisation*". (in *Appreciations on Initiation*, pg. 298) which has for its purpose to produce a harmonisation of the various elements of being, and to determine the vibrations susceptible, by their repercussion through the series of states, in indefinite hierarchy, of opening a communication with the higher states, which, moreover and in a general way, is the essential *raison d'être* and

However - and this is fundamental - the author will point out that, to his knowledge, two essential things are lacking in the West for the realisation of this project: a ritual whose constituent elements are in perfect conformity with the feminine nature and its possibilities of "realisation", as well as a validly communicated authentic transmission. It is too much, and too much, for the most problematic initiative to be allowed. Let us recall what Guénon said about the conditions required for the constitution of a new ritual that can ensure the validity of the transmission of the spiritual influence proper to initiation: (it) "cannot be the product of simple individual initiatives, even if they come from people in an orthodox initiatory chain, which would obviously not be sufficient to legitimise the creation by them of new ritual forms (...) "⁵⁸.

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We have sometimes remarked that the author, just as he did not deal with initiatory "practice", did not deal much in his writings with the doctrine under its pure metaphysical aspect, even if the apprehension of metaphysics is considered indispensable. The truth is that he did not neglect this question for anything in the world; while constantly referring to the principles, explicitly or not, he did not deem it necessary to redo what R. Guénon had masterfully expounded in his Work, and this in a definitive manner⁵⁹. As we mentioned above, the author reserved, for example, an "opening up" in his proposal on symbolism, allowing the reader to benefit from esoteric transpositions; this application, in a certain way, of a certain modality of the Masonic method - always in force, in the particular domain of the communication of the "degrees" and the "secrets" - by asking everyone to "gather together what is dispersed", in a permanent way.

It is true that the absence of metaphysical and "practical" expositions in the author's work can be disappointing, particularly for those whose mental aspect is under the influence of the will of spiritual realisation "at all costs", which, under its conditions, can only generate individual deviations. In this connection, we have already said, in a certain milieu and with some condescension, and this during R. Guénon's lifetime, that his Work was only "theoretical", in the hope, no doubt, of turning away impatient readers. From this point of view, everyone can realise today, in view of the results, that this strategy, far from serving the Tradition (but was this really its intention?) has had the most deplorable effects.

primordial of all rites (...)", (R. Guénon, *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, chap. "The Language of the Birds", pg. 77). It is regrettable that circumstances did not allow him to write the study which, in his time, he considered to devote to this subject.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ R. Guénon E.S.F. and the C., volume I, pg. 246. D. Roman, in his private correspondence, indicated that, in the absence of a specific ritual, preparatory work was possible, and even necessary. We cannot deal here with certain modalities of this "work", but it may not be useless to point out that it, while being part of an exoteric "framework", can allow its limits to be permanently exceeded.

⁵⁹ Indeed, Metaphysics is very often approached in a philosophical and even ...theological way by certain authors, referring, however, to Guénon. From an initiatory point of view, this is a sterile intellectual game, for it is to neglect - and refuse - to take on an essential aspect, which is that of "operational" integrality. Let us simply remember that: "in a complete doctrine from the metaphysical point of view, the theory, understood in this ordinary conception, is not sufficient by itself, but is always accompanied, or followed, by a corresponding "realisation", so that, in short, it constitutes only the indispensable basis and, by way of which, it is ordered to the whole, as a means to that end". (Man and his Becoming according to Vedanta, chap. 1). R. Guénon alludes here to the "theory of gesture".

D. Roman's work will prove to be fruitful reading for the attentive reader who perseveres in frequent transposition; it will give him access to certain metaphysical notions, sometimes difficult to understand by direct means, in the perspective of the cosmological application of the Royal Art; through it, not only the seductive erudition of the author will appear (which, in the end, is nothing more than ⁽⁶⁰⁾*, but also his deep and unfailing attachment to the Masonic Order; his taste for Symbolism - the universal language and privileged support of initiation - and his innate sense of ritual and the Sacred will also prevail, as will his innate sense of ritual and the Sacred.*

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Some conclusions

*This is why we believe that the reading of the present work, like the previous one, will provide some answers, particularly for Masons who are concerned about the presence and ritual practice of Symbolism within the Masonic Lodge. What is its *raison d'être*? By following this reading, they will undoubtedly be led to recognise the need for a renewal of Masonic usage and practice; they may also realise that the ritual gaps are not irremediable and that those who are aware of the importance of ritual work will have to ensure the conditions for its re-establishment in a traditional sense*⁶¹.

We believe that the author, when he deals with the various "obstacles" which manifest themselves in the "Way" and when he gives evidence of their origin, will be able to awaken in them - for whom Freemasonry is not only a society of coexistence or a "peculiar system of morality" - a keen sense of Vigilance and an awareness of the initiatory nature of the Order. We also believe that it will not fail to arouse genuine Masonic "vocations"⁽⁶²⁾ *those which are not merely individual inclinations, but the heartfelt manifestation of an inner need, accompanied by a certain taste for the rite and for the symbol*⁶³*. This reading will recall, in addition to the privileged attention and the "vigilant and fraternal interest" that R. Guénon brought to Freemasonry until his last days, the capital importance of his Work towards*

⁽⁶⁰⁾The author's "erudition" was also exercised in the field of Greco-Latin mythology, which he used successfully, and for which he had a particular taste.

⁶¹It is frequently observed that attempts to restore certain usages are curiously observed as "innovations". This behaviour, which betrays a severe legalism and literalism, is almost always the result of doctrinal ignorance; it accommodates itself to the real innovations, introduced here and there, and, in particular, to the re-edition of "official" rituals.

⁶²Those who owe their membership of the Masonic Order to the reading of the Works of Guénon and D. Roman are no strangers to it. But the latter, in his first work, also pointed out that "the attentive study of Guénon's works has not only developed the fervour of many Christians, but has also aroused many priestly or religious vocations" (volume I, p. 9).

⁶³It must be said: the Masonic march seems to resemble, more and more, a banal psychotherapy, when the development of an "ego", exacerbated by the will to power - or for whatever other reasons - is nourished in a profane "environment" in progression. This raises the urgency, even without being something new, of becoming aware of the true nature of initiation (which is not sacramental); thus, by way of consequence, care should be taken to respect certain criteria for the recruitment of candidates for initiation, criteria very different from those generally taken into consideration for the admission of members in any social group that considers itself respectable. As for the initiatory march itself, it should be remembered, after the author, that it is radically different from those which reveal, consciously or unconsciously, the profane or even exoteric point of view.

the apprehension of the true symbolism, of the principles from which it proceeds and, in a word, of the recognition of its non-human origin.

This is how, in the twilight of life, these certainties impose themselves. When the author evokes, in the epilogue of his first work, the need, at the end of this cycle, for "a certain prudence", the few people who know him well will understand what this inner admonition means and what it refers to. Those who carefully read his last articles and remember his last resolutions will understand the importance and solemnity of such an attitude. Will they be inclined to apply it to themselves? Surely such a statement will not fail to surprise some readers, that, in the present period, it incites to an attitude of self-absorption, and even of concealment of traditional concepts, convinced that the "game is up".

But isn't Hope a Masonic virtue?

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To conclude the presentation of this work, we will allow ourselves, in a few words, to evoke the man that M. Maugy was.

*In this, we are aware that, from the traditional point of view, "individualities count for nothing". But for us, who have had the privilege of frequenting him assiduously and for many years, it would be too much to limit ourselves to appearances; we know that the state of "**bālya**", the state of childhood or that of "spiritual poverty" evoked by the Gospel, can give rise to many misunderstandings. We have noted this many times⁶⁴. Moreover, it would be presumptuous to move on to the intimacy of being, which, in any case, almost always eludes us in its essentials; but we hope to have given a glimpse, in the course of this presentation, of the manifest "qualities" of this "monk of the century" who was Marcel Maugy⁶⁵.*

*May we be permitted only to recall now, of this Christian Mason, who also had the audacity to claim to be a "strict Genonian" - in his time, this was rare enough not to be revealed - his daily "**ruminatio**" of the Psautier, and also his practice of a form of prayer, which he particularly loved: the Litany, which he considered to be a Christian form of incantation.*

But, in a particular circumstance, this fervent practice and the sacralisation of all his acts gave him the appearance of a "popular mask"; and so it is that "of his intimate conversation with God, nothing appeared of his person".

It is in this state of spiritual poverty that the "Angel of Death", the "ever awaited Visitor" and Messenger of the retirement of the Promise, was to approach him and require his entry into the Temple, on the simple and radiant morning of 21 March 1986, on this Friday of the feast of Palm Sunday, symbol of "Victory" and of

⁶⁴The author, who only moved around out of necessity, sometimes received, in Riom, in Auvergne - where he had settled in 1955 - together with good friends, very strange visitors; they seemed to be in search of some enchanted formula or some Guenonian ritual, and they were soon eclipsed in some "traditional" purpose.... Certain "pilgrimages", tinged with impatience and ease, when it was not a question of greed, thus took on the appearance of derisory formalities, but rather of sordid manoeuvres.

⁶⁵Marcel Maugy had, at one time, considered joining a monastic Order of Circassian obedience.

Resurrection, dedicated by the Roman Church to Saint Benoît, also patron saint of Builders.

For us, his memory remains linked to that of his collaborator Ivonne Bizeu. Thanks to her daily availability, she was his reading and writing assistant in the author's near-blindness, enabling him to carry out his work in the special conditions illustrated by the formula "Ora et Labora". It seems to us that Providence, which allows some paths to come together, came to praise this circumstance.

It is also why, in view of all those who recognise the author, for all that they owe him - in the measure of human expression, it can only be imperfectly translated - we think of this verse taken from the Gospel of John⁶⁶, Patron Saint of Freemasonry, the one that "must remain" until the return of Christ, and the commentary that had inspired Denys Roman:

"It is written: "It is sown by one and gathered by another". We have sown and it has not always been pleasant. Others, younger than us, may reap the fruit of our efforts. But, in the absolute, that is to say in the eternal present, sower and reaper are confused with the one Father of the family who recruits the labourers for his field".

André Bachelet

⁶⁶John, IV, 37-38.

FIRST PART

CHAPTER I

33 YEARS LATER

Thirty-three years have now passed since the death of René Guénon, and at the end of this period of time, which some authors have called "the fullness of the age of Christ", we often see a high level of interest in the work of the departed Master. A few years ago, we saw the appearance of some anti-Guénonian works, which could be voluminous and sometimes "brilliant", and some colloquiums where the pros and cons were mixed, but whose final impression of the whole could not be considered exactly favourable to Guénon. In the meantime, these works and the oratory that came from them - to which Guénon had been able to oppose during his lifetime - brought the advantage of breaking the "conspiracy of silence", which, after his death, seemed to have imposed itself on all the *mass media*. Since 1984, writings and lectures have been published which have placed the Cairo scholar in his rightful place among the contemporary intelligentsia, and he has even been recognised as unique in his teaching in the Western world.

This is not the time to review here its various manifestations, but we simply wanted to indicate the impact that this sort of "resurrection" of Guénonian thought has had on certain currents of the two truly important traditional institutions in the West: the Catholic Church and Freemasonry. The "Dossier H" on René Guénon, published in 1984⁽⁶⁷⁾ has been the subject of a multi-page report in *Les Etudes*, the journal of the French province of the Society of Jesus, whose members, it is well known, take, in addition to three vows common to all religions, a special vow of submission to the Holy See. In spite of the above, one recognises in René Guénon's books "a Work which cannot pass unnoticed" and which unfortunately "does not occupy its rightful place". The author does not deprive himself of criticising "those who doubt its importance", and to give an example of the convincing character of Guénon's writings, he reproduces the "declaration" contained in André Gide's *Journal*: "What would have become of me if I had found René Guénon's books in my youth? But now it is too late; the games are over, there are no more bets". There is a kind of despair in these words, although, on the other hand, Gide speaks of the "four M's", who are relieved to try to "convert" him. Possibly they would have succeeded if, before "the bets were over", these eminent men of letters had used value judgements of the kind employed by Guénon⁽⁶⁸⁾.

We will point out, however, an error in this report of "*Les Etudes*". Guénon did not become a Muslim "because Islam was the Tradition closest to Hinduism". For Islam, an "Abrahamic" Tradition, is much closer to Christianity and the Jewish Tradition than to any other Tradition. It is impossible

⁶⁷*Dossier H on René Guénon*, in Editions de l'Age de l'Homme, Paris.

⁶⁸Gide also writes elsewhere in his diary: "I have nothing, absolutely nothing to oppose what Guénon has written: it is irrefutable".

to scrutinise the profound reasons for a man's adherence to this or that Religion, for, just as it was Christ who chose his disciples, so it is the Way who chooses his faithful. Moreover, a change of Tradition is, par excellence, a change of state and, as such, "can only be accomplished in darkness". We can also point out that, if Guénon had remained in the Religion in which he was born, he would not have been able to write his Work without having suffered the most serious ecclesiastical sanctions, and even, probably, excommunication, and even more for having been a Freemason. A Catholic Guénon, dealing in his Works with questions closely linked to the dogmas of the faith, should therefore have obtained the *imprimatur*; a Muslim Guénon escaped this obligation⁶⁹.

The Report of "*Les Etudes*" on Dossier H often contains formulas beneficial to Guénon's defence against unjustified accusations, sometimes coming from Catholic circles. He underlines, for example, that "what we could call the integrality of Guénonian thought" has nothing in common with today's "integrism"; just like the traditional synthesis, it cannot be identified with any "syncretism". When we remember how often Guénon was criticised by religious authors, who accused him of syncretism and pantheism, we see how far he has come.

We will quote the gist of the conclusion of the report of the review "*Les Etudes*":

"It turns out that the journey to which Guénon invites us has distant sources in space and time, and not in order to exhaust our Christian sources, but rather to revitalise them; which is not something to be rejected. It turns out that, for a better knowledge of this Work, it would be profitable for anyone to observe it from bottom to top, for a thought and a method cannot be ignored, which touches the essential of our becoming in this world and in the other".

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⁶⁹The passage of certain Guenonians to Islam undoubtedly has multiple reasons. We would like to draw attention to a sort of "constant" in the most outstanding episodes of "sacred history". Guénon has recalled that, after the destruction of the Order of the Temple, the Christian initiates, with the Muslim initiates, agreed to form what was called the "College of the Invisibles" of the Rosicrucian Cross. And, in many of the works of the Christian Hermetists, we find an allusion to the journeys they made to the lands of Islam. It was such a journey, it was said, that Cagliostro made, which enabled Guénon to assert that to regard the Great Count as a mere impostor "was insufficient to explain everything about him". Guénon also thought that the Crusades - so despised in our days - had, besides their exoteric reasons, other occult reasons, relevant to the initiatory order. It is almost unnecessary to recall how, after the "halt" given by the Franks to the Arab expansion in Europe, cordial relations were established between the restorer of the Western Empire and the caliphs of Baghdad. We have always thought that Guénon saw very well the advantages of these almost permanent contacts between Christian initiates and Muslim initiates, and, naturally, the ideal medium for these encounters can be none other than a Masonic Lodge. Finally, since everything that concerns "sacred history" involves a "lesson" in the spiritual order, we can say that "bringing together" the scattered initiates, or those of different Traditions, is a "constructive" work; and that helping to separate them can only be the fruit of a work of the "Shadow Satellite" of which Guénon had spoken, and whose tactic has always been to divide in order to rule.

The report of "*Les Etudes*" echoes certain criticisms against Guénon, contained in the *Dossier* and concerning certain errors that may stand out in some of his works. Of these errors, the two that are of real importance and from which some "teaching" can be drawn (for, in Guénon's case, there is nothing without meaning, and even without truly important meaning), concern Buddhism and the relations between spiritual authority and temporal power. He himself explained the reason that made him recognise the orthodoxy of certain branches of Buddhism. And as for the relations between the two powers, since the publication of the work *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, several readers have been quick to point out a divergence between Guénon's doctrine, in which the temporal power is subordinate to the spiritual authority, and that of Dante who, in his treatise *On Monarchy*, affirms the reciprocal independence of the two "powers" and that the one and the other would proceed immediately from the Supreme Principle.

We must confess that this divergence, on a point which is nevertheless capital, between two exceptional spirits, has never caused us much concern. We think, in fact, that Guénon is superior to Dante, because the latter's work, according to Guenon, is "the testament of the end of the Middle Ages", while Guénon's seems to us to bear "marks" that constitute the testament of our entire cycle, and this, as much for the East, as for the West. It is not for nothing that Guénon, in almost all his Works, alludes to the imminence of what Joseph de Maistre called "an immense event in the divine order".

Let us dwell, however, on the "scandal" which the error (repaired) about Buddhism, and Dante's error about the primacy of the spiritual, might have caused some people. We will recall in this connection that the authority of the most eminent authentic spiritual teachers is, however, inferior to the authority of the Sacred Books. The question is palpably evident when one thinks of the illustrious Shankaracharya, considered by the Hindus as a minor *avatara* of Shiva, but who "skates" when he ventures to speak of a Tradition other than his own, to the extent of asserting calmly, in his admirable *Commentaries on the Brama-Sutras*, that Shakyamuni had invented his pernicious doctrine of Buddhism, in order to supply the humanity for which he had conceived a hatred without quarter.

Guénon, we think, was superior to Shankara as he was to Dante, because his intellectual horizon was not limited to a single Tradition like the Hindu Master, or even to two or three Traditions, like Alighieri. In any case, what could "cloud" the Guenonian teaching was not whether it contained this or that "defect" of greater or lesser importance, but rather whether it contradicted the Sacred Books of the various Traditions, and, above all, whether it contradicted those of the particular Tradition of the people in whose language he formulated his message. This Tradition is Christianity, whose Sacred Book is the Bible. Guénon's adversaries have used their imagination to put him in contradiction with the Book of books; they have not succeeded, and it is necessary to thank the publication of the review *Études* for not having made any allusion to any divergence between the Guenonian texts and those inspired by the Spirit to the authors who go from Moses to St. John.

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The extracts we have quoted from the review *Études* show that the Dossier H, and also - most importantly for us - the Work of René Guénon itself, have found a favourable reception, in spite of the - very widespread - voice of the Catholic world. We would like to say a few words about the reception that, in our opinion, should have been given to this Work, by the more authentically traditional means of the Masonic world.

No one has ever spoken of Freemasonry, as it should be and as it is in its virtualities, in such glowing terms as those used by Guénon. For him, Freemasonry "had gathered - and had done so from the Middle Ages - the heritage of numerous earlier organisations", among which we must mention Pythagoreanism and the Order of the Temple, illustrious initiatory schools among them all. Freemasonry, on the other hand, is the only brotherhood to have taken up such inheritances, and this seems to indicate very clearly that a very particular destiny, a truly "providential" destiny, is reserved for it, symbolised by the promise made to John to "remain" until the return of Christ. Guénon asserts that "there is not much to say about the conservative power of Freemasonry and about the possibility it has of supplementing it, to a certain extent, the absence of initiations of either order in today's Western world"⁷⁰. The pen fell from Guénon's hand, before he had time to answer the many questions, stemming from such enigmatic lines, raised by a certain number of readers; but they are sufficient to justify the unreserved attachment that many, faithful to the Master, have devoted to an Order, of which they have not refused to disqualify the aberrations inspired by the now decadent prestige of the modern spirit⁷¹.

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Another collective work appeared immediately, published by the "Editions d'Hermès", and on the initiative of M. Jean-Pierre Laurant. In this *Hermès Notebook*, as in *Dossier H*, we will find extracts from Guénon's correspondence, which provide an immense desire to know the rest. The one who was undoubtedly the last to correspond with Guénon (to whom he wrote every day), the "faithful among the faithful", Roger Maridort, one of the first three initiates in the Lodge "The Great Triad", confided to us, the day after the Master's death, that he had just acquired a very important part of this correspondence, as it extended over some twenty years. We have always thought that he had received from Guénon the mission to collect the totality of his letters, to which he was to devote his whole life. This was an eventful task, for the letters thus collected, if they were to be published, would form a collection four times more voluminous than René Guénon's Work currently on sale.

⁷⁰Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t.II, pg. 40.

⁷¹Here a question arises quite naturally: How is it that Freemasonry, which had such a predisposition to "assimilate" organisations - sometimes quite alien to its own nature - has not seriously considered annexing the various female initiations, which existed, indeed, in Antiquity, and which must have persisted, probably, until the early Middle Ages? This is a very complex question, which we could not address here. But the fact that Guénon recognised the Masonic quality of a François Menard - a member of the "Human Right" - shows the difficulty of such a problem. In the New Testament, it is in the Passion and Resurrection of Christ that women are seen to play a role, so to speak, of intermediation, between the role of John and that of the exoteric Apostles. It may be necessary to have here an indication that this often debated subject of female initiation in the Western world will only be resolved in favour of the events that are to prepare for the coming of the "age to come".

M. Jean-Pierre Laurant, a university student and official of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes and also of the C.N.R.S., gave, in March 1984 and under the auspices of the "Villard de Honnecourt" Lodge of Research, a lecture attended by Masons of various Obediences and also non-Masons. And he ended by saying that the time when some allowed themselves to be mocked by the name of René Guénon alone was henceforth over. Today, he concluded, "it would be old-fashioned to proclaim oneself a Bergsonian; but I would be honoured whenever I heard myself called a Guenonian".

For some time now, certain authors, referring to disciplines related to the historical sciences, have been very interested in the phenomena of "long duration". These phenomena would be reproduced according to regular rhythms which would determine, in turn, more or less long cycles. Particularly noteworthy are the discoveries made by specialists in economics and demography, such as the Frenchman Simiand and, above all, the Russian Kondratief. The latter has pointed out that the phenomena he studies are subject to certain rhythms which he calls "trecentary movements".

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It is curious to see ultra-modern sciences recognise that everything in the world is arranged "in weight, number and measure". As for the traditional sciences, universal by definition and therefore eternal, it is well known that rhythm plays a constant and capital role. The number 33 occupies a privileged place, and at the same time, in cosmology and sacred history. The spinal column of the microcosm, whose "links" with the "subtle centres" are known, consists of 33 vertebrae; and Christ had reached the age of 33 when He was crucified and rose again on the third day. It is not without significance to us that the present "resurrection" of interest which Guénon attains, comes after 33 years of apparent oblivion. It is written that "the risen Christ can no longer die". Heaven grant that this renewed attention for a Work whose providential mission would not know how to limit itself to a few nations, in which it has already exercised such an influence that hostile forces must henceforth take it into account. For this Work, based on the eternal principles of Metaphysics, has, consequently, a vocation towards universality. "There is no science but the general", said Aristotle; to which Guénon added: "There is no Metaphysics but the universal".

CHAPTER II

INDICATIONS ON SOME MASONIC SYMBOLS

Even today, one of the sources frequently consulted by all those interested in Freemasonry and its symbols is a work first published in 1984 by the occultist scribe Jules Boucher, entitled: *Masonic Symbology, or the Royal Art brought to light and restored according to the rules of esoteric and traditional symbology*⁷².

It is a useful work, in which most of the symbols, formal or sonorous, of Freemasonry of the first three degrees are dealt with. We would say, in principle, that the title chosen by the author seems to us to be somewhat ambitious, because, although the question of Masonic symbolism is correct, we have not found the slightest trace of the "restitution of the Royal Craft". The Art, according to the definition usually given, is the application of knowledge to the realisation of a conception. Now, if the Book in question correctly alludes to a realisation, it is clear that this realisation is, above all, known in terms of the author's own magical ideas; and, in any case, Jules Bucher does not provide us with any information on the "techniques" which should constitute the art in question. The idea that he makes of a complaint or a reproach would never cross our minds, for we know that the Master is dead, that the Word is lost, and that no one can say for how long Freemasonry will have to use these "substituted signs", which will last, according to the English formula, "until the times and circumstances permit the original signs to be restored". But, for the present, we fear that it is in the power of no one to announce that the Royal Craft is "restored".

Having said that, it is fair to say that this work is superior to those of the same genre which have appeared up to now, at least in French, i.e. the well-known books by Ragon, Oswald Wirth, Armand Bédarride, E. Plantagenet, etc.... The author, who gives a good critique of ordinary rationalism (pp. XX-XXXI), protests against the fanciful interpretations of those who do not want to see a "diabolical" meaning in Masonic symbolism, rather than a political or moral meaning (which is one of the most stupid, or most suspicious, of the anti-Masons). It reminds us, unfortunately, of certain traditions which have been long forgotten in France: for example, the way in which the compass and the square should be arranged, one in relation to the other according to the degree in which the Lodge is working; the use of the compass during the obligation, etc.... He rightly deplores the indigence and incoherence of the ritual of the

⁷²Dervy-Livres, editor.

second degree. It has found the solution to certain difficult questions: in particular, it is the first time, to our knowledge, that the exact meaning of the Scottish acclamation, which has been the subject of so much discussion, and for which the most improbable interpretations have been proposed, has been publicly given. Such is the interest of such a work. The omissions to which we could refer are minimal; we shall have occasion to point out some of them. The author has had at his disposal an extensive documentation which he has worked on in depth. We were surprised, however, that he did not mention again the Anglo-Saxon "sources", which would have often provided him with the solution to certain problems, in particular those concerning the meaning of "voyages". It should be noted, however, that, especially when dealing with Freemasonry in the form known as "Latin", such a lacuna cannot be considered as one of the most serious.

Unfortunately, the author has proposed certain "innovations" (which are always dangerous in traditional matters) which do not seem to us to be at all justified: for example, the use of "fumigations" in blue Lodge and a board in an unpublished form. Such liberties are reprehensible, especially as the Work, being accessible to "non-Masons", could mislead them. Members of the Order know perfectly well that the use of incense and the board in the form of a regular pentagon are by no means meaningless fancies; but other readers might be led to think that, as expressed by Jules Boucher, Masonic rites and ornaments can proceed from individual fancy; an assumption which is reprehensible and, moreover, contrary to the truth.

Apart from the lacunae and fancies which we have indicated, there are in the "Masonic Symbolism" a number of assertions which we have found objectionable, and also a large number of palpably manifest errors. At other times it has seemed to us that, from the confusions, the extreme conciseness with which some of the objects are treated might later be born, in the minds of some readers, of the extreme conciseness with which they are treated. This concludes without mentioning the arduous task of setting out, at least in some 400 pages and by reviewing the emblems, words and gestures of an organisation which, apart from the numerous "inheritances" received over the years, is in possession of a particularly rich and varied symbolic "treasure trove". As it was our intention, after some time, to examine certain points concerning Masonic symbolism, we decided to take, as a starting point, Jules Boucher's book, which has the advantage of being, in addition to being complete, easy and pleasant to read.

We shall also examine, incidentally, questions touched upon by the author, which, without being - strictly speaking - of Masonic symbolism, are of some interest to the general order. Some of these questions may at first sight appear to be of little importance, but on reflection we thought it would be good, even on these apparently secondary issues, to provide some clarification.

We find just such an example of an imprecision of language, which, at first sight, might not seem serious, in the first pages of the Book (p. XXI, note 1). Speaking of the "egregors"⁽⁷³⁾ or "watchers" of the *Book of Henoch*, Jules Boucher writes: "This word designates the angels who had sworn to *watch* from Mount Hermon", where it seems to follow that the other angels did not

⁷³ On *egregors*, cf. René Guénon, *Spiritual Influences and "egregors"*, in E.T. April-May 1947. Article collected in *Initiation and Spiritual Realisation*, pg. 64.

are entitled to be described as "watchmen". Now, in the *Book of Enoch*, it is all the angels who are called "watchers", "watchers of Heaven", "holy watchers", "those who do not sleep". It is only a part of the angels (200, according to Tradition), who descend upon Mount Hermon, after having sworn, not to watch, but "to join themselves to the sons of men". Having carried out this design, "they showed them the carmens and the enchantments, and taught them the art of cutting the roots of trees. Now they conceived and gave birth to giants (*Nephilim*)..., who devoured all the fruit of the labour of men". We have chosen to refer to these texts because we believe that Jules Boucher has not, in this case, made a necessary distinction. We perfectly admit that Freemasonry has "vigilant angels", but it is necessary to specify that these beings of light are at the "antipodes" of those angels in whom there is no peace"⁷⁵and who were the fathers of the "man-eating giants, who filled the Earth with blood and violence, who oppressed, destroyed, ruined and sowed sorrow"⁷⁶. We know that the union of the angels with the "sons of men" alludes to the "non-human" (and anti-diluvian) origins of the counter-initiation⁽⁷⁷⁾ and it is interesting to know that this union has had as its first consequence "the art of cutting the roots of trees"⁷⁸.

Further on (p. 9), the author, pointing out the relationship between the Solomon's seal and the emblem consisting of an intertwined A and an M, refers to the latter: "a symbol imagined by the Sulpicians in the 17th century". However, this sign can be found in earlier times. Carbonneaux-Lasay, known for his work on Celtic and Christian archaeology, discovered it in a chapel of the ancient monastery of the Carmen of Loudum⁷⁹. This chapel, built in the time of René d'Anjou, King of Sicily, contains a large number of graphics representing, in addition to the symbol that concerns us, the *swastika*, the rose and the serpent on the cross⁸⁰. The interlaced A-M are, moreover, represented in two forms, with or without a stroke in the middle. We believe that the form reproduced by Jules Boucher, which is characterised by the addition of a dot under each of the two vertical strokes, representing the three letters J, M and J, the initials of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, is nothing more than the "devotional" degeneration of a symbol which, like all symbols, dates from a more remarkable antiquity.

The first chapter of the Work is devoted to the study of tools; the author points out (pgs. 13 and 14) that Masonic gavel is generally made of boxwood, and asserts that the boxwood is the symbol of enclosure and perseverance. This is true, but it should be added that the boxwood, by the fact that it remains evergreen⁸¹, was, in the eyes of the Elders, a

⁷⁴ *Book of Enoch*, VII, 1, 2 and 3.

⁷⁵ *Book of Enoch*, XVI, 4.

⁷⁶ *Book of Enoch*, XV, 11.

⁷⁷ Cf. *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, p.258, note 1.

⁷⁸ Cf. René Guénon, Les "roots des plantes", in E.T., September 1946. Articles included in *The Symbols Fundamentals of Sacred Science*, chapter LXII.

⁷⁹ The symbolic graphics of the ancient monastery of the Carmen of Loudon, in Atlantis, March 1935.

⁸⁰ The latter symbol seems to have been particularly dear to Loudon, for Chabonneaux-Lasay wrote (note

11): 'The pulpit of the church of Saint Pierre du Marcher in Loudon has a large cross sculpted on it, around which is coiled a serpent, the emblem of the crucified Christ'.

⁸¹ Linné has given this plant the name *Buxus sempervivens* ("evergreen boxwood"). It should be noted that Many English-speaking Lodges, especially in America, like to take as their "distinguishing title" the name of the Lodge. *Evergreen* (Evergreen is the name given to evergreen trees).

symbol of immortality, and was consecrated to Hades. It is also known that in France and other countries of the same climate, boxwood branches are used for the celebration of the "flowery Easter", replacing the palms used in southern areas. This makes the boxwood, like the Acacia, a "guarantee of victory", of resurrection and immortality.

We intend, in this connection, to set out certain considerations on the symbolism of the colour green. The word "green" is composed of the same consonants as the words "virtue", "vertical", "truth". Green, in Latin, is *viridis*, which has the root *vir*, from which comes virtuality (i.e. power), virulence, virility. There is a mysterious relationship between the colour green and the idea of strength. It is known that green is a symbol of hope, the theological virtue that corresponds to the "Force" of Freemasonry. The Chivalric Order of the Annunciation had as its motto the word "Iron", for which the strangest explanations have been given, but which certainly means "Strong", and which comes from the word "Green", the first consonant of which has been hardened. We recall, in this connection, that the Masonic symbol of the lakes of love plays a great part in this Order of the Annunciation. In Egypt, the god Thoth, the equivalent of Hermes, *psychopompe*, had as his symbol a small column of green spathe⁸². On Egyptian sarcophagi and coffins, the garments of the personages are green⁸³. It is also known that the enigmatic *El-Khidr* is always depicted dressed in green⁸⁴ and that, later in the Koran, "Those who believe in Paradise will be clothed in green robes embroidered with silk and gold" (XVIII, 30). It is necessary to pay attention to what has been said, in different Traditions, about the emerald. The oracle of Jupiter Ammon possessed one, in the form of a navel, which was carried in procession round the temple at different times⁸⁵. Before the conquest of the country by the Incas, the Peruvian elders manifested a very particular veneration for this stone⁸⁶. The fundamental text, we could say, of hermeticism, bears the name of the *Emerald Tablet*. Finally, we know that it was an emerald that fell from Lucifer's forehead, which was taken from the Holy Grail, which, in turn, was covered with a green veil. In the light of these Traditions, we can understand what the folklore of all peoples alludes to when it relates that the emerald - which, moreover, is an extremely hard stone - restores lost memory, fortifies the eyesight, facilitates childbirth. The three ancient Works of Medicine attributed to Orpheus even recognise "virile virtues", which Rabelais recalled.

The Latin word *vis*, which is only a modification of *vir*, has the same meanings of strength, vigour, power (from which it derives *victor*, victorious). The French word "vis" designates an instrument used to join different pieces of wood with force. And it is worth remembering that it is by a ladder "en vis" that one has access to the "Middle Chamber", where one will receive the fullness of the "Force". However, it is not from the Latin *vis*, from which the French word "vis" derives, but from *vitis* (vine, vine stock), because this tree possesses the "tendrils". But it should be noted that there are close links between the vine and life (in Latin *vitis* and *vita*), because life is linked to the vine.

⁸² "I am the little pillar of green spathe which Thoth bestows on his worshippers, and which hates evil" (*Book of the Dead*, 180).

⁸³ Champolion, *Egyptian Grammar*, quoted by Lanoë-Villène, *The Book of Symbols*, t. V, p. 115.

⁸⁴ Cf. *Traditional Studies*, 1938, p. 304.

⁸⁵ Quinte-Cource, *History of Alexander*, IV, 7, quoted by Lanoë-Villène. t. V. p. 114.

⁸⁶ Garcilaso de la Vega, *Comentarios reales*, quoted by Lanoë-Villène. t. V. p. 125.

to blood, and that there is an obvious resemblance between blood and wine, which is, as we know, the substitute for the "brew of immortality"⁸⁷.

We seem to have moved away from Freemasonry, although, in reality, it has been very little. These meanings of strength, virility, power, victory, life, truth, which we find in the Latin radicals *vir* and *vis*, are also found in the Sanskrit *vîrya*, which gave its name to the *vîrya-mârga* or "way of héros", whose importance in Tantrism is well known. This way, "more active than contemplative, and which is more on the side of power than of knowledge"⁸⁸, presents singular affinities with Freemasonry, and the kinship between the expressions "Way of héros" and "Royal Art" is immediately apparent. According to J. Evola, "the *vîrya*", in Hindu doctrines and especially in Buddhism, is in the spiritual energy which, once isolated, is capable of acting on the habitual behaviour of the elements, developing an action similar to that of "fire against nature"⁸⁹. To isolate the *vîrya*, one needs, as a premise, the energy necessary to renounce desire, thanks to which the virile spiritual power opens up, capable of bringing the elements of the human being to a state that no longer belongs to the "flow"⁹⁰. We have reproduced this passage because it provides an excellent definition of this "force, which is constantly referred to in Freemasonry, and also because of the use of the Hermetic term "flux" to designate that which Freemasonry aims at for the escape of its members. In 18th century England, the oath of Apprenticeship was concluded by the passing of various "penalties", many of them being related to the "sign of recognition" of the degree, and the last was the following: "to be left on the beach by the seashore, bound with a cable, where the ebb and flow come twice daily". This mention of the ebb and flow, which obviously symbolises the alternation between the states of "generation" and "corruption", is remarkable.

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A passage from "Masonic Symbolism" which has struck us (pg. 16), is the following: "The perpendicular and the level offer, respectively, the Vertical and the Horizontal. We still find here the Active and the Passive, the two universal polarities, one of movement and action, the other of inertia and repose, the *Rajas* and the *Tamas* of the Hindus, the two opposites, whose reciprocal play conditions the life of the Universe". From which it seems to follow that *Rajas* - which the author makes correspond to movement - is exercised in the vertical sense and that *Tamas*, which would correspond to rest, is exercised in the horizontal sense. All our readers know that, in reality, it is quite the reverse, and that, on the other hand, *Rajas* and *Tamas* are by no means opposites, and that it is absolutely futile to consider these two terms to the exclusion of *Sattwa*.

It is even shocking that the author, referring further on (pg. 19) to the expression: "passing from the perpendicular to the level", which means receiving the degree of

⁸⁷ The adage: "*In vino veritas*", is evidently capable of a higher meaning. And it is practically needless to say that the kinship between the Latin roots *ver* (which has, among others, the meaning of "Spring"), *vir* and *vis*, is evident in the famous saying: "*Vincit omnia Veritas*".

⁸⁸ Cf. René Guénon: The Fifth Vêda, *Traditional Studies*, August-September 1937.

⁸⁹ What the author is referring to here is evidently the "hermetic fire" that produces the "calcination".

⁹⁰ "The Hermetic Tradition", p. 101.

Companion, do not remember the parallelism of these terms with the well-known text of the Vedas: "All was tamas; the Supreme Ordainer requests, and, tamas acquires, the colour of *rajas*; and, *rajas*, having received the new order, acquires that of *sattwa*"⁹¹. There is here a succession of three senses: vertical descending, horizontal and ascending, reminiscent of the English expressions: initiation, passing and raising⁽⁹²⁾ -which are used in the elevation to the three degrees of Freemasonry

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On page 18, the author writes: "Knowledge given by initiation, which must, we believe, replace morality, tends towards the Absolute". We think that initiation does not have to replace morality, with which it has little in common. Morality is a "specification" of the laws governing "concordant actions and reactions", with the aim of benefiting men by providing them with the most favourable conditions in the play of "ebb and flow", to use the symbolism referred to above, and that is why it is addressed to all. Initiation is addressed to the "qualified" and its ultimate aim is to "liberate" man from this game. Once this end has been achieved, morality is meaningless, and initiation itself becomes a useless "instrument".

Moreover, it is obvious that he who attempts to follow an initiatory path without taking into account the moral rules imposed by the traditional "form" to which he belongs by birth or by choice,⁹³ will expose himself to such violent reactions that it will be practically impossible for him to make any progress on his chosen path.

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On page 21, the author states, seeming to make his own, an erroneous assertion by Plantagenet: "The Gavel and Chisel belong to the Apprentice degree only in France". In English-speaking Freemasonry, these two tools are more in evidence than in France, and in the course of the reception of the first degree, the Worshipful Master says to the recipient: "I now hand you the working tools of the Apprentice Mason, which are the 24-inch ruler, the mallet and the chisel".

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The first chapter concludes with three summary tables, the first of which classifies tools into active and passive. We confess that we do not understand why the ruler is placed in the first category and the alzaprima in the second. The shortcoming of such a distribution is that a tool is always passive in relation to the worker and active in relation to the worker.

⁹¹ Cf. The Symbolism of the Cross, pp. 51-52.

⁹² Initiation, passage and elevation. It must be remembered that initiation begins with the "descent into hell". In the language of the coat of arms, an animal is said to "pass" when it marches horizontally.

⁹³ It must be clear that, whatever the appearances, it is the "Way" that man chooses. Cf. the word of Christ to the Apostles: "It is not you who have chosen me, but I who have chosen you" (John, XV, 16).

to the first matter. In the picture in question, the chisel is given as passive and the mallet as active. It is therefore true that, in relation to the stone, the chisel is active, since it plays the role of penetration. It is thus equivalent to the sword, the dagger of the "degrees of vengeance", see the "sword" of the "Lodge of the Table". And it is the symbolism of lightning, as the sledgehammer is of the storm. In a sense, the chisel is more active than the mallet itself, as lightning is quicker than thunder.

We know that, in the Charbonnerie, the president of a "Vente" opened the work by striking an axe on a cut tree stump. The iron and the handle of the axe correspond, respectively, to the chisel and the mallet, and it would seem to us very contestable to claim that the iron of the axe is less active than the handle, the latter symbolising rather the blind force of the storm and the iron the illuminating force of the lightning.

For us, the chisel, far from being a passive instrument, we consider it to be active par excellence. For the lightning bolt is the symbol of the "celestial ray", of the *Buddhi* which links individuality to Personality. It can therefore be said that in Masonic work, the "rough stone" is the individuality, the chisel and the hammer the intellect, and the worker the Divine Personality. For perhaps for a "non-human", the famous question must be answered: "Which is the builder?"

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The author writes (pg. 22): "No work can ever be considered as fully finished". This statement is surprising, because it suggests that the author never understood, in the conclusion of a work, the expression: "All is just and perfect".

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This page 22 is devoted to the symbolism of the trowel, on which we think it appropriate to dwell a little. The trowel, which is used to apply the cement that binds the various parts of a building together, is an indispensable tool in all construction. In Masonic symbolism, however, it plays only an insignificant role. In the French Rite, it is the tool of the fifth journey of the second degree. In the Scottish Rite, it is totally unknown. Jules Boucher is rightly surprised at such an outdated role; but we must say that when we see him (pg. 23) making the trowel the symbol of "benevolence all round", we seem to fall into one of those purely "moralistic" interpretations, against which, moreover, he justly reveals himself".

The shape of the trowel is remarkable: on the one hand, it has a zigzag profile and, on the other, its blade is triangular: the outline of this instrument is therefore the exact equivalent of the "lightning bolts" in the hands of the "master of the storm". Moreover, it is enough to have seen a workman building a wall to realise the way he uses the "sofrenar" to project the cement, which makes one think of the "flashes" of lightning. What further confirms this lightning-blade equivalence is that the "image-makers" of the Middle Ages frequently reproduced

the Creator with the trowel in his hand⁹⁴. We can say that God created the world with the palette, and this useful one becomes a symbol of the Word. The palette serves here as the "sceptre" of the Creator, and we know that the Hindu and Buddhist divinities, who have the right to carry a *vajra*, carry instead a sceptre which is a sacred utensil, which has, moreover, a ternary character and is expressly assimilated to the thunderbolt.

We can therefore say that the palette is a symbol of creative power (even of the creative act). How can it be that an emblem which expresses so much and which plays such a role in the art of building, has been forgotten to the point of being almost reduced, in Masonic symbolism, to the level we have already expressed? We believe that this has not always been the case and that, in the Middle Ages, the trowel occupied a special place among the operative Masons. At that time, the craft guilds were endowed with a certain number of "privileges" which made them, to a certain extent, similar to the nobility. Among these privileges were the wearing of gloves and the use of arms. The latter notably adorned the flag, which each corporation carried publicly during the feast of its patron saint. In general, these weapons were seen as working tools that the corps of masters had as a characteristic of their activity. And the Masons naturally represented the palette, the essential tool of this art⁹⁵.

At the end of the confused and poorly understood period which marks the transition from operative to speculative Freemasonry, the paddle was still used for initiation in certain Lodges. Thus, in an old English ritual⁹⁶, the recipient holds, while taking the oath, a paddle in his right hand and a hammer in his left. If we go back to France, it is evident that after the intervention of the lightning, with the spiritual influence, the paddle could be seen as a "vehicle" throughout the rite that causes you to receive this influence. It is possible that this would have been the case in a more or less distant epoch; but, in the present day, it is not the trowel, but the flaming sword that is used in conjunction with the hammer.

It is possible that such a substitution is due to the entry of the *Kshatryas* into Freemasonry, which transforms this corporate organisation into a non-corporate recruitment organisation, and the art of the builders into the "Royal Craft". Such an impact must necessarily have influenced the symbolism of the institution, and it is undoubtedly to it - the flaming sword - together with the hammer, that we owe, on the occasion of the rite of aggregation to the Order, the handcrafted use of an essentially "royal" utensil.

An obscure allusion to this substitution may be found in a passage from the English Rites, in which it is said: "And the reputation of Masonry has reached such a degree, that kings have not thought fit to derogate from the dignity of our craft, by exchanging the trowel for the sceptre, and fraternising with the members of our

⁹⁴ Cf. Albert Lantoiné, *"Histoire de la Franc-Maçonnerie française française"*, 1st volume, p. 4.

⁹⁵ Thus, in the Saumour Masons' corporation they used to take it: "From blue (*perhaps from the lapis lazuli stone*) to the

palette of gold". That of Tours: "From the sand, to the golden palette". We quote these coats of arms from after the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, published under the direction of Paul Lacroix, volume III, 1st part, 3rd art., folio XXVIII. This work reproduces a large number of flags of the ancient guilds. It also exhibits a third flag of Freemasons, which represents a very particular character, and to which we shall refer.

⁹⁶ Reprinted in *Early Masonic* by Knoop and Jones. The ritual in question dates back to at least 1726; it said that the hammer separates and the trowel unites.

assemblies⁽⁹⁷⁾ ". We have here the palette-sceptre equivalence, to which we alluded earlier; and we can say that, if the *Kshatryas*, entering Masonry, symbolically "deposited" the sceptre, in order to be the "equals" of those who were to be their brothers, Masonry, which welcomed them into its bosom, "lost" the palette and received, in exchange, an equivalent royal insignia: the sceptre, or more precisely, the flaming sword.

Freemasonry undoubtedly had, from its origin, something to justify the decision of the *Kshatryas* to make the "deposit" of the Royal Craft. In any case, since the Middle Ages, certain "Lodges" used a symbol which was a rigorous equivalent of the flaming sword. Thus the Beaulieu Freemasons' corporation carried: "From the blue (*perhaps from the lapis lazuli stone*) a ruler and a square set in a cross, the compass open in a V, all of gold and intertwined by a coiled serpent, also of gold, which undulates between them all and above which the head is shown". The flaming sword and the undulating serpent are known to be interchangeable symbols, representing the Word. It is noteworthy that, on Beaulieu's flag, the serpent shows a tongue in the form of a spearhead, or paddle, which, in heraldry, is not very common⁹⁸. It is known, moreover, that snakes dart (stick out and stick in) their tongues with extreme vivacity, which inevitably evokes the instantaneousness of lightning. And this once again confirms the equivalence between the symbols: the paddle, the lightning, the sword and the snake.

We have dwelt on the palette and some will be tempted to criticise us, as it is a symbol which has practically disappeared⁽⁹⁹⁾ like other Masonic symbols, such as the "bee", the "name of the Masters", etc....

But we have tried to show that this disappearance undoubtedly has a meaning, and that it is truly linked to a major event in the history of Freemasonry; an event which transforms this craft organisation, which has always been similar to all others, into an organisation open to all "qualified" men. He who can penetrate into the profound reasons for this remarkable transformation will undoubtedly be able to foresee the "destinies" reserved for the Masonic Order, and will also have the "key" to enter into the historical and many other enigmas. But such searches are not the purpose of this chapter, the sole aim of which is to draw your attention to certain neglected aspects of Masonic symbolism.

⁹⁷Cf. Rev. John T. Lawrence, *Highways and By-ways of Freemasonry*, p. 170.

⁹⁸In the coat of arms, in fact, the serpent's tongue is usually forked. It should also be noted that, in the "heroic art", the serpent should regularly be referred to as a "repetition". Deriving this word from the Italian *biscia*, snake (the expression *vicia* means "zigzag"; it is very likely that the Italian word, the term blazon, and the forked form of the snake's tongue, of which Aristotle had already spoken (*Treatise on the Groups of Animals*, II, 17), like the word "repetition", curiously evoke the "ambivalence" of this animal's symbolism.

⁹⁹Disappeared in ritual use, although not as a decorative element. It should also be pointed out that the palette is also clear from the *Tracing Board* of the *Mark Masonry*, whose "operative" origin is beyond doubt; and that English-speaking Freemasonry has retained a "constructive" rite, where the trowel necessarily plays a predominant role: we are talking about the laying of the foundation stone of a public building with "Masonic honours".

CHAPTER III

A FORGOTTEN MASONIC RITE: THE NAMING OF TEACHERS

In Freemasonry, as in all initiatory organisations, initiation is considered first and foremost as a second birth, making the layman a new being. The name "neophyte" (new plant), given to the new initiate, is characteristic of this event. Sometimes this symbolism of the new birth is underlined by a "staging" that recalls the main stages of physical generation, in particular incubation and birth¹⁰⁰. But it is an essential rite which, almost everywhere, is linked to initiation: it is the imposition on the recipient of a new name, which consecrates the fact that the neophyte is henceforth and forever a different being from what he or she has been in profane life¹⁰¹.

However, if we examine the main Masonic rituals in existence today, be it the "French" and "Scottish" Rite used in "Latin" countries, or the "York Rite" used in Anglo-Saxon countries¹⁰², it seems normal that a change of name has not been practised. What is shocking, however, is that in Freemasonry's sister organisation, the Compagnonnage, a change of name has always been and still is practised.⁽¹⁰³⁾ How can it be that Freemasonry, which has so many affinities with the "Order of the Tour de France", differs on such a crucial point?

Indeed, there have been, and still are, certain Masonic rites which are not ignorant of this practice. Thus, an 18th century "regime", that of the "Initiated Brothers of Asia" - founded in Austria under "Rosicrucian" influences - changed the name of its members and that of the "Orient" where they resided¹⁰⁴. The "African Architects", who claimed to have been founded under the protection of Frederick II⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ acted in the same way. And there must have been many similar cases at this time, where there were many Masonic groups of all kinds.

¹⁰⁰ Such traces of staging are found in the "magical framework" used by certain rituals, and through which the aspirant must pass when the incubation is over.

¹⁰¹ Cf. R. Guénon, *Appreciations on Initiation*, p.188.

¹⁰² We know that all English-speaking Masons practise a single rite, to which is attributed, especially in America, the name of the "York Rite". It is obvious that there are great differences between the English and American rituals, and in England itself there are various versions of the "work": Emulation, Stability, Ritus Oxoniensis, etc.... Whatever the case may be, there are enough similarities between all the rituals practised in English-speaking countries to justify the name "York Rite", given indiscriminately to one or the other.

¹⁰³ Examples of these names can be found in the special issues of the journal *The Veil of Isis* in the Compagnonnage: "Angevin-la-Clef-de-Coeurs", "Périgord-Coeur.Loyal", "L'Ile-de-France-la-Belle-Conduite", etc....

¹⁰⁴ In this regime, the city of Vienna, the seat of the Order, was called Thessalonica; Nuremberg was Amsterdam; the founder, Baron De Ecker and Eckhonffen, was called *Roch Hamdabrin*; Prince Charles of Hesse-Cassel was *Melchisedech*; Spangenberg was *Marcus-ben-Bina*, etc.... This Order also had the name of "Fraternity of the Knights of the Gospel of St. John".

¹⁰⁵ The capital of this Order, Berlin, bore the name of Constantinople, etc....

The changing of names of people and places was also practised by the "Illuminati of Bavaria", although it should be pointed out that this organisation was not originally Masonic in any way. Its founder, Adam Weishaupt, initially gave it the name "Order of the Perfectibilists", which is indicative of its totally profane tendencies. Weishaupt professed complete ignorance of Freemasonry¹⁰⁶. He had devised for his "Order" "rituals" of incredible vulgarity, and it seems that he plagiarised the Masonic rituals which he received at the "Prudence" Lodge in Munich in 1777. Under the influence of an unsettling character, Baron de Knigge, Weishaupt gave his society the name of the Order of the Illuminati, and had several of his members enter various Lodges in Germany, with a particularly notable success in the South. But this event was short-lived and hostile to other Masonic regimes, the reaction of the civil and religious authorities of Bavaria, and the coup de grâce that fulminated Lang at Weishaupt's side in Ratisbonne, brought a definitive end to Illuminism and the ambitious ways of its founder¹⁰⁷.

Among the Masonic regimes that were adversaries of the Enlightenment, the most notable, and which even played a decisive role in their loss, bore the name of The Order of the Golden Rosicrucians. The change of name was already practised¹⁰⁸.

There was also in the 18th century a famous regime, the Order of Strict Observance, whose members were given a Latin name. Its founder, Baron de Hund, had received in Paris, in an unknown lodge, the name of *Eques ab Ense*. He brought to Germany the degrees and usages acquired in France, and instituted the "Order of Strict Observance". This Order, profoundly modified at the Convention of Gaules, in 1778 and under the influence of Willermoz, gave birth to the Order of the Knights Benefactors of the Holy City, from which comes that which, today, bears the name of the Rectified Scottish Rite. This rite has retained the practice of changing its name to the present day¹⁰⁹.

The history of the Strict Observance is closely linked to that of the "Clerics of the Temple", a system founded by Augustus Starck, who had been initiated in St. Petersburg, in a particular Freemasonry widespread in Russia at the end of the 18th century, and known under the name of the "Mélésino rite"¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁶ In a letter to Councillor Berger of Munich, he said that the Freemasons were engaged in "pure nonsense", were "intoxicated with words", and the only advantage that the one who enters with them has is that of "being introduced to important persons who invite him to dinner and make him pay for a dinner twice its real value" (*sic*). Cf. Le Forestier, *The Bavarian Illuminati and German Freemasonry*, p.194.

¹⁰⁷ Weishaupt, was called in the Order: Spartacus; Knigge: Philon; Councillor Berger: Scipio. In geography Germany was called Assyria; Bavaria, Greece; Munich, Athens; Ratisbonne, Corinth, etc....

¹⁰⁸ One of the leaders of this regime, Wölner, was called Chrysophoron in the symbolic degrees. Heliconus and Ophiron, in the higher degrees. It was he who received into the Order, under the name of Ormesus Magnus, the King of Prussia, Frederick William II, nephew and successor of Frederick the Great.

¹⁰⁹ It is necessary to specify that the change of name in the Strict Observance and similar regimes is of a chivalric character, and not properly Masonic. This is shown not only by the title of *Eques*, but also by the fact that these orders include other elements that obviously come from the heroic art: that is, the personal coat of arms of each member, his "motto" and his "inscription" (which is the heraldic "battle cry"). This is why Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, *Eques al Eremon*, carried: "From the Blue (*perhaps from the lapis lazuli stone*), to the hermitage of incarnation dressed in silver, carrying a golden lance on his back, with the motto: *Vox in deserto*, and the inscription: *Verba ligant*.

¹¹⁰ The Mélésino rite was practised, in addition to the 3 "blue" degrees, the 4 high degrees: the Dark Vault, Scottish Knight, Philosopher, Clergyman of the Temple. At this time Freemasonry, especially in its chivalric form, enjoyed in Russia a splendour only attained in Germany and Sweden. It should be mentioned that one of the Freemasons

On the other hand, the Strict Observance, whose influence was considerable between 1760 and 1780, influenced the constitution of the "Swedish Rite". "The Latin names for the Knights, the institution of "Templar provinces", the importance given to the "Unknown Superiors"⁽¹¹¹⁾ the creation of "clerical" offices, and a marked tendency towards alchemical and Rosicrucian studies, are the characteristics of the Swedish system, constituted under the influence of the Strict Observance⁽¹¹²⁾". We do not know whether this influence, and the change of name that followed, have persisted to the present day, since the primitive rituals were revised in 1779 by the Duke of Sudermanie. Nor do we know whether the change of name was known in the "Zinnendorf Rite", which is derived from the Swedish Rite and was practised by the "National Grand Lodge of the Freemasons of Germany" until it was "put to sleep" by the National Socialist regime in 1933¹¹³.

Finally, it should be mentioned that English Freemasonry possesses, among its high degrees, two degrees conferred by the Royal Order of Scotland: those of the Brother of Heredom¹¹⁴ and of the Knight of the Rose-Cross. The members of this Order acquired a "knightly title": Knight of Courage, Knight of the Mystic Sun, and others of the same kind.

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Apart from the examples just cited, are we to believe that name changing has been an unknown practice in the Masonic Order as a whole? We think that there is nothing of the sort, despite appearances to the contrary. In fact, the French Rite⁽¹¹⁵⁾ in the rituals published as late as 1880, speaks of the "mystical jewel with which Hiram was always clothed, and which bore, in ineffable characters, the letter G and the mysterious designation of the Masters". What was this mysterious designation? The answer is easy. All the Masonic manuals, those of Vuillaume, de Ragon and other authors, have preserved for us, among the "characteristics" of the 3rd degree of the modern rite, the following formula: "The name of the Masters is Gabaon". Gibeon was a city in Palestine, now reduced to a tiny village, where the most "spectacular" event of the Old Testament takes place. But before examining the reasons which may justify the use - to designate all Master Masons indiscriminately - of a name which is not the name of a man but that of a city, it is necessary to point out that there are certain indications that such a name was commonly used in the eighteenth century as a synonym for Master Mason.

The most active of this time was Baron Von Ungern Sternberg, ancestor of the enigmatic personage of whom Ferdinand Ossendowski made a portrait in *Animals, Men and God*, and about whom René Guénon has given several indications, considering him as a particular source (cf. E.T. of January 1938, pgs. 36 and 37). Among the Clerics of the Temple, Starck was called *Achimedes ab aquila fulva*.

¹¹¹On the "Unknown Superiors", cf. R. Guénon, *Appreciations on Initiation*, p. 69.

¹¹²Hugo Tasch, *The Swedish Rite of Freemasonry*, in *Grand Lodge Bulletin* of Iowa, December 1930, p. 733.

¹¹³This Grand Lodge had tried, in order to escape the prohibition which struck all German Obédiences, to become the "Christian Tautonic Order". But this modification, which, moreover, constituted a serious alteration of the most essential Masonic principles, was to no avail: it had to disappear like the others.

¹¹⁴Cf. René Guénon, *Heredom*, in E.T. of March 1948, Article reproduced in *Studies on the Franc-* (¹¹⁴)Cf.

Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage, t.II, p.14.

¹¹⁵French Rite or Modern Rite. Known to be a rite practised by the Grand Orient of France.

It is in this sense that we find it in the catechism of Guillermain. On the other hand, in an instruction of the Lodge of St. John of Scotland, Scottish Mother Lodge of France, the name Gabaon is given to the Apprentices. But the most certain indication is that, in the 18th century, the widow of a Master was called Gabaon. This strange feminisation of a Hebraic town name can evidently only be explained by the fact that the name Gabaon was applied to the Masters, and was quite common.

This name of Gabaon is also very famous in certain versions of the English rituals; versions which, though not among the most widely practised, are nevertheless interesting. Here, Gabaon is not a name given to the Masters, but in the versions of which we are speaking, the sign of recognition of the second degree is said to go back to Joshua, and to have been executed when this warrior uttered the famous words: "Sun, stand thou still unto Gibeon, and thou, Moon, over the valley of Aialon".

And it is here that we find the explanation of the choice of such a name for the Masters. The Sun and the Moon have stood still over Gibeon; now, at the beginning of the Bible, the Sun and the Moon are said to have been created "to serve as signs, to designate the times, the days and the years,"¹¹⁷ and it is by their motion that these two stars mark the course of time. When they stand still, time stands still, as it were, as the day was prolonged to permit the victory of Joshua over Adonisedech, and as, in the Greek tradition, the night was prolonged to permit the conception of Heracles.

It follows that the Master Mason, assimilated to Gabaon, is symbolically placed between the immobile Sun and Moon, as Christ on the cross is often presented, with the Sun on his right and the Moon on his left. It is also known that the Apprentice who has just "received the Light" sees before him the "Sun, the Moon and the Master of the Lodge"¹¹⁸. (118) Since the Sun and the Moon are compelled to dwell upon the Master Mason Gabaon, it means that he has passed beyond time, that he has reached, virtually, it must be understood, that unique point in our world where time ceases to run, where the phantasmagoria of succession are abolished in the consciousness of immutable reality, where its relative and contingent aspects, which we call past and coming, vanish in the "permanent actuality" of the "eternal present".

The being who can reach this point reaches the "fountain of youth" by himself, for the past is dead for him. This fountain, in the Tradition of the "Faithful of Love", is always represented at the foot of a tree, which is evidently an acacia, the tree where the place of Shittim was situated, from which Joshua set out to conquer the Promised Land⁽¹¹⁹⁾ and which is also the tree of life, the tree of the Garden of Eden. The waters of the Fountain of Youth, "the brew of immortality", emanate from the

¹¹⁶ Joshua, X, 12.

¹¹⁷ Genesis, I, 14.

¹¹⁸ In the Charbonnerie, the three dignitaries of a "Vente" are called "Master of the Hut", "Master of the Hut", "Master of the Hut" and "Master of the Hut".
of the Sun" and "Masters of the Moon".

¹¹⁹ Joshua, II, 1.

centre of the world, which recalls the formula according to which "a Master Mason never strays from the centre and is always between the square and the compass"¹²⁰.

But the high place of Gibeon witnessed yet another remarkable event. It was there that, at the beginning of his reign, King Solomon went up to offer his sacrifices. And he had a dream in the course of which the Eternal said to him: Ask of me what thou wilt, and I will give it thee. Solomon asked for "an intelligent heart", and the Eternal granted him not only Wisdom (the attribute of the priestly caste), but also riches (the attribute of the commercial caste) and glory (the attribute of the warrior caste)¹²¹. What is certainly curious is that the account of this dream, in the Bible, is immediately followed by the famous "judgment" pronounced by Solomon, between the two mothers who were disputing over the same child; and then comes the account of the beginning of the building of the temple in Jerusalem¹²².

We will not go into the other questions that may have motivated the choice of the word Gabaon as the "name of the Masters". This word designates, in Hebrew, a hill with a rounded profile. In conclusion, we will point out that each Master Mason, being called Gabaon, does not have a name different from that of the other Masters, which indicates that they have all arrived at the place where "that which was scattered" is gathered.

The story of Joshua stopping the sun has, after the eighteenth century, been the mockery of all "strong spirits" who have demonstrated, with envy, the impossibility of such a phenomenon. However, the divine Book remains as it was written many years ago, and we know that these are "words that will not pass away". Is it the criticisms of these "strong spirits" that have incited the French rite to abandon such a remarkable practice as the assignment of the "name of the Masters"? In any case, we believe we have shown that this rite still retains traces of this practice today, misunderstood vestiges of a past that is more traditional than present. The forgetting of the "name of the Masters" is obviously due to "modernisations".

¹²⁰Cf. R. Guénon, *The Symbolism of the Cross*, p. 91, note 1.

¹²¹It is worth remembering that, among ancient peoples, riches - in the form of jewels and precious fabrics, were an indispensable element of Beauty. Thus *Wishnu-Purana* described the conditions of the Kāli age, deploring those days of poverty when "women had only their hair for grooming" (*Wishnu-Purana, Book VI, Chapter I*). (*Wishnu-Purana*, book VI, chap. I). On the other hand, glory, commonly in military form, has obvious relations to strength. On Mount Gibeon, Solomon received the gifts of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty (the three pillars of the Masonic temple). In the ancient rituals of the second degree, the Master of the Lodge is said to be clothed in gold, purple and blue"; and these three colours are put in relation to riches, glory and wisdom, "the three gifts which the Great Geometer of the Universe bestowed on King Solomon".

(122)1
, *Kings*, ch. III and V. A comparison could be drawn between the judgement "of Solomon" and the "judgement of Paris" in

Greek tradition. On the one hand, Solomon, the type of the initiates, asks for Wisdom (the higher divine aspect), and receives, in addition, Strength and Beauty. And from this judgement emanates the construction of the temple where "Peace" will reside. On the other hand, Paris, the type of the profane, despising the Wisdom offered by Minerva and the Power offered by Juno, queen of the Empires, chooses the favour of Venus, goddess of Beauty (lower divine aspect). And this fact provokes the war, which will lead to the ruin of the city of Troy. It should also be noted that Minerva, whose action was predominant in the fall of Ilium (cf. *The History of the Paladium*), was the goddess of Wisdom, war and the arts, i.e. Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. Born of an axe, i.e. daughter of the thunderbolt, Minerva is the ruler of all initiates. She is an aspect of the Great Architect, for she directed the plans for the ship of Argo, "the first of all ships" and thus an image of the ark. Invincible in battle, she is the one who gives birth to the olive tree, symbol of peace, light and abundance. The Pythagoreans called the equilateral triangle or Delta "Minerva". They consecrated to her the number 7, which is the only one of the numbers of the decade that has no multiple or sub-multiple, just as Minerva has no mother or children. Finally, Minerva was the patron saint of the Colleges of Craftsmen, to whom this epigram is attributed in the *Antologie Palatine*: "A level and a plumb line, a wooden hammer, a solid axe for splitting stumps, a red string resounding under the fingers that lift it; here is what the carpenter Léontique consecrates to you, young heron god; for the years have robbed him of the strength for its use.

The successive successions that the French rituals have had to undergo, and which were originated by Masons of profane spirit, completely ignorant of all that concerns symbolism, would be useful today. Today, the work that it would be useful to undertake would be the restoration of all the formulas and usages that have disappeared. Who knows if, among the materials discarded by the ignorant builders, there is not to be found this "white stone", the cornerstone and "hidden stone of the Wise", which is the same as the lost Word?

CHAPTER IV

REFLECTIONS OF A CHRISTIAN ON FREEMASONRY

The "Inner Harmonies" of the ritual

It is remarkable that studies on Masonic symbolism - studies which are abundant and copious, especially in Anglo-Saxon countries - are almost always limited to the same subjects, about which the same considerations are constantly reprinted. How many articles have we not read on the two columns! It seems to us that this is not the right way to treat Masonic symbolism and, consequently, the organisation of which it is the repository, which, in this way, restricts the "unlimited" field of research that it can propose to its members. For if, as we think, and as we would like to demonstrate in the articles we began, Freemasonry is a "Living Ark of Symbols", would it not be natural that the whole treasure of universal symbolism should be found, "reintegrated" and harmonised in some way, as it was found in the Ark of Noë, together and "reconciled" for a time, all the animal species scattered and, in concurrence, over the surface of the Earth?

Among the subjects we have never seen discussed, let us cite all those connected with the Masonic aspect of the person of Christ. We shall come back to this later. On the other hand, if the question of the two St. Johns is not to be said to be lacking in studies, we have omitted to interpret, from an initiatory point of view, certain episodes connected with the Gospels, which could shed precious light on a major theme: the relationship between exotericism and esotericism; we are thinking in particular of what is known as the "request of the mother of the sons of Zebedee". And, to say in passing, if the symbolism of the Old Testament is used with fervour in the Lodges, we cannot say that the same is true of that of the New; and, in the continental workshops, is it not precisely on a page of the New Testament that the Book of the Sacred Law is permanently open?

But today, it is not on the symbolism of writing that we wanted to entertain our readers, but on a very particular aspect of the symbolism of numbers; an aspect whose presence in Masonic rituals, we believe, has never yet been pointed out.

A few years ago, we discussed an attempt to "restore" the "Scottish" rituals in which René Guenon was interested. Needless to say, it was a restoration in a strictly traditional sense, in the face of many "revisions" which, after two centuries, have been openly described as "modernisations". Our essay was to be limited to the rituals of the first three degrees, known as the "blue" or "symbolic" degrees.

When the writing of these rituals was completed, we were curious to count the number of mallete blows given by the first three Officers throughout the "work". And our surprise was great when we realised that there were 115 blows in the first degree, 115 in the second and 115 again in the third. The total number of strokes was thus 345, which is the numerical value of the "divine name" used as a "sacred word" by ancient operative Freemasonry: El Shaddaï.

It was certainly not René Guenon who could be very surprised by our "discovery", he who had so masterfully commented on the occult numerical symbolism within the two famous esoteric works: Virgil's *Bucolics* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It must therefore be said that, according to all evidence, Virgil and Dante have consciously introduced this symbolism into their poems, possibly and above all as "signs of recognition", for the use of "spiritual posterity", in the future... But the case we are dealing with is not exactly the same, and this is because the observation to which we have referred above gives us, at first sight, the impression of an inexplicable "coincidence".

We know that indications of the same kind have been made concerning certain "key-words" in the Sacred Books. Thus, in the Bible, the word "covenant" is used 33 times; and the presence of this word in each of the Books of the New and Old Testament also deserves to be considered. It is in the Apocalypse that the numerical harmonies are most abundant and complex: here, in fact, it is not only a question of words, for it is the numbers which, we could say, "have the honour". It is easy to see, simply by counting how many times the numbers 7, 12, 24 are repeated; the number of repetitions is itself a symbolic number. It seems that the visionary of Pathmos, before being able to give the definitive end to the Book of Christian Revelation, wanted to give a solemn, if "veiled", testimony to the legitimacy, the importance and the "sanctity" of traditional symbolism and, in particular, to the symbolism of numbers, established in the very heart of the divine Word, by the sovereign will of Him who has arranged all things "in weight, number and measure".

However, it must not be forgotten that, beyond the earthly individuality of St. John, the true author of the Apocalypse, as of the other Books of Scripture, is the Holy Spirit *qui locustus est per Prophetas*, according to the affirmation of the Nicene Symbol. It is therefore the Spirit who has "included" in these Books the numerical harmonies we are talking about. And this assertion acquires a palpable evidence, if we consider these harmonies, not only in this or that Book of the Bible in particular, but in the Bible taken as a whole. To return to the example cited above, it is absolutely certain that, if the word "covenant" appears 33 times in the Bible, it is not by the decision of an individual or collective will of the sacred authors. The extreme distance - in space and, above all, in time - which separates these authors from each other, the relatively late date at which the "canon of Scripture" was established, and the very circumstances of its establishment, or, in the case of the Apocalypse, which was precisely the object of so much "vacillation", all these militate against such an assumption. For all these reasons it must be seriously considered that the presence of numerical harmonies in the Bible has a "non-human" origin.

We will point out that if we were to count certain terms (e.g. the word "Lord"), if we were to count the signs of the cross in the text of the "Roman" mass,

we would still find symbolic numerology. The same theme then applies to the "functions" of the Western Christian liturgy, including the "canonical hours" of the divine office. And if we were to examine the Eastern liturgies (Byzantine, Armenian, Chaldean, Ethiopian, etc...), we would find different numbers, but always symbolic.

Of all the findings referred to so far, the following law stands out strongly: every traditional text (holy book, religious liturgy, initiatory poem), by the very fact of being "Traditional", involves numerical and symbolic "internal harmonies".

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The text of the holy books, whether written in a "sacred language" (such as the Old Testament) or in a "liturgical" language (such as the Greek of the New Testament), is always, at least in practice, a "fixed" text, and the internal harmonies it may contain are therefore immutable. The same is true for the initiatory works of the "inspired poets"; we will recall that, after the drama of the Templars, Dante voluntarily altered some of the numerical correspondences, of which the "Divine Comedy" is full. As far as the liturgical texts of Christianity are concerned, a distinction must be made between the Eastern and Western Churches. The Eastern liturgies have had the text fixed for several centuries. This is not the case in the liturgies of the Western Church (Roman, Lyonnais, Ambrosian, Mozarabic, Benedictine, etc.) where the common language is Latin, and which have seen the text frequently modified, mitigated or completed over the course of time. It is therefore a fact worth noting that these modifications - some of them being very recent, the last known date being only a few years ago - have notably changed the number of repetitions of words and characteristic signs, of which we have spoken; but, afterwards - as before each reform - the number of these repetitions is always a traditional "symbolic number".

It is hardly credible that the religious authorities who decreed these reforms were concerned with safeguarding the "internal rhythms" of the modified texts. Only, and we would like to draw attention to this, since the revision did not constitute a modernisation (i.e. a concession to modern prejudices), but a legitimate adaptation to the new conditions of the cosmic order, its action did not alter the "reflection" of a certain cosmic order in the sacred rites; a reflection of which one of its manifestations - secondary, it may be, from the external point of view, but eminently "speaking" from the internal point of view - consists precisely in "the internal harmony of numbers". We will recall here what René Guenon wrote about the etymological kinship of the words "order" and "rite", and also the admirable definition he gave of harmony: "reflection of the principal Unity in the manifested world".

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It is now necessary to return to the Masonic rites. The primitive texts - no doubt very different according to peoples and languages - must have contained an abundance of harmonies of the kind we have spoken of, because the art of construction is closely linked to the science of numbers. On the other hand, in the second degree (the

The most "operative" of the blue degrees) is an extensive commentary on the symbolism of the Liberal Arts, among which the *trivium* (Grammar, Logic, Rhetoric) constitutes the science of letters, and the *quadrivium* (Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, Music), the arts based on the science of numbers. But, from the moment the "modernisers" set about their ill-fated work, all these internal rhythms should alter and finally disappear, and all the more easily when their existence was "hidden" and even inconceivable to the eyes of people for whom there is no reality outside appearances. But we cannot reproach darkness for not being able to "comprehend the Light"....

Thus, from degradation to degradation, we should arrive at certain sweetened rites, from which all profound symbolism was banned, and sometimes adorned with pseudo-scientific - not to say anti-clerical - statements, very close, in short, to justifying the assertions of those for whom Freemasonry is a counter-Church, and the Lodges "Higher Institutes of Free-Thinking"!

The righting must have come from France, where the evil had been worse. In the first quarter of our century, a small group of Freemasons, gathered around René Guenon in the Lodge "Thébah", had adopted a ritual which was already far superior to those in use at the time. But circumstances were not yet very favourable: the use of the Bible as "the first of the three Great Lights of Freemasonry" could not be re-established. Since then, things have changed a lot. Attempts have been made in all the Obediences, which have not always been successful, but which are a sure sign of a manifestly resentful demand which, with the help of the Great Architect of the Universe, will eventually triumph.

Some of those who have taken part, sometimes in total isolation, in this often thankless and often disappointing work, have told us that they have had the impression of a "communion with the Masons of the olden days". In truth, as soon as they become involved in the traditional work, none of their efforts will be in vain. It was a stone added to a majestic edifice, for its completion, in which it is not forbidden to count on a certain "assistance of the Spirit".

Even from an entirely contingent point of view, it is natural that the harmonies, destroyed by the anti-traditional action of the "modernisers", should reappear as a consequence of a return to Tradition. And if it should happen, as in the case cited at the beginning of this article, that the harmonies bring to the fore, any of the twenty-one "Divine Names" so revered in ancient Freemasonry, we would like, above all, to see, in this fact, their symbolic significance.

The modernisers had endeavoured to hunt down the God of Freemasonry. The Bible, and the "supreme symbol" of the Great Architect of the Universe, had been the particular targets of their attacks. As soon as their work is beaten - if not definitively abolished - it is natural that the Divinity should "reinstate" the ritual; and this, not only in a "visible" but also in a "hidden" form, for Scripture testifies, in the words of King Solomon, on the day of the Dedication of the first Temple: "the Eternal wants to dwell in darkness".

As Masonic rituals became more complete, more traditional - and therefore more "authentic" - numerical and other harmonies, which are more and more often used in Masonic rituals, became

The Temple was more apparent and more numerous. For everything in the Temple must be in harmony, just as in Noah's Ark all beings lived in peace. In conclusion, we will quote an interesting formula, taken from an eulogy of these Liberal Arts of which we have spoken, and which are one of the subjects of meditation proposed for the second degree: "Finally, Music, the most immaterial of all the Arts, is the human expression of this divine Harmony, which unites the terrestrial chords with the song of the starry spheres. It is a strong means of asceticism, constantly associated by our ancient Fathers with the worship of the Great Architect of the Universe, to whom we ask the grace to gain access one day, through the beauty of sounds and the power of rhythms, to the supreme Wisdom of Silence.

The Symbolism of the Lodge of Mesa

The modernization of Masonic rituals has not only impoverished to the point of disfigurement the essential "functions" of the Order, which are for each degree three in number: The opening of the works, the closing of the works, and the collation of the corresponding degree; they have also had a "desacralising" effect on many other rites, wrongly considered as "adventitious" or secondary (because, in general, they are not performed at each tenure, but only once or twice a year), but which, in our eyes, are no less important and "significant" than the others. Among these rites, some have disappeared, at least practically, and the others have been transformed to such an extent that they have lost all "initiatory" character.

Among the rites which have disappeared in most of the Latin Lodges, we may mention the "consecration" of the workshops. This function, according to some authors, was formerly performed annually in operative Freemasonry, and designated as the "Anniversary of the Dedication of the first Temple". In Anglo-Saxon countries, it is practised, once for all, after the constitution of a new Lodge. In continental Freemasonry, it fell into disuse or was reduced to almost nothing. No doubt we came to the conclusion that the use of incense and the allusions to the "service of God" were hardly compatible with the contemporary mentality¹²³.

There is another rite of an annual character, which has been preserved, though degraded and "profaned" (in the etymological sense of these words). It is the one commonly called "Installation of the College of Officers", and which is, in reality, "The Installation of Hiram-Abiff in King Solomon's pulpit". Stripped of various elements essential to a correct understanding of the true character of Freemasonry, this rite has been reduced, at least in France, to a simple "administrative" formality, passably tiresome and, in any case, devoid of any truly profound significance.

Masons who have understood the necessity, for the revival of the Order, of using rituals as near to perfection as possible, should, we think, not neglect to apply their efforts to the functions we have just spoken of and to all the others. For this, two things are necessary: a fairly extensive documentation and, above all

¹²³ In addition to incense, the elements of consecration are wheat, wine, oil and salt.

above all, a profound knowledge of the writings of René Guenon, whose work, on the subject of Freemasonry, seems to us to be absolutely irreplaceable.

It would be interesting, whenever such a task is completed, to see if the result reveals some of these "internal harmonies" to which we have referred above. We would like, just today, to give an example which would serve, not as a "model", but rather as an "illustration" of what can be done in this respect. For, needless to say, Masonic Rites vary considerably from one Obedience to another; the "harmonies" obtained in the York Rite, for example, are not the same as those obtained in the Scottish, French, Swedish, or other Rites. But we think they should always be "significant".

We have chosen, for this purpose, a function generally considered to be of little importance - although this was not René Guenon's opinion - and of which we can speak, in any case, without infringing the rules of silence concerning the work of the Lodge; rules which, as we know, are nothing more than the symbol of the "Masonic secret", incommunicable by essence. This is the function of the Table Lodge, once considered obligatory at solstitial feasts. Today, its "communion" character having been totally forgotten, it has often been replaced by a simple "fraternal supper", totally devoid of all symbolic value.

The examination of this rite will also have the advantage of offering another example of numerical harmonies, which we will find here, not in the drums played with the mallete, but in the drums played with the hands, which are of particular importance in the Mesa Lodge.

Let us begin by recalling some of the often forgotten rules of the Table Lodge. It must be "regularly covered", that is to say that the workings must be open for a ritual, which may be abbreviated, but in any case effective in its essential elements. It is always practised in the first degree, but by a rather remarkable tradition, the Apprentices are authorised to wear the "Master's cord". The tables are arranged in a special form, reminiscent of the *triclinium* of the Elders (which is also, many believe, the form of the table at which Christ celebrated the Last Supper); English-speaking Masons, however, have not forgotten that such an arrangement is but an approximate imitation of the ideal Table Lodge, whose rigorously exact form would be a semicircumference prolonged at its ends by parallel lines¹²⁴.

The essential rite of the Table Lodge, the one by which the work cannot be "suspended", but must acquire "strength and vigour", is constituted by the "honours". Under this name is designated the action of drinking to the "glory", to the "memory" or to the "health" of one or more previously designated "dignitaries". After each of these "honours", the diners make the sign of the first degree and then perform with their hands a particular battery, called "table battery".

This battery differs according to the "dignity" of those to whom the "honours" are rendered. To give an example, a battery given "by agreements of 3 times 5 and 3" is made up of 3 series of 5 quick beats, followed by 3 slower beats (in this case, it is the "toast", so well known at dinner parties), and 3 slower beats (in this case, it is the "toast", so well known at dinner parties).

¹²⁴In this respect, we can refer to the article *Table Lodge* in Mackey's Masonic Encyclopaedia.

(The first is a popular family or merely social ritual, and one might wonder whether it is not one of the many initiatory rites that have penetrated the profane world).

When honours are done to the health of a person present at the Lodge Table, he is obliged to thank them by a few words. This response should be followed by a "sign" and a battery identical to the one he has received as a greeting.

Such thanks must then be "covered", i.e., at the invitation of the presiding officer, the attendants reiterate the sign and the battery. However, the Venerable's thanks are not covered; but the First Warden recalls the rule by saying: "Out of respect for our Venerable, we will not proceed to cover his battery".

Freemasonry, especially in England, has multiplied at pleasure the number of honours. Having eliminated those which presented no more than a "etiquette" aspect of obedience or which are entirely occasional, and re-establishing those which modernist influence had caused to disappear, the following remain:

1.- "To the glory of the Great Architect of the Universe". These honours are performed "by agreements of 3 times 11 and 3", which offer 33 claps.

2.- "To the memory of the two San Juan". They are performed "by agreements of 3 times 9 and 3", resulting in 30 claps.

To the Worshipful Worshipful of the Lodge" this salute is proposed by the First Warden, who requests prior authorisation. It is made "by agreements of 3 times 7 and 3", for a total of 24 clappings. The Worshipful thanks and reiterates the battery, but, as stated above, his thanks are not covered. The total number of claps in this salutation is therefore 48.

4. "To the two Watchers on whom the pillars of the Temple stand". The accords are 3 times 5 and 3, resulting in 18 claps. The First Watcher thanks and, at the same time as his colleague, reiterates the battery, and the thanks are covered. The total number of claps is then 54¹²⁵.

To all Masons scattered throughout the world, wherever they may be, on the surface of the Earth or beneath the waves, wishing them, by the grace of the Great Architect of the Universe, a happy return to their native land. Amen. These honours, after which the "chain of union" is formed, are performed "by chords of 3 times 3 and 3". They are never answered and the number of clapping is 12.

* * *

Now, if we add up the number of claps made in the 5 "honours", we find that: $36+30+48+54+12=180$, i.e. the number that expresses, in degrees, the measure of the semicircle. This finding is close to the arrangement of the tables in a semicircle, to which we have referred earlier, and also to the

¹²⁵ We note that honours 3 and 4 correspond, respectively, to honours 1 and 2. Just as the Worshipful and the two Wardens lead the Lodge from below, so the Grand Architect and the two St. Johns lead the "*Grand Lodge Above*", which the French Masons also designate by the Eternal East.

The fact that the Table Lodges present all their solemnity on the dates of the two solstices, which divide the cycle of the year into two equal parts.

Thus, in the "Instructions" of the Apprentice degree, the Lodge is said to be in the form of a quadrilateral (or elongated square). How is it explained that, for Table work, this form of Lodge is modified? We could point in this respect to the symbolism of the "Round Table", where the knights were placed on a relative "equality", which may not be in analogy with that designated above, referring to the Apprentices, in Table Lodge, being qualified to the level of the insignia of mastery.

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Among those enigmatic symbols on old 19th century "lodge pictures", we find one which represents a square and a circle intertwined in such a way that the aspects of the four portions of the square outside the circle are roughly equivalent to the aspects of the four portions of the circle outside the square.

Nowhere have we seen any interpretation of this symbol. But, for us, there can be no doubt that it is an allusion to the famous problem of the "squaring of the circle" which, with the "tri-section of the angle" and the "*déliaque*" problem of the "doubling of the cube" (to which, possibly, certain symbols of the second degree are related), have given rise to as many esoteric and exoteric commentaries from Pythagoras to the present day.

We know that in the cosmological order, the squaring of the circle is the "flat projection" of the passage from the "sphere to the cube", which symbolises the cyclic process leading to the terrestrial Paradise and the heavenly Jerusalem. The insolubility of the problem, in Euclidean or "profane" geometry, expresses the fact that the cosmic process, as a whole, is the work of the Activity of Heaven.

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Let us now return to the semicircular shape of the Table Lodge and the quadrilateral shape of the "Working Lodge", and let us specify at the outset that the quadrilateral is precisely a rectangle whose width is twice that of its height; it is therefore twice that of a square. The diagonal of this figure serves to determine the "golden section" of a segment, necessary for the formation of a starry pentagon or the "flaming star": one of the principal emblems of Freemasonry, which symbolises the "True Man" or, for Western traditions, the Adam Qadmon and the Glorious Christ. The similarities of the quadrilateral with the building of the heavenly Jerusalem are therefore obvious. In America, it is true, the flaming star is assimilated to the star that guides the Magi to Jerusalem and then to Bethlehem; but we can see that the earthly Jerusalem is the "figure of the heavenly Jerusalem. On the other hand, it is interesting to remember that the star disappeared with the arrival of the Magi in Jerusalem, and did not reappear until they started their return. This incident may be related to the fact that the heavenly Jerusalem receives no light from the sun or the moon.

The Table Lodge is a semicircle, the Working Lodge a double square. The former represents the earthly Paradise, but a "mutilated" Paradise, so to speak. And it would be more accurate to say that the Table Lodge is, in relation to the Working Lodge, the "memory" or remembrance.

The Lodge of Work symbolises the "waiting" for the heavenly Jerusalem. For the rectangle is but an imperfect square; a quadrilateral tending towards the square. And the passage from the "Table" to the "Work" and from the "Work" to the "Table" symbolises the inverse and complementary hermetic operations of the "squaring of the circle" and the "circling of the square".

The earthly Paradise is described at the beginning of the Old Testament. The heavenly Jerusalem is described at the end of the New Testament. These two "rooms" thus mark the boundaries between which the Divine Word, which is the Way, the Truth and the Life, is dispensed.

And they are also, for our cycle, the first and last dwellings of Humanity and, more particularly, of the "elect"; one and the other are the ideal model of these "houses" that operative Masons build, sheltered from the Rain, which the Greeks represent by the letter *delta* and the Hebrews by the letter *beth*.

But this same symbol is also applied in the microcosmic order, evoking then the first and last abodes of the individual man, a specification of the Universal Path. The cradle is a semicircle, and the tomb a quadrilateral. To the Mason who applies himself to the "interpretation of signs", the similarity between macrocosm and microcosm, and, consequently, the necessity of unifying the way from below with the "Will from Above", expressed by the Plan of the Great Architect of the Universe, appears with serene clarity, as the demanding evidence, as the Absolute.

CHAPTER V

IN PROSPECT OF RITUALISTIC REPETITIONS

The magazine *El Simbolismo*, in its January-March 1966 issue, published a study in which interesting questions could be highlighted, entitled: "The Rectified Scottish Regime". This study was signed by MM. Jean Tourniac and Pierre Le Selier. In addition to the historical considerations, the two authors gave their thoughts on certain ritual details, and notably on the repetition of questions and answers, at the opening and closing of the work.

It is to these ideas that we would like to turn our attention. We will use the same terms as the two authors to summarise the notions they have drawn from Granet's work:

"The author sees in repetition the means of suggesting ideas¹²⁶ by a rhythmic procedure of rhythmic meditation of words or phrases, of exchanging replies which show the solidarity of the interlocutors for the same work and for its accomplishment. The two interlocutors exchange their functions by repeating the same formula. There is a symmetry, but with very reliable variations indicated by a "pietinant" progression, the "ritual" and "ritualising" value (...) The Master and his vassal alternate their powers, the latter representing the Master's own words, to speak, as Master, to those below him. It is a hierarchical change of attributes¹²⁷ (...) The idea of identity is passed on to all levels, and now the hierarchy of values, down to the detail, is ordered in a ritualistic way by repetition, so that all participants reach the same thing, the same union of the microcosm and the macrocosm. It is, moreover, the notion of identical order for all steps that is thus signified. The unity of the world is reflected in the unity of the group, when a Unity is realised beyond the thoughts of each individual. (...) The repetition used in "non-ordinary" language, to bring everyone into the same state of vibration with the Master.¹²⁸ (...) The

¹²⁶ MM. Tourniac and Le Selier could certainly have insisted on the fact that it was neither suggestion nor auto-suggestion.

¹²⁷ In Masonic symbolism there is but one example which recalls the hierarchical changes; but one example, particularly interesting. Here is what it is all about: The three principal Officers correspond to the three "little lights"; the Worshipful to Wisdom, the First Warden to Strength and the Second Warden to Beauty. That is why, in English Masonry, the First Warden has a Doric "little column" above the "tray" and the Second Warden has an Ionic "little column" above the "tray". It is known that these two orders are considered, symbolically and even etymologically, the first as masculine and the second as feminine. But if we now consider the "jewels" of these two Officers, we will indicate that the First Watcher has a level and the Second Watcher has the plumb line. And in the "definition of functions" - which is an integral part of the opening ritual - it is the Second Warden who evokes the masculine symbols and the First Warden the feminine ones. Here is the principle of these two definitions: "As the Sun, in its strength, dominates the meridian in the middle of its path, projecting the rays of its light according to the plumb line, so the Second Watcher is at noon, etc...", "As the Sun sets at the level of the horizon at the end of its path, at this hour, which is that of the beauty and splendour of the day, so the position of the First Watcher is to the West, etc...(*)". What allows such a change to be considered almost hierarchical is the "story" well known in the "legendary" history of Freemasonry, according to which the first Lodge would have held its meeting "East of Eden", with the Eternal Father as Worshipful, Adam as First Warden, and Eve as Second Warden. Such a legend obviously poses problems, all the more so when, according to the Bible, Adam and Eve were the "first guardians of the Holy Land. (*) These formulas are taken from the ritual elaborated by the author, in conjunction with Reñé Guenón.

¹²⁸ Masonic jargon is also a "non-ordinary" or "non-profane" language, that is to say: a sacred language, which participates to a certain extent in the "permanence" of the sacred languages. After the Masonic tradition, the

repetition establishes a kind of internal communion (...). The organisation must show that Unity is to be found in everything and uses, as its only means, the repetition of orders and formulas".

In the passages just reproduced, no explicit allusion has been made to the "descent" of the questions and the "ascent" of the answers, which evokes the arrangement of the signs of the Zodiac in the doorway of the cathedrals, and also the well-known phrase of the Emerald Tablet: "Ascend from Earth to Heaven, and again descend from Heaven to Earth, and receive the strength of the higher and lower powers". Moreover, the analogy revealed by MM. Tourniac and Le Salier, with the Masonic rites, is shocking. The repetition of orders and formulas "with very slight variations", the "vassal" taking the words of the Master and transferring them to the inferior vassal, the "definition of functions", the identification of the community in the Cosmos (especially by the assimilation of the place occupied by the first three Officers, in relation to the position of the Sun); all this is constantly reen countered by the opening, closing and reception, in the different degrees. We shall give two examples of this way of "working" and apply them to the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite⁽¹²⁹⁾ to show that these things are not the exclusive heritage of the Rectified Scottish Rite. These examples are taken from an early 19th century ritual, which differs very little from the rite of the "Thébah" Lodge, a workshop of the Grand Lodge of France, to which René Guénon belonged in the years preceding his departure for the East¹³⁰.

The first example has features of Masonic usage, which many would no doubt describe as a ceremony rather than a rite. And they would be wrong, for this usage is of operative origin, although it is a secondary rite, which has nothing essential about it, and which, moreover, is proper to the Scottish Rite. It is the "acclamation" which follows the "proclamation" of the new Apprentice as a Mason. After this proclamation:

The Venerable: (Knocks once with the mallet and says:) Brothers First and Second Warden, inform the Brothers who decorate your columns, as I inform those who decorate the East, that we are going to celebrate by a battery of rejoicing, the initiation of our Brother N.N., who bears in Lodge the name of Boaz¹³¹ and whom I invite, to this effect, to join you and me.

The First Warden: (Mallet) Brother Second Warden, Brothers who decorate the Noon pillar, the Worshipful invites you to join him in celebrating, with a battery, the joy of the initiation of our Brother N.N., who bears in Lodge the name of Boaz.

The Second Watchman: (Mallet) Brothers who decorate the North column, the Venerable One invites you to join him in celebrating, with a battery, the joy of our Brother's initiation.

terms of this jargon would be the remnants of this original language (spoken on the earthly Paradise), which was lost as a result of the construction of the tower of Babel, and of which the "true Noahites" would have retained certain elements.

¹²⁹The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite is commonly known as the "Scottish Rite", without any other epithet.

¹³⁰The full text of the "work" of this ritual for the first degree has been published, in appendix, in a work

The anti-Masonic campaign, which caused a great uproar between the two world wars, and which René Guénon never heeded, contenting himself with incidentally describing it as "despicable".

¹³¹This is not a particular name, but a name common to all apprentices. The Modern Rite also knows this usage, by the third degree: "The name of the Master is Gabaon".

N.N., who bears in Lodge the name of Boaz. (Then he strikes again with his malleting and says:) Brother First Watcher, the announcement is made in the North column.

The First Watcher: (Mallette) Venerable Master, the announcement is made in the columns of the Noon and North.

The Venerable: (Mallette) The same has been done in the East.

If we have mentioned such an insignificant usage, it is, in principle, because it shows how familiar this way of working in Freemasonry has become; and, in fact, we have come across it in a ritual of the "Table Lodge" of the Grand Orient of France, on the occasion of the solemn "toasts".

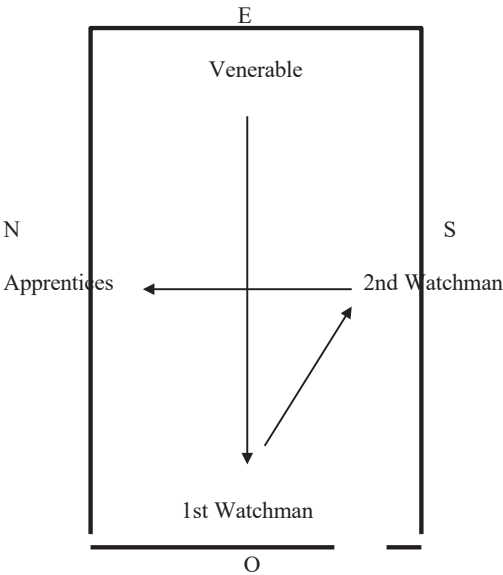


Figure 1

But there is another reason. For the "descent" of the order, the Worshipful looks to the First Warden, who is in the West; then the First Warden looks to the Second, who is in the South; and finally the Second Warden looks to the Apprentices, who are in the North. As we can see in figure 1, the trajectory of the word that starts from the "Master in the pulpit" describes, over the Lodge, a line that, seen from the perspective of the Worshipful, turns out to be the number 4, which René Guénon has written is a sign of Mastery¹³².

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Our second example will be of greater interest, for it concerns the performance of the "first duty" after the opening of the work of a Lodge.

¹³²Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry*, vol. II, p. 53 and fig. 2.

We know the equivalence that René Guénon established between the "duty" of the Compagnonage, the *due guard* of the English Freemasons, and the sign of "order" of the French Freemasons. In addition to the etymological relationship between the words "order" and "rite", we can say that the "first duty" of Freemasonry is its "first rite" and, in fact, in the ancient rituals, the work began in this way:

"The Brethren assembled in Lodge, the Worshipful knocks with the mallet - repeated by the First and Second Warden - and says:

The Worshipful: Brother First Warden, what is the first duty of a Warden in the Lodge?

The First Watchman: Ensure that the Temple is covered.

The Venerable One: Be sure, my Brother

The First Watchman: Brother Second Watchman, you want to make sure that the Temple is covered.

The Second Watchman: Brother Coverer, do your duty.

The Coverer: (Makes his office and says:) Brother second Watcher, the outer Coverer is under arms, the profane are apart.

The Second Warden: Brother First Warden, the Lodge is regularly covered.

The First Watchman: Venerable Master, we are under cover.

We see here that the "descent" of the order "reverberates": from the Second Watcher to the "guardians of the threshold". (Such is the effect of the role played by the Coverer and the Outer Coverer, which the English call the *Inner Guard* and the *Outer Guard*). Now then, the regular square of the "outer door" of a Lodge is in the West on the Noon side¹³³ and we can see it in figure 2, where the "course" of the order concerning the "first duty", is carried out according to a line which is the outline of the ray.

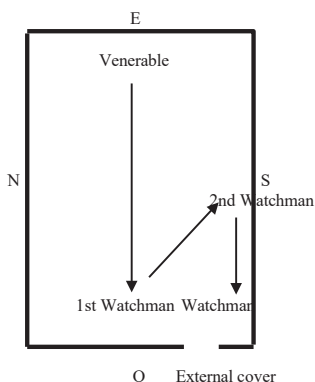


Figure 2

There is a similar special feature in the English Rite. Immediately after the proclamation of the opening or closing, the Venerable makes, with his mallet, the

¹³³Cf. Mackey's Encyclopaedia, vol. 1, p. 601, in the article *Lodge-Room* and in the figure. We refer to an American source, firstly, because the American rituals derive from the Grand Lodge of "Elders", and secondly, because the prosperity of Freemasonry on the other side of the Atlantic enabled them to have Temples conforming to the most minute ritual prescriptions, which is not the case either in France or in England.

"The First Warden then imitates him, and then the Second Warden, after which the Inner Warden performs the above-mentioned drumming at the door of the Lodge, and the Outer Warden responds in the same manner. Here again the stroke of lightning occurs, this time accompanied by the sound of thunder¹³⁴.

In confining themselves to the Rectified Rite, M. M. Tourniac and Le Salier cannot enter into considerations of this order, for the Rectified, like the Modern Rite, places the two Watchers in the West, a fact which René Guénon described as "false symmetry". Without this, the two authors whose work we are commenting on, would not have omitted to make an approach to the "gesture" by which, in Lodges practising the English ritual, "spiritual influence" is communicated throughout the initiation¹³⁵. And if M. M. Tourniac and Le Selier do not even speak of lightning, despite the "zigzagging" (and not "*pétinant*", as in the Chinese texts) progression of questions and answers, in the Lodge, at least the Symbolist's editorial staff has, alongside his article, a "Note from the Direction", where M. Marius Lepage, gives a short summary of the "spiritual influence". Marius Lepage, gives a short extract from a letter of René Guénon, concerning a related subject: the absence of "consecration" in the receptions made according to the Anglo-American ritual¹³⁶.

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¹³⁴ It is not a violation of Masonic secrecy to quote extracts from rituals or to give indications such as the one for which this note is given. We do not reproduce anything which has not been printed in the Light or deposited in the Libraries. English Freemasonry, which has the reputation of being very "formalistic", is not very formalistic in this matter; however, there are in the rituals "esoteric parts", few in number, which should never be printed, and of which it is even forbidden to speak, except in very grave circumstances. American Freemasonry is particularly rigorous on this point (cf. René Guénon, *Studies on Freemasonry*, t.I, pg.149, review of the *Grand Lodge Bulletin* of Iowa, in *fine*). But all the rest is accessible to anyone interested in Masonic subjects. English Masonic authors have, at times, drawn attention to the lack of seclusion of the "Masonic annexes", where meetings are frequently held in provincial lodges or big city hotels, and J. T. Lawrence, in *Sidelights on Freemasonry*, has set forth piquant examples of the inconveniences that result. Such "escapes" are clearly to be avoided, but are they really so harmful and so dangerous? We do not think so. On the contrary, what is dangerously deadly to Freemasonry are the "infiltrations" that are exercised in the opposite direction. We know how disastrous the "cracks" through which the "rain" seeps in can be for a façade, and vigilant attention is needed to ensure that they occur as little as possible and to repair those already caused, with the least possible delay. This is why the outer Temple-Guard, who ensures the "outer covering" of the Lodge, must, without ceasing, be on "guard", to keep out the profane and, above all, the "*Gormogons*" (cf. *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, p.170. at the beginning of the paragraph). As the world rushes towards its end, such fissures are becoming more abundant and more open, aggravating the danger of opening the way, not only to profane or pseudo-initiatory influences, but to agents of counter-initiation.

¹³⁵ This rite is, moreover, called "a blessing".

¹³⁶ Here is the text of this quotation: "... The importance of thunder (in the initiation tests) is much greater than that of thunder.

than we can imagine, because, after finding the similarities with the rites of the most diverse peoples, it represents a call to the "descent" of spiritual influences; the answer to this call is given at the end of the initiation, by the consecration with the malle (lightning) and the flaming sword (lightning), so that there are here, in the ritual, two elements which are in reality complementary. In this connection, I have always disagreed with the absence of the consecration in the English rite. It seems that there is here, in the French rituals, something that cannot be traced back directly to an operational source well before 1717..." (Letter from René Guénon to Marius Lepage, August 28, 1950). With his extraordinary spirit of synthesis, and his understanding of the "operative mode" of the rites, René Guénon had seen that something of an essential character - and, we could call it: a capital element - was missing in English or American Masonic initiation, and that it was related to the ritual: this capital element is the intervention of the ray. The lightning plays the same role in Anglo-American Masonry as it does in Western Masonry, the same role it plays in the initiations of all the Traditions of the Earth. For the reception of the Apprentice degree, the lightning is represented by the "gesture" of which we have spoken before, and the third movement of this gesture is accompanied by the thunderbolt. If Guénon has not spoken of these things to Marius Lepage, it is because they have not yet been mentioned in the published rituals. In any case, the "question" having been raised, we think that it is up to the Masonic Traditions to "give the answer". In this connection, we must thank one of our friends, a Mason from a non-European Lodge, for the great help he has given us on this important point.

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We will not examine in detail the parts of the article concerning Zen and the other Buddhist schools. The texts reproduced are of great interest, but the attempts at rapprochement on the part of the two authors did not seem to us to be fully justified. The repetition of "orders" and "announcements", always limited in number, should not be confused with the almost indefinite repetition of phrases or words (notably of "divine names"), which is one of the most widespread and constant forms of "incantation". M. M. Tourniac and Le Salier, think that repetition develops "stillness" (which they rightly assimilate to the Deep Peace of the Rose-Crosses). This is a probable effect for incantation. But, as far as the Masonic Rite is concerned, how does one explain asking three or four times: What time is it? - Is it noon o'clock, or: "The temple is covered", or even: "The proclamation has been carried", as this might pacify the perpetually agitated minds of contemporary Masons? We firmly believe that the contrary is the case, and the criticisms to which our two authors have alluded, show very clearly that there is no need to generalise this mode of working, and that it would be wise to stick to the limited use which is practised in all the Rites; which, moreover, is sufficient, and even admissible, from the symbolic point of view.

It is, therefore, a Masonic prescription which is largely ignored today, at least in France, and which, if it were better observed, would undoubtedly be capable of producing that "stillness" to which the two authors demand so much: it is the one which commands the recitation of the ritual "by heart". A text is only learnt by heart by repeating it many times; it is, so to speak, an "incorporated" repetition; and the very expression "by heart" is significant in this respect ((Note) (of the (translator)).

The relationship between memory and initiation is well known, and the researches of our two authors could have been developed further and offered interesting considerations. Indeed, whoever says "repetition" necessarily says "rhythm", and isn't one of the first aims of initiation rites to bring the initiate into harmony with the "rhythm of the world"? Note that we do not say "the rhythm of this world", for what Guénon calls "the unification of the microcosm with the macrocosm"¹³⁷. The being who attains this state is the "True Man" restored to the primordial state. He is the Master who, according to the sacred word of his degree, "possesses the world" and is not possessed by it. This is in order that the Apprentice may later - at least virtually - attain such a state that the mallet and chisel necessary to work the stone can be placed in his hands.

Whoever says repetition, says number, and number is also linked to rhythm. In the Masonic Rites, the number of strokes with the mallet, given by the three "lights" of the Lodge, has nothing arbitrary about it, it can only be a sacred number. And this intervention of the number must remind us that, according to Guenon, symbolism is a

(() (Note) (del) (translator) ()\We think it necessary to clarify that the expression "by heart", in French, is "par coeur", which literally translated is: "by the heart"; and it is quite possible that the fact that it is significant, in the subject we are dealing with, is more in keeping with the heart, than with the mind.

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Mention is made of this union (or unification) of the microcosm with the macrocosm, in Marcel's text Granet, provided by our two authors and reproduced above. According to Guénon, the number corresponding to this unification is 11, which is the number of feet used by Dante in the verses of his "Sagraric Poem".

The word "poetic", taken in the sense it has among our contemporaries, and not in the sense given to it by Dante, who already reproached certain poets of his century, of "sustained rhythm".

We will not insist any further on these indications from the study by M. M. Tourniac and Pierre Le S  lier. It could well generate other considerations, since symbolic thought itself, contrary to discursive thought, is capable of giving rise to developments, not only indefinite, but rigorously infinite, like Total Possibility itself.

CHAPTER VI

THE WORLD OF RITUALS

In 1971, the journal *Renaissance Traditionnelle* published the beginning of Jean Tourniac's study entitled: *The World of Rites*¹³⁸.

In a preliminary notice, the review states that this study is the reproduction of a lecture given in Lodge by the author, who has considered, in his own words, "to present a very brief and very approximate summary of the doctrine announced by René Guénon", in a work from which he claims to have "borrowed numerous definitions" — and also, we add, the essentials of his conceptions. And the review recalls that, after Jean Tourniac, Freemasonry without the rites would be nothing more than "scouting for adults" and that, moreover, "it would be a great and irremediable mistake to take initiation for a sort of Masonic doctorate".

Let us turn to the article itself. The subject matter dealt with by the author is very vast, and we might fear that a large number of allusions will remain unnoticed by the great mass of listeners. On the other hand, reading it, these allusions regain all their vigour and importance. We shall reproduce here some of M. Tourniac's indications, often expressed in a felicitous elliptical form. "The rite, conceived as a sacred gesture, is finally none other than Freemasonry itself, as the etymology of the word *rita* (which means in Sanskrit: Order) indicates". All those who participate in this rite "are bound together, according to the ancient formulae, by a mystery which is Order in itself". And the author recalls one of its formulae: "Is there anything between me and you?" (or, what is the bond that unites us?), a question to which the answer is: "A secret"; a secret which he claims to be "Freemasonry". The rite is a cable of transmission" (*cable-tow*) of a spiritual influence.

The author rightly insists on the specific characteristics of initiation, which, he says, far from being "a nebulous construction, are based on rigorous techniques". Initiation is therefore essentially distinguished "from mysticism, which is not very concerned with such technical requirements". The Masonic initiation of the blue degrees even has "an a-religious and a-sentimental character, which gives it a scientific aspect". It is, in fact, a kind of mathematics applied to the spiritual order".

All this is excellent, especially when the author makes it clear that the "a-religious" character of this initiation does not put it at all in opposition to any religion or tradition. And it must also be said that its "a-sentimental" character does not prevent it from making abundant and sometimes predilective use of the symbolism of human feelings, particularly that of love. Certain allusions to the "Tradition

¹³⁸ This study constitutes chapter VI of *Propos sur René Guénon* (Dervy-Livres editor, 1973).

Unique and Unchanging, they justify all the traditions and religions that emanate from it", showing well the fruit that the author has been able to extract from meditation, from what he himself calls: "the Masterpiece of René Guénon".

The following article by Jean Tourniac "overflows" with an excess of riches. We can only point out the main themes addressed by the author. He again insists on the distinction between mysticism (characterised by the passivity of the subject) and the initiatory path, "made up of discipline and ritual access), which "reveals symbolic knowledge" and "tends towards unity with the governing Principle of the Universe". The purpose of this initiation, "more and more clearly grasped" as one progresses, is not unlike "that evangelical Kingdom of total freedom, freed from all limiting conditions, including formal and impressive paradisiacal descriptions". Here, we believe that the author must have been thinking of Alighieri who, ascending "to the stars", returns to the earthly Paradise, at the risk of plunging, against the whole mountain of Purgatory, towards the Hells.

The ultimate purpose of initiation, which is "Being is not possessed, it is, and can only be participated in by a birth into it, i.e. a co-birth; no discursive explanation can give it assent". Beyond Being, there is the Principle of Being, that is to say the metaphysical zero, "Night which contains the day, or silence which carries the sound". Here again, it is to be feared that the essential doctrines - therefore correctly formulated - have been only imperfectly taken up by a certain number of auditors.

In a section entitled "Rites and Symbols", the author reminds us that symbols are "ritual elements of non-human origin". He insists in particular on the capital role played by number in symbols and Rites, and, in this regard, recalls the well-known admonition: "Let no one enter here unless he is a geometrician". Consequently, the "rite, whether sonorous or plastic, is always linked to the perpetuation of a rhythm, i.e. a number put into action". The biblical expression: "God has arranged everything in numbers, weights and measures" is recalled and placed in parallel with the three pillars of the Temple (Wisdom, Strength and Beauty) and also, of course, in the growth of Christ "in wisdom, in stature and in grace before God and man".

After various indications on "the consanguinity between the Rite, the Symbol and the number", the author touches on some particular points. For example, he compares "the integral, which allows, in mathematics, a leap from one order to the other", with "ritual vibration, which also makes a leap from the temporal to the eternal". Let us quote the following passage: "Rhythm and number are, in reality, the energetic substance of rites".

Despite the conciseness of his study (it is a lecture), the author could, at times, take up certain points in order to make them more explicit. Among those which would deserve some development, the following should certainly be given preference: "Spirit and Life take the rhythmic form of a spiral, like that which marks the scalp at the cranial extremity, of the spiritual coronary artery, like that of the navel". Here, the author must certainly have been thinking of the *Dumfries* operative manuscript *no. 4*, which may be the most important of all the *Old Charges* discovered up to the present day. The allusion that it contains "all the secrets" is in itself an explosive confirmation of Guénon's Masonic theses.

The last part of this study deals with the signs and, above all, the signs of recognition. However, it is clear that the author has been bothered by the fact that he was most probably speaking in an Apprentice Lodge, which prohibited him from specifying the many points concerning the 2nd and 3rd degrees, and also the complementary degree of the Master's Degree (i.e. the Royal Ark). Nevertheless, what he has been able to say is important, especially with regard to the allusions to the "vital centres". The author establishes, let us understand, a rapprochement with the Hindu and Tibetan Yogas; but he could also have evoked Western hermeticism, whose essential symbolism, the caduceus, is related to the vital centres. We think, moreover, that M. Tourniac must have reflected on the ornaments of the Masonic picture and on certain allusions made by Guénon. But it is always the same thing: how does he talk about all this in the Apprentice Lodge? In any case, at the end of the article, there are many useful notes: for example, on the taking possession of the directions of space, by the "marches" of the different degrees (which is equivalent to the taking of "possession of the world").

Let us also point out, with regard to the "mystical conference" of the Royal Ark of which the author speaks, that its "legendary context" is far from indifferent, for the figure of Moses is of obvious symbolic interest to Freemasonry, because of the relationship of this holy personage not only with the revelation of an essential "divine name" in the Royal Ark (the Tetragrammaton), but also with the wooden construction, with the manifestation of lightning, and also with the plundering of the Egyptians by the Hebrews in the Exodus. Guénon - based, we believe, on certain Hermetic texts - saw in this despoilment, which took place after the first night of Passover ("night of the passage", cf. *Ex.* XII, 35-36), the symbol of the passage of certain traditional civilisations: that of the Pharaonic civilisation to the Hebrew civilisation. Among these sciences was hermeticism, and it is very likely that the "riches" of the Egyptians, consisting essentially of objects of gold and silver, were used for the construction of the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle (cf. *Ex.* XXXV, 22 sqq.), of which Solomon's Temple was only its "fixation".

This chapter, in spite of its brevity, will have shown, we hope, that the study of the "World of Rites" could not be carried out, and carried out satisfactorily, without a constant recourse to the traditional teaching of René Guénon.

CHAPTER VII

RENÉ GUÉNON AND THE LETTER G

Throughout the 1960s, the journal *Le Symbolisme* published, among other interesting articles, several studies by Jean-Pierre Berger. This author had undertaken the translation of the *Old Charges* of English operative Freemasonry, and had notably published the longest of these texts, the *Dumfries Manuscript No. 4*. In such an arduous work, M. Berger had brought together the original studies devoted to various Masonic questions. His article on Nemrod and the Tower of Babel was remarkable. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of one of his last articles, *This G which comes to designate*, which appeared in *The Symbolism* of January-March 1967.

The author studies the important symbol that is the letter G, using reviews of 18th century English and French Masonic literature, and also the rituals, mostly British, practised up to the present day. The first written mention of the use of the G in Lodge is found in Samuel Prichard's work, *Masonry dissected*, published in 1730. The G is designated as representing, firstly, Geometry and, secondly, "the Great Architect of the Universe, who was hoisted upon the pinnacle of the holy Temple", i.e. Christ. In France, however, the G was immediately interpreted as the "initial of *Gold*, God in English". In addition, a writing from 1745, *The Broken Seal*, speaks of a Great Light in which "the letter G, initial of God in Hebrew" can be distinguished. Such a statement is worthy of note. Today, however, in English-speaking Freemasonry, the G is regarded as the initial of *Gog*, and also as the symbol of the sun. The Irish Rituals are the exception, however, and formally state that "the G does not designate either God or Geometry, but has an esoteric meaning". We will return to this point, which is of exceptional importance, at the end of our article.

M. Berger does not speak of the other interpretations given to this letter. The one which designates it as the initial of the word "Gnosis" would deserve at least a mention. The American Albert Pike, who, in his time, was the highest dignitary of the Scottish Rite, has written that "Gnosis is the essence and marrow of Freemasonry"^{(1) (3) (9)}. This is a formula worthy of note, if we relate it to certain ancient texts given by M. Berger, which present the G as the "essence of the Companion Lodge" and as "the centre from which the true Light comes".

For a more feasible understanding by non-Masonic readers of what is to follow, we reproduce the principle of the "instruction" of the second degree,

¹³⁹ It is by this citation that René Guénon's first article on Freemasonry debuted in the journal *La Gnosis*. He was then 24 years old (Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry* ..., II, 257).

as practised in many French Lodges, and which does not differ in any way from the texts used by M. Berger in his exposition.

"Are you a Companion? - I have seen the flaming star.
Why did you become a partner? - To get to know the letter G.
What does the letter G stand for? - Geometry, which is the quintessence.
What else does the letter G stand for? - It stands for someone greater than you, Venerable Master.
And who could be greater than I, who am a free and accepted Mason, and the Master of a just and perfect Lodge? - The Great Geometer of the Universe, he who was raised upon the pinnacle of the Temple.

M. Berger's article seems above all intended to discuss two of the interpretations given by Guénon¹⁴⁰. The author sees in the second of these interpretations (initial G for Geometry) a "rectification" of the first (initial G for *God*), simply forgetting that "a symbol which has only one meaning would not be a true symbol"¹⁴¹. On this account, he could have considered as another contradiction, a quotation from Oswald Wirth, taken up by Guénon, and affirming that the perfect Gnosis, in Freemasonry, is represented by "the letter G of the flaming star"¹⁴². But, above all, it is these two assertions of Guénon's that M. Berger fights against: the one that makes of the G a symbolic equivalent to the Hebrew *iod*; and the one according to which, "after *certain*"¹⁴³ operative rituals, the letter G appears in the centre of the vault... and a plumb line suspended from this letter G, and pointing to the centre of a swastika, traced on the floor"¹⁴⁴. The author clearly reproaches Guénon for having been inspired by the witticism of Clément Stretton's correspondences, disseminated by the magazine *The Speculative Mason*. And he finds it reprehensible that Guénon "felt the need to resort to the authority of such a dubious source".

Whatever may have been M. Berger's information concerning Clément Stretton, we think that Guénon should know incomparably much more about him. At the beginning of his career, Guénon had a close relationship with many of the last "survivors" of *H.B. of L.*, who nourished him considerably on the teachings concerning the origin of spiritualism. We believe that it is thanks to the documents of this organisation - one of the last manifestations of Western hermeticism - that Guénon was able to acquire knowledge of the doctrine of the last operative Masons, who had not yet forgiven the Grand Lodge of England for the "speculative" schism of 1717, and who obstinately refused to admit into their ranks anyone bearing the abhorred name of Anderson. Two centuries had passed, Freemasonry had spread over the world. They had not been moved in their "fidelity" and their rancour. They had seen certain Lodges transform themselves into *Trade-Unions*¹⁴⁵,

¹⁴⁰See *The Great Triad*, cp. XXV, and *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, cp. XVI.

¹⁴¹This expression is taken from M. J. Corneloup, an author whose conceptions are, however, very far removed from those of Guénon (Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Companognage*, t. II, pg.140).

¹⁴²Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t.II, p. 259).

¹⁴³It is we who underline the word "*certain*". Indeed, when reading M. Berger, one could believe that Guénon attributed to all operative Lodges the practice in question. Now, no one has been more aware than this author of the multiplicity of Masonic rites; a multiplicity which must go back to very distant times.

¹⁴⁴The *Great Triad*, pg. 205.

Guénon gives here some indications on the ritual consequences of this little known fact.

And many of its members joined *Co-Masonry* (Mixed Masonry), and even the "irregular" organisations of John Yarker (Rite of Memphis-Misraïm). But wasn't all this more valid than joining the Speculative? Theologians who have become heresiarchs by dint of ultra-orthodoxy are not uncommon¹⁴⁶.

It was one of these diehards, Clément Stretton, who, seeing the irremediable decline of the operative order, clearly communicated by letter to John Yarker certain information whose subsequent use by the magazine *The Co-Mason* - now, oh irony of words, *The Speculative-Mason* - had nothing to teach René Guénon, who had known of it long before through another channel, of a totally essential character. It was only out of understandable discretion that he waited, before speaking, until everything had been published. Stretton may have sometimes "embellished" things (we are thinking in particular of a certain ladder of multiple gears, each corresponding to a different key), but for the most part his reviews are accurate. And it should be added that *The Speculative-Mason* was a Masonic journal of exceptional quality. To convince oneself, it is sufficient to note that Guénon very regularly mentioned its articles, and did so always with praise; and, as far as we know, he never mentioned the slightest criticism of the content of those articles.

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After having criticised what he believes to be the "sources" of René Guénon, M. Berger, on the question of the G drawn on the ceiling from which the plumb line hangs in the direction of the centre of a swastika, writes the following lines:

"The material arrangement of this "polar" symbol..., can only be conceived of in a special room, exclusively concerned with the operative Lodge; and such a practice cannot correspond to an ancient usage. It is necessary, therefore, to recall here Masonic texts, the authenticity of which cannot be doubted, where the opposite of what was said above about speculative Freemasonry is affirmed, and where the meetings took place in the open country. Thus, in the Status of Aberdeen Lodge, dated 27th December 1670, it is stated: "We decree that no Lodge shall be held within a house, dwelling or dwelling of persons, but in the open country, except in bad weather, in which case the house shall be chosen, without any one seeing or understanding.... We also decree that every Apprentice shall be admitted to our ancient Lodge in the open country".

"Of this practice, we find echoes, notably in the manuscript of *Edinburgh Register House* (1696): "a day's journey from the town, without a dog's bark, or a cock's crow", and also in *A Mason's Examination* (1723): "Where have you become a Mason? - In

¹⁴⁶By the inappropriate term "ultra-orthodoxy", we have wished to designate this mentality, above all "formalistic", which places the accessory on the same level as the essential. In 1717, the time had undoubtedly come for a "readaptation" of operative Freemasonry, for the real operations had long since ceased. Unfortunately, this task was entrusted to Anderson, and what did he do? It was then more necessary than ever to preserve the *Old Charges*, and he burned them. As for the Lodges that remained "operational", it seems that their leaders did not measure up to Anderson and Désaguliers. The successive attitudes of the Duke of Wharton did not serve their cause. And what of those who founded the anti-Masonic organisations, such as the Gregorians and, above all, the Gormogons, whose very mention of the name must have inspired them with a salutary terror? It was not until 1751 that a sane "reaction" was established; it was the foundation by Irish Masons resident in London, of the Grand Lodge of Atole, who, in a demi-century, would turn the tide, and, saving all that could be saved, should ensure to the "Union" of 1813, the triumph of the conceptions of the "Ancients" over the "Moderns".

the valley of Jehoshaphat, behind a thicket of rushes, where no dog's bark is ever heard, nor cock's crow; and even: "upon the highest mountain or in the deepest valley of the earth" (Grand Mystery of Freemasonry discovered). (*Grand Mystery of Freemasonry discovered*); and finally, in *Masonry dissected*: "Where is the Lodge to be held? -On a sacred site, on the highest hill, or in the deepest valley, or in the valley of Jehoshaphat, or any other secret place".

Here, we rub our eyes, for we reread again, and we must necessarily surrender to the evidence: M. Berger has taken expressions so obviously symbolic, in the literal sense; he has believed - is it possible - that the Operatives really met in the open country, behind a reed bush, on the highest mountain in the world, and even - why not - in the valley of Jehoshaphat! This seems incredible to us, just as your author, who has so masterfully translated *Dumfries No. 4*, cannot be unaware that such expressions apply, par excellence, to St. John's Lodge.

It matters little what circumstances may have led the Aberdeen Lodge to issue its rules of 1670¹⁴⁷. What is certain is that the Operatives met "under cover", in lodges, as the Compagnons had always done throughout France. The name of the Lodge, kept secret, was not designated until after the lodge banner. To the Goose and To the Grill; To the Crown; To the Apple Tree; To the Goblet and To the Cluster of Grapes; these were the operative Lodges.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ And how did M. Berger not see the incompatible evidence of the conditions he enumerates? Until a very recent epoch, the silence of the fields was not disturbed except by the faithful barking of the dogs, checking the flocks, and by the crowing of the cocks, calling and answering each other, from farm to farm.

Is it serious to write that the tracing of a G on the ceiling and a swastika on the floor, connected by a plumb line, "can only be conceived in a special locale and exclusively in the operating Lodge"? Solving such a problem was nothing more than a game. It even involved a solution to which Guénon did not refer. Before 1914, in village lodges, the "main beam", whose symbolism we know, was full of hooks from which bottles decorated with ribbons were hung, and from which a metal letter G could, on occasion, be suspended, from which a string would hang. A pole, ending in a Y-shaped hook, was used to raise and lower the bottles, which were hooked in this way three times: hanging, unhooking and finally uncorking them. "Did you hang up many bottles?" asks Rabelais in the preface to *Gargantua*, before advising his readers of the "curious lesson and

¹⁴⁷ We were curious enough to consult the article on the Aberdeen Lodge in Mackey's encyclopaedia (t. III, pg. 1.151). We have indeed found the two statutes which speak of M. Berger. But we have also found the following lines: "The verbal processes of the "bourg (*town*)" of Aberdeen, interrupted after 1398, make numerous allusions to the Freemasons..... One of these verbal processes speaks of the "Lodge" of the Freemasons, a construction (*a building*) in 1483.... A verbal process, from 1544, speaks of the building of the Lodge, which was the permanent meeting place of the Masons... A first Masonic Lodge... had been built of wood and was burnt by the enemies of the *Craft*, who, let us say, were numerous and among their ranks were clergy. (For, after Wyclef's death, the office was filled by the most staunchly anti-Masons.

-although many of its members had been among the best Masons. The Roman Church had *officially* [underlined in the text] condemned, at the general council of Avignon, all secret societies...). Another Lodge was built later, but was also burnt (and, along with it, numerous ancient documents), probably by the Marquis of Huntly, when he sacked the city of Aberdeen, with 2000 soldiers. In 1700, the Freemasons built yet another Lodge, well apart, on the seashore".

These texts, we think, are sufficient in themselves.

¹⁴⁸ We are not at all aware that, under these names, the four operative Lodges formed the Grand Lodges of London, 24 June 1717.

frequent meditation" in order, he says, to "break the bone and suck out the marrow, i.e. what I understand by these Pythagorean symbols".

The humblest objects, in a civilisation which has not yet broken all ties with a traditional order, are full of profound significance when considered in the light of the teaching of the Masters.

M. Berger had devoted several pages of his article refuting Guenon's assertion that the letter G "must in fact be a Hebraic *iod*, and that, in England, it was replaced, through phonetic assimilation, by the letter *God*"^{(1) (4)(9)}.

M. Jean Reyor once thought he could add some linguistic clarifications to Guénon's assertion, and M. Berger declared his argument "inadmissible", basing himself on the Oxford dictionary and on the work of M. H. Brunot. We will prudently reserve our intervention. It is a question, he says, of "semantics". What do we care about the laws of semantics?", René Guénon asked Paul Le Cour. But we are not René Guénon; we profess, even for semantics - and consequently for all modern sciences in general - a reverence mixed with fear. We are very afraid of confusing the "*C chalcidique*" with the "front vowels" or the "back vowels" (all these wise terms are used in M. Berger's argumentation), and that is why we pass beyond it.

And we will go further, more cheerfully than M. Berger, in a note unfortunately relegated to the end of the article, in which he has not taken care to ruin, himself, his entire argumentation. He does so in these terms:

It may be, however, that the possibility of a kind of assimilation between G and *iod* should not be completely ruled out . . . This is a simple hypothesis, based on certain linguistic and phonetic points.

After H. Brunot.....in the manuscript of Gregoire de Tours, we read *iniens* cambiado by *ingens*...., foreseeing that *ge* was mistaken for *Y*.

It is interesting to note, however, that Villard de Honnecourt, in some of the lines accompanying certain drawings in his famous notebooks, writes *iometrie* instead of *geometry*. Is there more to this than just a question of spelling?

It should also be noted that, in English, we find, after the Oxford dictionaries, the form *jematrye* around 1450. It would also be necessary to be able to look at the original texts of the oldest *Old Charges* to see if a similar spelling is found in Masonic documents".

Yes, the G can also take the place of the Y, the "Pythagorean letter of Rabelais, and even more so when this G appears in the centre of the five-pointed star, the "Pythagorean symbol" par excellence. Moreover, M. Berger could have spared himself so much effort to convince René Guénon of his error if - remember that Freemasonry uses an agreed written language in which the highlighting of initials plays a major role - he had remembered that all craft organisations also had a secret spoken language in which the alteration and mutation of initial consonants often played an important role.

¹⁴⁹ *The Great Triad*, pg. 205.

In the Compagnonage, such language was called "alarido". Here is what our collaborator Luc Benoist tells us: "*Alarido* is no longer commonly practised. It was a special language which, through distortions of pronunciation, allowed the Compagnons to speak in public without being understood by the layman, in particular during ceremonies of conduct and funerals¹⁵⁰".

Moreover, even outside of any initiation, certain corporations even use a special form of speech with very simple rules. We can cite, for example, the slang of butchers (*louchébem*), which involves the displacement of the initial consonant¹⁵¹.

It is permissible to think that the use of such "*shibboleths*" must have been much more frequent in the Operatives than in present-day Freemasonry. The latter has retained only the word *Shibboleth* itself, which belongs to the degree of Fellow, and which is connected with the "passage of waters". Then, in the Bible⁽¹⁵²⁾ the correct pronunciation of the initial consonant (*Shibboleth*) permitted the passage of the Jordan; the incorrect pronunciation of this initial (*Shibboleth*) not only forbade passage, but also led to death.

The initial is the symbol of the Beginning. "In the beginning was the Word", which is the Way, the Truth and the Life. In matters of initiation, any ignorance of the Principle - whether by simple "impoverishment" of its meaning, sublimated by definition - closes the way, leads to error, leads to death.

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After having criticised Guénon's main interpretations of the letter G, M. Berger proposes to give "some indications which give an idea of the way in which this symbol may have been absorbed by Christianity, so that Christian craft organisations can validly use this ritual point of view".

This is a most felicitous idea, because it touches on the important subject of the Christianisation of Western Freemasonry. Unfortunately, the author started from questionable premises, which led him to write that "Hebrew, the sacred language of Christianity, is necessarily the technical instrument of all Christian esotericism". But how can we admit such a starting point, when Dante makes no use of Hebrew in his Work, without discussing one of the highest monuments of Christian esotericism? Where, then, are there any Christian initiatory productions, prior to the Renaissance, which have been inspired by the language of the Old Testament? We are certain that there are none; at any rate, in the most "popular" one

¹⁵⁰*The Compagnonage and the Trades*, pg. 124 [P.U.F., 1966].

¹⁵¹The return, at the end of each word, of the ending *em*, provides a very rapid speech, resulting in a (The Hebrews gave the name *Zomzomin* to a people of anti-Canaanite giants, who could not understand their language. Cf. *Deuteronomy*, II, 18-21).

¹⁵²*Judges*, XII, 4-6.

of all, the cycle of the Holy Grail, we would search in vain for the slightest trace of use (or even knowledge) of the Hebrew language¹⁵³.

How not to get angry? Christianity has no sacred language, which is neither an inferiority nor a superiority, it is a peculiarity. Its sacred books are written in Greek. Its "tradition", expressed by the Fathers of the Church, has been in Greek, in Latin, in Syriac, in Arabic, in Armenian, in Coptic, in Greek¹⁵⁴, never in Hebrew; there are no "Hebrew Fathers"¹⁵⁵. The highest of sciences, emerging from the "priestly art", the holy liturgy, takes as its vehicle the most diverse languages (even using, in the Orthodox missions in Alaska, Indian and Eskimo dialects); it has never, we believe, been translated into Hebrew¹⁵⁶.

But if Hebrew is not the sacred language of Christianity, it is at least the sacred language of Freemasonry, which uses it exclusively for its sacred words, its words of passage, its "covered words", and also for the generic names given to the recipients of each degree. It is appropriate to make a major distinction here. Masonry, of all the Rites, uses these words (about fifteen in all, in the case of the Operative Rites) taken from a sacred language which is Hebrew. But Hebrew is not par excellence "the" sacred language of Freemasonry, it is the universal symbolism, "the only language, says a ritual, which is common to all the nations of the Earth, whose origin goes back to the sources of humanity". It alone makes it possible to read and interpret the *Liber mundi* of the Brothers Rose-Crosses, the great Book of Creation, which, with its light, appears as the Cosmos, that is to say, as Order and Beauty. This language is more precious than Hebrew, for it is the language of the Most High, who used it in the beginning, and who uses it today and always, when in "the bosom of His glory" He eternally pronounces the original Fiat Lux¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵³ It might be objected that Dante's Christian orthodoxy, and even his Christianity as such, were called into question during his lifetime, and that an author who says to Virgil, "Thou duke, thou lord, thou master", might well reveal any Hermetic-Pythagorean initiation. Let us note, however, that the further we advance in the *Divine Comedy*, the more the Christian elements dominate over the "pagan" ones. On the other hand, the very violence of Dante's criticism of the Church of his time seems to us inexplicable from a stranger to this Church. And we even think that Alighieri should occupy a very high rank in the "hidden hierarchy of Christianity" (it is especially in Dante's case that it is worth remembering that "the initiate is superior to the cleric"). In any case, "the Sacred Poem" is addressed to the Christian world, and if Dante had thought that he should have added to his initiatory scope, a certain use of Hebrew, we can believe that he could not have disdained such a "technical instrument". In the Grail romances, the Celtic elements are present as such only after a more or less "skilful" Christianisation. Likewise, we have it on good authority that there were a large number of "Christian cabalists"; but it must be borne in mind that no one was found before the Renaissance who "consecrated" the break of the Western world with the Christian Tradition.

¹⁵⁴ The religious language of the Church of Ethiopia.

¹⁵⁵ It is well known that in Greek Patrology, the most "metaphysical" works are those of the great "*Cappadociens*":

Basil

of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianze and, above all, Gregory of Nyse. The latter's most remarkable treatise, his *Contemplation on the Life of Moses*, makes no reference to Hebrew. The same is true of the Homilies on the Hexameron, a commentary on the six-day work of Basil the Great. This treatise has in its favour that it was inspired by numerous Jewish works on the same subject, and such an omission speaks for itself.

¹⁵⁶ The use of the Hebrew language in the liturgy is limited to the daily use of four words: *Amen*, *Alleluia*,

Hosannah and *Sabaoth*, to the Aramaic *Ephphêta* in the rites of Baptism, and a dozen or so words, from time to time, throughout the liturgical year.

¹⁵⁷ Let us remember the exceptions: *Jah - Bel - On* in the Office, and some words in vulgar languages (for example:

"Frederick II. -Of Prussia"), in the high Scottish ranks.

¹⁵⁸ We have drawn here on terms used in various rituals, and, notably, in the *Prayer* of the third degree of the English Rite.

It should be noted, incidentally, that a sacred language (in the ordinary sense of the word) is not indispensable to an initiatory organisation, especially when this organisation is based on a "sedentary" activity. The Compagnonage dispensed with it entirely, and, to all probability, the same was true of the Charbonnerie. For these reasons and others, we believe that the Hebrew language is, for Freemasonry, only a symbol like many others, or a "tool", always useful and often precious, but not the "technical" and privileged instrument that could serve as a "key" to the understanding of its esotericism¹⁵⁹.

M. Berger has therefore been inclined to attempt an interpretation of the letter G from the methods of the Kabbala. The Hebrew letter corresponding to Gamma is Chimel, the initial of *Gebhurah* (Force), one of the ten Sephiroth. But whereas the G, in Masonic symbolism, is always situated in the centre of the floor and, at the pinnacle, in space, *Gebhurah* is neither in the centre, nor at the top of the Sephirothic tree, nor even on the middle column, but on a side column (that of Rigour). On the other hand, the numerical value of the word *Gebhurah* (which M. Berger does not give) is of no interest. It is possible that the author, with his usual erudition and ingenuity, has had recourse to the Apocrypha of the Old Testament and to the texts of "Gnosticism" (texts not written in Hebrew but in Greek); and it must be admitted that, with such speculations, one cannot go very far; which, on the contrary, would have shocked us. Does this mean that this appeal to the Hebraic Tradition is worthless? Certainly not. The author indicates that the root of *Gebhurah*, GBR, is that of *Gibbor* (Power, Heros), epithet of Nimrod^{(1) (6) (0)}; and, quite rightly, he evokes the "heros" of Psalm 44, and recalls that the "wife" of which this psalm speaks is Israel for the Jewish commentators and the Church for the Christians. And I could have added that the liturgy links this psalm to the cult of the Virgin, and that its character as an "epithalamium" has always associated it with the *Song of Songs*, a work dear to St Bernard and his school, and of which Berger must be well aware of its intimate relationship with the immediate prodromes of the building of the Temple^{(1) (6) (1)}.

¹⁵⁹ The "sacred words" vary constantly from one Rite to another (the "avatars" of the word *Tubalcain* are revealing in this respect), and it is in Freemasonry that there are "characteristics" which do not vary, and which are even the only ritual elements which never change. These are not sound symbols, nor figurative symbols, but "gestures", quite rightly called "signs of recognition", and whose permanence throughout all the Rites may suggest the "unassailable" character of the diamond.

¹⁶⁰ It might be interesting to bring GBR closer to another Semitic root KBR, which has the same meaning. The *Kabirim* were the

"Powers". This term, transferred to Greek, gave the name "*Cabires*", the name of gods honoured in certain Mysteries, notably in *Samothrace*. Here is a little known Guenonian text: "With regard to Sinai, it is interesting to note that this region was, at a very distant time, the seat of the Mysteries in connection with the art of the metallurgists, that is to say of the Kabiric Mysteries; these metallurgists were the "Kenites" - a name which many read as "Cainites" - and this, in any case, has a close relationship with the symbolism of Tubalcain, well known in Freemasonry". These lines end in a note on the three "sacred mountains" of the Operatives (Sinai, *Moriah* and Thabor), signed A.W.Y. (initials of René Guénon's Arabic name) in the 1936 *Speculative Mason* (page 36). We see that Guénon, far from depending on this journal for his information on operational matters, occasionally gave these editors and editresses clarifications on obscure points of symbolism. It is understood that he was perfectly aware of the attempts made, on various occasions, to bring the latest Operatives into contact with the United Grand Lodge of England.

¹⁶¹ Solomon's dream on the heights of Gibeon, where the Eternal bestowed upon him wisdom, glory and riches, is preceded by the account of Solomon's marriage to the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, who is the wife of the *Canticle*, assimilated to the "black land" by these words which have so intrigued commentators: "I am black, but I am beautiful, or daughters of Jerusalem, like the tents of Kedar, like the pavilions of Solomon". Let us remember that Cedar was the second son of Ishmael (Genesis, XXV, 13). Curiously enough, it is from Cedar, and not from Naboath, "the first son of Ishmael", from whom Islamic tradition recognises Mohammed's ancestry.

This is another interesting point. After a Zoroastrian text, Ghimel's scheme consists of an upper horizontal line, representing Heaven, a lower horizontal line, representing the Earth, and, between them, a vertical axis, representing Universal Man. But how could M. Berger not recognise in this scheme the exact equivalent of the Masonic symbol pointed out by Guedeon, and which he has criticised so much: the ceiling, the floor and, between them, the plumb line? Thus Ghimel's scheme is also that of the Great Triad.

When Satan said to Jesus "come up" on the pinnacle of the Temple: "throw yourself down", he exhorts Christ to behave like the lead of the plummet. He exhorts, in short, the liberating Christ, to play the role of Satan himself, as the "reverse encouragement of nature" and the "prince of individualisation". This is the cosmological meaning of this gospel episode.

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We believe, in fact, that in order to interpret the symbol of the letter G from a Christian Masonic point of view, it is not to the conceptions of the Hebrew Kabbala that we must turn, but to the Gospel texts themselves, and first of all, of course, to the story of the temptation of Christ, to which the ritual formula alludes: "He who was lifted up on the pinnacle of the Temple". We do not consider it useless to reproduce the sacred text, underlining the terms of particular interest from the Masonic point of view¹⁶².

"Then¹⁶³ Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these *stones* to become *bread*. Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'". Then the devil led him into the holy city and hoisted him up on the *pinnacle of the temple* and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here; for it is written, 'He will send his angels to guard you in all your *ways*, and they will bear you up in their hands, so that your foot will not strike the *stone*'. Jesus said to him, "It is written, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God. At last the devil carried him *up a very high mountain*, and showing him from there *all the kingdoms of the world* and their glory, said to him, "I will give you all these things, if you will prostrate yourself at my feet and worship me. Jesus answered him, "Get thee behind me Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and thou shalt serve none else but him." Then the devil departed, and the angels came to Jesus and served him".

Much more than the correspondences we could reveal between the three temptations and the three degrees of blue Masonry, what is essential in this text is that Christ reveals Himself as not only the Almighty, but as the "Spiritual Teacher par excellence", by His threefold "rejection of power" and, above all, by His attention to "rectifying" the earthly interpretations of the Scriptures and restoring them to their true meaning, which is the "higher" meaning. Satan is a good theologian and, we see here, that he is equally "versed in the holy words". But he always incites to look them down, and when he warns and quotes the psalm *Qui habitat*, he clearly shows that he does not possess the key and, through his interpretation, the Word of God appears as

¹⁶² We give the text of St. Matthew (IV, 1-11). St. Luke reversed the last two temptations; we can read in the Cassien's *lectures*, interesting considerations on this mutation.

¹⁶³ After his baptism.

"petrified". Here, we think, is the "technical lesson" to be drawn from the temptations of the second Adam. And the allusions to the "stone" in the first two temptations, and to the "possession of the world" in the third, should indicate something to particularly attentive Masons, reminding them that the highest symbols can be "profaned", that is, reduced to their profane meaning - even to profane use, as Medusa did for the Temple of Wisdom.

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If M. Berger had admitted the symbolic equivalence between G and *iod*, he could have made interesting reproaches. The *iod* represents a "germ"¹⁶⁴. The G or *iod*, in the middle of the flaming star, symbolises, above all, the "germ of immortality", that is to say, the *light*. But in the case of Freemasonry, it is something else altogether. It is known that the "rain of tears" which envelops the cock in the hermetic picture of the "chamber of reflection" is, at the same time, a "rain of germs". This double symbol alludes to the double meaning of "widowhood", an extremely important Masonic notion, the true extent of which is unfortunately unknown. Master Masons are ritually designated as the "sons of the Widow". The fact that Hiram-Abif was the son of a widow is evidently merely the "occasion" for such an appellation. In reality, Freemasonry is the "Widow" of all the extinct initiatory Orders of which it has taken the inheritance; and it is known that these Orders are extremely numerous. And, just as a Tradition, before "dying" in the eyes of the profane, "wraps itself in a shell" - as Caesar, before falling through 33 stab wounds, wrapped himself in the folds of his scarlet cloak¹⁶⁵ - so an initiatory Order, having "finished its course", reabsorbs itself in germ in order to pass through what, for it, is going to be a period of darkness, symbolised by the black veils of the widow. And the outline of the germ, or of the tear, is that of a "coiling" which recalls, to a certain extent, the Latin form of the letter G¹⁶⁶.

The "widow's log offering for the finishing of the Temple", which, in the continental Lodges, is evoked after the closing of the work, develops a similar symbolism. This tiny coin, which has more value than all the offerings of the rich, and of which Christ emphasises its links with "the only thing necessary" and with "life", is, in short, another aspect of the "mustard seed", "the smallest of all seeds", but which, when it has grown, "becomes a tree, on whose branches the birds of Heaven come to perch". It should also be noted that the episode of the widow at the bazaar immediately precedes the prophecy about the ruin of Jerusalem and the end of the

¹⁶⁴ Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science, pg. 432.

¹⁶⁵ If we remember this fact, we see that the Holy Empire is the last inheritance that Freemasonry has received. Moreover, the "eponymous heros" of the Empire is qualified as "germ" by the Hebrew Bible; and the last "official" title of the Empire also evokes the idea of germination.

¹⁶⁶ This remarkable faculty of assimilation of Freemasonry is due, we think, to the particular kinship with the hermeticism. Inheritance represents the most normal form of such assimilation. But there is another, "violent" one, which is abduction. In the Greek legend of Hermes, the sons of Maïa, barely born, are seen stealing and "hiding" the thunderbolt of Jupiter, the sword of Mars, the belt of Venus, the flocks and the lyre of Apollon. To recover what had been stolen, the god of the day had to get rid of the shepherd's staff, which Mercury used to invent the caduceus. But the dignitaries of the Scottish Rite who, in the Latin countries, have allowed their blue Lodges to abolish the office of Deacons, only knew that the insignia of these Officers were none other than the caduceus of Hermes, - or, even, the staff of the mysterious Altri, the silent *missus* sent from Heaven, to succour Dante and Virgil, in order to open the door of the Deity?

world, whose close links with the completion of the construction of the Temple are well known¹⁶⁷.

In the 18th century, the widow of a Master Mason was called "Gabaona". This French feminine of a Hebrew town name reminds us that the letter G has sometimes been considered as the initial of Gabaon. This word, the root of which must interest M. Berger, is the "name of a Master" in the French Rite, and the best British rituals also make such use, recalling the phrase, "Sun, stand thou over Gibeon, and thou, Moon, over the valley of Ahialon," by which Joshua "stood" the two lights, in order to finish his victory over King Adonisedech.

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We must now return to the interpretation of Irish rituals, according to which the letter G stands for neither *God* nor *Geometry*, but is an esoteric sign. This question seems to have intrigued M. Berger, and, to tell the truth, he was not wrong. For this author, it must be admitted, has a "sense of mystery", and when he points out an enigmatic point, he always shows an interest in deepening it. Let us first reproduce the text of note 2, which is devoted to this problem:

"In the Irish ceremony of the Installation of Masters, it is particularly indicated that the G stands for neither God nor Geometry, but has an esoteric significance; it would relate to the word, of which it is the initial, of the "Installed Masters", for whom the scriptural reference is not given in the article in the journal *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* (vol. 76). 76), where most of the indications relating to the letter G in 18th century Masonic literature are copied⁽¹⁶⁸⁾".

If *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum* has not given the biblical reference to the word in question, it is because everything relating to the "fourth degree" is regarded as "esoteric", and a fortiori the sacred word¹⁶⁹. (169) We must realise that we, too, would not know how to give this word, but we see that it begins with a G, and that, like all sacred words, it is a Hebraic word. Only all the Installed Masters know this word, and a good number of French Masons, though not Installed Masters, know it also, under another title. It is true that neither the one nor the other generally doubts its multiple and very elevated meanings, although these meanings are not difficult to discover. Let us say, therefore, that this word evokes, at the same time, the construction in stone and in wood, the eventful life of Dante Alighieri, the symbolism of the triangle, the gift of tongues, the Phoenician tradition, the Egyptian tradition, a certain wild boar hunting, the symbolism of mourning and widowhood, the navigation of the ark, the gathering of the dispersed, and so many other things. But it is possible that we have already spoken too much, and lifted, more than we should, the veil which, in Lodge, the letter G should normally cover.

¹⁶⁷ Mark, XII, 41-44; and Luke, XXI, 1-4.

¹⁶⁸ The journal *Ars Quatuor Coronatum* is the organ of the English Lodge *Quatuor Coronati*: it is a "Lodge of Research", which does not proceed to any initiation, and specialises in Masonic history and archaeology. ¹⁶⁹ The English commonly say that a Worshipful Installed Mason has received the "Fourth Degree". What may explain such an expression is that, in the Anglo-American Rites, the rites of "Installation", which are performed "under cover" in the "Committee of Installed Masters", involve the communication of particular "secrets", and notably, a password and a sacred word.

In any case, it will have been noted that the word in question belongs to three different traditions. How then can one be angry? M. Berger writes, speaking of the G and the blazing star: "The central character of the two symbols is clearly underlined in the texts or in the Lodge Charts, where the G appears most frequently in the middle of the rectangle delimiting the line". And the author adds: "Thus, in Prichard, the star is expressly said to signify in the centre".



Symbolism of the centre; symbolism of the germ and the initial; symbolism of victory and completion G, Latin, in the form of a hitch; Gamma, Greek, in the form of a hitch.

square; Ghimel, Hebraic, evoking "The Great Triad" Here we still quote René Guénon: "The truth is that the letter G can have more than one origin, just as, incontestably, it has more than one meaning; and does Freemasonry, in itself, have a unique origin, or has it not, since the Middle Ages, gathered together the heritage of multiple previous organisations? We are sure that Jean-Pierre Berger would have agreed with us in leaving the last word to this great voice.

¹⁷⁰*Studies on Freemasonry and the Companognage*, t. I, pg. 208.

CAPÍTULO VIII

LIGHT ON FREEMASONRY OF THE OLDEN DAYS

Oral Tradition is very important in Freemasonry, to the extent that all written documents, and especially rituals, printed and even manuscripts, can only be considered as "aids to memory". However, the evolution of the world in which the Masonic Order is obliged to live has become such that the memorising faculties of the majority of Masons have been declining, making it necessary to have a resource consisting of the "memory aids" of which we have just spoken.

The oldest of these documents that we can possess are the so-called Old Charges; it is, in fact, only in England that a considerable number have been discovered, although most of them were burnt in the fire at St. Paul's Lodge in London. In France, no such document is to be found, and Guenon, when questioned on the subject, thought that French Freemasonry had remained oral, much longer than its English sister. A truly curious thing is that this privilege, from which the Order seems to have benefited in France, eventually turned against it. Indeed, it is beyond Manche that the traces of the ancient Masonic Lodges were first recorded in writing, and that they have been able to reach us, in spite of the auto de fe of 1720, also providing indisputable proof of the highly spiritual character of the French Freemasons of the olden days.

The oldest of the Old Charges is the Regius Manuscript, which dates back to the 14th century. Most of these texts are much more recent, but Guénon pointed out that each of them is offered as a copy of an earlier text, although we can have no doubt about the authenticity of the Tradition, of which it is the "vehicle".

We propose to examine one of the last of the Old Charges, and at the same time the longest of them all: the Dumfries Manuscript No. 4, probably written in 1710, that is to say, on the eve of the "speculative" mutation of Freemasonry. We shall add to this examination that of a famous text in English Masonry: the *Masonry dissected*, by Samuel Prichard. It is not an Old Charge; on the contrary, it is the work of an anti-Mason, published in 1730, but which, of general scope, contains a good number of precious reviews, for the knowledge of the years that followed the "revolution" brought about by Anderson. For the study of these two texts, we shall use the translation published by Jean-Pierre Berger in *The Symbolism of January-March 1969*.

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Dumfries Manuscript No. 4, discovered in 1891, appears to have belonged to the old Dumfries Lodge in Scotland. It contains a version of the "Legend of the Craft" (with the "Oath of Nemrod"), the ritual questions and answers, and finally the coat of arms of the Order, which are said to date back to the time of the martyrdom of St. Alban. After M. Berger, it is the longest of the documents of this type currently known. It is also one of the most recent, since it was written on the eve of the events of 1717. It is, in short, the one "whose specifically Christian outlook is the most pronounced", and it is "the only one which mentions the obligation to belong to the Holy Catholic Church".

M. Berger often gives very judicious indications. Speaking of the three sons of Lamech: Jabel, Jubal and Tubalcaïn, he teaches us that, after Cooke's Manuscript (beginning of the 15th century) Jabel was the Architect of Caïn (his ancestor in the sixth generation), in the construction of the city of Henoch. The author notes the presence of the root JBL in the names Jabel and Jubal, and also in the "word of passage" Shibboleth. He recalls that this root, which is the root of the word jubilee, evokes an idea of "return to the Beginning" ¹⁷¹. This is interesting; but, properly understood, what is essential in the word Shibboleth, is its connection with the "passage of the waters".

Moreover, M. Berger thinks he sees a contradiction between Guénon's assertion that "the first stone must be placed in the North-East corner of the building" and the location assigned to this stone by Dumfries No. 4: the South-East corner. And he adds: "René Guénon seems to have been inspired for this, as on other occasions, by what Stretton had hinted at, in his correspondence with J. Yaker, regarding operative Freemasonry, to which he belonged". We can assure M. Berger that Guénon, although he had shown great interest in the documentation of Cl. E. Stretton and his school, also knew its limits and had pointed them out on some occasions. Of all the "taking possession of the North-East corner of the Lodge", it constitutes, today, the last stage of the initiation of the Apprentice degree.

Another Thing. We have alluded in the preceding work ¹⁷² to the question of Hiram-Amon. In most of the ancient documents, the building of the temple is not attributed to Hiram, but to a certain Amon. However, in Dumfries no. 4, it is not a question of Amon, but of Hiram, son of the Widow, and this attribution is confirmed with some insistence.

The difficulty that seems to result from the contradiction between the generality of the Old Charges and Dumfries No. 4 is confirmed by one of the final questions of the latter document: "How was the Temple built? _ By Solomon and Hiram _ It was Hiram who was sent from Egypt. He was the son of a widow, etc. ". But, according to the Bible, Hiram-Abif was not sent from Egypt, but from Tyre by King Hiram, in these terms: "I am sending you a wise and skilful man, Hiram-Abi, the son of a woman of the tribe of Dan and of a father of Tyre (II Paralipomenes, II, 12). It will be agreed that such a divergence from the sacred text cannot be without significance.

¹⁷¹Let us note, in passing, that Fabre d'Olivet, in his *Tongue Hebraïque Réstituée*, has noted that the consonants BL, in a language which has nothing sacred about it, such as French, can evoke an idea of roundness and, by extension, of circular movement. Let us cite the words balle (ball), bille (small ball, marble), bol (bowl), bulle (bubble), boule (ball), and also bal (dance) and even belle (beautiful).

¹⁷²Cf. René Guénon and the *Destinies of Frac-Masonry*.

Moreover, the importance given to Egypt in the "Legend of the Craft" cannot fail to shock those who read it without a preconceived idea. The "black land", which was the cradle of hermeticism, is always presented in this text, and, notably, on the occasion of two little-known anachronisms.

The first is the one to which Euclid, the disciple of Abraham, who as the father of the believers resided in Egypt in circumstances narrated in the Bible (Genesis XII, 10-20), sees Sarah welcomed by Pharaoh; this story, which is repeated later with Abimelech, king of Gerare, is evidently of a symbolic nature¹⁷³. The second anachronism is even more surprising. It concerns the mysterious Naymus Grecus "who had built the Temple of Solomon", and who had introduced Freemasonry into France under the protection of Charles Martel.

The commentators have been so much occupied with this singular legend, and their erudition has been subjected to such tests, that we prefer to omit to propose an interpretation. This offers the opportunity of referring to a note by M. Berger, which shows us that Naymus Grecus (Minus Greenatus in the Dumfries) is also designated as Mammongretus, MemonGretus, Mamon Gretus, Memongretus¹⁷⁴. Let us now consider: _ that Hermeticism constitutes the essence of Freemasonry (cf. the similarity between the names Hermes and Hiram); _ that Mammon, Memon, Mamon and Naymus, may be deformations of the word Amon (or Aymon), the name of the Architect of the Temple, which is not different from "this Hiram who was sent out of Egypt"; and, finally, that Charles Martel "personifies" the "encounter" of the French monarchy, the first-born daughter of Western Christianity, with the Islamic world; A "violent" encounter at first, but which, under the little son of the mayor of the palace of Austrasie, was to give rise to an alliance between the caliph Haroun-al-Rachid (Aaron the Just), with the "great and peaceful emperor of the Romans", to whom the *Abbasid* sovereign was soon to send a spectacular embassy, the "keys of the Holy Sepulchre".

We can therefore ask ourselves whether this implausible story of the relations of Naymus Grecus, builder of the Temple, with Charles Martel, is not high symbolism, designed to violate and reveal, at the same time, a "transmission", capital for the Masonic Order, and of which René Guénon spoke in *Appreciations on Initiation* cp. XLI): Hermeticism is a tradition of Egyptian origin, which took on a Greek form, and which was transmitted to the Christian world through the Arabs.

On the other hand, it is useless to underline the relations of all this with the mysteries of the "Holy Empire". - But let us now turn to another subject. With regard to the question: "Where is the Lodge of St. John?", the author studies the answers given, which speak of a dog, a Rooster, the top of a mountain, and sometimes the valley of Jehoshaphat. M. Berger has seen clearly "that it is an ancient operative formula" and we will add that it is related to a symbolism of Christian esotericism, very close to that of Dante. The valley of Jehoshaphat is the traditional place of the Last Judgement, where the Lodge of St. John must find its place in accordance with the

¹⁷³This question is dealt with in chapter XII ["*Euclid, disciple of Abraham*"] of our previous work.

¹⁷⁴Non-biblical proper names are often altered in the *Old Charges*. We know the famous examples of Pythagoras transformed into "Peter Gower" and the Phoenicians identified to the *Venitiens*.

Christ's words to Peter about John: "If I want him to remain until I come, what about you?" Correlatively, the "top of a mountain" corresponds to the earthly Paradise, which touches the sphere of the moon, and from which all initiation proceeds. The dog alludes to secrecy ("Do not throw holy things to the dogs"), and the cockerel to silence, because this bird had reproached Saint Peter for not having earned his silence in the face of the accusations of Caïphe's servant. Moreover, astrologically, the cockerel is solar and the dog is lunar (cf. the dogs of Diana the huntress, the black and white dogs of the tarot that "bark at the moon", etc...).

The correct formula (the debut of which has been preserved in England and America) seems to be as follows: On the highest of the mountains, and in the deepest of the valleys, which is the valley of Jehoshaphat, and in every secret and quiet place, where no dog barketh, nor cockcrow shall be heard".

We will point out the extraordinary answer concerning the long length of the cable- tow: "It is as long as the distance between my navel and my shortest hairs". And when asked: "What is the reason?", he replies: "Because all the secrets lie here". Considering the many speculations on this cable-tow issue as "very superficial", M. Berger wants a "more technical" explanation. It is indeed a constructive technique, but a technique with the characteristics of a spiritual construction. The navel, symbol of the centre (and through which the symbol of recognition of mastery passes) is the "place" of the third of the seven "subtle centres" of the human being (through which the light rises), the first two (sacral region and Sub-ombilical region) being "covered" by the Masonic apron; and the binding of this apron is originally effected by a "knot" situated precisely above the navel, a knot, the ends of which are still attached, even today, to aprons of the British model. As for the shorter hairs, they are related to the upper fontanel and the capillary vortex, the "spiral" nature of which is visible in the freshly cut hair of children. And indeed, "all the secrets lie here", i.e. they are "in dreams as long as initiation remains only virtual, awaiting the "nameless" occasions, offered by Freemasonry, for the awakening of possibilities of a higher order.

The formula so perfectly preserved by Dumfries - like an intact jewel among so many other formulas that have been altered, mutilated or have become incomprehensible - throws an unexpected light on the "operations" practised by the Masons of the "old days", and irresistibly evokes the techniques of this other "Royal Art", which is Râja-Yoga. It is understandable, then, why Guénon once echoed Armand Bédarride's assertion: "Masonic philosophy is more Eastern than Western". And Guénon added: "This is true, but how many today understand it" (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. I, pg. 190). Nearly forty years have passed and the situation is any better? The formulas that have come down to us from the depths of the ages, if not from the "highest of the mountains", are forgotten or ignored, unnoticed or misunderstood. And we know how the elders represented the hair of the goddess "Occasion". But we do not have the right to lose courage, for the Lodge of St. John is held "in the deepest of valleys", that is to say, it must last until the end of this cycle. There is, in Freemasonry, a "solidity" (or, to use the symbolism of the Lodge of Table, a "health") which, for us, is linked to this conservative role recognised by René Guénon.

The Guenonian Masonic work (which is not separable from his total Work), will undoubtedly bear fruit that "will go beyond the promise of flowers". But it is truly unexpected to find, in one of the most recent Old Charges, such teachings on the cable-tow; teachings which constitute, without any doubt, what the Dumfreis, in question 15 of his catechism, designates as the "royal secret".

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Let us now examine the famous *Masonry dissected* by Samuel Prichard. Published in 1730, it had a prodigious success: the first three editions sold out in 11 days, a 3-year reprint for a century, etc... The author was therefore an anti-Mason, as is shown - in addition to certain incomprehensible *Nota Bene* - by the "signature" of the recitation of the letter "G" (which we shall return to) and also by a laudatory mention of the *Gornogons*. This word, derived from "Gog and Magog", is written by Prichard *Gorgomons*, and possibly alludes to the "Gorgons", sisters of Medusa, who, like her, petrified those who looked at them, and were only defeated by the mirror given by Minerva to Perseus, who was thus able to combat them by looking at them from behind without any danger; _ after which he took refuge in the single eye of the three *Grees*, thus gaining access to the "eternal present".

Prichard gives the Gorgomons as older than the Masons, i.e. as descendants of the "Pre-Adamites" _ Whatever the origins of the *Masonic dissected*, the texts reproduced in this Work are generally regarded as authentic, and offer no doubt that Masons should use them as a "memory-aid" in order to learn the long and complicated instructions of the time.

The Work begins in a summary of the "traditional history" of the Order, mentioning the principal stages of the "Royal Craft", with the anachronisms of which we have before spoken, and which are evidently intended to "mislead" profane-minded Masons, and to "awaken" the attention of those who believe neither in the ignorance nor in the stupidity of the "Brethren of the olden days". Let us recall these stages: the Tower of Babel, Egypt and Euclid, the Temple of Solomon, *Mamon Grecus* (Naymus Grecus) and *Carolus Marcil* (Charles Martel), King *Athelstone* (Athelstan). In the ritual domain, we will dwell on certain points. M. Berger, with regard to the symbols of the Mastership, did not want to translate *diamond* by "diamond"; we think he was being prudent, because some of the formulas that follow this mention of *diamond* ("Mac-Bénah will set you free", "what you desire will be shown to you", "the keys of all the lodges are in my possession") show that it is the diamond with its multiple meanings, among which we can see: access to the centre, the completion of the work, the arrival of the light at the third eye, etc.... all of these being related to "the power of the keys", "possession of the world" and "liberation".

Let us cite yet another point where the translator's interpretation does not seem to us to have gone very far. Hiram-Abif was buried in the Holy of Holies; and M. Berger remarks: "This cannot be understood literally, it being evident that the corpse of Hiram would have become impure in the Holy of Holies". If this view were adequate, it would be necessary to say also why the "transcribers of the legend of Hiram", who knew perfectly well the prohibitions of the Mosaic law, did not allow themselves to be detained by them. Let us first point out that the body of Hiram-Abif cannot be considered as an ordinary corpse. The son of the Widow, he is the "master of the mysteries", the "master of the Word", by the death of whom the word was lost and had to be replaced by "substitute words". He is also the "martyr" of the Masonic secret, and is also identified with the very essence of Freemasonry. His body is fully charged with spiritual influences (it was discovered because, "in the darkness", a light emanated from him"). There can be no better resting place for him than the Holy of Holies, for, in reality, there is no corpse, but a "relic". It is known that, in principle, a sacred building requires a human sacrifice (cf. The murder of Remus by Romulus). Even today, where the cult of relics (with its "invention" and "transfers") has come to almost nothing, a church could not be consecrated without relics (and preferably relics of martyrs) being deposited under the altar. We can therefore say that ordinary Freemasonry, that of the "blues" (of which the Temple of Solomon is the symbol) is "founded" on the body (or on the martyrdom) of Hiram-Abif, just as "Templar" Freemasonry is founded on the torture of Jacques de Molay. Finally, there is one more thing. Anyone who has reached the centre, like Hiram, is no longer subject to the limitations and prohibitions (except in an "exemplary" way) of a particular Tradition. This, in relation to one of the aspects of the symbolism of the acacia, which we cannot dream of dealing with here.

One of the most curious particularities of the "instructions" published by Prichard is the occasional use of versified language, especially in the form of a quatrain. This reminded us of the operative quatrain preserved by Franz Rziha⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ and, above all, of the *sixains* commenting on the engravings of the *Atlante fugitive*, one of the most important Hermetic texts.

We will take some examples of the Masonic use of quatrains, in the last part of the instruction of the second degree, called "recitation of the letter G".

Questioned as to the meaning of the letter G, the examinee replies that it represents "the Great Architect of the Universe, He who was raised upon the pinnacle of the Temple"; but - this clearly shows that there is no need to stop here - the examiner insists: "Can you recite the letter G?", the examinee replies: "I will endeavour". He then recites the following quatrain: "In the middle of Solomon's Temple there is a G - a beautiful letter to behold and to read, for everyone; but its understanding is only granted to a very few, as to what the letter G means". Then comes an extremely complicated dialogue, in quatrains or isolated verses, sometimes difficult to understand, where it is a question of science, of "perfect sight", of "health", of a change of name, of "a stanza of noble structure", etc... Towards the end of this enigmatic conversation, comes the quatrain: "By letters, four and, by science, five - this G remains - Perfect in art and, just, in proportions: -Friend, you have your answer", which Guénon has commented on in his chapter XVII of *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*.

¹⁷⁵Franz Rziha was an Austrian architect who published in 1883 a work on the *Bauhütte*, i.e. the German stone carvers of the Middle Ages. This work has, as sources, about twenty "corporate regulations", the oldest being that of Trèves, which dates back to 1397, i.e. 7 years after the date attributed to the English *Regius Manuscript*. It seems that this period at the end of the 14th century constitutes (as far as Freemasonry is concerned) one of those "barriers" of which René Guénon spoke, and beyond which the "official" history, based on written documents, would not be able to go back. Rziha, let it be said in passing, often reminds us that the craftsmen of the Middle Ages, however Christian they may have been, and even, in general, of extreme fervour in the "faith", were nevertheless the legitimate successors of the *Colegia Fabrorum* of ancient Rome, and to whom they were linked by a continuous filiation. The Bauhütten (Builders' Lodges) must have been dependent on a Grand Lodge (*Haupt-hütte*) based in Strasbourg, where a regulation or "charter" was promulgated in 1459, sometimes confused in parallel with the colony charter. The rituals of the Bauhütte would have had many similarities with those of present-day Freemasonry. For example: the two columns, the three pillars, the festooned tassel, the position of the Venerable in the East, the distinction of the three degrees, the opening of the Labours with three strokes of the mallet, the three journeys of the first degree, the ritual marches, the "genuflection to the square" (an attitude which has an obvious connection with swastika), the manner of drinking, saluting, ritual thanksgiving, etc.... The author also speaks of the "operative marks", of which he reproduces numerous examples, ranging from the sober lines of Greek art to the complications of the Rococo style; a mark was given to the newly raised Companion; and he thinks it appropriate to recall that, today, *Mark Masonry* is considered to be an *appendage* to the Companion degree. The German operatives seem to attach great importance to three figures: the triangle, the square and the circle; and they particularly honoured the Four Crowned Saints. Rziha, too, quotes a quatrain, which he says was communicated to him by the "architect of the cathedral (doubtless the cathedral of Saint-Etienne, Vienna) which is this: "A point suggesting a circle, _ which is in the square or in the triangle; if you know it, so much the better! If not, all is vain". We find here the three figures dear to the operatives; and we must remember that, in certain Hermetic texts, such as Michel Maier's *Atlante fugitive*, the triangle is observed as an intermediate phase of the "circulation of the square", an inverse and complementary operation to the squaring of the circle. Moreover, the "central point of the circle" is an important symbol in English-language Freemasonry; this circle is completed by two parallel tangents, said to represent the two St. Johns. Finally, the point of the quatrain quoted by Rziha, without the knowledge of which "all is vain", is none other than the "sensitive point", which exists in every cathedral built "according to the rules of the Craft". It is also the same as the "vital knot", which unites the various parts of the "human compound". Guénon, in the chapter "Cologne or Strasbourg?", which begins the *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*, recalled the relationship of this knot with the "power of the keys", the Hermetic "solution" and the symbolism of Janus. He also pointed out the relationship between the "Gordian knot", cut by Alexander's sword - an act that brought him the "empire of Asia". This name for the East would be completed three centuries later by Caesar, who, having subdued Gaul and led his legions into Germania, Britain, Spain and North Africa, would also "cover" all the countries which, after the "sacrificial" death of the conqueror, would form the western part of the Roman Empire. There is in Caesar's life an event whose "violent" symbolism corresponds to Alexander's gesture of using his sword to cut the Gordian knot; it is a "crossing of the waters", the crossing of the Rubicon (the red river), where some have seen the equivalence for Rome of what was the crossing of the Red Sea for the Jewish people and the "bleeding" passion of Christ for the Christian people.

The conclusion of this "story" is a stanza of five verses; verses 1, 3 and 5 are spoken by the examiner, verses 2 and 4 by the examinee. Here is the stanza: "God's health be upon this assembly, which is ours; _And all the most Worshipful Brethren and Companions - Of the Holy and Respectable Lodge of St. John - from whence I come - Greet you, greet you, greet you, greet you, 3 times most warmly, and desire to know your name." To this question, Prichard gave a grotesque answer: "Tiamathée Ridicule" (Timothy *Ridicule?*). We must see here "the mark of the devil", who, after having "*carried the stone*" (*reached the stone?*), takes revenge as best he can.

The translator has seen, perfectly, the existing relations, in the text under study, between the word "health" and the secret. Regarding the formula: "I greet you. -I hide it" (the French Freemasons would say: "I cover it"), the translator goes back to one of his earlier writings, where he points out, in particular, the indistinct use in various ancient texts of the verbs *to hele* (to hide, to conceal), *to heal* (to cure, to heal) and *to hail* (to greet). He concludes: "it would be extremely interesting to be able to restore to this expression its primitive form and meaning, as it is very likely to be a very ancient formula of operative Freemasonry". Without at all pretending to elucidate a problem concerning the Masonic "secret", which is essentially incommunicable, we would like to give some indications that could clarify, to a certain extent, the observations made by M. Berger. In his youth, René Guénon had remarked that the "fissured" walls of a Parisian Masonic Temple had been consolidated by three metallic armours in the shape of an S. He thought that this fact did not happen by chance, but he had to revise the ancient formula S.S.S., which headed all the Masonic plates. It was translated as "Wisdom, Science, Health", or even "Health, Silence, Sanctity" (equivalent to *to hail, to hele, to heal*), but, more ordinarily, as "Thrice Health". This last formula also ended speeches in Lodge, before the French Freemasons considered it appropriate to replace it with the expression "I have said", no doubt borrowed from the "redskins" romances that enraptured their childhood. Now, in the Scottish 21st degree ("Knight of the Sun, or Prince Adept"), the fundamental symbol is a Delta with an S at each of its angles, _ and Vuillaume (*Masonic Manual*, pg. 190, note 1), reminds us that the three S's are three deformed *iods*. The *iod*, representing a "germ", is the link between the Masonic "health" and the Masonic "secret". But we must limit ourselves, and we will remember only: the "salutes" or ritual "honours" (in English *healths*) of Table Masonry, salutes in which the "inferiors" must be "covered"; -the Greek word *Ygieia* (health) of which the Pythagoreans, wrote each of the five letters (*ei* was counted as a single letter), on each of the branches of the Pentalfa (their sign of recognition); _ and, above all, the "sign" of the faithful of Love, called, indifferently, *saluto* (salute) or, la *salute* (health), and of which, M. Gilbert of Corsica, recalled that "the meaning is not clear". Needless to say, these latter salutations must be related to the salutations which Beatrice had addressed to Dante, and which decided his fate.

Other interesting formulae are given concerning the secrets of Freemasonry, which - the examinee must answer - are kept "in my left breast", i.e. "in my heart". We reach these secrets thanks to a key which, in the subsequent rituals, becomes both "a hanging tongue" and "a tongue of good repute, which never consents to speak ill of a Brother, whether he be present or absent". In *Masonry dissected*, the key is depicted as hanging from a *tow-line*, which M. Berger has linked to the *cable-tow*, and whose length is "9 inches or a span". Nine *inches* is 22.86 cm. The *span* is a measure represented by the distance between the thumb and the little finger, when the hand is fully extended (i.e. with the fingers open, which are some of the most important signs in Freemasonry, such as the "sign of horror" and the "Great Royal Sign"). The span represents 22 to 24 cm, which is 9 inches. In any case, it can be verified in any person, the length of the span is exactly equal to the length between the "root" of the tongue and the tip of the head. In other words, the *tow-line*, from which the "key of the heart" hangs, is the part of the "coronary artery" (*cable-tow*) that runs from *Vishuddha* to *Brahma-randhra*.

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We now come to the examination of the Work: *Initiation two hundred Years ago*, published in *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum Transactions*, and translated by M. Berger.

This work is presented in the form of a compilation of teachings taken from various English works of the second half of the 18th century; and the most cited in England are three "divulgations", possibly anti-Masonic, but in any case, used, at the time, practically

as "aide-memoire": *Three distinct Knocks*, relating the uses of the "Ancients"; *Jachin and Boaz*, relating the uses of the "Moderns"; and *The Grand Master Key*, relating the rituals of both.

The most important feature of M. Harvey's article is the comparison that can be drawn between the rituals of the two rival Grand Lodges, which were to unite in 1813 to form the United Grand Lodge of England. The Moderns had adopted (it would seem by the years 1730-1789) inverted signs. They ignored the Officers called Deacons (who, among the Ancients, came immediately after the Wardens and wore as their badge a long black rod of "seven feet"). In the Moderns, the two Watchers were placed in the West. In the initiations, "the Moderns" reversed left and right, and were less conscientious than their rivals, as far as the rites were concerned, notably as far as the "detachment of metals" was concerned. The Bible, always as a support for the compass and the square, "was open in the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John, for the Moderns, and, for the Ancients, in the second Epistle of St. Peter". And we think it would be appropriate to dwell on this last consideration.

That the Ancients, who are known to be suspiciously faithful to the usages of the Operatives, should have opened the Bible, in their Lodges, in a text of St. Peter rather than in a Johannine text, is surprising to French Masons, and not only to French Masons. Mackey, in the six large pages of biblical references to Masonic use at the end of the *Encyclopaedia*, does not cite the Second Epistle of St. Peter, where there is no allusion that could be interpreted Masonically. Why then do the Ancients pay such honour to this short letter, to the point - as Mackey tells us - of using its principles for the *prayer* pronounced to the recipient, throughout the initiation rites? We are in the presence of an enigma. Let us try to find the key in the written text itself.

After certain moral and disciplinary recommendations, usual in apostolic writings, the Epistle suddenly takes on an eschatological character, and deals essentially with the second coming of Christ, enumerating some of the main features: the alternation of the destruction of the world by water and by fire; the importance of the "millennium" ("A thousand years are as one day in the sight of the Lord"); the "day of God" when, says the Apostle twice, "the heavens will pass away with a noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fervour". This last expression recalls (especially if one considers that, in Lodge, the Bible - the Word of God - is always serving as a support for the compass, symbol of Heaven, and the square, symbol of the Earth) the conclusion of Christ's prophecy about the end of the world: "Heaven and Earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away".

At the end of the Epistle, the Prince of the Apostles recalls the teachings of the other "pillar of the Church": "Our beloved brother Paul has written to you on these matters in the wisdom given to him". The eschatological Epistle of St. Paul is the second of the Thessalonians. The "vessel of election" draws a striking portrait of the "man of lawlessness", the son of perdition, the adversary who revolts against all those who bear the name of God and who worship him" (This precision is important; it proves that the Antichrist will not revolt against a particular religion, but against all authentic traditions, without exception). He will seduce the nations led astray by a "faculty of illusion", which has been sent to them by God Himself (this indication may answer, in part, the "question" mentioned by Guénon at the end of *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*). And St. Paul, evoking an oral teaching, no doubt secret, which must go back to Christ himself, adds: "And now you know well what hinders him (the Antichrist), so that he will not appear except in his own time". This passage is considered by today's theologians to be one of the most difficult passages in the Bible. But the ancient Church Fathers commonly thought that the obstacle to the coming of the Antichrist was the Roman Empire, the last of the great monarchies dealt with in Daniel's prophecy concerning the "transfer of empires". The Roman Empire, with the triumph of Christianity, became the Holy Empire. We see that we have not moved away from Freemasonry, except in appearance. It is true that present-day Freemasons are not at all concerned with the traditional "destinies" of their Order, but they do, however, allude to and repeat the ritual formulas without taking the necessary care. It is, therefore, considerations of this order that René Guénon was thinking of when, correcting an assertion by Albert Lantoiné, he considered the possibility for Freemasonry to come to the aid of religions "in a period of almost complete spiritual obscurity", and this in "a very different way from that" advocated by the author of the Letter to the Sovereign Pontiff, "which, moreover, being less outwardly apparent, should not, however, be more efficacious".

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We will end with a vote on the studies of Jean Pierre Berger. It would be deplorable if works of this value did not go beyond the narrow circle of "specialists". We think that the Lodges - at least those who take Masonry seriously - could, from now on, use these works to give their members "instructions" worthy of the Order and rich in symbols, which constitute incomparable supports for meditation.

CHAPTER IX

THE MASONIC HANDBOOK OF VUILLAUME *.

"There would certainly be much to say about the "conservative" role of Freemasonry and the possibility given to it, to a certain extent, to make up for the absence of initiations of another order in the Western world today".

René Guénon

Alongside so many works on Freemasonry, which at least have the merit of elucidating certain obscure points in the history of the Order and of giving its members a clearer awareness of the truly universal character of the organisation of which they are a part, we would like to draw attention to a reprint, the preface to which has the merit of addressing a question which directly reveals the inner and "sacred" aspect of the Royal Craft¹⁷⁶. We would like to speak of Vuillaume's Masonic Manual, which Jean Tourniac prefaced¹⁷⁷.

It was a happy idea to reprint the *Masonic Manual* after such a long wait. It includes, for each of the degrees of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the French Rite, the Rite of Misraïm and the Rite of Adoption, elements of the Covering, i.e. the "modes of recognition"¹⁷⁸; and, in addition, the decoration of the workshops, the titles of the Officers, the description of the aprons, jewels and other ornaments, the "batteries", the "marches", the ritual "ages", the "hours of work", the "uses of the table", etc.... The author, Claude-André Vuillaume⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ of whom this treatise constitutes his "masterpiece", has taken great care to give the sacred words, words of passage, "covered words", "big words", cries, acclamations and other manifestations of oral symbolism, their original purity, by taking advantage of the

**This text is taken from that published in the magazine Renacimiento Tradicional, no. 29, January 1977 (A different version was also published in the magazine Estudios Tradicionales no. 455, January-February-March 1977, under the title: Notas de Simbología masónica)].*

¹⁷⁶ By way of consequence, this preface, not allowing it to be "limited" to a consideration of the past and the present, casts

a glimpse into the "symbolically foreseeable" future of Freemasonry.

¹⁷⁷*Masonic Manual or Covering of the various rites of Freemasonry practised in France.* By a veteran of Freemasonry. Reproduction of the last edition (1830). Preface by Jean Tourniac (Collection "History and Tradition", Dervy-Livres, Paris).

¹⁷⁸ In his preface, Jean Tourniac recalls the ritual dialogue: "In what is it recognised that you are a Freemason? - In my signs,

touches and the sacred word, as well as the description of my Lodge and the circumstances of my reception, faithfully demonstrated. The first three "modes" bring into action the three senses "agents of knowledge" (Sight, Touch and Hearing); the description of the Lodge has a particular link with space, and the relationship of the circumstances of reception with time.

¹⁷⁹The teachings on the Masonic career of this Brother were given to Jean Tourniac by Jean Bosu, a contributor to the journal *Rennaissance Traditionnelle*.

knowledge of the Hebrew language. He frequently denounces misinterpretations and, for example, argues that the letters SSS in the 28th degree Lodge chart should in fact be three *iods*. There are rare occasions when his sagacity can be mistaken, for example, when he derives the Scottish acclamation from Arabic, when it is an alteration of Hebrew words, meaning "My Strength!"¹⁸⁰. On the other hand, his ignorance of English Freemasonry forces him to give up the search for the meaning of *Jabulum*, the "first covered word" of the 14th degree (Grand Scotsman of the sacred vault of James VI), which also appears in the 13th degree (Royal Ark) and in the 17th (Knight of the East and West). In fact, *Jabulum* is the contraction of *Jah-Bel-On*, essential words in the Holy Royal Ark, a Masonic body which could be close to the denomination of the Scottish 14th degree, as a result of the equivalences between the words "Holy" and "Sacred", "Ark" and "Vault", "Royal" and "James VI".

We would point out in this connection that of the 32 plates which illustrate the *Manual*, 4 are devoted to the 14th degree only: they reproduce the four vertical faces of the cubic stone particular to this degree. This stone contains a large number of symbols: the key of letters, the key of numbers, the geometric figures

-The stone contains the first three powers of the first odd numbers, possibly in connection with the squaring of the circle, the first three powers of the first odd numbers, and a hundred letters, which follow an apparently incoherent order. Guénon, in his correspondence, has sometimes alluded to enigmas emanating from this stone which, we believe, have some connection with the "science of letters". He would certainly have spoken in the work he planned to write on the alphabet and which the haste of events made him defer in favour of publications directly inspired by the acceleration of this evolution.

Let us return to Vuillaume's *Handbook*. This author's "Essay on Freemasonry" is preceded by the preface written by Jean Tourniac for the current reprint. Comparing these two texts, published 150 years apart, the difference in their "intellectual density" is striking. Vuillaume, at the beginning of the 19th century, which was a truly lamentable period for Freemasonry and, above all, for French Freemasonry, could not avoid falling into the common errors of his time regarding the "aims of initiation". When, for example, in order to justify the institution of Adoption Masonry, he wrote that "women wanted the Mysteries" in order to... practise charity, he gave the measure of the general Masonic misunderstanding, all the while refusing to be discourteous to women, to the Mysteries and to Charity.

It is enough to read Jean Tourniac's preface to see to what extent, thanks to Guénon's symbolic and masonic work, certain notions have been, so to speak, "purified" and certain enigmas deciphered. Let us cite, for example, the question of secrecy, on which Vuillaume has only very confused, not to say "desacralising" ideas. But we will dwell more particularly on two points that Jean Tourniac deals with at some length: the lunar-solar calendar and the existence of the high degrees.

¹⁸⁰ It is Jules Boucher who, in *The Masonic Symbolism*, has given the real explanation of the Scottish acclamation. His work, which appeared in 1948, contains, in addition to interesting points of view, a good deal of fantasy.

He points out that the Manual is preceded by a "Table of divine names related to 21 of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet", and that it is followed by a "lunar calendar, according to the system in use by the Jews". He has seen perfectly well that the choice of a lunar-solar calendar is related to a "sacred cosmology" in which the two great lights play a preponderant role¹⁸¹. Today's Freemasons could take advantage of Jean Tourniac's observation: "There is no Freemasonry without the intervention of a sacred temporal and spatial qualification". Masonic work must be carried out not only in a sacred space, but also in a sacred time. Such a "framing" could take place after the opening of the work, at the reading of the "traced plan"⁽¹⁸²⁾ and at the closing, at the announcement of the next meeting¹⁸³.

But what is most remarkable in Jean Tourniac's preface are the considerations regarding the distinction of Freemasonry from other Western initiatory organisations - dead or alive - that is to say the existence of high degrees. Whereas the Compagnonage and the Charbonnerie have always been content with two degrees, or at most three, it would be easy to cite, in Freemasonry, several hundred degrees. Even if several of them are no more than "transitional levels", there are several whose original character begs the question: Why such a proliferation in the Masonic Order, when there is nothing similar in the others?

Jean Tourniac proposes two answers to this question, the first of which is of "microcosmic" interest and concerns the initiatory "method", while the second is of "macrocosmic" interest and concerns doctrine⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ and more precisely the rules relating to the preservation of the "vestiges" of organisations of different Traditions

Here is the first of the answers, in the same terms as those expressed by Jean Tourniac:

"The high degrees make it possible to satisfy the various tendencies of the initiates. Thus a neophyte, endowed with a *Kshatrilla* nature¹⁸⁵, may well not feel "animated"¹⁸⁶ by

¹⁸¹The agreement - one might even say, the betrothal - between the Sun and the Moon, is a theme of prime importance in Hermeticism, as may be seen, for example, in *The Rosary of the Philosophers*; it is connected with the realisation of the Rebis. The two lights figure in the traditional representations of Christ on the cross; we find them also in the Lodge Tableau of the first two degrees, and English Masonry attaches great importance to the Biblical expression: "Sun, stand thou over Gibeon, and thou, Moon, over the valley of Ahialon" (Joshua, X, 12). Let us remember that, in the French Rite, "the name of the Masters is Gabaon". There would be some curious points to note about the calendars of the three "Abrahamic" traditions: that of the Jews is lunar-solar, that of the Christians is solar, and that of the Muslims is lunar.

¹⁸²The "Books of Architecture" of certain ancient Lodges contain formulas such as the following: "In the East of a very bright, very strong and very regular place, where Work and Unity lie, where Silence, Harmony and Peace reign, the year of True Light ... on ...day of the month of ..., and in profane style on ..., the Brethren of the respectable Lodge of St. John, constituted under No. ... and with the distinctive title of ..., having assembled at the geometrical point known only to the sons of Light, the works having been opened at high noon, etc...". This text, in which each term could give rise to lengthy developments, clearly shows the intention to place the ritual work in a sacred framework.

¹⁸³In certain workshops touched by René Guénon's teachings, after the announcement of the closure of the workshops, the works, the Second Warden added these words: "And they shall be closed until the ... day of the month of ..., in the year of the true Light, and in profane style, on ..., except in case of emergency, etc...". Usage taken from English rituals.

¹⁸⁴Very often the doctrine is symbolised by the cup and the method by the sword. In Mongolian Buddhism and Tibetan, these attributes are replaced by the bell and the *vajra*, where each *lama* must never be separated.¹⁸⁵ Jean Tourniac alludes here, for ease of reference, to the Hindu theory of the four castes, which, moreover, cannot be considered totally assimilable to the "classes" of the modern West.

the blue degrees of Freemasonry, based on craft initiation. Also in the subsequent accession to the knightly degrees, it will place him in a favourable position to receive the portion of spiritual influence, proper to knightly initiation, which has been transmitted to Freemasonry - by mysterious means to which René Guénon has alluded in terms of "coverings" - making it the beneficiary of the fruits inherent in craft initiation¹⁸⁷."

Let us now turn to the "macrocosmic" answer. Referring to an article by Jean Norbua¹⁸⁸, Jean Tourniac associates the overcrowding of symbols in the Masonic Order with what Frabré d'Olivet called the "overcrowding of species" in Noah's Ark. In this connection, he praises Vuillaume for having evoked the various "inheritances" that Freemasonry has received over the centuries, of which he lists some of the main ones: Pythagoreanism, Hermeticism, the "initiatory background of original Christianity", the Templars. It seems to us that, with regard to these inheritances, a preliminary question must first of all be asked: why did they all end up in Freemasonry and not in other initiatory organisations? Let us try to develop this point.

The initiatory organisations, participants in the stability which is one of the attributes of the supreme Centre from which they come, are the possessors of a precious and indestructible "deposit", and therefore often symbolised by a pearl, a jewel or a treasure. When the external apparatus of one of these organisations, as a result of attacks from the profane world or for any other reason, is threatened with disappearance, its leaders, official or occult, must take the necessary steps so that at least a part of the deposit, of which they are the guardians, can be "saved", that is, preserved in so far as it can be passed on to another organisation and protected from any danger. Guénon could also hint that an initiatory organisation does not die out if it does not wish to do so.

By virtue of "traditional infallibility"¹⁹⁰, there can be no doubt that an initiatory organisation, on the point of death, receives, from the "spiritual influence" which assists it in solemn circumstances, an "inspiration" which enables it to "recognise", all at once, the Fraternity which is to receive and preserve the inheritance which is to be handed down to it. It is striking, and even impressive, that this Fraternity has always been, in the West, Freemasonry. Certainly, Guénon has underlined the profound symbolism of the tradition of the Templars and the Rosicrucian Hermeticists, finding

¹⁸⁶It is the animation of the "Subtle Centres" of the human being, which must be the fruit of initiatory rites.

¹⁸⁷The explanation formulated here by Jean Tourniac was presented to René Guénon after the publication in *Traditional Studies* of his article "Lost Word and Substituted Words", a text in which he deals with the quotation we have placed as an epigraph in the present article.

Genon replied that the explanation put to him was "just"; but, at the same time, he urged the search for "something else", and recalled, in this connection, the situation which Freemasonry holds exclusively in the West. It is Guénon's advice, at the origin of the "macrocosmic" explanation of which we are now going to speak. Let us recall that the article "The lost word and the substituted words" was inserted in *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*; the passage concerning the conservative function of our Order is to be found on page 40 of volume II.

¹⁸⁸Published in *Renacimiento Tradicional*, n° 17-18, January-April 1974, "Ensayo de definición de la peregrinación Tradicional".

¹⁸⁹The deposit may have been split up and passed on to several organisations, and possibly this was the case.

of Pythagoreanism, whose inheritance was not only passed on to the craft organisations. When we read that the author of the *Golden Verses*, after the destruction of the political regimes, which he established in the southern cities of Italy, let himself die in the sacred forest of Muses, we must understand, no doubt, that the "daughters of Memory" (who presided over the various genres of poetry), were then invested - in the person of traditional poets, whose "muses" they were - with a mission that allows the "chain of tradition" to avoid breaking "from Pythagoras to Virgil and from Virgil to Dante" in the land of Italy (cf. René Guénon, *The Esotericism of Dante*, pg. 16).

¹⁹⁰Is it necessary to recall that this infallibility is linked to a regular traditional function, and not to an individuality?

a refuge among the craft organisations¹⁹¹. But did not the Compagnonnage, by its essentially popular character, meet the requirements of a "conservative asylum" better than Freemasonry? And in this organisation, did not the body of carpenters dispute the "presence" of the body of Freemasons by reason of its primordial character¹⁹²? Here we come to the explanation of the privilege of Freemasonry. The earthly Paradise was a garden "planted with all manner of trees pleasant to the eye", and the heavenly Jerusalem will be a city made of precious stones. Christ, likewise, spends His childhood and youth in a carpenter's workshop: but in the last days of His mortal life, He does not separate Himself from the Temple⁽¹⁹³⁾ this Temple which, when destroyed, will be raised up in three days.

The wood used by carpenters has a particular relationship to the beginning of a cycle, and the stone of the Masons has the same relationship to the end. It is precisely the proximity to this end that causes the decadence, then the "crisis" of various initiatory organisations, and which leads them to seek a "refuge". It has been seen that this refuge should preferably be a craft organisation, and the laws of analogy demand that the symbolic activity of this organisation should be exercised on materials that are closer to escaping the cataclysm that will mark the end of the cycle. We know that the cataclysm is fire¹⁹⁴, and there is no need to look elsewhere for the reason for the singular privileges given to the Art of stone builders and the justification of the vigilant and fraternal interest to which Guénon has never ceased to testify.

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We think we have sufficiently explained - on the basis of the teachings of him whom Jean Tourniac calls "the renovator of sacred Science" - the "why" of the passage from the Western initiatory fraternities to Freemasonry. There is no reason to dwell at length on the "how" of this transition, which must have been greatly facilitated by the fact that a threatened traditional organisation "retains an effective existence as long as only one of its members remains alive"¹⁹⁵. But it would be vain to search in this matter for one of the "proofs" demanded by the historical science of the Moderns. Transmissions of this order are comparable to a death followed by a rebirth, or to a "dream-entry". In either case, it is a question of a real change of state which, as such, "can only be accomplished in darkness"⁽¹⁹⁶⁾.

¹⁹¹Cf. "The Popular Mask", in René Guénon, *Initiation and Spiritual Realisation*, pg. 221.

¹⁹²Cf. R. Guénon, *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonnage*, t. II, pp. 9-13.

¹⁹³*Luke*, XXI, 37.

¹⁹⁴It is rather curious that certain workshops, coming from the Grand Lodge of the "Ancients", have worked with the Bible open to the Second Epistle of St. Peter, which is the most explicit written text as to the nature of the final cataclysm: "In that day the heavens will pass away with a noise, and the elements will be burned up and dissolved, as will the earth with the work that is in it" (III,8). It is useless to recall the tradition of the two pillars built by Enoch, one to resist the water, the other to resist the fire: it was the absence of prophecy concerning the expected cataclysm that forced the Patriarch to take this double precaution. Even Western exotericism is well aware of this tradition. In the pre-conciliar liturgy, the office of the dead and the funeral mass ended with the responsory *Libera me*, where the following verse became a refrain: *Dum veneris judicare saeculum per ignem*.

⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ R. Guénon, *Appreciations on Initiation*, pg. 82.

⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ R. Guénon, *The Crisis of the Modern World*, p. 28.

CHAPTER X

RENAISSANCE OF TRADITIONAL SCIENCES?

Among the many reasons that led René Guénon to take an interest in Freemasonry, there is one that is rarely mentioned. He believed that the Masonic Order has close links with various traditional sciences, which, after having flourished in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, fell into decadence during the Renaissance, to disappear almost completely in our days. Moreover, in application of the rule: "when the gates of heaven are opened, the gates of hell are also opened", Guénon thought that, at the approach of the end of time, when the ephemeral triumph of the Adversary, "the enemy of all that bears the name of God"¹⁹⁷ was announced, the integral and eternal Truth must manifest itself in a visible form¹⁹⁸, and provoke, in some way, a certain emergence of the traditional sciences, which are as many applications of this Truth, to the contingent orders of knowledge.

In a period as dark as this end of the dark ages, the unmentionable falsehoods of Truth are accompanied by a multitude of other falsehoods of the traditional sciences⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ and one would not have to be very suspicious to discern the good grain which may be hidden among the luxuriant vegetation of the tares. It is possible to appreciate, at present, the updating of certain elements, which could constitute the starting points for a return to "traditional history"²⁰⁰, such as this science that gives

*This text has been published in the magazine *Renacimiento Tradicional* n° 35, July 1978].

¹⁹⁷ *Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*, II, 3.

¹⁹⁸ In the *Apocalypse* (XII, 1), this remanifestation of the eternal Wisdom and of the primordial Tradition, comes symbolised by the apparition of "the Woman clothed with the Sun, with the Moon under her feet and upon her head a crown of twelve stars". The details concerning the various episodes of this "apparition" are easy to interpret symbolically by anyone who has paid attention to the numerous "eschatological" annotations scattered throughout Guénon's Work. We know, moreover, that the *mulier amicta sole* has been compared by St. Bernard to the Virgin Mary. We find here a particularly remarkable application of a truth on which Guénon never ceased to insist: it is that the esoteric interpretation of a symbol or a myth (and we also remember that historical, geographical or other "facts" are also symbols) can never be in contradiction with an exoteric interpretation. In the apocalyptic episode of which we are speaking, the Woman symbolises universal Possibility, and the "child" that she brings into the world is the germ of the future cilia of our humanity. (In Albert Dürer's *Melancholy*, these two characters are represented by the great Angel and the little angel). In the specifically Christian interpretation, the Woman is the Virgin Mary who introduces Christ into the world as the "father of the age to come": *Jesus, pater futuri saeculi*. It can also be perceived that the appearance of the Woman of the *Apocalypse* immediately precedes the coming of the "Beast that arises from the abyss", a Beast that symbolises the arrival in the human world of the lowest possibilities of the universal Manifestation. The concomitance between these two appearances is of great importance, notably as regards the "attitude" to be observed by the "witnesses" of these great events.

¹⁹⁹ It is practically useless to offer details. The shoddy astrologers are flourished; it does not matter what *substitute* of A pretended Eastern religion can be sure of recruiting followers; and psychoanalysis sometimes provides a guarantee of scientific authenticity to the fantasies of the wildest imaginations.

²⁰⁰ We are thinking in particular of certain recent works on the Templars. The authors of these works do not have, normally, no concerns of a traditional order. But they have updated a remarkable number of very

so much importance to cosmic rhythms, the "official" history of which is so far removed nowadays. But above all, we would like to dwell a little on sacred geography, which is in some way related to traditional sacred history, as space is related to time.

It is an amateur geographer, Xavier Guichart, who, in his work *Eleusis-Alésia*, launches the foundations of this sacred geography, which he had intuited thanks to the careful study of ancient authors such as Strabon²⁰¹. Today, the most eminent representative of this science seems to us to be M. Jean Richer, whose works (*Sacred geography of the Greek world and Delphi, Delos and Cumae*)*, have opened up extremely interesting perspectives in this field of study. It is the last of these works that we propose to examine here.

M. Jean Richer has an admirable knowledge of the ancient world. Moreover, his way of seeing things allows him to pay particular attention to the religious and initiatory aspects of the legends linked to the cities and monuments which are the object of his studies. In other words, the scope of his discoveries goes far beyond the realm of geography, and he constantly refers to it.

In the review *Atlantis* (March-April 1977 issue), speaking of the basilica of Guingamp, considered by certain authors as having a hermetic character, he makes several reflections which inspired him to draw some curious parallels with Greek architecture. In this regard, he refers notably to Plutarch's treatise *On the Letter E of the Temple of Delphi*. In Plutarch's time, "the meaning of this letter was largely lost". Plutarch considered, above all, the numerical value of this letter E, which is 5, and, in addition, he related this letter to Apollo, the god worshipped at Delphi. This is highly interesting from a Masonic point of view. Indeed, the Companion degree, which brings together many elements from the Pythagorean tradition, is, so to speak, placed "under the sign" of the number 5. However, Guénon insisted that we should remember, even in rituals, "the links of Pythagoras with the Delphic and Hyperborean Apollo, the latter being properly the geometrical god"²⁰².

In short, the letter E, in the Temple of Delphi, played approximately the same role as that played, in Freemasonry, by the letter G, which is solemnly unveiled to the recipient of the second degree. The link between these two letters is easy to discern. The Greek E has a value of 5, and the Masonic letter G is located (at least in "continental" rituals) in the five-pointed star: both letters have a "microcosmic" character. Moreover, the letter G is the initial of the inscription engraved on the front of the Temple of Apollo: *Gnothi séauton* (Know thyself). It thus evokes Gnosis and, more particularly, the knowledge acquired by the way of Geometry, which is "the 5th science" in the traditional enumeration of the liberal arts.

The Templars have always been regarded as a significant group of initiatory organisations, and they completely corroborate the conception that they have always had of the Templars.

²⁰¹Cf. René Guénon, *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*, pgs. 156 to 165.

*Delphi, Delos and Cumes, July 1970; *Sacred Geography of the Greek World*, Hachette, 1967 and G. Trédaniel, 1985. The work *Iconology and Tradition* was the subject of "Notes de lecture" by D. Roman in the E.T. no. 487 of January-February-March 1985].

²⁰²Private letter of 14 September 1950.

In one of the rare articles written by Guénon directly in Arabic²⁰³ he recalled that "if all sciences were attributed to Apollo, they would be, more particularly, tending towards geometry and medicine". Plato, and also Aristotle, speak of Apollo as a geometrical god. Finally, it is known that, "in the Pythagorean school, geometry and all the branches of mathematics occupy the first place in the preparation for higher knowledge".

Like the letter E, which shines in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi, the letter G of the Masonic Lodges, which Guénon thought had multiple origins, also has a multiplicity of meanings. But it evokes, first of all, the "Germ of immortality" latent in the centre of the human microcosm, then the "Great Geometer of the Universe", who has drawn up the plans of the macrocosm, and finally "Sacred Geometry", the science par excellence which allows "the unification of the microcosm and the macrocosm".

Other traditional notions can also be grouped around the latter doctrine. The lodge is the image of the macrocosm, or rather of the *Logos*; and Delphi was considered by the Greeks as the "navel of the Earth", the central place where the *omphalos* had fallen from the sky. The predictions made by the Pythia testified that, in this place, the temporal condition was abolished in favour of the "eternal present"; and, on the other hand, Apollo, whom Aeschylus called "the infallible physician and the eternal saviour", enabled the human organism to rediscover this primordial state, where man is in perfect harmony with the Cosmos.

Jean Richer's article has taken us a long way from the basilica of Guingamp. But the master builders and craftsmen of this sanctuary - and, no doubt, all those who gathered to worship the "radiance of the eternal Light" (*Jesu, candor lucis aeternae*) - did not differentiate, in the Absolute, between architects, masons and the faithful of the Delphic temple, of Apollo the Hyperborean.

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In the May-June issue of the same journal *Atlantis*, Jean Richer presented the elements of a work that he had been planning for some time, and which he had already announced in his Sacred Geography of the Greek World. It was *an essay on the reconstitution of the Greek calendar of trees*. He estimates that this calendar, which may have had its equivalent among the Celtic and Germanic peoples, must have been used in Greece around the 8th and 7th centuries BC. For such an arduous study, it has been necessary to resort to toponymy, the interpretation of legends and numismatics. For him, "the Greek calendar of the trees was associated with a zodiac". The centre of the zodiacal circle was to be found at *Héliqué*, a name which evokes that of the willow tree: here it would be the "helix, the pivot of the system"²⁰⁴. As for the point of

²⁰³ This article, donated to the journal *El-Marifah*, is reproduced in René Guénon's posthumous work *Mélanges* (pgs. 48 to 57).

²⁰⁴ The city of *Héliké* bears the same name as Mount Helicon, the habitual abode of Apollo and the Muses.

It is on the Helicon that the winged horse, Pegasus, with his hooves, made the fountain of Hippocrène, the source of poetic inspiration, gush forth; this fountain was situated near the sacred forest of the Muses. It is useless to underline the relationship between the winged horse and the "divine journey" of the being who rises to the higher states.

In this Zodiacal departure, corresponding to the winter solstice and the sign of Capricorn, the Pythagoreans (in complete opposition, on this point, to the Greek philosophers, "who condemned mythological fictions as so many errors, lies, even blasphemies), very often professed a great esteem for poetry, to the point of introducing Sappho into their school". The death of the poetess, which, according to tradition, occurred at "the **Leucade** Leap", was for them an event of great importance, especially since, for Homer²⁰⁵, the strait of Leucade, "gate of the Sun, region of dreams giving access to the meadow of **Asphodels**", was situated "at the extremity of the West and the inhabited lands: it marked the passage between the world of the living and that of the dead"²⁰⁶.

According to the correspondences established by Jean Richer, **Leucade** is in the sign of Capricorn, which naturally evokes the idea of "leaping" and whose tree is the white poplar: **Leucade** is therefore the "white rock". This could be developed at length by referring to the traditional poets, from Virgil, for whom the white mountain of **Leucade** was "a dream as high as the clouds", to Goethe, who declared that "Sappho, in love with Chaon, loved no man but a star"²⁰⁷. We think it appropriate to add that, knowing that every leap marks a discontinuity, **Leucade's** leap is, in short, nothing more than this "hiatus" of which Guénon spoke, and which marks the "violent" passage from the profane to the sacred, then from the exoteric to the esoteric, and finally from the lesser mysteries to the greater.

We will not go into Jean Richer's often very interesting examination of the 12 signs and the trees he attributes to each of them²⁰⁸. Finally, the author points out "that there has existed, for every region of the ancient world, a calendar of birds" and that "it has persisted much longer than that of trees". This role played by the tree and the bird in traditional calendars is worthy of note because of the tree's relationship with the axis of the world and the bird's relationship with the higher states of being²⁰⁹. Jean Richer's studies often provide the opportunity for incursions into the metaphysical domain. The "Leap of **Leucade**" - to which he seems to pay particular attention - is, as we have said above, a symbol of the passage to the limit (and also of the passage from potency to act), which Guénon underlined as being accomplished "in a single stroke" and "suddenly"²¹⁰. And this

goes back to the heavens, where it becomes a constellation. As for poetry, its relationship with enchantment, as a means of liberation, is well known. It is also worth remembering that the Muses were daughters of Mnémosyne, goddess of memory. The links between initiation and memory are close; initiation is, so to speak, "the memory of the earthly Paradise, that is to say, of the primordial state. It is not without reason that English Freemasons attach so much importance to the recitation of the ritual "from memory". Guénon said that written or printed rituals should be no more than "aids to memory".

²⁰⁵The *Odyssey*, canto XXIV, vers. 11-14.

²⁰⁶Jerome Carcopino, *From Pythagoras to the Apostles*, pg. 44.

²⁰⁷Cf. Carcopino, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-72 et al.

²⁰⁸Here is the list of these trees, beginning with the one corresponding to Aries: the Oak, the Elm, the Fir, the Palm, the Plane, the Cane, the Cypress, the Scylla, the Dogwood, the White Poplar, the Olive and the Ash.

²⁰⁹It is almost useless to recall the text of the Upanishads: "Two birds, companions and inseparably united, perch on the same tree: one eats the fruits of the tree and the other looks on without eating".

²¹⁰*The Principles of the Infinitesimal Calculus* and, above all, pg. 136 sqq.

symbolism of the *Leucade* leap, would suffice to justify its use by the Pythagorean school.

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"Jean Richer's work on sacred geography has given a clear impetus to research in this field. He has shown the way by proving that the great ancient sanctuaries occupied, one in relation to the other, positions whose orientation corresponded to the zodiacal directions, that is to say, making angles of 30, 60 and 90 degrees with the geographical North".

This is how M. Lucien Richer has expressed himself for a long time with regard to his brother's work, and on which he has been inspired "for a study in which he thinks he can show the links between the zodiacal directions, the sacred geography and the geometrical configuration of the planet". Again in the same issue of *Atlantis* (May-June 1977)*, he discusses, in outline, some of his findings. And it turns out that "the location of the sacred places seems to obey precise rules, and that, despite appearances, the different aspects of the earth's surface could correspond to a very organised structure". Forty years ago, René Guénon reported on Xavier Guichart's *Eleusis-Alesia*, acknowledging that "it is possible that the world is much more geometrical than we think"²¹¹". But the discoveries of Xavier Guichart, who did not have the idea of using the zodiacal symbolism projected on the Earth, were less probative than those of M. Lucien Richer, and that is why we hope that the latter will not make us wait too long for the publication of his work.

He first examines the five main sanctuaries which Latin Christianity has dedicated to the archangel Michael²¹². It is very remarkable that these five sanctuaries (always very ancient, which were very often the destination of frequent pilgrimages and next to which there was usually a Benedictine monastery) are situated in a straight line; a straight line which forms an angle of 60° with the meridians of the earth. We shall have occasion to return to this point. But here is what is strange. If we extend the straight line beyond Mount Gargan and thus enter the Greek world, the line passes through Delphi and Delos, which were the most famous sanctuaries of Apollo. The author did not take into account to point out these similarities between the dragon vanquishing archangel and the triumphant god of the serpent Python. He could also have compared St Michael, chief of 9 choirs of angels, with "Apollon Musagète", who governs the 9 choirs of muses²¹³. And we could even find other correspondences between these two "lights" of polytheistic and monotheistic religions²¹⁴.

* Lucien Richer: The "Axis" of Saint Michael and Apollo].

²¹¹Cf. *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*, pg. 159.

²¹²These sanctuaries are the following: that of Mount Gargan, in Les Pouilles; another, in Piedmont; that of Mount Tomba, in Normandy (also called "Saint Michael at the Peril of the Sea"); that of England, at the extremity of the Cornouailles; and, finally, another situated at the South-West extremity, off the coast of Ireland.

²¹³The relationship between the angelic choirs and the Muses is mentioned by a British Templar Order, the *Royal Order of Scotland*, which has the particularity of possessing the only versified ritual in the world. Two numbers are particularly consecrated to Apollo: 7 and 9. Jean Richer (*Desphes, Delos and Cunes*, pgs. 47 and 64, n. 1) recalls that the Pieta rendered its oracles on the seventh day of each month, and for this reason Apollo was called "the seventh god". But the Pieta was interrupted during the 3 months of Winter (consecrated to Dionysus): it therefore exercised its mystery 9 times a year. Moreover, the number 9 is linked to the birth of Apollo and Artemis. Their mother, Latone, after the absence of Ilithyie, the goddess of childbirth, had suffered labour pains for 9 days and 9

But, prolonging still further our straight course, behold, we left Europe and touched the coast of Asia. And we touch it at Mount Carmel, sacred to the Canaanite peoples, sacred to the Jews because of the triumph of Elijah over the priests of Baal, and finally sacred to the Catholics because of one of their most famous Orders, that of the Carmelites; it claims as its founder "Brother Elijah" and "Brother Pythagoras". Guénon has emphasised that "Pythagoras" symbolically means "he who leads to the Pietà"²¹⁵, and it is known that the Pietà was, at Delphi, the organ of Apollo.

We have left out interesting considerations, notably on the legends of Gargantua and the Gorgons²¹⁶. The author also points out that the route he has studied passes through Bourges (l'Avaricum of the Gauls), through Perouse and also through Athens, whose relations with Délos are well known²¹⁷.

M. Lucien Richer regrets that the limits of his article do not allow him to examine the prolongation of the straight line beyond Mount Carmel, for he says that "its prolongations outside Europe are equally revealing". Finally, when Xavier Guichart had evaluated, in units of length, the distances between these "places *alésiens*", M. Lucien Richer had the happy idea of evaluating the distances between the different sanctuaries he was studying, in degrees of length, and found "that the intervals between these different places are very clearly marked". The average interval, which goes from one sanctuary to another (or to one of the three cities: Bourges, Pérouse and Athens), has a degree of 537 minutes. This number, 537, which plays such a role in the "spatial rhythms", is so close to 539 - an important number in the temporal rhythms^{(2) (1) (8)} - that it is impossible to see it as a mere coincidence. And this coincidence constitutes, in our eyes, a very remarkable confirmation of the thesis put forward by M. Lucien Richer.

One of the most striking features of the article we have just analysed is that its author inappropriately links sacred geography with sacred mathematics. We cannot go into the details of an exposition that does no more than outline the development of a work in preparation. Let us just say that the square root of the number 3 plays an important role; and the author reminds us that this root is also

nights. These two numbers 7 and 9, and above all their product, 63, play a great role in the numerological order of the Divine Comedy.

²¹⁴Like Apollus, Michael, in his turn, has a particular relationship with the number 9 and with the number 7. Like Gabriel and Raphael, he is one of the "7 archangels who are always in the presence of the Lord" (*Tobit*, XII, 15).

²¹⁵Cf. R. Guénon, *Miscellaneous*, p. 53.

²¹⁶The Gargantua of French popular legends differs markedly from the Gargantua of Rabelais, for it has a much more "maleficent" character. The Gorgons are always "evil". However, we must not forget that the most dangerous of them, Medusa (who personifies the corruption of Wisdom), gave birth (unintentionally, of course) to the horse Pegasus, whose important role as a "vehicle" for accessing the higher states of being we were reminded of earlier.

²¹⁷The Athenians periodically sent a sacred vessel, the "Theoria", to Délos. Until its return, capital executions were not permitted. Socrates did not drink the hemlock until the Theoria entered the harbour.

²¹⁸Cf. *Traditional Forms and Cosmic Cycles*, pg. 39. 539 is the result of 77×7 , and this product is associated, in the Old Testament, with vengeance, and, in the New Testament, with forgiveness. There has been talk of a certain "cyclical revenge of the Templars", which would have been exercised during the 77 years of the royal house of France. No more than Guénon, we do not believe in the reality of this revenge having a repetition. If we want a revenge, or more precisely a "consequence", provoked by the event of 1314, we must lean more towards the captivity of the royal family, in the prison of the Temple, and that of Marie-Antoinette, in the Conciergerie, an outbuilding of the palace of Philippe le Bel. Between 1793, the date of the latter events, and 1314, there are 479 years, which is far from being a multiple of 77.

the trigonometric tangent of the angle of 60°; an angle which expresses the inclination on these terrestrial meridians, of the axis of the sanctuaries, of which we have spoken. M. Lucien Richer even adds:

"The square root of 3 is of prime importance in all the observations we have been able to make, and seems to involve many peculiarities of the structure of the globe, considered in the light of our research. We do not disguise the extent of the problems that this hypothesis of the effective connection between the Earth and the spiritual world may raise. In any case, it would be necessary to agree ... that it integrates perfectly into a monistic vision of the Universe".

The monism of which M. Lucien Richer certainly does not have much in common with Spinoza's monism, and the author obviously wants to emphasise that, for him, there is no "closed system", and that the relations between the various sciences are multiple, because these sciences all derive from the same principles. This is an entirely traditional idea, and it would be advisable, we think, to follow with particular attention the discoveries that could be made in the field of research that we have just opened.

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But, we would ask, however interesting these questions of sacred geography may be, what interest can they have for Freemasonry? It may be answered that, the Royal Craft, being linked by the *Old Charges* to Geometry, the relations of the latter to Geography, should not be indifferent to Masons. And, on the other hand, was it not our operative ancestors who built the pagan, and later Christian, sanctuaries on the axes of the circumferences which have been the subject of this study? Guénon has written: "High Freemasonry in the 18th century had a whole conventional geography" on which he intended to return²¹⁹. Circumstances did not allow him to realise this project. However, thirty years after the death of the Master, it is not too rash to attempt to follow these traces²²⁰.

In conclusion, we would like to see the type of research we have just described extended to other sacred sites, notably Ephesus, a holy city, both pagan and Christian, in which M. Jean Richer has taken a great interest and which has just been the subject of an important work by M. Jaques Bonnet*.

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE NUMBER 3, ITS POWERS AND ROOTS

²¹⁹Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, pg. 193, n. 4.

²²⁰In the eighteenth century, the numerous works published in France on Freemasonry were printed in fictitious cities. For example, for Paris, the place of publication was given as Jerusalem, or Heliopolis, or Philadelphia, or other cities. On the other hand, the high degrees of Scottishism, which refer, in their sacred words, to "Frederick II of Prussia", are possibly making an obscure allusion to a Frederick II who has nothing to do with Prussia, and to a Prussia which is not at all that of Frederick II....

* *Artemis of Ephesus and the Legend of the Seven Sleepers*, P. Geuthner Orientalist Bookshop, 1977.

In Christianity, for example, the Father created the world with His Word, who is the Son, while the Spirit "covered" the surface of the waters. In Hindu doctrine, manifestation was accomplished under the action of the three *gunas*.

The raising of a number to any power is a symbol of creation *ex nihilo*. This expression means, in effect, according to Guénon, that God has created the world from nothing external to Him²²¹.

Conversely, the extraction of a root (square, cubic or any other) symbolises the return from the manifest to the non-manifest, or from the world to its Principle, or from contingency to absolutes²²².

CAPÍTULO XI

THE TWELVE LABOURS OF HERCULES*.

²²¹An occult allusion to these considerations can be found on the cubical stone of the 14th degree of the Scottish Rite. On the 1st phase of this stone are inscribed the first three powers of the numbers 3, 5, 7 and 9. On the "right side" of this stone, we find a geometric representation combining the square, the circle and the triangle (cf. Vuillaume's Masonic Manual, plate VI and, above all, plate VII). This reminds us of one of the most remarkable (and, to a certain extent, the most "clear") of the Hermetic texts handed down to us by the Rosicrucians: *l'Atlante fugitive*, by Michel Maier. Plate XXI of this treatise evokes the intermediate role played by the triangle between the square and the circle in the "circulation of the square" (the inverse of the squaring of the circle). Understanding that the triangle is geometrically analogous to the number 3 in arithmetic.

²²²We would find, in the four articles we have just commented on, other points with properties to evoke certain metaphysical teachings. For example: M. Lucien Richer, in his research, uses Mercator's cartography, which "converted" the terrestrial meridians into parallel lines (as in today's planispheres). It is a question here, then, of "a passage from polar coordinates to rectilinear coordinates" (cf. *The Symbolism of the Cross*, chap. XVIII), obtained by an inverse operation to this "rotation", according to which the Italian Freemason, Arturo Reghini, had based all Pythagorean geometry (cf. *Comptes Rendus* de René Guénon, pg. 15). And all this can also lead one to think of the passage from "the sphere to the cube" (cf. *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, chap. XX). These inverse and complementary operations (elevations of powers and extractions of roots, for Arithmetic; and circulation and quadrature, or even rotation and sliding, for Geometry), are rigorously equivalent to what are, in Alchemy, "solution" and "coagulation", which together constitute the essence of the Great Hermetic Work.

M. Lucien Richer, in order to explain the very slight divergences between the "theoretical" distances of the places he has studied and the real distances, has resorted to the "drift of continents"; could we not also think of the "solidification of the world" (*The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, chapter XVII)?

Greek mythology is rich in legends of all kinds, of which it is sometimes difficult to discover their true meaning, which, in its origin, must often express a truth of a doctrinal or even initiatory order. In a classic of Hermetic philosophy, *The Egyptian and Greek Fables, Unveiled*, Pernety has commented extensively on the main legends. But this work, useful as documentation, seems to us to suffer from certain defects, which are less Pernety's own than those of his century. When we see him, for example, so intent on proving that all the heroes of the Trojan War, according to Homer, have a divine ancestry and, consequently, he thinks, their exploits can only be the symbolic expression of the operations of the Alchemical Work, we could not follow him on this point. But who would think of reproaching Pernety? In his time, the ruins of Troy had not yet been found; and, moreover, it is only in our own day that, after René Guénon, some admit that these historical events - like geographical or other facts - have, in themselves, a symbolic significance²²³.

Let us note in passing a curiosity, a consequence of Pernety's position. He postulates that the ancient myths are not historical facts and, therefore, can only be symbols. Since he is obliged to admit that the facts related in the Sacred Books of Christianity are historical facts, he does not consider the possibility that there are also Hermetic symbols among them. This singularly impoverishes his dissertations and, above all, his *Dictionary*.

Pernety seems to have attached particular importance to legends dealing with gold. The golden age, the golden fleece, the golden rain, the golden horns, the golden apples, are, in his work, the subject of particular attention. Why was the golden hair of Pterellas, which made its possessor immortal and was thus obviously connected with the elixir of long life, omitted²²⁴? And, having been given the initiatory role of the vine, why not have mentioned, at the very least, the branches or plants of the vine, in gold²²⁵?

Pernety also fails to mention the sometimes unhappy endings of the main conquerors of gold. Thus Hippomenes, who had received three golden apples from Venus, which enabled him to betroth Athaliah, was, like Athaliah, metamorphosed into a ferocious beast and subjected to the chariot of Cybele²²⁶. As for the Argonauts, they refused to take refuge in the golden fleece, but their return voyage was

* This text has been published in the magazine *Renacimiento Tradicional*, n° 42, April 1980].

²²³For Pernety, the heroes of mythology have not existed; they can only be "figures", and Pernety thought that these figures cannot represent anything other than the doctrines and operations of Alchemy. It is much more legitimate to think, as Guénon does, that mythological heroes have existed, and that they are therefore more than symbols, even symbols so excellent that their historical existence has been truly "incarnated" in realities of a higher order, not limited to the hermetic domain alone.

²²⁴This golden hair had been given only to Ptérelas, king of Taphos, by his father, the god Neptune. It was cut off by Ptérelas' daughter, which immediately caused the king's death. Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses*, speaks of a purple hair, that of Nisus, which was linked to the possession of the kingdom of Megare. In certain versions of this legend, the magic hair of Nisus is not a purple hair, but a golden hair.

²²⁵A golden branch, given by Dionysos, plays an important role in the legend of Hypsipyle, a heroine who is connected with two highly symbolic affairs: the expedition of the Argonauts and the war of the Seven Chiefs against Thebas. On the other hand, a vineyard plan in gold, given by Jupiter, is at the origin of the first attempt to save Troy from ruin: the intervention of Eurypyle, son of Téléphe. Finally, it is almost useless to recall the golden branch that Aeneas, under the guidance of Sibylle de Cumes, went to gather in a sacred forest to offer it to the queen of the Hells.

²²⁶The legend of Hippomène and Atalante, famous in Hermetic texts, is the subject of one of the most remarkable treatises by Michel Maier: *Atalante fugitive*, which we will encounter later.

The life of their leader, Jason, was a trail of tragedy. It seems that such events might have led to some development of the need for "the renewal of power"²²⁷.

Hercules had embarked with the Argonauts, but, in the early stages of the voyage, he became separated from them²²⁸. He must have accomplished a considerable number of feats, but the most famous are known as "the twelve labours of Hercules". The sacred character of the number 12 may lead one to suppose that the labours of Hercules have an initiatory significance; and, in fact, the Delphic oracle had declared these twelve labours and the twelve years of service owed by the hero to his cousin Eurysthée to be completed. Hercules would be admitted as immortal.

Pernety has spent a considerable part of his work examining the works of Hercules from the point of view of their application to Hermeticism. He has seen clearly, in particular, that, from the very birth of the hero, a very characteristic episode is to be found. When he was in the cradle, with his half-brother Iphiclès, the goddess Juno sent two monstrous serpents to devour them. Iphiclès fled in fright, but Hercules, taking the snakes, one in each hand, strangled them. This feat identified, in a certain way, the caduceus of Hermes, essentially consisting of a golden stalk around which two snakes are coiled. It should also be noted that in certain representations of the *Rebis*, this symbol of the perfection of the human state has a snake in each hand²²⁹.

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We could discover a symbolic meaning in all the labours of Hercules, even in those not included in the 12 labours²³⁰. One of the most curious in this respect is the account of his enslavement in the house of Omphale, queen of Lydia²³¹. This

²²⁷A mythological adventure in which gold plays a certain part, and which ends beneficially, is the famous story of Psyché, which the Latin poet Apulée has explained at length in his romance *The Golden Year*, where the last chapter relates the Rites of Initiation into the mysteries of Isis. In the story of Psyché there is a golden palace, and also lambs with golden wool, which is related to the Golden Fleece. Psyché's travels and various "trials" precede her descent into Hell, followed by her ascent to heaven where she will consume ambrosia and nectar. All this obviously has the characteristics of an initiatory process, happily brought to its normal conclusion, which is none other than the divinisation of the hero (or heroine). Moreover, it must be Mercury-Hermes who accompanies Psyché on her celestial journey. Mythology also deals with a golden dog, whose role was both beneficent and maleficent. It is the magical golden dog that watched over Jupiter as a child and the goat Amalthée in the mountains of Crete. This golden dog, later stolen by Pandarée, caused the "petrification" of the kidnapper, who was metamorphosed into a rock.

²²⁸According to the Argonautics of Apollonius of Rhodes, Hercules, on the coast of Asia, wasted considerable time in searching for his companion Hylas, abducted by a nymph, and the Argonauts, dispensing with waiting for him, continued their voyage without him.

²²⁹The *Rebis* of the *Rosary of the Philosophers* has, in his left hand, an upright serpent and, in his right, a cup from which three serpent heads emerge. This figure is equivalent to Hercules strangling the serpents. The duality of the *Rebis* is represented by the pair Hercules-Iphiclès. As the Hermetic symbols, like all symbols, are susceptible to a plurality of interpretations, we will indicate that the vertical serpent, held with the left, is the equivalence of the sword and is therefore complementary to the cup held with the right. We know that the cup and the sword symbolise, respectively, the doctrine and the method, which constitute the two aspects of all initiatory teaching.

²³⁰Thus the well-known story of Hercules, hesitating at the beginning of his career between Vice and Virtue, was celebrated by the Pythagoreans, who represented it by the letter Y, which Rabelais calls "the Pythagorean letter". We can see, according to Guénon, the symbol of the Hermetic Initiate, having to choose between the two Ways: the "Dry Way" and the "Wet Way".

²³¹This name Omphale is evidently reminiscent of the omphalos of the Temple of Delphi, considered by the Greeks to be the "navel of the Earth" and the centre of the world. In this case, the "resolution of the

The service concluded with a wedding, and a curious story of "hierogamic change" is related to this fact: Hercules, having dressed himself in the queen's clothes, spun the wool at her feet, while Omphale, covered with the skin of the Lion of Némée, wielded the hero's mace. In this connection, we may point out that the distaff (held in the left hand) and the mace (in the right) are two of the "axial" symbolisms that play, in relation to the Hercules-Omphale couple (identifiable to the *Rebis*), a role analogous to that of the two serpents referred to above²³².

Of the twelve works, the last three are the most interesting from a hermetic point of view. First of all, however, we must point out that while the first nine works are set in the Greek world and its immediate vicinity (Asia Minor and Thrace), the last three take us considerably further away, to the point of leaving the Mediterranean basin (the Oxen of Geirion and the Garden of the Hesperides) and even the terrestrial world (the Descent into Hell). It is these three works that bear the clearest initiatory stamp, and it is on them that it seems interesting to dwell.

The order in which the twelve labours are listed is generally the same in ancient authors, except for the last two. Very often, the 11th work is the gathering of the golden apples and the 12th, the descent into Hell; this is the order followed by Pernéty. But the 11th work has also been given as the descent into Hell, and the 12th as the conquest of the golden apples; and it seems that this order is the most in accordance with traditional principles²³³. Indeed, if the 12 labours have an initiatory significance, the descent into Hell could not mark the end, it should even mark the beginning; but we may consider the first labours as preliminary trials; and the fact that Hercules, before descending into Hell, had himself initiated into the mysteries of Eleusis, further strengthens this interpretation²³⁴.

What could be used to confirm or deny the "regularity" of the order, normally given in the succession of the 12 labours, is their correspondence with the signs of the Zodiac. Unfortunately, an author who has made an in-depth study of the sacred geography of ancient Greece, M. Jean Richer, has established irrefutably that, despite repeated attempts "after Hygin and Eratosthène", such a claim is "manifestly absurd", and that any concordance between the signs and the labours is "impossible to establish". Consequently, "it would be in vain to attempt to draw,

opposites" and that is why *ex_voto*, the necklace of Harmonia, daughter of Mars and Venus, that is to say of war and love, had been exposed. Among the Jews, the navel of the Earth was located on Mount Moriah (the Hebrew equivalent of the Hindus' Mérou). It was on this mountain, famous for the sacrifice of Abraham, that Solomon's Temple was built. The site is today located in the Omar Mosque.

²³²We may also recall, as an equivalent symbol, the crosses of the two thieves, on either side of the central cross of Christ. Christ, as the new Adam, is evidently the true man, of whom the *Rebis* is the symbol. We might object that Christ is essentially masculine, whereas the *Rebis* is androgynous. But this difficulty seems to be more apparent than real. In traditional representations of the crucifixion, the Sun and the Moon (emblems, respectively, of the masculine and the feminine) appear above Christ's hands. On the other hand, at the foot of the Cross, there is a group of "holy women" gathered around the Virgin Mary who, in the Christian view, has "concretised", so to speak, in her person, a "reflection" of the feminine aspects of the Divinity.

²³³This order is given, notably, in the Dictionary of *Greek and Roman Mythology* by M. Pierre Grimal. This work, of considerable erudition, takes into account teachings, enriched by all the ancient authors, from the most famous to the most unknown.

²³⁴In reality, as we shall see later, it is the first nine labours which have this preliminary character. The tenth work (the conquest of the oxen of Géryon) involves, in fact, the passage between the "Pillars of Hercules", a rite of which the equivalent is found in all types of initiation.

of the inventory of works, a complete Zodiac". The reason given by Jean Richer for this state of affairs is very interesting. It is, in fact, "linked to the phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes", so important in terms of traditional chronology. At a very ancient time, the vernal equinox coincided with the entry of the Sun into the sign of Taurus, "from about 2000 BC, the vernal point was in the sign of Aries, after the displacement of the *colure* of the equinoxes". After M. Jean Richer, such a change in the astronomical facts, caused in the various Greek cities and "before the acceptance of a new system", a certain outcrop, consisting of overlaps or double attributions, which are reflected in legends and monuments". We have summarised, very briefly no doubt, the argument of Jean Richer, which seems to us to have definitively clarified a problem that has become particularly difficult because of "the state of degradation that mythological legends have reached"²³⁵.

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It is thus impossible to make the order of succession of the labours of Hercules coincide with the order of succession of the signs of the Zodiac. Any attempt to establish a "correspondence" between these works and the principles of this important aspect of Hermeticism, which constitutes Astrology, is, for that very reason, compromised, and it is to be feared that it will be so in another aspect as well: Alchemy. What does Pernety think in this respect?

According to his custom, he is not at all concerned to make the successive episodes of the legend coincide with the ordinarily recognised follow-up of the operations of the alchemical Art. He simply recalls, with regard to the principal actors of the *Heracléen* myth (lion, hydra, bird, etc...), the analogous symbols found in abundance in the Hermetic writings, and draws conclusions which are far from being uninteresting, but which clarify nothing about the profound meaning of the science of the philosophers. We think, in fact, following René Guénon, that the Royal Art never had for its purpose the exchange of lead for gold, but that it worked on a "prime matter" - first of all, precious - man, who tries to transmute him into True Man, "reintegrated" into the original Adamic state, while, by this very fact, nature, in its entirety, found for him the Edenic conditions of the "golden age".

In this context, we may note that certain elements of the legend of Hercules are likely, if the traditional principles of interpretation of universal symbolism are applied to them, to acquire a meaning and a scope, so to speak, "technical", rich in teachings for the attitude of the initiate, and even for all those who aspire to knowledge.

It is notably the 10th work, the conquest of the oxen of Géryon, which involved Hercules leaving the Mediterranean in order to reach the island of Erythie, situated in the Ocean. The hero then had to cross the strait, which later became known as the "Pillars of Hercules". The passage between the columns is found in every

²³⁵Jean Richer, *Sacred Geography of the Greek World* (chap. X, pgs. 107 to 117).

initiation rites, and the columns themselves have multiple meanings. The Pillars of Hercules had been raised by the hero, on his return from the Mediterranean to recover his homeland, and on which he engraved the inscription: "Nec plus ultra". Dante reminds us of this fact throughout this strange canto XXVI of the *Inferno*, where he makes numerous allusions to the dangers faced by those who follow an "irregular" path of initiation.

Here is the gist of this text, where Ulysses, buried with Diomedes in a flaming tomb, tells Virgil and Dante of his last and fatal adventure:

When I was with Circe, who held me captive in Gaëte (...), neither the caresses of my son, nor the pity for my old father, nor the love I had for Penelope, could overcome my ardour for the knowledge of the world and of men. But on the high seas, taking flight, and followed by my comrades, who never forsook me, I set sail for Spain and Morocco (...). We were old and we were heavy with age, when we reached that narrow gorge, where Hercules planted his two boundaries, lest any should dare to venture farther. Then I said: Brothers who, through thousands and thousands of dangers, have reached the limits of the West, follow the Sun and do not deny to your eyes, exhausted by sleeplessness, the knowledge of the uninhabited world (...). I had excited the ardour of my friends so strongly that I could not have held them back. The oars became wings, in a mad flight (five months). After having crossed the supreme pass, we arrived at an isolated mountain, the highest we had ever seen. Dying on it, we felt great joy, though it soon turned to tears. From the new land a whirlwind arose and struck the ship. It did so three times: on the fourth, the stern lifted and the bow plunged into the sea, as it pleased *Un Autre* (the *Other?*), and finally the sea covered us.

This account is so different from the various versions of Ulysses' death handed down by tradition that we are forced to think that Alighieri, by inventing it, wanted to provoke surprise and perplexity in his readers. In fact, it is possible that it is not the only one of his expressions, which gives rise to extensive developments. We intend to draw attention to a few points, without pretending to elucidate the obscure parts of a text which the best traditional commentator of Dante, Luigi Valli, considered to be particularly enigmatic^{(236)*}.

14* [Published in 1980, Denys Roman had planned to include this text in this work. The disappearance of the author prevented him from doing so].

SECOND PART

CAPÍTULO XII

ANDERSON

The vast majority of French Masons, and even the so-called "Latin" Masons, have devoted to Pastor Anderson an admiration almost comparable to a cult. They considered him simply as the founder of "modern" Freemasonry. This is neither entirely true, nor entirely false. Anderson is certainly the origin of speculative Freemasonry, but the Grand Lodge of "Moderns", which he helped to found, was quickly overthrown by a more traditional organisation, the Grand Lodge of "Ancients", which fought an all-out struggle against the former. In 1813, the union of the two rivals took place, and the triumph of the Ancients' practices was consecrated.

Anderson is also revered by English-speaking Masons. However, those who are truly conversant with the history of the Order know where they stand. One of the most beloved works of English specialists in Masonic history is Henry Sadler's *Masonic facts and fictions*. One of the highest dignitaries of the Grand Orient of France, M. J. Corneloup, has published, in the official organ of this Obedience, *Humanism* (No. 92-93, published in 1972), a very interesting article on this work. Mr. Corneloup (who, however, shows a declared predilection for the moderns of 1717) formally recognises that this Work is anti-traditional in character; and in substance, he subscribes to the assessment of Laurence Dermott, the Coryphaeus of the Elders: "Instead of a renaissance, it is a discontinuity of ancient Freemasonry, which was established by those who organised the Grand Lodge of 1717".

Among the innovations of the Moderns, M. Corneloup mentions the neglect of the old usages (such as the installation ceremony), the unleashing of the use of words in 1730 (this use, when you think about it, is really strange) and also the forgetting of ritual prayers (which, moreover, the Moderns are opposed to their rapid reestablishment). The author also notes: "It is interesting to note that the Grand Lodge of Ireland, and later that of Scotland, established official relations with the Ancients, which they never had with the Moderns, despite the favourable reception given to Desaguliers in Edinburgh in 1721". In another remark, M. Corneloup shows that tradition, within an initiatory Order, almost always ends up imposing itself. "As far as I have been able to see, he says, the *only* customs of the Moderns that survived the Union of 1813 were the privilege of the Quartermasters [the English equivalent of the Masters of Banquets in French Freemasonry] to appoint their successors, and the prerogative of the Grand Master to appoint the Grand Officers". It will be agreed that these two points are really of little consequence, and are not ritualistic in nature.

In the article by M. Corneloup, we found traces of difficulties in which the author - and good rationalist - proves and admits that the art of building (as in all traditional crafts) has, in itself and from its origin, a higher meaning, i.e. esoteric, based on symbols made up of elements of construction _ and that, consequently, Freemasonry had no need of the entry of Hermeticists into its midst, to give an incatic meaning to the tools and materials proper to its use.

This entry of the Hermeticists²³⁷, of the Rosicrucians and other organisations, must have taken place since the Middle Ages, and has undoubtedly influenced the settlement in favour of the speculative mutation. It enriched the symbolic treasure of the Order, but did not create it. M. Corneloup is well aware of this: the Compagnonage also possesses a set of symbols adopted from the trades. Some of these symbols (such as the Labyrinth or the Tower of Babel) have a very high meaning, which has nothing to envy of the Hermetic symbols, and which is somewhat reminiscent of the symbolism of the Ark, which M. Corneloup seems to believe was introduced late into Freemasonry.

Let us now summarise the thesis put forward by M. Corneloup in his article. It is ingenious and, apparently, irrefutable. The first historically known French Lodges were established in France from 1725 onwards, i.e. by English Freemasons belonging to the "Moderns". French Freemasonry, which quickly became independent of London, was not affected in any way by the foundation (in 1751) of the "Ancients", and still less by the Union of the Ancients and the Moderns in 1813. Apart from these facts, France and England had been at war for ten years. French Freemasonry then, without interruption, comes from the first Obedience to be founded in the world, that of 1717. On the other hand, English Freemasonry (according to M. Corneloup) does not derive from this Grand Lodge of 1717, in which all the usages were abandoned in 1813, in favour of the rites of the Ancients. Or rather, English Freemasonry comes from the Ancients, and only goes back to 1751.

The demonstration is seductive, and certainly contains a part (a small part) of truth. The Guenonian Freemasons, however - who do not believe at all that in such matters the truth should be sought exclusively under the shroud of dust where the archives sleep - sent to M. Corneloup the correspondence that their friend Marius Lepage received from Guénon, and where the latter underlined the high probability of a very marked operational influence on French Freemasonry. In a letter dated 28 August 1950, Guénon wrote to Lepage:

"The importance of the "thunder" in the initiation tests is much greater than we might believe [...] I have always been displeased by the absence of this consecration in the English rituals; it seems that there is nothing here, in the French rituals, that cannot be traced back directly to an operative source, much earlier than 1717..."

Such an indication, written four months before the death of the Master, is extremely precious to the French Guenonian Freemasons. It enables them to repudiate, much more strongly than Dermott and the Ancients could have done, the ill-fated work of 1717, and to disavow all kinship with "the very joking Compagnon" Anderson and his cronies.

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Later, M. Corneloup, had the happy idea of translating and publishing the Works of

²³⁷Cf. the chapter entitled: "From the Temple to Freemasonry, through Christian Hermeticism" in our Work: *René Guénon and the Destinies of Freemasonry*.

Sadler⁽²³⁸⁾ accompanied by comments; and a young Guenonian Mason, after reading a text, wrote to one of our friends: "It is equally curious that the translator and commentator of this text has drawn conclusions diametrically opposed to those of the author". On the cover of the book, the title was preceded by the words: "The Myth of the Mother Lodge", where the exclamation mark sufficiently indicated the polemical and hostile intention towards English Freemasonry; an intention which, evidently, could not have been that of Henry Sadles, Deputy Librarian of the United Grand Lodge of England.

Reading Sadler's work, the author's dislike and contempt for this Anderson, whom so many Freemasons today revere almost as a father, stands out in numerous indexes. Sadler seems to adopt Dermott's irony when he quotes "our learned historian, Dr. Anderson". Moreover, Anderson is presented as a "biased historian", who is supposed, along with Desaguliers, to have manipulated the regulations. In a major chapter on the "Written Records of the first Grand Lodge", Sadler, "having - with the sole aid of official sources - administered the clearly conclusive proof of what is fallacious in certain of Anderson's assertions", adds: "I would venture the opinion that not only did Anderson take no part in the events he relates, but that he was not even a member of the Order before 1721". In the chapter 'Examination of the Ancients' Archives', Sadler stresses that 'without any doubt, the intervention of Desaguliers, Payne, Anderson and numerous lords, officers and other gentelmans, who met, in the Order, during the first tenure of the Grand Lodge, as if it were a sort of fashionable pastime, meant the concurrence of certain alterations in the work of the Lodges'.

Sadler, at times, also forces the note a little, for example when he writes: "It is my firm opinion that we have Dr. Anderson to thank for the introduction into Freemasonry of terms Ancient and Modern.... It is our zealous historian who has invented them, and.... has decided to apply the term "Modern" to the society of which he himself was a distinguished member". M. Corneloup makes some reservations here about the interpretation of the author he is translating, and we think he is right.

Let us return to the more serious grievances. It is quite possible that the noble lords, who invested the Grand Lodge of London, some years after its foundation, saw in Freemasonry nothing more than an original pastime for idle people. But, Is it not singular, even somewhat disturbing, to see, in 1721, the profane Anderson "thrown" (as we would say today) on Masonic soil, where he will suddenly occupy exactly the place necessary to put his incomparable talents as a "mortar worker" to work? Another easy problem to solve, for any attentive reader of Guénon, consists in the fact that Dermott's work, a simple painter's labourer, has finally led him to the very distinguished doctors Payne, Desaguliers and Anderson.

For, in fact, the Moderns will be, little by little, "led to recognise the error of their system", and "their determination to return to the old forms testifies to their intelligence and their real Masonic spirit". In the duel which, for more than half a century, had pitted the two rival Fraternities against each other, it is Tradition which has finally had the last word.

²³⁸Henry Sadler, *Masonic Facts and Fables*, translated from English, with preface and commentary by J. Corneloup (collection "The For and Against", Editions Vitien).

Sadler, at the end of his *Work* (which was published in 1887), formulates conclusions that do not conform to the usual ways of "profane-minded Masonic historians", but which coincide exactly with the judgement that René Guénon would later bring to bear on the dangerous and suspicious nature of the upheavals that followed 1717. He wrote: "For its importance and for the lasting benefit that resulted, the event of 1751 (foundation of the Ancients) was the best thing that could have happened. The only important event in Masonic history that is carried with it is the Union of the two great Fraternities sixty years later.

For Henry Sadler, Deputy Librarian of the United Grand Lodge of England, and who, according to all plausibility, must have been able to interpret correctly the texts among which he had spent his life, 1717 had almost lost Freemasonry, and 1751 and 1813 saved it. For M. J. Cornmeloup, 1717 saw a great light rise upon the Order, which the disastrous dates of 1751 and 1813 obscured. The young Mason, whose lapidary "judgement" we spoke of earlier, was certainly not mistaken.

CHAPTER XIII

JOSEPH DE MAISTRE AND THE MEMORIAL TO THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK

Among the most outstanding historians of Freemasonry of our century, we think that Henry-Félix Marcy should occupy an important place, and we would like to give some indications on a work by this author: volume II (*The French Masonic World and the Grand Orient of France in the 18th century*) of the *Essay on the origin of Freemasonry and the history of the Grand Orient of France*²³⁹.

The very long and generally praiseworthy review of volume I of this Work was left unfinished by the death of its author, which constituted the last Masonic writing of René Guénon²⁴⁰.

H.-F. Marcy, who was a member of the Council of the Order (the governing body of the Blue Lodges of the Grand Orient), is a typical case of the "profane-minded Masonic historian", who regards Freemasonry as any other human institution, without ever asking himself whether it is something whose nature and aspects might exceed the narrow limits of the "historical method". That said, the Work of which we speak contains such a mass of facts and data that it will always be useful to refer to it, provided that the author - which is commendable on the part of a modern and rationalist Mason - never forgets the operative origin of the Order, and does not nurture any illusions, or any tenderness, towards the "great ancestors" Anderson and Desaguliers.

The first chapter of Volume II (Chapter V of the Work) deals with the origins of the Master's degree. Marcy thinks that it is Anderson, Desaguliers and their supporters (whom he calls the "clergyman party")²⁴¹ who instituted the Master's degree and invented the legend of Hiram. The reasons he gives are unconvincing, and his thesis vanishes when he wishes to recall that Freemasonry is not the only organisation of its kind in the West. Has the historian, Marcy, ignored the work of his German confrere Eugen Lennhof? The latter's work, *The Secret Political Societies of the 19th century*, has a chapter entitled "The Crown of Thorns of the Good Cousin Christus". Indeed, in the Carbonari, it was the passion of Christ that played the role of the legend of Hiram. Moreover, "in the medieval Compagnonage, the ceremonies were inspired by both the ancient rites of purification and the episodes of the Passion of Christ": the 30 dinars of Judas, the cock of St. Peter, the pillar of flagellation, the lashes, the crown of thorns, the cross, the nails, the three dice used by the legionaries to draw lots for the seamless cloak, the spear of the centurion, the chalice where the divine blood was collected, the holy shroud²⁴². Something essential would have been missing in operative Freemasonry if it had not had the symbolic "equivalent" of the Passion of Christ: this equivalent was the legend of Hiram or Ammon (a particular "version" of the myth of

²³⁹Editions du Foyer philosophique, Paris.

²⁴⁰Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, book review, September 1950.

²⁴¹It is rather unpleasant to find in this volume II, some anti-clerical "piques", which are not to be found in volume I. Protestants and Catholics share them equally. Marcy had no sympathy with the Jesuits, perhaps he had his reasons; but why treat the pretender Stuar as "blessed", for attending the College of Clemont, to follow the famous exercises of St. Ignatius? Whether the suitor had been a Mason or not did not matter, since he liked the Jesuit exercises. Why should he have abstained?

²⁴²Cf. Luc Benoise, *The Compagnonage and the Trades*, chap. V (What do I know?, P.U.F.).

Osiris). Anderson and Desaguliers had nothing to "create" in this matter. Moreover, they were both pastors, therefore, Christians; we must believe that if they had wanted to introduce into Freemasonry a "drama", symbolising death followed by resurrection, they would never have thought of anything other than the drama of Golgotha, _ and, above all, never of an extra-scriptural "legend" which they would have "invented" entirely.

In this Chapter V, the interesting details are given on the silence of the Operatives, as regards the character of Hiram-Abif (almost unknown in the *Old Charges*), _ and also on the disturbances which agitated the Grand Lodge of London in its early days. Indeed, the Operatives, still numerous and very dissatisfied with Anderson's actions, tried repeatedly to take back the leadership of the Order. They chose as their leader the Duke of Wharton. The innovators, fearing the latter's accession to the Grand Mastership, intrigued to prevent the election of 1722 from taking place. But this combination failed, and Wharton became Grand Master. A minority refused to recognise him. Things became acrimonious and there was a threat of a split. Finally a compromise was reached: Wharton would remain in the Grand Mastership with honours, but Desaguliers would receive the office of Deputy Grand Master, with the reality of power²⁴³. Wharton, however, did not long take advantage of his victory *a la Pyrrhus*. He found a means of dissatisfying even his supporters, and his influence was short-lived. Did he, at this time, found the Order of the Gormogons? It is probable, if not certain²⁴⁴.

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We shall go further in Chapter VI, which deals with the development of the High Degrees. Chapter VII is devoted to the Military Lodges⁽²⁴⁵⁾ and Chapter VIII to the Lodges of adoption. Marcy first does justice to the confusion, propagated "by the adversaries of the Order, in order to disregard Freemasonry", between the Lodges of adoption and the Bacchic Societies: the Mopses, the Order of Happiness, the Knights and Knights of the Ancre (*Ink?*), the *Fendeurs* and *Fendeuses*, etc.... He examines immediately after, the three strange cases of female initiations supposed in the operative period (in York) and attested at the beginning of speculative Freemasonry (in Ireland). Only one of the *Old Charges* (out of a hundred that we possess) alluded to them. That is to say that such initiations were only by "accident". English Speculative Freemasonry has always excluded women. In France, the Masonry of adoption, very widespread in the 18th century, was a carefully separated "annexe" of male Masonry, but which (Marcy, let it be understood, could not take into account a "female" Masonry).

²⁴³ A frequently reproduced engraving shows the Duke of Wharton, superbly feathered, receiving from Desaguliers the *Book of Constitutions*, which "consecrated" the triumph of innovative ideas.

⁽²⁴⁴⁾ "Ruined, he went into the service of Spain and converted to Catholicism; he died in 1731, in the Franciscan monastery of Poblet, where his last illness had taken him" (pg. 41 n. 1. Some affirm that he would have been Grand Master of French Freemasonry for a year.

⁽²⁴⁵⁾ "At the end of the reign of Louis XVI, we find a regime over three, possessing a workshop, sometimes doubled in a Chapter (for the High Degrees); in certain bodies, there were two distinct Lodges" (pg. 101). The recruitment of these workshops was much less specialised than we might think. The Lodge "Friendship on Trial", in the Orient of the Orleans-Dragons regime... counted in its columns officers, non-commissioned officers, simple soldiers, nobles, a priest, civil servants and merchants (pg. 127). "After 1792, all the military Lodges seemed to have ceased their activities.... The emigration of a large number of officers, emptied the cadres and with the reorganisation.

The dispersion of the Brethren is such that no military Lodge of the 18th century could not continue in this period" (pg. 132). They were only to be seen more than under the First Empire.

The initiation ceremonies were conducted according to a ritual and a symbolism which bore no relation to those of the male Lodges.... The initiation ceremonies were conducted according to a ritual and symbolism which bore no relation to those of the male Lodges.... "Women's Masonry has never had an independent organisation The existence of a women's workshop depends entirely, at this time, on the will of a male Lodge, whose Venerable may, or may not, summon his Sisters, who are forbidden to meet except under his direction...". The Grand Mistress of the adopted Lodges possessed "a title and nothing more.... She who was invested was received with honours similar to those reserved for the Grand Master, and here the analogy stopped". Marcy recognises, however, the very real influence exerted by the Masonry of adoption, which contributed powerfully to render the order sympathetic to the profane. She recalls that Marie-Antoinette's two best friends, the Princesse de Lamballe and the Comtesse de Polignac, were dignitaries of adopted Masonry²⁴⁷.

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Chapter IX tells of the foundation, in 1773, of the Grand Orient of France, which took the succession of the first Grand Lodge of France, disregarded by the omnipotence of the Masters of the Parisian Lodges and by the disturbances caused by the substitutes for the Grand Master, the Count of Clermont. Chapter X (the longest in the volume) sets out the complicated history of the Grand Orient from 1773 to 1779. We will not dwell on this part, so abundant in reports; an index of proper names would have been very useful. Let us now turn to Chapter VI.

H.-F. Marcy was an avowed opponent of the high degrees, which is not uncommon in the Grand Orient of France, although he was one of its most intelligent adversaries. And he found it piquant to base his whole anti-chivalric and anti-Templar argumentation on the ideas of this Joseph de Maistre, whom we sometimes see presented, with the greatest faith in the world, as a supporter of chivalric Masonry, and even - why not - of Templar Masonry.

Let us recall some points of history, after Marcy.

"Baron de Hundt, initiated in Frantfort-sur-le-Main in 1742, founded a Lodge in one of these lands, in Lusace. Hundt was in Paris in 1754, and received the high degrees of the Chapter of Clemont²⁴⁹. He returned to Germany and, from 1755, a Lodge in Dresden introduced into its ritual the

²⁴⁶What causes real contempt is the action exercised on the Rectified Rite by the two "prophetesses" of Willermoz (Gilberte-Rosalie Rochette and the Vallière canoness), which these sleepwalkers did not have with the Order, not even the "psychic" bond constituted by the membership of the Masonry of adoption.

²⁴⁷It is known that the Princesse de Lamballe was one of the first victims of the September massacres. A martyr of this essentially "chivalrous" virtue: fidelity, she preferred to let herself be torn apart by a mob drunk with blood, rather than curse the names of the king and queen.

²⁴⁸The period preceding this foundation is very confused. Some have called it the "period of the unlimited autonomy of the Lodges". This autonomy has favoured, in France, the swarming of the High Degrees. In this forest, in which many trees have not survived, certain organisations have found a favourable environment in which to develop, sheltered from the curiosity of modern historians. It was not for nothing that the Council of the Emperors of the East and West - the origin of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite - seems to have been born at this time.

²⁴⁹The Chapter of Clemont, whose name probably comes from the Count of Clermont, Grand Master of French Freemasonry (and not from the Jesuit College of Clermont), has given birth to the Council of the Emperors of the East and West, which we have just mentioned in the preceding note.

Templar system, proclaims itself Grand Lodge, preaches a reform that ends in the Order of the Strict Observance, which Hundt propagates in the Holy Roman-Germanic Empire (pg. 270)".

Hundt's event was great...very great. The Strict Observance aimed at restoring the Temple Order and recovering its treasures; its leaders were Unknown Superiors. Many of these members took this to heart, The alchemical symbolism of the transmutation of base metals into gold was taken literally by the "blowers" (*aimers*?) of the time. Hundt seems to have been quickly "overwhelmed". There was the intervention of "impostors" (Gugomos, Starck, Schroepfer). Hundt, asked to "show" an Unknown Superior, sent, after the pretended Stuart, Charles-Eduard, who refused. Successive conventions had entrusted the Grand Mastership of the Order to two dukes: Ferdinand de Brunswick-Lunebourg, the father, then the son, who was absolutely worthy of his father in incompetence... and in pretensions²⁵⁰. Nevertheless, the Strict Observance had spread in Europe, notably in France. In 1774, Strasbourg became the seat of a Scottish Directory, which emerged from the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Strict Observance. The latter "established in Lyon, still in 1774, a Directory for the province of Auvergne, which constituted, in the same year, the Lodge "La Bienfaisance".... In 1778, with Joseph de Maistre and 15 other Brothers, the Lodge "La Sincérité" was formed in Chambéry (pg. 273).

"The Duke of Brunswick had the regime of the Strict Observance reformed and called for the reunion of national convents. In Lyon, Willermoz gathered, under his presidency, the Convent des Gaules. The Convent, coming from Templar ancestry, necessarily established a new ritual, which ended with the creation of the Scottish Rectified Regime, with 6 degrees: 3 symbolic, (Apprentice. In Lyon, the island of affairs and wealth did not dampen the ardours of mysticism; it was in the Gaules Convent that the esoteric triumph (*sic*), strongly tinged with Christianity, took place. This is not to frighten the Germans, for, in 1778, at the General Convent of the Strict Observance, in Wilhelmsbad, it was declared that the Masons were not the successors of the Templars and, with Templarism, the myth of the Unknown Superiors was relaunched: the Rectified Scottish Regime was adopted⁽²⁵²⁾" (pgs. 282 and 283).

Joseph de Maistre had attended the Gauls' Convent, but not the one in Wilhelmsbad. Only before the latter convent, he had sent a famous memoir to the Duke of Brunswick, setting out his ideas and giving him advice in

²⁵⁰The son, who presided over the Convent of Wilhelmsbad, was the classic type of the high dignitaries "decorated with all their honours", of whom Guénon said, without any compunction, that one must think of the degrees and dignities he had virtually received (cf. Prologue to *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*). After Paul Viulliaud, the "Eminent Grand Master" had thrown Joseph de Maistre's *Memoir* into the wastepaper basket without saying so, we prefer to think that Brunswick would have at least tried to read the famous *Memoir*, even if he judged it to be of no interest. This is not the case with H.-F. Marcy, and a few others...

²⁵¹The Strict Observance conferred the following 7 degrees: Apprentice, Companion, Master, Scottish Master, Novice, *Templar*, Professed Knight, the latter divided into various classes. The suppression of the Templar degree by Willermoz is therefore flagrant.

²⁵²The history of Masonic regimes in the eighteenth century is so complicated that some sometimes confuse the Convent of the Gauls with that of Wilhelmsbad. Such a confusion would be inconceivable to the attentive readers of Guénon, who wrote that the degree of Knight Benefactor of the Holy City "was instituted in the Convent of Lyon in 1778, under the inspiration of Willermoz, and definitively adopted at Wilhelmsbad in 1782" (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t. I, pg. 122). Guénon provided this precision in response to an occultist who claimed that the degree in question "had been in existence for six centuries", that is to say, that it dated back to the Templars; in truth, this is what Willermoz created with all his pieces, and precisely to replace the Templar degree in the Strict Observance.

as to the reform desirable for the Order. It is this memory that we are now going to examine, under the watchful eye of H.-G. Marcy²⁵³.

Let us then listen to Joseph de Maistre, *Josephus a Floribus*, Grand Professed of the Scottish Rectified Regime, who, after having - says Marcy - "fired a few arrows about the abuse of symbols which often obscure what they are intended to explain", goes on to "do justice to the Templar origin of the Order in general and its Obedience in particular".

"After some years, we have been accused of showing, under the veil of Masonic allegories, the vicissitudes of the Order of the Temple. In this connection, it is well to remember an axiom which seems incontestable as regards types and allegories, and that is: *the type which represents many things, represents nothing*²⁵⁴. There were indefinite things to be said about the character of true allegories and about the excess of nonsense, where scribes, otherwise very estimable, have been swept away by the furore of the search for and explanation of mysteries⁽²⁵⁵⁾ ... If our ceremonies are truly the emblem of the Order of the Templars, we are left with nothing but the feeling of having been Masons; for we shall, in this case, have employed our time and our faculties in an unphilosophical manner. What does Casal's little adventure matter to the Universe²⁵⁶? And to extend the expression, what does the destruction of the Order of the Templars matter to the Universe? Fanaticism created them²⁵⁷, avarice is abolished: that is all. As for the cruelties that accompanied this authoritarian coup, it is necessary to moan about this page of history, as in almost all others. But it is not impossible that the real crimes of the Templars were plausible pretexts for Philippe le Bel's greed. Whatever it was, it became necessary to institute societies to periodically deplore the great catastrophes and the famous crimes of the guilty or mistaken authority, because the population of the Universe was not sufficient".

This last feature will be appreciated as appropriate. Joseph de Maistre was never for a single moment affected by the thought that the events of 1307 to 1314 might have constituted, more than a monstrous crime, a "torment" in the history of the world and, in particular, of Christianity. And he allows himself the ridicule of evoking, in this connection, the Casal affair, a forgotten episode, since it is still not clear whether it belongs to the War of the Austrian Succession or to some other phase of the "war in lace" (*metaphor?*). The subsequent history of Freemasonry, however, has not justified the disdainful

⁽²⁵³⁾ "The Chevalier de Savaron, in the name of "Sincerity", was responsible for sending the memoir to the Duke, and we know nothing more. The memoir remained unpublished until the day when Emile Dermenghen, authorised by the author's grandsons, Count Rudolphe de Maistre and R.P. Dominique de Maistre, published a copy which remained among his grandfather's papers" (pg. 65). This text was republished in "Editions d'Aujourd'hui".

²⁵⁴ Marcy quoted in a note: "It is Joseph de Maistre himself who has underlined the passage in his text. How many Masons, he adds, could even today profitably meditate on this reflection on types and symbols!" In writing these lines, Marcy was no doubt thinking of one of his Brothers of the Grand Orient, M. J. Corneloup, a dignitary of the High Degrees, who had written just the opposite: "What is proper to a symbol is that it can be understood in different ways, according to the angle from which it is considered", so that "a symbol which admits of only one interpretation would not be a true symbol". M. Corneloup has defined here, in the best possible way, one of the essential doctrines of traditional symbolism. It is he who is right in the witticism and not Joseph de Maistre (*Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, pg. 140).

⁽²⁵⁵⁾ J. de Maistre shows here in abundance that one can be a brilliant "thinker" and a convinced traditionalist, and at the same time express oneself as the most obtuse of the profane. In short, he pretends that things mean nothing more than what they express to the common man. And, above all, let it not be said to him that it took the work of René Guénon to teach him that, down here, everything is symbolic. The very Catholic Joseph de Maistre should not have been unaware that the theology of his Church recognises a plurality of meanings in the letter of the Scriptures. In any case, such an ignorance of the "sublime" value of symbolism defines Maistre as totally unqualified for a real understanding of Freemasonry.

²⁵⁶ Marcy gives, in a note, the following indication: it is most probably about the siege and assault of the small Piedmontese village of Casal by the Franco-Spanish army in 1745".

²⁵⁷ We shall be very careful not to mention any comment on the scope of such a judgment, and will simply recall that the Council of Troy, which instituted the Order of the Temple, was led by "fanatics" whom the Church instituted at its altars: Saint Etienne de Cîteaux and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux.

comparison of Joseph de Maistre. Today, in all the existing systems of high degrees, the story of the ruin of the Templars occupies a place of honour which might lead one to think that, in the matter of Western initiation, nothing has changed since the time of Dante, where, according to Guénon, it was through the channel of the Temple that one had to pass in order to gain access to the supreme knowledge²⁵⁸.

How we regret, for Joseph de Maistre, that the paragraph reproduced above was written! It accumulates doctrinal blunders and highly debatable judgements. For example, with regard to the Templars, it is not true that Freemasonry has the right to disinterest itself in this affair, under the pretext that it was not the first time that innocent people had been condemned. Certainly, Maistre is logical with himself: seeing no link between the Temple and his Order, he does not want Freemasonry to waste time "regretting" an event he considers as meaningless and inconsequential, and furthermore - he adds, as a precaution - that "it is not impossible that real crimes on the part of the Templars constituted the plausible pretexts for Philippe le Bel's greed". On this reassuring phrase (reassuring also for Philippe le Bel), Freemasonry has only to imitate the gesture of this famous procurator, who, ordering water to be brought to him, washed his hands, saying: "I am innocent of the death of this just man; it is your business". After which he handed Christ over to his enemies and freed Barabbas.

We have forced the comparison. Indeed, it is not only Joseph de Maistre that is at issue. The distrust, skilfully directed by the illustrious author on the innocence of the Templars, has found its way into Freemasonry, whose current members (sometimes, for simple reasons of expediency) share Joseph de Maistre's views on the matter. Now, if - contrary to what this author believed, but in accordance with what the rituals affirm - the Templar heritage of Freemasonry is real, this heritage implies, in counterpart, a sacred duty for Freemasons: that of honouring the memory of those who passed it on, and who enjoy, since then, the prerogatives conferred by all "spiritual paternity"²⁵⁹. For these Christian monks and for these knights, honour counted more than life, and in the unforgivable crime of Philippe le Bel, it is less serious to have killed his victims than to have hurled against them infamous accusations which made possible the abolition of the Order, and whose echo has not yet disappeared. We are not thinking here of the accusations of immortality levelled against the Temple militia. Such accusations were also directed against the early Christians, because of the secrecy with which they surrounded themselves²⁶⁰. We are thinking, above all, of the accusations of ritual order, retained by the civil or ecclesiastical judges, terrified by Philippe le Bel: the Templars, in their secret rites, would have disowned Christ and profaned the cross. How can we admit that an Order spread throughout the Christian world, could, without this having transcended to the outside, follow, for two centuries, ceremonies so abominably sacrilegious? How could the monks, following the rule

²⁵⁸Cf. *Dante's Esotericism*. This necessity is symbolised in *Paradise* by the fact that St. Bernard, who wrote the rule of the Temple, takes the place of Beatrice (who, in her turn, had taken that of Virgil), to lead Alighieri to the highest heavens.

²⁵⁹The close links between honour and inheritance are well defined in the 5th commandment of the Decalogue: "Honour thy father and thy mother that thou mayest live long in the land (the Holy Land) which the Eternal, thy God, shall give thee" (*Exodus*, XX, 12).

²⁶⁰Philippe le Bel was in the habit of "slandering" those he wanted to get rid of. Boniface VIII was an experience. The king's legists gave him the example of his predecessor, Celestine V, a holy man, though unfortunately Pope, whom Dante severely criticised in *The Inferno*, stigmatising his "great refusal". He was the only pontiff to abdicate the tiara. Philippe le Bel, too, treated his successor, Boniface VIII, as a false pope.

How could the knights, who wore the cross on their mantle, have submitted to a gesture that is the negation of all nobility and chivalry: insulting the symbol of the cross?

Some have tried to explain these ritual acts by claiming that the Templars meant to go beyond the strictly religious point of view. Such a "justification" is absolutely inadmissible. It is not by disowning Christ that Christian exotericism is transcended²⁶¹. It is not by spitting upon the cross that the supreme, universal and eternal meaning of the cross can be attained. And René Guénon has written *The Symbolism of the Cross*, including nothing offensive to Him whom they slew upon the wood, and nothing unworthy of the incomparable majesty of the symbol of symbols.

Moreover, do we really believe that the non-French ecclesiastical courts, which declared the Templars innocent, _ believed that Clement V - who tried to the very end to remove them from the rage of Philippe le Bel - would have tried to do so if he could have suspected the accused of committing such sacrilegious acts²⁶²?

It is sad to see Masons, who have received from the Temple certain "enlightenments" in relation to Christian esotericism, discrediting those from whom it has such a precious deposit. It is sad to see that, in order to find in their Order a chivalric ancestry other than that of the martyrs of 1314, they do not hesitate to refer to the Teutons or the Hospitallers²⁶³, when it is not to purely imaginary organisations, to which it would be good to quote a single implicit allusion in the rituals.

In any case, it is to be congratulated that Freemasonry, in so far as it expresses itself by its traditional texts, has not followed Joseph de Maistre, any more than his emulators. If he had followed them, he would have gone further in the weakness of Pontius Pilate, who, at least, had the courage to say to the crowd, speaking of Christ: "I find nothing reprehensible in this man.... I do not judge Him guilty of any of the crimes of which you accuse Him; Herod [the tetrarch] did not find Him guilty either.... This man has done nothing worthy of death"²⁶⁴.

It seems that the Coptic Church, in consideration of Pilate's efforts to defend the life of Christ, has placed the Roman procurator among its saints²⁶⁵. Let us hope that the Masons, not usually zealous to defend the honour of the Temple, are not, at least, too hasty to mix their voices with those of the offices of the accusers²⁶⁶.

²⁶¹Needless to say, the Christ-Principle is the Teacher of both Christian exotericism and esotericism, just as the historical Christ was the Teacher of Peter and John.

²⁶²On these precise points - which, ordinarily, we deny knowing - we refer to the important work of M. M. Paul Lesourd and Claude Paillat: *Dossier secret. The Church in France*, t. I, pgs. 156 and 157.

²⁶³We are thinking here above all, not only of Ramsay, who was, in short, only a Freemason of occasion, but also of Willermoz.

²⁶⁴*Luke*, XXIII, 4-22.

²⁶⁵In the drama of Calvary, it is the spiritual authority (the princes of the priests) who accuse Jesus, and the temporal power has the weakness to bow down. In the drama of 1307-1314, it is the temporal power that accuses the Templars, and the spiritual authority that bows.

²⁶⁶The title of the bull *Vox clamantis*, which condemned the Templars, has always made us think of other voices crying out in the court of Pilate's praetorium: "He deserves death! Let him be crucified... We have no king but Caesar!" If we were reproached for too often comparing the drama of Golgotha to that of 1314, we could claim an illustrious precedent: Dante, on the occasion of the "death of Beatrice", wrote to the "princes of the earth".

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The Brother *a Floribus*, a modern and even progressive Freemason, will be easily consoled by the absence of this somewhat bulky Temple:

"Is it not possible to be useful and virtuous without ancestors? We are all gathered together in the name of Religion and humanity. We can vouch for the righteousness of our intentions. Let us boldly take the edifice by its foundations and, instead of renovating it, let us believe!"

Marcy is right to note: "What a revolutionary cry from this theoretician of absolutism and Tradition! For this is how this Brother, too liberal to admire the Committee of Public Health, who had defended French unity with great energy, is very often presented. De Maistre, a subject loyal to a foreign prince, taken from his native Savoy by the revolution, considered, in fact, that French independence and unity were indispensable for humanity".

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Count de Maistre (*in ordine Josephus, Eques a Floribus*), Knight Benefactor of the Holy City and Grand Professed, seems to have been prodigiously "irritated" by the chivalrous "accoutrements", a little... The "characteristic names" in Latin, the individual coats of arms with a motto and the "battle cry", the mantles with the red cross, the decorations, the feathered hats and the boots; _ the boots above all, the unmistakable index of chivalry, of vigilance and loyalty²⁶⁷. De Maistre took the opportunity to deny to Freemasonry any right to claim a chivalric ancestry:

"It even seems to be necessary to go a step further and to outlaw absolutely in the new formation everything connected with the cavalry. These kinds of institutions are excellent, but they must be left in their place. Nobility is one of those plants which can only live in the open air; what is a gentleman created under our sails, at the bottom of a room, and whose dignity evaporates as soon as the door is opened? In general, we would very much like to see all the words that do not mean anything disappear (pgs. 69 and 70)".

Of course, we could go even further than Joseph de Maistre and ask him: "What is a Mason who is ritually created under candles and whose professional competence 'evaporates' when he is asked to cement a wall or to lay a tapestry?" But we will go no further in the examination of *The Memoir*, which also combats the reality of the Unknown Superiors, the link of Freemasonry to the Mysteries of Antiquity, the Egyptian filiation, etc ²⁶⁸. However, in conclusion, we would like to call out attention to one point.

a letter beginning with the words *Quomodo sola sedet civitas*, the beginning of Jeremiah's *Lamentations*, which the Church has chosen as a scriptural text, sung during the "Sacred Triduum" (end of Holy Week), to commemorate the Passion of Christ.

²⁶⁷Mrs. Alice Joly has given an amusing anecdote about Willermoz's attraction to boots (*A Lyonnais Mystic and the Secrets of Freemasonry*, pg. 70).

²⁶⁸In his participation in denying, for Freemasonry, any origin other than Christian. De Maistre forgets, however, to refer to the Hermetic and Kabbalistic heritage. It is true that he could not have known the *Old Charges* and the numerous references to Hermes. As for the Jewish Kabbala, its influence on Freemasonry has sometimes been exaggerated; one must, however, be careful not to underestimate it, as did the most illustrious of the

In 1798, Bonaparte, leading the armies of the Directory into Egypt, took the island of Malta from the Knights of St. John. The following year, Nelson, pursuing the French fleet, took Malta in turn, and established British sovereignty for a long time. The Knights captured from the island never returned. As we shall see in the chapter on Cagliostro, the last Grand Master, Ferdinand de Hompesch, passed on his dignity to the Tsar of Russia, Paul I, when he died. This strange thing can only be understood if one takes into account the international intrigues that had taken place around the island of Malta, when the Order was in full decline. More than half of its funds were in France, since most of them came from the Templars. The Grand Master, Emanuel de Rohan, had been in favour of French influence. Hompesch, who succeeded him in 1797, was German, and, very worried about the contagion of revolutionary ideas among his Knights, deliberately turned to the side of Russia, which, after Catherine II, had ambitions for the island. A Priory of the Order had been founded in St Petersburg under Tsar Paul I, just before Malta fell into the hands of the French. Whatever the case, the Russian sovereigns henceforth added to their endless "title" the title of "Grand Master of the Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem". Paul I was assassinated and his son, Alexander, was the first Tsar to be saluted, since his accession, with the title of Grand Master of Malta. It is rather curious to read in Guénon²⁶⁹ that "Alexander I and Joseph de Maistre were both Knights Benefactors of the Holy City". It is known that Joseph de Maistre abandoned Freemasonry for reasons of his diplomatic career. Alexander I suppressed Freemasonry in Russia (where the Order was very prosperous). We do not wish to decide whether there could have been a cause and effect relationship between these two rather surprising events. Everyone is free to see no connection or to see a connection, so to speak, analogical. Everyone is equally free to believe, or not, in the existence of chance.

Italian Freemasons, Arturo Reghini, who did not want to see in the Order more than the Pythagorean heritage. In the Master's degree, for example, Hebraic elements are largely predominant. Many Masons are unaware that, if it is forbidden to stand bareheaded in the middle chamber, it is because Jews cover their heads to pray.

²⁶⁹*Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. I, pg. 122.

CHAPTER XIV

CAGLIOSTRO, FRANC-MASONRY AND THE ORDERS OF MALTA

One of the most interesting figures in the occult movement at the beginning of our century was certainly Dr. Emmanuel Lalande, who signed under the pseudonym of Marc Haven. His main work is entitled: *The Unknown Master, Cagliostro*²⁷⁰. He used considerable documentation on a subject close to his heart, and drew on the memories left by Cagliostro in the many countries where he lived: England, Russia, France, Switzerland, Italy. The work is a serious testimony of these researches, and constitutes, in short, a conscientious bibliography.

-The enigmatic character who, after having aroused the enthusiasm of the masses and the curiosity of the upper classes of the society of his time, was to end miserably, in the prisons of the Inquisition. Marc Haven certainly has an admiration for his hero that is difficult to share, but he does not abuse laudatory epithets too much. The author's esteem for the texts is almost constant, and his respect for the "facts" so evident that he almost forgets the title of the work; truly excessive, given that Cagliostro was only a "Master" in magic, and that he very often sought popular acclaim in order to be entitled, even symbolically, to the title of "Unknown".

Marc Haven is, moreover, the first to warn against the credulity of Cagliostro's disciples, the source of so many fables which have sometimes crept into the most "official" history. Thus Franck-Brentano - regarded as a serious author - gives the anecdote of Cagliostro recognising the real traces of the crucified on a crossed Calvary²⁷¹. Marc Haven claims (pg. 11) to have found this story, although attributed to the Count of Saint Germain, in a work that is neither esoteric nor strange: *The Chronicle of the Bull's Eye!*

The author's occult conceptions are not very disturbing, at least for those who know their value²⁷². For the rest, Marc Haven's erudition was real. But all erudition has its limits, visible, here, in the simple domain of exoteric Christianity²⁷³. More numerous are the errors concerning Freemasonry,

²⁷⁰Editions Paul Derain, Lyon.

²⁷¹Cf. Fubck-Brentano, *The Affair of the Necklace*, pg. 87: "Have you known Christ?", Cagliostro would have invoked the testimony of his footman; but the latter reminded his master, with regard to chronology: "No, Count, the Count knows very well that I have been in his service for *fifteen hundred* years."

²⁷²When, for example, it is a question of the *Book of Thoth* (pg. 12, n. 1), it should be remembered that occultists thus designate

... to the Tarot.

²⁷³Pg. 142, wanting to prove that, in the rituals of Cagliostro, "there is a profoundly religious and sincere breath, which is not found at all in the rituals of other Orders"; Marc Haven gives as an example, one of the speeches of reception to the degree of Master: "My God, have mercy on the man N., according to the greatness of your mercy, and blot out his iniquity, according to your manifold goodness; cleanse him more and more from his sins, etc...". And the author goes on to reproduce *in-extenso*, the 20 verses of the Miserere (Psalm 50 of the Vulgate), after which, in the height of enthusiasm, he asks, "Can we find, with a higher doctrine, with a truer initiation, a more respectfully religious thought than this?" We certainly do not think so: and we think that we must give to King David, what does not belong to Cagliostro.

and, above all, to 18th century French Freemasonry, which has been spoken of in terms that "date" terribly, but which political Freemasons will not recognise (pg. 119). Other, less serious, inaccuracies could be relieved²⁷⁴. But here it is only the role that Cagliostro played (and, above all, the role he would have liked to play) in Freemasonry that we wish to confine ourselves to, deliberately forgetting the other aspects of the character: the healer, the therapist, the alchemist (or rather the "blower"), the "clairvoyant" and even the guesser of winning lottery numbers, although Cagliostro played the role of "precursor" for the latter.

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Cagliostro's life is known only from 1776, the date of his first trip to London. The following year, he was initiated into the "Hope" lodge. But it was during his stay in Russia (1779-1780) that he was to begin a truly original Masonic attitude. In Mitau, Courlanda, he founded a mixed Lodge (i.e. admitting women according to the same rites as men). Recruitment took place among the aristocracy of the "barons baltes". The "marshal of the nobility" of Mitau was the Venerable of the workshop. Among the founding members was Mme de Kayserling²⁷⁵. The meetings, in principle daily, involved "operations" in which a child, called "Pigeon", played an important role²⁷⁶. Here is how these operations took place:

After the opening of the work, the members of the Lodge being without sword and without metals, "the Grand Master, in Masonic dress and sword in hand, would bring in a child, and, having consecrated him before all, by the imposition of his hands, by anointings with the "oil of Wisdom" and by some words for the work he wished to accomplish, would make him sit before a jar, in a small room adjoining the Temple; Then he would go out, close the door and stand in front of it, in the same room as the attendants. The "Pigeon" was left alone in front of the "Tabernacle". The attendants, with the Grand Master, after having recited certain psalms of David, would withdraw, praying in silence. After a moment, Cagliostro asked the child if he saw anything in the Jar. "I see an angel... angels", he would often reply. Then, after having thanked the spiritual visitors, the Grand Master would announce that all questions could be asked, and the assistants would ask questions. Cagliostro would transmit the questions; the angels would answer, either by signs or words perceived only by the child, showing him a changing picture, which the child would describe" (pg. 54).

²⁷⁴Pg. 120, n. 5, we are surprised to read that Dom Pernéty was born in Berlin. This Benedictine religious, author of the *Mytho-hermetic Dictionary* and founder of the Rite of the "Illuminati of Avignon" (who had nothing in common with the "Illuminati of Bavaria"), was in fact born in France, in Roanne, the memory of which has remained very vivid.

²⁷⁵He is a descendant of the family that was to found the "School of Wisdom" in Darmstadt, Germany, after World War I. He was related to the Ungern-Sternberg family (see Theosophism, review of the book Vladimir Pozner: *Le mors aux dents*). He was related to the Ungern-Sternberg family (cf. *Theosophism*, review of Vladimir Pozner's book *Le mors aux dents*), where one of his representatives played a major role in Russian Freemasonry, somewhat before Cagliostro.

²⁷⁶Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Comagionage*, t. II, review of Cagliostro's *Ritual of Egyptian Freemasonry*, annotated by Dr. Marc Haven (Editions des Cahiers Astrologiques).

In short, it was "ceremonial magic" here, but with the very aggravating circumstance that children served as subjects. As, at such an age²⁷⁷, the separation of subtle and "coarse" elements of individuality is particularly comfortable, it is not necessary to underline the danger of these practices. It seems to us improper that parents should have tolerated this for their children²⁷⁸. It was necessary for Cagliostro to be an accomplished magician, so that serious catastrophes would not have ensued²⁷⁹.

We know that, in ceremonial magic, ceremonies are of no value, and, on the other hand, Masonic rites are certainly not meant to "frame" magical operations or experiences of magnetism. Encouraged by the confidence of his faithful, Cagliostro progressively suppressed the tinctures and ornaments, the mysterious formulas, the "circle of protection"²⁸⁰, the lights. All he had left was the pigeon in front of the carafe.... Such infringements of the Ritual raised questions at first, and then the concerns of the Countess of Recke, Madame de Kayserling's niece. This led to a disagreement which was soon to turn into open hostility²⁸¹.

²⁷⁷The first child known to have played the role of the "pigeon" is the son of the "burggrave" von Howen, at the age of six.

²⁷⁸About 50 years after Cagliostro, a German secret society, not Masonic, practised very similar operations, but with adolescent subjects and not with children. The "Gentleman Ludwig", of whom *Ghostland* treats (cf. *The Spiritualist Error*, chap. II), did not look into a carafe, but was asleep, and a certain "crowned Angel" played a great part in the teachings he conveyed.

²⁷⁹Among the differences that can be noted in the operations of the Chosen Coëns and those of Cagliostro, let us cite the following: The Chosen Coëns did not use any "subject". The operator had to be in possession of the last degree of the Rite: that of *Réau-Cruz*. The "work" was not carried out in a Lodge, but in the home of the operator, who was in absolute solitude. These operations did not take place at any time, but very rarely, on certain days (the new moon, the equinoxes) and at a fixed time ("at the stroke of twelve bells", i.e. at "the stroke of midnight"). Moreover, the *Réau-Cruz* was subject to a severe accessis. Like the Jews, he abstained from the blood of animals, and also from the flesh of pigeons. Forty days before the equinoxes, he began a very hard "quarantine". For the operations, he had to be, exoterically, in a "state of grace". Finally, in Martinez's case, the "practice" was accompanied by a "doctrine", which has no equivalence with Cagliostro. In any case, the operations of the latter, with his luminous visions and his "apparitions" (known, above all, by the "verbal-process", which we will reproduce later, of the consecration of "Triumphant Wisdom"), were particularly similar to the practices of Prince Charles of Hesse, of whom Guénon recalled that they were inspired by the "works" of the "Initiated Brothers of Asia" (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, pg. 118, end of § 1 and beginning of § 2). Moreover, Mr Yves Dangers recalled that the Prince of Hesse was a Grand Master of this Regime, whose extremely "Judaising" character he emphasised. We can believe that Cagliostro was aware of similar practices at the time of his passage from Germany to Russia, and must have drawn inspiration for the institution from his own system.

²⁸⁰In the Coëns Chosen, this circle was called the "circle of Retreat". The operant was to take refuge when he felt "dominated". Bacon de la Chevalerie, a very active Mason at the end of the 18th century, who was one of the founders of the Grand Orient of France, was a *Réau-Cruz*. Having undertaken the "work of the equinox" without being "perfectly pure, he often felt - he told Baron de Gleichen - overwhelmed by an adversary of greater strength than himself, "affected by an icy cold" and soon "prey to annihilation". He threw himself into the Retreat circle. But this setback made such an impression on him that he left the Chosen Coëns, joined the Strict Observance and then the Philalèthes, while continuing his activity in the Grand Orient. It was he, notably, who led the extremely complicated negotiations aimed at adding to the Grand Orient both the Rectified Scottish Regime and the organisations that were eventually to become the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Moreover, Bacon de la Chevalerie seems to have been particularly vigilant in preserving the Masonic "jargon", which had already been greatly affected by the introduction of profane language.

²⁸¹In violation of one of the most universally observed landmarks, Cagliostro made no distinction in Lodge between men and women. And it does not seem that the latter were very grateful to him. Back in London, Cagliostro must have pitied a certain Miss Fry, whom he called his "implacable enemy". In Mitau, Mme de Recke came to publish a violent pamphlet against him. In Russia, the Tsarina Catherine II, composed two plays with him (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, pgs. 109 and 110). In Paris, Jeanne de la Motte had him arrested, and Queen Marie-Antoinette banished him from France. Finally, it seems that it was Cagliostro's own wife who denounced her husband to the emissaries of the Holy Office.

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Cagliostro had some events in St. Petersburg, where obediential rivalries were very lively, and in Poland, where he was received by King Augustus.

II. After some time in Strasbourg, where he got into an argument, due to his bad temper, with the very famous Cardinal de Rohan⁽²⁾ ⁽⁸⁾ ⁽²⁾ he came to settle in Lyon at the end of 1784.

This is where he definitively developed his "Egyptian Freemasonry", which, it seems, was to serve him as a "fulcrum for a much more ambitious action, targeting the entire Masonic Order. After Marc Haven:

"infused with the Christian spirit, the spirit of wisdom and truth of this young and active organism... such was the aim of Cagliostro. To achieve this, it was necessary to direct Freemasonry as a whole, to remove its human intrigues, to direct it towards good.... He must have thought about it several times before Lyon.... He was slowly preparing the realisation of his project, but it was in Lyon that his Masonic work became more precise" (pgs. 121 and 122).

But, for such a work, why rely on a so-called Egyptian Freemasonry? René Guénon pointed out²⁸³ that there is nothing Egyptian in Cagliostro's rituals, apart from the pyramid which appears in certain paintings (and also, let it be understood, the title of "Grand *Cophe*" taken by the founder). However, in *The Memoir for the accused Count Cagliostro, against the Procurator General*²⁸⁴, we find the following sentence: "All light comes from the East, all initiation from Egypt. This reminds us of the assertion in *Cooke's Manuscript* (the oldest of the *Old Charges*, after the *Regius*), stating that, from Egypt, Freemasonry has spread from land to land, from kingdom to kingdom". Cagliostro could not have known of *Cooke's*, discovered in 1861; although it is possible that, in London, he might have heard of this tradition, preserved, so to speak, in the "collective memory of Freemasonry"⁽²⁸⁵⁾.

It is then this pseudo-Egyptian Masonry - we should say: pseudo-Masonic, since it was irregular for the first *chef* - that Cagliostro had the audacity to present to the Lodges of Lyon, as the "unique and pure Masonic doctrine", as "Freemasonry in its true primitive form and purity". The success of the Grand *Cophite* was incredible. By day and by night, profane and Freemasons alike, presented themselves at his door. Willermoz alone, or almost alone, had the merit of resisting the general contagion. It is true, therefore, that at that time he was very busy with other chimeras.

²⁸²At the Cardinal's request, Cagliostro had cured his nephew, the Prince of Soubise.

²⁸³*Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, pg. 107.

²⁸⁴Cagliostro reprinted this memoir to 'justify' himself before Parliament.

²⁸⁵It seems that the same could be said for the Rites of Egyptian pretension, and, notably, that of Misraïm and that of Memphis. The first - the most interesting - was so un-Egyptian and of such evident Hebraic inspiration, that its acclamation was: "Alleluia alleluia, alleluia, alleluia". They seemed to be isolated or disused "Scottish" degrees (Chosen of Unknown, Scottish, Panissière, Scottish of the three JJJ, etc...), Judaic degrees (Sovereign Princes Talmudin, Sovereign Princes Hasidim, etc...) and even degrees whose names were known only to their holders. Possibly the most curious aspect of this Rite were the two degrees called "Chaos" ("Chaos 1st Discreet" and "Chaos 2nd Good") and also the four degrees of the "Key of Freemasonry" adopted from the metallurgy of gold: Miner, Washer, Blower, Smelter. It should be remembered that the Rite of Misraïm had long since disappeared. As for the people of the *R.I.S.S.* who reproached Guénon for having belonged to them, they simply confused this Rite with the much more recent Rite of Memphis-Misraïm, which Guénon had indeed "practised" at the beginning of his Masonic career.

The Mother Lodge of the Egyptian Rite, "The Triumphant Wisdom", was founded - and its subscriptions were collected by the erection of a sumptuous Temple - in the Brotteaux district. A bust of Cagliostro was placed in the centre of the "Chamber of Egyptian Masters". An unusual innovation, if one considers that the centre of a Lodge is normally occupied by the "altar", or by the "lodge square", where it is forbidden to walk²⁸⁶.

The Grand *Cophite* did not attend the consecration of his Temple. The Convent of the Philalèthes was opened in Paris at the beginning of 1785, and it was immediately a matter of inviting Cagliostro. He was in the capital, where he met the Cardinal de Rohan, who had become Grand-Hospitaller of the Court. But we have the account of what happened during the consecration of "Triumphant Wisdom" (a consecration which took place much later, in July 1786), from a letter of the Venerable of the workshop, Saint-Costar, a letter which was found in Rome, among Cagliostro's papers, and published by the Holy Office. Here are the essential passages:

"Worship and work lasted three days, and by a remarkable contest of circumstances, 27 members were assembled, and there were 54 hours of worship.... At the moment when we asked the Eternal One for a sign that our vows and our Temple were pleasing to Him..., the first philosopher of the New Testament²⁸⁷ appeared uncalled. He blessed us⁽²⁸⁸⁾ having stood before the blue cloud in which the apparition took place, and having risen above this cloud, from which our young pigeon could not sustain the splendour of the moments in which he descended to earth. The two great prophets and the Lawgiver of Israel²⁸⁹, have given us the sensible signs of their goodness and of their obedience to your orders; everything has concurred to complete a perfect operation, though we may judge of our weaknesses." (pg. 136).

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The Paris Convent, convened by the Philalèthes and open to Masons of all Rites and from all countries, was the last of the great assemblies which formed the "visible" history of continental Freemasonry in the second half of the 18th century, and where the Order, before entering into an awkwardness from which it has not yet fully emerged, questioned itself as to its nature, its origin and its destiny. From the beginning, Mesmer had been invited. But Cagliostro, considered to be the most "compromising", had to wait for his summons. Offended, the great *Cophite* replied, imposing two conditions for his entry: "1) The Philalèthes will burn their archives and make a clean sweep of a deceitful past. 2) All should be initiated as Egyptian Masons".

The Convent was astonished. The archives of the Philalèthes (comprising mainly what had been handed down to them by the Chosen Coëns) were their pride and joy, and the Head of their Rite had the title of Curator.

²⁸⁶The bust in question must have been an original, or it may be a replica of the bust of Cagliostro by Hudon, now in the museum at Aix-en-Provence. The sculptor, evidently more accustomed to reproducing the features of the encyclopaedists, has depicted Cagliostro with his gaze towards the sky. This may be very mystical, but there is very little Egyptian about it.

²⁸⁷We assume that this must be John the Evangelist.

²⁸⁸The fact that this participle is in the singular seems to indicate that the apparition had been visible only to the Venerable One, who had evidently taken the place of Cagliostro in the "operation". But the use of the plural "we" in a particular letter does not allow us to be absolutely certain on this point.

²⁸⁹Elijah, Elisha and Moses.

from the archives: it was Savalette de Langes. Knowing Cagliostro's taste for titled people, he sent him, in haste, some proofs they had at hand: a Marquis de Chefdebien, a Baron de Gleichen. The Grand *Cophte* was intractable. Implausible negotiations followed, both by correspondence and by deputations. The final point of the negotiators was a letter from Cagliostro, dated 30 April 1785, from which we will quote some passages:

"To the glory of God, why is falsehood always on the lips of your deputies? You say that you seek the truth; I presented it to you and you have despised it. Since you prefer a heap of books and puerile writings to the happiness I destined for you and which you would have shared with the elect; since you have no faith in the promises of the Great God or of his minister on earth, I abandon you to yourselves, and truly I say to you: my mission is no longer to instruct you. Wretched Philalèthes! You sow in vain and will reap nothing but tares" (pg. 143).

The Paris Convent closed its doors shortly afterwards. Two years later, in 1787, a second session was held. There was no longer any point in inviting Cagliostro...

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The issue of the "Queen's Necklace" is related after Funck-Brentano and G. Lenôtre. It seemed established that Cagliostro had nothing to do with it. He would even, said Marc Haven, have advised Rohan to explain the whole affair to the king. The cardinal could not resolve it, and we know the great scandal that followed: the great chaplain of France stopped at Versailles, in the presence of the whole court, on 15 August 1785 and at the same hour, clad in his sacred vestments, prepared to celebrate pontifically the mass of the Assumption (the queen's feast). Eight days later (23 August), Cagliostro, falsely accused by Jeanne de la Motte^{(2) (9) (0)} was taken to the Bastille. When the trial took place before the Parliament, to the question: "Who are you?", Cagliostro answered: "A noble traveller"^{(2) (9) (1)}. Then, says Marc Haven, he speaks "of his life, of the mystery surrounding it, of his powers, of God, of who is his soldier protected by Him" (pg. 167). In short, he paraphrased strange statements in his *Memoir*:

"I am not of an age, nor of any place; outside of time and space, my spiritual being lives its eternal existence, and if I immerse myself in my thought, reaching back through the ages, if I extend my spirit into a world of existence other than the one you perceive, I become the one I desire. Consciously participating in absolute being, I regulate my action according to the environment in which I find myself. My name is that of my function, because I am free; my country is that where I momentarily fix my steps. Date yesterday, if you will, by enhancing the years lived by ancestors who were strangers to you; or tomorrow, by the illusory pride of a greatness, which, possibly, will never be yours; I, I am that which is (pgs. 241 sq.-."

Although, in our view, the rest of the Report does not live up to this "superb" debut, it must be agreed that such sentences are very worthy of intriguing those who think that everything is not "simple" in the history of organisations.

²⁹⁰Jeanne de la Motte-Valois, who had set up the whole affair, had a public daughter called Oliva play the role of Marie Antoinette in the unlikely night-time rendezvous in the "queen's forest", the offspring of an illegitimate son of King Henri II.

²⁹¹Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*, t. I, chapter entitled: "On Pilgrimages".

The fact that: to see in Cagliostro only an impostor is undoubtedly an easy attitude, too easy to conform to the truth.

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On 31 May 1786, the day after Cagliostro had been branded a "noble traveller", Parliament declared him and Rohan innocent, and both returned to their respective homes to an indescribable popular ovation²⁹². But Marie-Antoinette, indignant at the "anti-royal" atmosphere in which the trial was taking place, obtained from Louis XVI an edict banishing Cagliostro from the kingdom. The latter went to London, where, it seems clear, he invited Masons "in the name of Jehovah-Jesus", to found "the new Church" (pg. 197). The event was null and void. It was in Switzerland that he met Lavater. But something in him seemed to have broken. It was then that he made the decision to go to Rome.

Why? Marc Haven is formal:

"More and more distant each day from ordinary Freemasonry, more desirous of propagating before it his true, religious and Christian Rite, Cagliostro conceived the hope of obtaining Papal approbation and supporting it by the Order of Malta and giving it a universal extension. His arrival in Rome was, then, the natural course of his work" (pg. 221).

It was to delude oneself. Cagliostro arrived in Rome in May 1789. It was the time when the Estates General were meeting at Versailles, and events were rapidly taking on an aspect that unsettled the Roman court. Cagliostro, expelled from France for a scandal that spilled over the throne and the altar, could only be considered a suspect by the pontifical police. He was arrested on 27 December 1789. What symbolism: 27 December, the feast of St John of Winter, is a holy day for all Freemasons. After a long investigation, Cagliostro appeared before the tribunal of the Holy Office, presided over by Pope Pius VI²⁹³. On 7 April 1791, the Cardinals delivered their verdict. Cagliostro was notably convinced that he had "incurred the censures and penalties established by the apostolic laws of Clement XII and Benoît XIV against those who, in any way whatsoever, favoured and formed the societies and conventuals of the Freemasons". The penalty foreseen, when the crime was committed in the States of the Church, was "exemplary death"²⁹⁴.

However, Cagliostro was not "handed over to the secular arm", his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, without hope of pardon. After a detention in the castle of Saint-Leon, in truly outrageous conditions, the wretch died on 26 August 1795 (10 years and 3 days after his arrest, in the Collar affair), "without having given a sign of repentance". Burial "in Christian soil" was denied him.

²⁹²Jean de la Motte, was sentenced to the "*marque*".

²⁹³Marc Haven speaks of Pius VII, but this is obviously an error. Pius VI reigned until 1799.

²⁹⁴The review *El Simbolismo* (October 1959) has given a translation of the "Edict for the publication of the Bull *In eminenti* of Clement XII in the Papal States". The penalties provided for are, in effect, "death and confiscation of goods, irretrievably incurring no hope of grace".

Had he really conceived the foolish project of dominating Freemasonry with the support of the Papacy? It seems clear that he had. After his own documents published by the Inquisition, Cagliostro, during the instruction of his trial, exposed to the cardinals of the Holy Office, "without fear and without direction", the principles and rites of Egyptian Freemasonry. "Ordinary Freemasonry, he told them, is a dangerous route leading to atheism. I have tried to save the Masons from this danger, and to lead them, while there was still time for it, through a new Rite, in the belief of a God and in the immortality of the soul." At other times, "he explained to them how he prayed, reviving their faith before operating; then, through the intermediation of pure and young subjects, in the form of visions or directly in himself, in the form of interior inspirations, he received the revelations, the directions he had asked of God." (pg. 221). We understand the astonishment and indignation of the cardinal inquisitors at such statements. We must add that they are even less unusual for the Church than they are unpleasant for Freemasonry, whose "secret" thus ran the risk of being raised to the level of a disturbing magic²⁹⁵.

No doubt, Cagliostro was not only mute for the "interested ways", and wanted to "be useful" by improving the relations between the Church and Freemasonry. But what had he done to achieve this, why was he on a "mission", in whose name and on whose behalf was he speaking? And, moreover, was it opportune and legitimate for him to intervene in the quarrel which, especially after the Bulls of Clement XII and Benedict XIV, Rome had directed against the Masonic Order²⁹⁶?

Another question remains: what exactly has been the role of the Order of Malta in all this? Marc Haven alluded to this question several times, but without giving precise facts. He should have carried out some research in this direction, which might have brought unexpected results. For the Order of Malta, the illustrious heir of the Knights Hospitallers - those former "adversaries" of the Templars - was only interested in Cagliostro, but also, and above all, in the Strict Observance, and more especially in an avatar of it, the Rectified Regime²⁹⁷. We see that there are, in these matters, hidden things, whose profane-minded Masonic histories count for nothing. And Cagliostro was, too,

²⁹⁵ Without showing the slightest sympathy for the inquisitors of Pius VI, we can, in turn, render them justice, that never, throughout his interminable trial, was the Freemason, Cagliostro, not accused of "Satanism". Would it have been the same a hundred years later?

²⁹⁶ We speak, I e t it be understood, of speculative Freemasonry. As for operative Freemasonry, it was The term "Compagnonnage" is naturally included in the numerous condemnations of secret societies and, in particular, of the craft organisations which are nowadays known by the term "Compagnonnage". According to Luc Benoist, these condemnations would have begun as early as the 10th century (cf. *The Compagnonnage and the Trades*, pg. 20 sqq.). However, the first date formally indicating this is that of the Council of Lavaur, in 1368, which alluded to the "oaths, incantations and signs" used by the guilds. It should be noted that this date is subsequent to the Templar tragedy. It must be understood that the so-called condemnations, which were to multiply until the 18th century, were considered as "null and void" by the Comapgnons and even by a large part of the clergy: an attitude which was also that of the 18th century Freemasons (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t. II, pg. 126).

²⁹⁷ We shall mention only the following fact: He is a dignitary of the Order of M a l t a , the Commander of the Order of Malta.

Monspey, who put Willermoz in touch with his sister, the canoness of Valiere, the famous "Unknown Agent", a pitiful "caricature" of the "Unknown Superiors", who claimed to have raised the Strict Observance. This strange setback must have been the ringing of the bells of a great hope.

as ill-prepared as possible, to move through intrigues that were not even suspected²⁹⁸.

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What to make of Cagliostro? At the end of the 18th century, he seems to have summed up, in his behaviour, all the mistakes that should not be made in Freemasonry, as in any initiatory path: individual ambitions, quests for "powers", ignorance of the rites, the foundation of an irregular Regime, confusion between the psychic and the spiritual, throwing holy things as pasture for the profane, calling upon an outside authority for the initiatory path. One should not be upset if such "violations" of traditional norms have given rise to terrible "consequences". But Marc Haven's work leaves many problems in the shadows.

Has Cagliostro always acted on his own initiative, or was he one of those "inspired" people sometimes described as "impostors", _ the last in a "chain" running from Gugomos to Starck, then to Schroepfer²⁹⁹? Has he played a role, without knowing it, by ostensibly occupying the "vanguard of the Masonic scene", awaiting events which, by upsetting the profane world, would - by a singular combination of circumstances - bring about the return to Freemasonry of the only inheritance it has received, after its transformation into "speculative"³⁰⁰? It is not unreasonable to think so. But it would be rash to assert it.

We have not had the opportunity to speak of the private man that Cagliostro was. Some have exaggerated him³⁰¹. Others have praised his piety, his charity towards the poor, the fidelity of his friendship, his simplicity and his trust - often odiously betrayed - and his disinterestedness. This disconcerting character had, in fact and on a human level, virtues that prevented him from being considered absolutely unworthy of this qualification of "noble traveller", claimed in circumstances and in a place that were obviously unheeded. Kind to the humble, he was never subservient to the powerful. It is more honourable, in short, to have been exposed to the sarcasms of the "great Catherine" than to have received the praise so generously bestowed by this sovereign on the "philosophers" who, like Diderot or Voltaire, used their mercenary pen to sing the praises of "enlightened despotism". The "cardinal virtue" (no pun intended), which was Cagliostro's greatest fault, was that of Prudence. He mixed inconsiderably with the most suspicious characters, starting with

²⁹⁸ Guénon very formally doubted that Cagliostro had "a sufficiently profound knowledge" of Freemasonry to realise his aims (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t. II, pg. 109, & 1). It seems clear that the great *Cophite* was equally ill acquainted with exoteric Christianity, without which he would not have undertaken his Roman endeavours.

²⁹⁹ René Guénon did not entirely rule out this hypothesis. Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t. II, "The Strict Observance and the Unknown Superiors".

³⁰⁰ Marc Haven himself seemed to have had some "inkling" of such a possibility, when he consents in compare his hero to the Tarot's "jumper" (pg. 12, n. 1).

³⁰¹ Let us quote from a Theosophist pamphlet: *Incidents in the Life of the Count of Saint-Germain*, and some "literary" works: the novel *Joseph Balsam* by Alexandre Dumas senior; the drama, of the same title, by Alexandre Dumas junior; *The Illuminati*, by Gerard de Nerval; the libretto of the opera-comic, *Cagliostro*, by Scribe. All his productions, on the occasion, have provided weapons for French anti-Masonry. Thus, Dumas senior translated the initials L.D.P. (Liberté de Passage), which appear on the symbolic bridge of the 15th Scottish degree (Knight of the East or of the Sword), by *Lilium destrue pedibus* (*Foulez* at the foot of the lilies): an interpretation accepted by several authors who can be described as serious, not to mention certain Freemasons.

the Archbishop of Rohan. Marc Haven seems to think that his hero nourished the hope of leading the cardinal to a more regular life for his influence. If this was indeed the case, then it is very regrettable that Cagliostro's famous "clairvoyance" did not foresee, in order to put it into practice, the excellent advice which, half a century later, Goethe put on the lips of the Great *Cophite* himself: "Old Merlin from his black tomb has said to me: Let the madman apply himself to reforming the mad! Young men of Wisdom, let the mad behave like madmen, as it is agreed⁽³⁰²⁾".

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Dr. Marc Haven's book gives a better understanding of Cagliostro's Masonic life and work. A different author, in another work⁽³⁰³⁾ gives some interesting indications about the relationship between the Order of Malta and Cagliostro. An attentive author - very attentive - will highlight, by means of illustrations, the reproduction of a painting, representing "standing" Don Manöel Pinto de Fonseca, Grand Master of the Order of Malta, and who, according to M. Ribadeau Dumas, "took under his authority the young Balsam who was Cagliostro". Such an indication deserves to be taken into account. But before developing the subject of these relations, it is necessary to rectify some of the numerous material inaccuracies contained in this book. Let us mention some of these errors. We seem to be dreaming when we read (p. 25) of the detailed description of the Masonic initiation of Cagliostro in London. In fact, purification by the elements, the "blood pact", consecration by the sword, have never been practised beyond the English Channel; and in Blue Masonry, incense is used only for the consecration of the Lodges. No regular Masonic Rite has ever initiated a layman by the laying on of hands and by "the three breaths of the Venerable"! Where did the author get all this from?

Masonic history is treated with the same fantasy: it is well understood that English Freemasonry is constantly assimilated to Scottishness; there is, of course, the classic confusion between symbolic Scotland (i.e. the *Ultima Thulé*) and geographical Scotland; the two may have sometimes coincided, but this was certainly not the case in the 18th century! On the other hand, it is now admitted, even by profane-minded Masonic historians, that the "material" origin of Scottishism is to be sought in France, and more precisely in Paris. M. Ribadeau Dumas explains (pg. 27) that "the knight of Ramsay was looked upon very favourably by the English in his speech of 1737". Everything shows, on the contrary, that the speech in question, had no success (for the rest, very relative) except in France, and that the English never heard of it. We are even told (p. 40) that Cagliostro was admitted to the Strict Observance; in which case, his "characteristic name" should be known in Latin.... Understand well, according to the legend dear to the occultists, the links of the Chapter of Clermont (origin of the Ancient and Accepted Rite) with the Clermont college of the Jesuits, are mentioned as an obvious fact (pg. 39). Then comes, in a few words: "The Council of Emperors assembled spiritually, around

³⁰²Goethe saw in the "affair of the Necklace" one of the "inter-signs" which was never lacking, when heaven was hastening to withdraw its "mandate" from the great ones of the earth. He went to Sicily, to visit the family of Cagliostro. He wrote a drama entitled, *The Great Cophite*, and also a "ballad" with the same name, and the verses we have quoted, constitute its refrain.

³⁰³*Cagliostro*, by François Ribadeau Dumas (Arthaud, Paris).

to Grand Master Ferdinand of Brunswick, twelve crowned heads of Europe. It is this Council that delegated, in 1761, Etienne Morin, to America.... Freemasonry then progressed with the event". Evidently, the history of Scottishism seems to have been voluntarily "muddled" by the same people who inspired its founders. But M. Ribadeau Dumas has a way, typical of him, of simplifying the problem!

Here is what is even stronger (pg. 44): "Swedenborg had been at the head of the "Illuminati". Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin was an agent of the "Illuminati". Dom Pernéty reinforced this action, which Weishaupt developed for political purposes". Doesn't this make any commentary faint?

The history of the traditional sciences also holds unexpected discoveries. But we must limit ourselves. Let us reveal, however (pg. 47), that "it was in the heart of the Great Pyramid that the Egyptian priests proceeded to perform prophetic scenes, by means of a child under a hypnotic dream".

Let us now turn to the relations - underlined by M. Ribadeau Dumas - of the Order of Malta - formerly the Order of the Hospitallers - with Cagliostro. Cagliostro's native Sicily is very close to Malta, and many members of his family are said to have held important positions within the Order of the Knights of St. John. During a stay on the island, Cagliostro would have been particularly affected by the Grand Master Manoël Pinto (a Portuguese) and, above all, by one of his dignitaries, the royal official Emmanuel de Rohan, who, on the death of Pinto's successor, was elected Grand Master in 1775, the same year that preceded Cagliostro's arrival in England, the year in which his story was brought out of the shadows for fourteen years.

All this, which I would ask to be carefully verified, is rather curious. Cagliostro has always claimed to have been born in Malta and to have grown up in Medina, which makes little sense. On the "sovereign" island, did the Knights apply the anti-Masonic bulls of Clement XII and Benedict XIV? In the first Lodge mentioned, which was founded in 1788, i.e. ten years before Bonaparte, on his way to Egypt, ruined the temporal power of the Knights of St John. In any case, when Cagliostro speaks of Malta and Medina, it should not be forgotten that "High Freemasonry in the 18th century had a whole conventional geography"³⁰⁴, which does not facilitate the discovery of the truth.

M. Ribadeau Dumas had, moreover, a very debatable idea of the attitude of the Order of Malta towards the Templars and Freemasonry in general. He wrote (pg. 12):

"The independence of the Knights of Malta - possibly very oriental - towards the Church was legendary. Their affinities with the Temple, tinged with regret at the unjust disappearance, in the worst torments, of their brothers in arms, led them not to dispense with Templar thinking. Some Grand Masters, recalling the martyrdom of Grand Master Jaques de Molay, suffered, in the course of their ministries, the weight of this spiritual burden whose secret, for the initiates, lay in a certain Koranic (*sic*) illumination, reinforcing the impulses of the nostalgic (*sic*) exegesis.

³⁰⁴*Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, t. II, "The Strict Observance and the Unknown Superiors".

All this is obviously rather exaggerated. It is possible that some members of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem may have shown some sympathy, more or less overt, towards the former brothers in arms. The Knights of Malta are Knights... But the two Orders were, in reality, "rivals and adversaries". Jean Palou recalls (*La Franc-Masonie*³⁰⁵ pg. 204) that "the holders of the 33rd degree of Scotus had their feast, at the beginning of the 19th century, on the 3rd October, i.e. the anniversary of the donation of the Templars' property to the Knights of Malta" (or rather to their "ancestors", the Hospitallers). A contemporary author, M. Paul Naudon, has tried to attribute to this "Scottish" attitude, not very chivalrous motives, and even a "utilitarianism" bordering on the most sordid mercantilism. Has he not forgotten here - as in other circumstances - that historical events have a symbolic meaning? In any case, loyalty obliges us to recognise that M. Naudon, in the rituals he has reproduced, has done nothing against the violent hostility - especially in France, is it not natural - directed against the Order of Malta by the "Supreme Councils of the Holy Empire".

Since we are talking about the Knights of Malta, we will allow ourselves to provide some information on this Order that we have found in *The Notebooks of Saint John*³⁰⁶.

Do we know, for example, that the caliph Haroun-al-Rachid established the first "Frankish" hospice in Jerusalem, and that his ally Charlemagne "was the first sovereign to regulate the proper functioning of the hospices at the stages and places of pilgrimage"? Around the year 1048, the Italians "obtained, from the caliph of Egypt, permission to open, for the Latin Christians, a new and large hospice, close to the Holy Sepulchre, and situated on the land donated, as a present, by the Muslim prince". When the Turks changed their name to "Arabs", the Latin-Islamic friendship was compromised, and the Crusades were born. The Frankish hospice survived. Numerous lords entered, serving the pilgrims and the sick. Gerard de Martigues, considered to be the founder of the Hospitallers, took monastic habits; the new institution was approved in 1113 by Pope Pascal II, who conferred many privileges on it, notably that of electing its leader without interference from ecclesiastical authority. Gerard de Martigues died in the odour of sanctity, and his successor, Raymond du Puy, elected in 1118, "decided to transform his convent and its ramifications into a regular troop of soldier-monks". The religious and military Order of St John of Jerusalem was founded. We will not dwell on the rivalries and jealousies that arose between the Hospitallers and the Templars. *The Notebooks of St. John*, speaking sadly and without prejudice, prefer to quote extracts from the rule of the Temple, where St. Bernard gave the panegyric of the soldier-monk, and to insist on the numerous circumstances in which the two Orders acted in concert. They were both rich, and, "thanks to their financial resources, they were able to pay the ransom to free King St Louis, prisoner at Damiette". *The Notebooks* do not speak of the glories of the Order after the final loss of the Holy Land in 1291. The stay in Cyprus, then in Rhodes and finally in Malta, the places where Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and La Valette were enlightened, are no longer remembered. Let us now turn to the events that were to transform the sovereign Order so profoundly. In 1797, the Grand Master, Immanuel de Rohan, concluded a treaty with Tsar Paul I: a Russian branch of the Order was to be

³⁰⁵Small Payot library.

³⁰⁶This is the first issue of 1969 of this periodical, the "official bulletin of the Sovereign Order of St John of Jerusalem, Knights Hospitaller of Malta".

founded "for the eternal times", mainly by Catholic (i.e. Polish) elements of the Tsar. The latter became "Protector of the Order". A few months later, under Ferdinand de Hompesch, Malta was taken by Bonaparte. The Knights flocked to Russia, deposed Hompesch's Grand Master and elected the Tsar Protector to succeed him. This was at the end of 1798. It seems clear that, in the minds of the Tsar and the Knights electors, this was more than an ordinary election. Paul I - whom the review takes pains to present (notably through the citations in *the Memorial of St Helena*) as a far less capricious and degenerate sovereign than some historians have claimed - modified the imperial arms of the Russian state, where the double-headed eagle bore, during his reign, the eight-pointed Maltese cross. The Tsar founded a new Grand Priory for non-Catholics. All the European powers (with the exception of revolutionary France) were notified of the election and all of them acknowledged their reception. "It is noteworthy that this international recognition was only inaugurated by the first sovereign (in rank) of the European concert, the Emperor of the Holy Roman-Germanic Empire and Apostolic King of Hungary". However, the Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII, refused to recognise the validity of the election: in 1802, a new, strictly Catholic Order of Malta was founded. Roger Peyrefitte wrote about it in a work that had some repercussions at the time, and which evokes the quarrels of its members with certain circles of the Roman Curia. It should be noted that the two Orders, the Russian and the "Roman", have since become non-monastic (we do not say "lay"). The Russian Tsars took many arbitrary decisions to ensure the establishment of the Knights in their States: a corps of Maltese pages was created, as well as a regime of knight-guards, who were to serve as bodyguards of the sovereign, being the Grand Master. The Order of Malta had thus become a specifically Russian and Orthodox institution. The Tsars were the Grand Masters by simple inheritance. They remained so until the fall of their empire in 1917. Then, the Grand Mastership became elective. It would be desirable for details to be given subsequent to these events, and we would also like to know if there were Knights among the great Russian immigration to Paris. This Order, later led by an Orthodox prince, among which Christians of all Churches seemed to be found, describes itself as the "legitimist Order of Malta", and designates the Order founded in 1802 as the "pontifical Order".

But both Orders are "regular". In this sense, the slight irregularities that can be discovered in the foundation of both Orders do not tarnish the validity of the chivalric transmission.

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Let us now return to our object more directly. If we examine the action of certain Knights of Malta - if not of the Order of Malta - under various branches of Freemasonry, we shall have to give pride of place (if we may say so) to the Commander of Monspey, who, as we know, gave Willermoz and the Rectified Rite this calamitous present: the canoness of Vallière. But it would also lead to some research into other Freemasons of the same period, starting with the illustrious friend of the Tsar, Alexander I, Joseph de Maistre. Let it not seem strange to see how we associate a Maistre with a Willermoz. The haughty aristocrat and the negotiator, in his turn naïve and cunning, understood each other like carnival hucksters, in order to falsify the rituals.

and to propose to the Brothers of his Order, "an apparent object" in order "to suppress more, in Freemasonry, the kind of Order of the Templars". It is they themselves who say so; and we would not, for anything in the world, doubt the word of these gentlemen, eminently do-gooders, one of them (Willermoz) having, as his "battle cry" *Verba ligant* ("words oblige"), and another (Joseph de Maistre) belonging to a Lodge which had a beautiful name: "La Sincérité" (Sincerity).

To return to Cagliostro, it seems that he has never bothered about the Templar problem. He has never spoken or written anything about it. Such an attitude should not surprise us. All the "Judaising" Masonic rites have shown the same silence. The Order of the Chosen Coëns, the Order of the Initiated Brethren of Asia, had no "Templar degrees". The case of the Rite of Misraïm was a little peculiar.

90 degrees, included one (the 65th), called "Grand Chosen Knight Kadosch", entirely comparable to the degree of the Scottish Rite. But we see that this degree was very far from the highest point of the "scale" of the Rite, when, ordinarily, the "Templar" degrees are, on the contrary, very close to that high point. In the 33rd degree of the Ancient and Accepted Rite, two themes constantly appear (as in the case of Dante): the destruction of the Templars and the reign of the Holy Empire, as is well shown by the two words of passage in the vulgar language: "De Molay._Hiram-Abif"; and "Frederick._De Prussia"³⁰⁷.

We hope that the foregoing indications will, in turn, open up the search for certain "backgrounds" in the history of Freemasonry, which are not devoid of interest. But before leaving *The Notebooks of St John*, we must do justice to the fact that this journal is neither anti-Catholic, anti-Templar, nor anti-Masonic. There are more references to the praise of the present-day Knights of Malta. These heirs of the heroes of Cyprus, Rhodes, Malta and Lepanto speak of Islam, which they have fought for so many years, in laudatory and sometimes almost admiring terms. This is a truly chivalrous attitude, very rare in our times. However, a question arises: chivalric initiation did not consist solely in training men of honour, and - in the case of the Hospitaller Orders - men of charity, but aimed, above all, to train initiates. What is known today of the Order of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem? On this point, the bulletin, from which we have just quoted numerous extracts, unfortunately does not give us any answers.

³⁰⁷The presence in a degree such as Scottish 33 of a reference to Voltaire's (intermittent) friend raises many problems. Another Frederick II, emperor of the Holy Empire, is a truly enigmatic character, among whose heirs, Manfred and Conradin, frequently appear in Boccaccio's Decameron. On the other hand, Frederick (*Friedrich* in German) means, etymologically, "King of Peace". The word second, is synonymous with "charitable" (*in French "secourable"*). But above all, the Prussians were originally called "Borusses", a word derived from the root *Bor*, from which we know their relationship to the Primordial Tradition. However, "Frederick II of Prussia" could be translated symbolically as: "The pacifist, charitable Emperor from the land of the Boar". It should also be noted that there is a Scottish degree, which bears the evocative name of "Noachite or Prussian Knight".

CHAPTER XV

WILLERMOZ, OR THE DANGERS OF INNOVATIONS IN MASONIC MATTERS

Willermoz, a famous figure in the history of 18th century Freemasonry, founded a Rite, the Scottish Rectified Rite, which was widely spread in Switzerland and France.

This Rite claims to be the heir of the "Chosen Coëns of the Universe" and also, in a way, a privileged heir of the Order of the Temple. Against these two claims, René Guénon has raised his voice on several occasions, and that is the reason why we are going to go into some details on this subject.

As far as the "posterity of the Chosen Coëns" is concerned, there is no problem; the Chosen Coëns died without leaving any posterity. Their last "Great Sovereign", Sebastian de las Casas, "abdicated" in 1780 without designating a successor. And if he had designated one, it certainly would not have been Willermoz or one of his friends. Let us listen to the excellent historian of the Chosen Cohens, R. Le Forestier:

"A single point in the last instructions of the Grand Sovereign before he abdicated, the name of the system for becoming *fidéi* - commissioner of the expiring Order - betrayed the rancour which had inspired the Chosen Coëns, the victorious concurrence made to their association, by the Knights Well-wishers. Savalette de Langes, in whose hands Las Casas invited his subordinates to deposit the sealed packages containing his papyri, was President and Curator of the Archives of the Regime of the Philalèthes, a Masonic association (...) born, in 1733, in the Parisian lodge "The Reunited Friends", which had just led a violent campaign against the Lyon Reform³⁰⁸. Willermoz's negotiations with the German Strict Observance had given rise to a lively protest movement on the part of many French Freemasons (...). The Philalèthes (...) became noisy interpreters³⁰⁹ of this opposition (...), to become a weapon against the Knights Well-wishers, who disputed their supremacy in the various Councils of the Grand Orient (...). By entrusting them with the archives of the Order, the Chosen Coëns inflicted on their former Brothers the most hurtful affront³¹⁰.

The instructions of Las Casas were carried out throughout 1781. Savalette de Langes received (...) the correspondence, the monthly plans, the catechisms and ceremonies of the various degrees, the annual plans, the tables with their invocations, the general and secret explanations (...). The Order of the Chosen Coëns ceased to exist³¹¹".

We believe that the cause has been understood. What The Houses transmitted to the Philalèthes - perhaps not very "qualified" to receive such a deposit - is nothing more than unusable documentation; and, in fact, after this time, no Mason has ever practised the special rites of the Chosen Coëns: the daily invocation, the

³⁰⁸That is to say, the "rectification" carried out by Willermoz at the Gaules Convent in 1778.

³⁰⁹The "specialist", so to speak, in this opposition to Willermoz, was the Marquis de Chefdebién, Commissioner of the archives of the Philalèthes, who also belonged to the Strict Observance, where he had the name of *Franciscus, Eques a Capite Galeato*.

³¹⁰To understand this sentence, it is necessary to know that the Philalèthes, for the most part, were total strangers to the Chosen Coëns, while the Knights Well-wishers, counted a great number of these Chosen; Willermoz having been one of the favourite disciples of Martinès de Pacually.

³¹¹*Occult Freemasonry in the 18th century and the Order of the Chosen Coëns*, pgs. 517 and 518.

invocation of the three days at the New Moon, the Operations of the equinoxes preceded by a rigorous "quarantine". Thus, the attempt, so interesting in several respects, to return to "operative" Freemasonry, by grafting onto the old Masonic trunk the teachings and rites of probably Sephardic origin, _ this attempt has died out; and we can say, with René Guénon: the Rectified Scottish Regime does not come, under any title, from the Order of the Chosen Coëns. Such is, in fact, the conclusion of the long article entitled: The Enigma of Martinès de Pacualy³¹².

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And the Templar heritage? Here René Guénon is even clearer: "The Rectified Regime has nothing to do with Templar Freemasonry",... because, quite the contrary, one of the main points of the "rectification" consisted, precisely, in the repudiation of the Templar origin of Freemasonry⁽³¹³⁾.

If it is serious to pretend to be what one is not, claiming to be the heir of the Chosen Coëns, and if it is regrettable for regular Freemasons to renounce a heritage claimed by Freemasonry as a whole, we must consider that all this is only a part of the reproaches that can be levelled at Willermoz. Not wishing to give the impression that we profess any particular animosity towards the founder of the Rectified Rite, we shall take his teachings from very different authors, who were among the contributors to the review *Symbolism*, at the time when it was under the inspiration of J. Corneloup and Marius Lepage.

In the October-December 1968 issue, Mr. Jean Chardons has dealt with *The Moral Rule* of the Rectified Regime. Promulgated at the Convent of Wilhelmsbad, it was composed by Baron de Türckheim, a great friend of Willermoz. What to say about this Rule? The extracts given by M. Chardons do not go beyond the exoteric level. Thus, morality, like so many other elements of religion, could, and should, be transported to a truly esoteric perspective. M. Chardons rightly points out the grandiloquent, even bombastic style (and often inspired by a kind of Rousseaulian sentimentalism). For our part, we believe that, if a moral Rule should be communicated outside the initiation of an Apprentice Mason, it would be preferable to have used one of the Masonic codes that Camille Savoie - illustrious Freemason of the Rectified Rite - inserted in his *Observations on the Temples of Freemasonry*. These two codes, at least, have the advantage of being of a brevity reminiscent of the Decalogue.

But the most serious of all Willermoz's innovations - not only because it testifies to an incredible misunderstanding of Masonic symbolism, and even of simple Christian doctrine, but above all, we think, because it was carried out under psychic influences, at least... disturbing - is obviously the substitution, in the ritual, of the word "Phaleg" for that of "Tubalcain". In *The Symbolism* of October/December 1966, we can read an interesting article on this subject, signed by "Ostabat". The author, the introduction tells us, is a young Mason of the Rectified Scottish Rite. He explains how, in 1785, the Director of the Rectified Scottish Rite of the Auvergne province (resident in Lyon), on the proposal of Willermoz, decided to

³¹²This text has been inserted in the *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonage*, Volume I.

³¹³*Ibid*, pg. 141.

this modification, with the most severe recitals. You have taken as a word of assembly, the name of a diabolical agent, the same that leads to all carnal vices. Your ignorance stems from what that name was in Egyptian initiation, etc...". Willermoz operated at the instigation of the "Unknown Agent", who is now known to have been Marie-Louise de Valiere, canoness of Remiremont, and sister of the commander of Monspey. This "*chrisiaque*", as they called her at the time, sent to the "Chosen and Beloved Lodge" ("La Bienhechora" of Lyon) and to Willermoz, abundant notebooks, obtained by "automatic writing". Willermoz communicated the decisions of Lyon to the German Lodges of the rectified "correspondence", but they rejected the application of innovations. After a few months, Willermoz stopped thinking about the Agent and the pretensions to operate "the reform of all Masonic societies and of all human religions". The more serious members of "La Bienhechora" broke away. On the eve of the Revolution, the credit of the ambitious sleepwalker was ruined. But "it happened," says Ostabat, "that the alteration of the rectified ritual was not abolished, even though the lack of authority of its origin had been demonstrated, and that it still exists today, testimony of the times of illusions, in which some Brothers, the most illustrious, abandoned themselves, when they had at their door, the storm that was to ruin the Order, to the prestige that the Psalmist designates as 'ghosts of the night'". The author feels that there must have been something behind this "disastrous misdirection" which was not accessible to simple erudition, and thinks that it would not be useless "to re-examine history in this light".

Willermoz, in fact, was constantly the object of very suspicious attempts on the part of the somnambulists, the most important of whom was Gilberte Rochette, but whose authority was ruined by the intervention of the "Unknown Agent", the canoness de Valiere. It is necessary to read in Madame Alice Joly's work, which sets out the whole history of Willermoz³¹⁴ the improbable vicissitudes which mark the relations of the founder of the Rectified Rite, with his pretended interpretations of the wills of Heaven. And, on the other hand, it is enough to open the *Book of the Initiates*, where Willermoz consigned, in the use of the *Node Raabs*³¹⁵ of the "Chosen and Beloved Lodge", the predictions of the inspired canoness to know the real reasons for the substitution. And these too are good! "Tubalcaïn is the father of all abominations..., guilty of the most shameful prevarications in the carnal way". This is bad enough. But it is even worse. "He could have, by his repentance, stopped the course of these evils; but dragged by his own concupiscence, he *evaded* the wicked angels in women. Such is the crime that corrupts all flesh, O abyss of horror!" This is why everything goes so wrong, on the part of the world! The Tubalcaïn family was, therefore, atrocious: "Tubalcaïn *voulia* (wanted?) the metals, and, her sister, Noéma, *voulia* the animals. It seems, then, that the spirit of the good canoness, a little... tormented by sexuality, the crimes of Tubalcaïn and Noéma, have sometimes been confused with the 'fault' of Adam and Eve, for similar expressions are used in the fall of the first man: "This being, who came out of being itself, dared to attribute to himself the production. *Voulia* his pure *ornos*, which he had in his *séos*, etc...". Do we want to know the real reasons for "the choice of Phaleg"? "Willermoz imposed on the rectified Lodges which followed his direction, to adopt the

³¹⁴A *Lyonnais Mystic and the Secrets of Freemasonry (1730-1824)*.

³¹⁵In this passage, we have italicised the terms proper to his vocabulary, for the least inept of canonry. At first, Willermoz spent his nights wondering what these wild words could mean. He ended up enlisting the help of his little nymph, who only partially refused to elucidate the meaning of what he was writing under "psychic influences", which were somewhat unhealthy.

The word "Phaleg", because the Agent taught that the son of Heber (Phaleg) was the first teacher of Masonry, the second being Solomon, and the third himself", i.e. the Agent-Canoness. And let us not forget that, writing these lofty revelations, the Unknown Agent saw how, from his pen, "the blood of Christ came forth". Mne. Alice Joly, from whom these quotations are taken, thinks that the Agent was really taken for a new incarnation of Christ that was to take place among the *Node Raabs*. Let us continue to pay attention to the canonical oracle: "Just as the prophets were given to the chosen people to be their light, it is today the true Rectified Masons who are called to form the new chosen Temple. It is a Great Work, which has just hatched and seems to have no end. How did the canons- Counts of St. John's Primary present themselves in ranks attached to the columns of the Chosen or Beloved Lodge (that is what the Agent called "The Do-gooder" of Lyon) welcoming the audacious exegesis and sensationalist theology of their colleague in canonry? It seems clear that these threefold venerable personages have remained, in the circumstances, as the Scriptures say, "dumb dogs". As for Willermoz, with regard to his glowing promises to his Lodge, he felt himself won over by the holy delirium of the canoness, and, possessed by a kind of sacred fury, he proposed, quite simply, "to burn all the books and all the histories of the councils (*sic*)", which, evidently, no longer had any object. We are not inventing anything. It is the Baron of Türkheim who explains the matter to the Duke of Brunswick in a letter of 1787. M. Ostabat was not wrong to speak of "disastrous misguidance" and to evoke certain "prestige". It would be a service to the Rectified Rite and also to the memory of Willermoz to work on filling the "cracks", starting with the last one, the one that betrayed "Tubalcaïn".

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* *

Another article in *The Symbolism* asserts that Willermoz's eccentricities have cast more suspicion on the Rectified Rite than on the other Masonic Rites towards the Catholic religious authorities. We believe this without rancour. But we must add that, after some time, this Rite has made laudable efforts to draw closer to the other heirs of the Strict Observance, namely the Swedish Rite and what may remain in Germany of the Rite of Zinnendorf, as well as the *Knigh Templar* degrees of England and the United States. In short, the Rectified would like to recover the Templar heritage. This is not impossible, but it requires a real "work of Hercules". It would indeed be necessary to start by eliminating the innovations due to the overflowing imagination of a nun without a vocation, a total victim of the "ghosts of the night". Once this had been done, it is clear that nothing, or at least not much, would remain of Willermoz's personal work and the famous rites written by his hand.

CAPÍTULO XVI

1877

The most important event in the history of the Grand Orient of France in the 19th century is intimately linked to the person of Frédéric Desmons, to whom an academic, especially in Masonic matters, M. Daniel Ligou, in 1968, devoted an excellent work in which he describes Desmons' three activities on the religious, political and Masonic levels³¹⁶. It is the latter that interests us here, but we will nevertheless cite an episode that marks both the end of his ecclesiastical ministry and the real starting point of his political career, because it reflects a curious day in the life of the character.

Pastor of the reformist (i.e. Calvinist) Church, with "liberal" tendencies (giving more importance to morality than to dogma and the sacramental way), Desmons, already general councillor of the Gard department, wanted to stand for deputation. A "Committee of Radical Republican Catholic Workers" published a manifesto against him, a real masterpiece of electoral literature. It can be judged here:

"Two candidates claim the honour of your votes. One is the citizen Mayor Malzac, the other is the citizen Pastor Desmons. The latter, in the eyes of the citizens who have waged a relentless war against clericalism, by virtue of the dress that covers him, will never be able to find grace in the scrutiny. It will be an extravagant buffoonery (*sic*), to see only Catholic republicans, after having escaped from the embrace of the Gospel, go and throw themselves into the arms of the Bible. To elect a pastor, would be a deplorable example for this reason. A crowd of chaplains of all religions could, temporarily, throw their clothes to the four winds of secularism and make a strong claim to national representation; then, with the seats conquered, it would not be long before we would see the democrats return to Caledonia and the dragons in their *Cévennes*... Because the situation languishes when we consider having a deputy pastor, because of the reprisals resulting from the rancour we have against the deputy Bishops, whom we want to remove from the Chamber... It is good that you vote Malzac".

Seduced by the beauty of this argument, Desmons left the pastoral office. The result was not long in coming. In the elections, Citizen Malzac was swept aside, and the ex-pastor was able to savour the sweetness of being a member of the Chamber of Deputies.

Let us leave aside the aspect of Desmons' political activity, which was much more heterogeneous than his Masonic action. M. Ligou's book provides a lot of details in this respect; in describing the years preceding the First World War, he speaks of an "era of symbiosis between radicalism and Freemasonry" (pg. 128).

There was no lack of protests within the Order. There were dignitaries from the Grand Orient in the "boulangist committee" and later among the anti-partisans! The saddest episode of this period was the famous "Ballot Paper affair" in 1904. The author underlines the passage which has many obscure points in this history (pgs. 224 ff.).

³¹⁶Daniel Ligou, *Frédéric Desmons et la Franc-Masonie de la IIIe République* (Gédalge Bookshop, Paris).

The name of Frédéric Desmons is linked to the most famous and also the most unfortunate episode in the history of the Grand Orient under the Third Republic. We have understood that it concerns the question of the Great Architect of the Universe.

Since the end of the Second Empire, this question had been raised. At the same time, the Grand Orient seemed to have contrived to run afoul of foreign Obediences and to criticise their behaviour. He reprimanded Prussian Lodges for not admitting Jews, American Lodges for not admitting Blacks. It is true that the Grand Orient was right. But when we criticise our neighbour, it is preferable to find ourselves without reproach. This was not the case with the Grand Orient, which went so far as to suppress the Grand Mastership: the President of the Council of the Order, elected each year by the assembly of the Blue Lodges, exercised some of the functions attributed to the Grand Master. However, the Grand Mastership is considered to be a *landmark*. In the administration of the Grand Orient, the workshops of the higher degrees were not rigorously separated from the blue Lodges: a further infringement of the *landmarks*. Foreign Masons began to regard the Grand Orient as the "enfant terrible" of Freemasonry. And the day was soon to come when they would find that this enfant terrible was really playing his role well....

After the war of 1870, so painful for France. The German occupation weighed heavily on the provinces. Now, the King of Prussia, Guillermo I^o, who was to become, by our defeats, Emperor of Germany, was a Freemason, as was his son, Crown Prince Frederick (cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*, t. I, pg. 93). "When, at the end of 1870, Paris was ravaged, ten Lodges of the capital, in a common communiqué, announced that King Guillaume and his son had put themselves outside the Masonic law, and proposed the constitution of a tribunal to judge them". Such an initiative honoured the patriotism of its promoters, but not their judgement. Foreign Freemasons might have been surprised that the Grand Orient, so ready to be moved when France was at stake, had not spoken a few years earlier, at the time of the expedition to Mexico. In England, Masonic opinion was irritated. Queen Victoria's sons were high dignitaries in the Order (one of them, Duke Connaught, was to hold the Grand Mastership for more than 30 years); and her sister had married the Crown Prince of Prussia³¹⁷.

The international Masonic atmosphere had scarcely calmed down when the Grand Orient Convent of 1877 had to discuss a proposal to amend Article 1 of its Constitution: this article declared that Freemasonry recognised the existence of a Supreme Being. The Lodges had already deliberated the previous year, and a majority had voted in favour of amending the article. In the meantime, de Saint-Jean, the President of the Council of the Order, advised against changing anything, foreseeing exactly what would happen later. A commission was appointed by the Convent; Desmons was the spokesman. M. Ligou has reproduced the speech he made which led to his accession to the Convent (p. 86 ff.). He explains with touching candour that belief in God would not be the first *landmark* to be violated by the Grand Orient; that he had already violated many others, and that this offered no risk. Let us listen to him:

³¹⁷On this subject, in addition to the book by M. Ligou (pg. 210 and 211) and the work of J. T. Lawrence can be consulted, *Highways and By-ways of Freemasonry*, in the chapter: "The Grand Orient of France".

"Bear in mind, he told us, if you delete this article of the Constitution at present, you will separate the Grand Orient of France from all the Masonic powers of the world. You are going to isolate it from the bosom of Universal Freemasonry..... You fear, you say, that if this article is arbitrarily suppressed, it will lead to the isolation of the Grand Orient from the bosom of Freemasonry. But is not this the same argument that we were evoking, only seven years ago, against the suppression of the Grand Mastership, _ to which we gave value not long ago, against the admission into our Lodges of coloured men, and against the representation of the High Degrees within the annual Convents? And well! what has happened in the meantime? Our Masonic Assemblies have not been deterred by this obstacle which we had made them foresee; and, to-day, our relations with the other Masonic powers are, as far as I know, neither less cordial nor less extensive".

Comforted by this assurance, the Convent abolished the obligation to believe in God. The rituals were to be revised to remove any allusion to the Great Architect of the Universe.

"The reaction of Anglo-Saxon Masonry was swift and brutal. Even before the decision of the Convent was notified to it, the Grand Lodge of Ireland broke with the Grand Orient. It was followed by the Supreme Council of England and then by the Grand Lodge of Scotland. The Grand Lodge of England was to follow.... The Council of the Order replied, through its President, by specifying that, by modifying an article of its statutes, the Grand Orient of France did not understand that it had made a profession of atheism or materialism.... Everything else must have been useless, and the English, after 1877, have never again recognised the Grand Orient as a regular power".

It seems that with his message, Desmons has considerably underestimated "insular (*sic*) traditionalism" (pg. 94).

There remain, however, several obscure points and an enigma that Guénon seems to have been the only one to point out. "The verbal processes of the Convent make no mention of the suppression of the formula of the "Great Architect of the Universe", and no trace can be found of a vow concerning a "reform of the rituals", which would have implied this suppression; a vow which, nevertheless, certainly took place. Moreover, prior to 1877, the Grand College of Rites (i.e. the higher workshop of the Grand Orient, which works in the 33rd degree) had already introduced modifications of a rationalist nature into its ritual: it notably used the motto *Suum cuique Jus* ("To each his right"), a moralising "laicisation" of the authentic formula *Deus meumque Jus* ("God and my right")³¹⁸. Guénon, in making his references, was no doubt thinking of certain Masonic pieces (in particular the seals of the Grand College), dated 1876 and belonging to the collection of André Lebey, who reproduced some of them in the first issue, published around 1936, of *The Documents of the Present Temple*.

M. Ligou gives a very brief account of the attitude observed, after the rupture, towards French Masons wishing to visit British Lodges. "For a certain time, the Brethren of the Grand Orient of France were received as visitors in the English Lodges. They were asked only to believe in

³¹⁸*Studies on Freemasonry and the Comapgnonage*, t. II, pgs. 159 and 160.

God" (pg. 94, n.1). This situation could not go on for long, no longer than the Grand Orient's blunders would last. At the 1900 Convent, "Groussier proposed that it should be considered a Masonic offence to marry religiously or to baptise children; and his proposal was only rejected by 151 votes to 141" (pg. 214). At the 1904 Convent, it was proposed to consider "participation in any kind of worship as a Masonic offence" (pg. 223). This news had repercussions abroad, and did not facilitate the Grand Orient's attempts to resume inter-obediential relations. We know little about the contacts made, more or less officially, with the Grand Lodges of *Prince Hall Masonry*, i.e. Black Masonry in the United States. This organisation, absolutely regular to all intents and purposes, is not, however, recognised by the American Grand Lodges, and this, by virtue of the most contestable of all the *landmarks*: that which forbids the existence of more than one Grand Lodge per State. White Masons also observe it, not as irregular, but as "clandestine"³¹⁹. It is useless to say that Black Freemasonry is intensely religious: the attempts, perhaps purely individual, of certain members of the Grand Orient, have not had any chance of success.

We will not insist any more on the twisted attempts made by the Grand Orient to enlarge the limits of its own "jurisdiction" (i.e. outside France and the French colonies). From such habits, things could only deteriorate.

There existed in France, at the end of the 19th century, another Obedience, known today under the name of "Grand Lodge of France". But it could not enter into relationship with the United Grand Lodge of England, because the Blue Lodges were not then totally independent of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite. For 36 years, from 1877 to 1913, there was no Masonic relationship between France and England.

Desmons died in January 1910. At this date, the Grand Orient was to begin to reap the bitter fruits of its errors. One of its Lodges, "The Friends' Centre", humiliated in its elementary rights (and this, precisely, on the question of the Grand Architect of the Universe) by a representative of the Council of the Order, seceded; and, in 1913, created a new Obedience which was promptly recognised by the United Grand Lodge. This Obedience is known today as the "National Grand Lodge of France". All hopes that could have nourished the Grand Orient to repair the "breach" opened in 1877 were dashed.

After its foundation in 1773, until 1877, the Grand Orient of France had certainly been the most prominent Obedience after the United Grand Lodge of England. It had played a certain role in the "clarification" of the High Degrees and, no doubt, in the constitution of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite. Etienne Morin's "patent" - much disputed, but nonetheless an essential piece, and which was at the origin of the constitution in Charleston of the first Supreme Council - was granted "to the Grand Orient of France and under the approval of H.S.H., the Most Magnanimous Brother Louis de Bourbon, Count of Clermont".

When reading M. Ligou's work, we sometimes wonder how an Obedience can preserve its initiatory character when it authorises the Lodges to :

³¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 154.

to adhere *es-qualite* to a political party, to throw themselves wholeheartedly into electoral fights and to display the most obtuse anti-clericalism. But nevertheless, the facts are there. During its worst turmoil, the Grand Orient of France never lost the awareness that, in reality, it was something very different from what was seen on the outside. M. Ligou recalls this many times. In 1901, "a certain number of ultra-rationalist Lodges, including "Masonic Unity" in the East of Paris, simplified the ritual, and even went so far as to dispense with it, considering it as belonging to the past. Others had done away with the decoration - pictures and cords - and replaced it with a simple insignia. Guardian of Tradition, the Grand College of Rites and, above all, its successive Grand Commanders, and in particular Brother Blatin, were concerned. The Council of the Order followed. Desmons severely censured the initiatives of "Masonic Unity", which was finally suspended, including the Convent. We see that, contrary to various self-serving assertions, Grand Orient Freemasonry, even at a time when it appeared to be clearly politicised, never wished to renounce its character as an initiatory society" (p. 207).

Thanks to this preservation of the essentials of the ritual, the Grand Orient escaped the fate of La Charbonnerie, whose mistakes it had largely shared. It is also what enabled it, especially after the Second World War, to carry out certain reforms which, unfortunately to a limited extent, made up for the shortcomings of the incompetent builders who were sometimes described as "mortar bunglers". The Grand Mastership was re-established. The High Degrees were clearly separated from the Symbolic Degrees. Certain Lodges refused to consider the study of "non-Masonic" questions. A Parisian workshop one day opened on the altar the Book of the Sacred Law. All these "promises" have not borne fruit, but they are the sign of work in "depth".

In January 1910, that is to say at the very moment of Desmons' death, *La Gnose* published the last part of Guénon's first article³²⁰. In March, this journal began, under the signature of "Palengenius", the publication of a series of articles on Freemasonry, a series that was to continue for 40 years, and which would thoroughly and completely revamp Masonic studies. It is, then, at the "darkest" moment of French Masonic life, that this light emerged. Action has been slow, difficult and hampered by hostile forces. There has been no lack of misunderstandings and, above all, deviations. But the seed sown in the Masonic field has begun to germinate. Today, in France, in the four regular Obediences, and even in this particularly irregular Obedience which is the "Human Rights", Guénon's work is known. Efforts to stifle it have failed. Attempts to denaturalise it or to "limit" it will equally fail. Contrary to what many feared, René Guénon was not wrong when he saw in the Masonic Order the great hope, and possibly the only hope of health, for the Western tradition.

³²⁰This text, "*The Demiurge*", is the first chapter of a posthumous compendium entitled *Miscellaneous*.

CHAPTER XVII

THE TAXI AFFAIR

Young readers of *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonage*³²¹ will no doubt have some difficulty in understanding, even partially, the many allusions made to the Taxil affair; and since, moreover, they know that Guénon wrote nothing "by chance" and that his interest in apparently contingent things must be justified from the "central" point of view - which was his own, and from which he never wished to depart - their curiosity is all the more lively. In our opinion, nothing could respond better to this attention than a work which appeared in 1964 under the signature of M. Eugen Weber⁽³²²⁾ for it is an excellent account, based on original documents, of the famous mystification which, at the end of the last century (supposedly the 18th), constituted the most picturesque and also the most tenebrous episode in the long history of anti-Masonry in France. It is surprising, to say the least, that historians of Freemasonry have not paid more attention to the vicissitudes in which the sinister is contested with the burlesque, and which, it seems, often add a certain touch of fantasy to an ordinarily austere study. If the Morgan affair, which passed like a cyclone through American Freemasonry in 1828 and the following years, had no comic element, was the same not true in England with regard to the actions of the *Gormogons* and the *Gregorians*, and not because of the role that "Beau Brumel", the prince of Dandyism, seems to have played in the latter organisation? But when it comes to triggering laughter, the palm goes, without doubt, to French anti-Masonry, of which the Taxil affair was the "masterpiece". No mystification has ever been better staged, none has ever succeeded so perfectly. The jokes, the wildest ones, which followed it: the bust of Hégésippe Simon the Forerunner, the groaning *Poldeve* people under the yoke of the "hobereaux", the international incantation led by Crimias, Tarcos and Xullpo, _ these gentle schoolboy jokes, have lasted a few weeks, a few months at most. The Taxil affair has lasted 12 years; and when we learnt the key to the story, it made us laugh even more...

It is only when the victim of the joke is the highest religious authority in the Christian world, however little respect we have for holy things, that we may laugh less and begin to reflect. For this reflection - let us say it now - we have to turn to Guénon and not to M. Weber. This author, a professor at the University of Los Angeles, is a specialist in the history of ideas and political movements, and he has published some outstanding works in this discipline. There is, therefore, nothing in his events that does not have a "comic" side to it. In particular, he insists a lot and on several occasions on the particular "atmosphere", which seems to have been "fabricated" by long hands, and in which the Taxil affair broke out. In his summary of the relations of the Holy See with speculative Freemasonry (pgs. 199 ff.), he emphasises those points which have often passed under silence. The first formal excommunication, that of Clement XII (1738), reproached the Order only for its secrecy, and for admitting persons of all religions. Such were the

³²¹In the course of this chapter, this work will be designated by the initials *E.F.M.*, followed by the volume and page number.

³²²Eugen Weber, *Satan Franc-Mason* (Archives collection, Julliard, Paris).

two only complaints, articulated for 150 years. But, in 1873, Pius IX, possibly because of the collusion of numerous French and Italian Masons with the Carbonari "sales", "attributed Freemasonry for the first time *ex cathedra* to Satan". Four years later (1877), the Grand Orient of France abolished the obligation for its members to believe in God³²³. In 1884, the encyclical *Humanum Genus* of Leo XIII was to aggravate the situation considerably, renewing the accusation of Satanism and adding to it the worst accusations: "Those who are affiliated must promise declared and unquestioning obedience to their leaders..., otherwise they must first consecrate themselves to the most rigorous treatment and even to death". In fact, it is not surprising that the penalty of the last torture was inflicted on those who were convinced that they had complied with the secret discipline of the society or resisted the orders of their chiefs; and this was practised with such skill that the executioner of these death sentences almost always escaped the established justice.

This encyclical had an immense repercussion, and an incredible number of libellists sought to "illustrate" and exploit it. After these timid essays by Louis d'Estampes (1884) and **Dom** Benoit (1886), the former Rabbi Paul Rosen - of whom Guénon said to have been, "in the Taxil affair, one of the most direct agents of counter-initiation" (*É.F.M.* I, pg. 263, *in fine*) - published *Satan et Cie* (1888). In 1891, it was Huysmans' turn, with *Là-bas*. But since 1885, only a few years after the encyclical, Léo Taxil had entered the fray.

Born in Marseilles in 1854, he first made his name with a series of dirty works: *The Secret Loves of Pius IX*, *The Scandalous History of the Orleans Family*, *The Mistresses of the Pope*, *The Poisoner Leo XII*, *The Crimes of the Clergy*, etc. Si If we want to know how far one can descend into ignominy, we will find in M. Weber's book (p. 207) the mention of other pamphlets, the titles of which, by themselves, could not be included here.

But, in 1885, Taxil, expelled from Switzerland for shady dealings, convicted of theft, declared bankrupt and expelled from the newspaper *La Lanterne*, with the consequent scandal, converted, and the apostolic nuncio himself lifted the many ecclesiastical censures he had incurred. From then on, he began a new series of works: *The Mysteries of Freemasonry*, *Are there Women in Freemasonry*, *Women and Freemasonry*, *Freemason Sisters*, etc. Un

The new "crusade" was joined by a buzzing swarm of authors, hitherto in obscurity. Mgr. Meurin, of whom we shall speak later, published: *Freemasonry, Synagogue of Satan*; Dr. Bataille added *The Devil in the 19th century*. Italy entered the movement with Domenico Margiotta, whom Leo XIII elevated to the dignity of Knight of the Holy Sepulchre. The journal *Freemasonry Unmasked*, acquired by the Augustinian Fathers of the Assumption, offers its readers "detailed reports on the orgies of the Lodges of adoption, suggesting that the *Freemasons continued to be the most dangerous of the Freemasons*", suggesting that the Freemasons continued to practise their human sacrifices, and denounced the horrifying development adopted, in recent years, by the satanic Order of *Odd-Fellows*, who called themselves Re-Théurgistes Optimates...". Scandalised, Leon XIII hastened to excommunicate the *Odd-Fellows* ("strange Compagnons"), a simple organisation of mutual help, which likes to increase, in the American way, the admission of its members, through a ceremonial which vaguely imitated Masonic rites.

³²³Cf. Chapter XVI of this work.

During his papacy, Leo XIII also excommunicated, always for Satanism, two other American societies: the "Knights of Pythias" and? the "Sons of Temperance". Evidently, we were in the midst of an aberration.

It must be said that, in the infernal *romancing* of Taxil and his cronies, American Freemasonry was particularly demonised. The French Freemasons, ignorant of "Palladisme" (Masonry of the "Last Rites"), were, for most of the simple peasants, vulgar dishwashers. But the American general, Albert Pike, as founder of the New Reformed Palladic Rite, had an "infernal telephone" at his disposal, to inform himself every morning of Lucifer's instructions. He resided in Charleston, Georgia, where, every Friday, Satan appeared in the Masonic *Sanctum Regnum*, in front of the original **Baphomet**. Pike also had in his service a "diabloton", apparently very diligent. The learned Dr. Bataille, who teaches us these things, also knows the number of demons and "demonesses": there are 44,435,633 exactly. Another leader of Palladism is Albert Galatin Mackey, author of a Masonic encyclopaedia, which has been reprinted several times. He has taken the excellent Dr. Bataille on a visit, in the simplest way, to the American Masonic laboratory. From this office of iniquity, and from another in Naples, come: "the manna of St. Nicholas of Bari" and so many other *poisons* with which "Pope Leo XII and many of his predecessors" were poisoned. Also poisoned by the Sect were Adolphe Thiers and the Count of Cavour, and many other statesmen, who have fallen into a possibly undeserved oblivion. The Bull *Humanum Genus*, then, told nothing but the truth. Moreover, "everybody knows" - the honourable Dr. Bataille tells us, and we must believe it - "everybody knows that the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, was assassinated by order of the Freemasons, and that the remains of his assassin, the actor, John W. Booth, rest in a Charleston Lodge, under the Sacred Labyrinth".

The Luciferian glory of Charleston, however, pales in comparison with that of Gibraltar: in the subterraneums of this evil city, the elevations to the highest Masonic degrees are decided according to one's titles. The good Dr. Bataille, who has visited this pandemonium, conducted by Tubalcaïn himself, teaches us remarkably, that everything takes place under the cursed English tongue"; that the Masonic expression "increases of salary", means "increases of alcohol ration", and that the titles most considered by the so-called increases, are: the burning of Churches, the attacks against monks when entering their Convents and the murder of Christian children (pgs. 69 et seq.).

On the death of Albert Pike (1891), Palladism, according to the most certain Taxilian authorities, appointed Adriano Lemmi as his successor, who had the audacity to move his residence to Rome itself. Convinced that Italian Freemasonry was no more worthy than American Freemasonry, Leo XIII, who had already published in 1890 the encyclical *Dall'Alto* (reprinted in Italian), again put the Catholics of the peninsula on their guard, by means of the apostolic letters *Custodi* and *Inimica vis*, both in 1892.

But Albert Pike, Mackey and Lemmi are only the apparent leaders of the Order, which, in reality, is led by Sophia-Sapho, daughter of an ex-pastor, "an unrepentant Anabaptist turned Mormon". Sophia-Sapho is honoured in all the Lodges, even in France, and in some of them in her own right. She has to give birth to the works of the devil Bitru, a girl who, after joining the demon Décarabia, will give birth to a child.

(If anyone wonders which is the father of the Antichrist, I would simply say that he has never read the Secret of La Salette).

Sophia-Sapho has chosen a disciple, Diana Vaughan, a descendant of the English Rosicrucian Thomas Vaughan (usually identified with Eugenius Philalèthes). Diana, an exemplary Luciferian, would gladly have wished to ascend to the rank of Master Templar. Rejected by Sophia-Sapho, after a violent altercation, Diana, in order to escape certain death, took refuge in France, where Léo Taxil helped her to pass unnoticed. It should be noted that she remains a Lucefirian, but with a lot of fear. Only a few strange privileges worked in her favour to give her a glimpse. Among its chosen ones, we must mention Commendatore P. Lautier, President General of the Order of the Advocates of St. Peter. On pages 114 to 116, she tells us how she was admitted, in the company of the indefatigable Dr. Bataille, "in the presence of the convinced Luciferian, of the Sister Mason of high sign, of the initiate in the last secrets of Satanism". Diana, a dutiful guest, offered her visitors a fine champagne and chartreuse, but she drank a cognac "whose smoothness denounced (*sic*) an extreme old age". And the perceptive dean of the Bar noted that: "The hostility towards the Church, carried to the point of abstention from Chartreux liqueur, was truly typical"!

A "union of prayers to Joan of Arc", published by a large Catholic newspaper, was the reason for a hardening, which reached the degree of wickedness. We do not know whether Diana later replaced the cognac with Benedictine for her own personal use. But the publication of the *Memoirs of an ex-Palladist* was soon followed by two other works: *Le 33° Crispi et la Neuvaine Eucharistique*, which confirms the seriousness of the conversion. It was, according to a renowned theologian, "the most splendid and unforeseen challenge to contemporary positivism" (cf. pgs. 226 to 232). She whom many then called "Diana the Saint" founded the "Order of the anti-Masonic Labarum" in three degrees (Legionary of Constantine, Soldier of Christ, Knight of the Sacred Heart), with habits of the Order, decorations and jewels. The double desecration was complete.

Why go on, why speak of the obscene "devil's scales", used in the Lodge of adoption; of the tail of the Lion of St. Mark, cut off by the demons and kept as a trophy in anticipation of Lucifer's victory over Adonai; Asmodée, appearing in a spiritualist scene in the guise of a crocodile and taking to the piano to play lewd dances, while casting concupiscent glances at the lady of the house? Such an outpouring of ineptitude ends up by provoking laughter; and all this leads us to think of a sort of "general repetition" of the Great Parody. It is sad that so many churchmen have bought into this nonsense. But we must take into account the atmosphere of suggestion which surrounds the whole story (cf. *É.S.F.*, I, 103). With regard to Leo XIII, it was possibly something else, and we would like to draw attention to the personality of Mgr Meurin. This bishop of Port-Louis, on the island of Saint-Maurice, seems to have lived a long time in France, where he had a great influence on the "Hieron of the Golden Valley" of Paray-le-Monial, an institution founded by Baron de Sarachaga (inventor of the famous "arcane of Aor-Agni"), and which published a review whose title changed every 7 years. Mgr Meurin combined anti-masonry with pretensions with erudition, of which Paul Vulliaud, in certain tasty pages, showed his ridicule; Dr. Bataille called him an "orientalist sage", and Taxil, who often dealt with him, gave him the name of "Kabbalist sage", which is rather comical, given the

Hieron's anti-Semitism. In this connection, is it not curious, to say the least, that the year after Taxil's conversion (1886), the *Baron of Jehovah* of Sydney Vignaux appeared, this friend of Dr. Henri Favre, the occultist author known for his *Battles of Heaven*? Guénon pointed out (*Theosophism*, pgs. 415 and 416) that Vignaux's work is one of the main sources of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, the famous falsehood spread in the early 20th century by *Okhrana*. To return to Hieron, his teachings have inspired, not only Mme. Bessonnet-Favre, who wrote under the name of Francis André (synonym composed with the names of her two sons) some works, of which Guénon has revealed their strange character (*É.S.F.* I, 98-99), but also the founder of the magazine *Atlantis*, Paul Le Cour; Hiéron's last secretary, Mlle Lepine, shortly before her accidental death, had replaced her ring in P.L.C. (*E.S.F.* I, 222, end of #1); but it must be said that the latter's writings have no anti-Masonic "tinge"; he had spoken one day about the awakening of the "Great West", but Guénon asked him ironically: "For when a new Fort Chabrol?", "Pélékus" did not insist any more (*E.S.F.* I, 233, end of #1).

But let us return to the original Hieron. Paul Vulliaud has written in *The Jewish Kabbala*: "It seems that Leo XIII read Hieron's publications; this learned pontiff must have thought, smiling, that imagination is a truly admirable faculty". But Who knows if Leo XIII was content to smile? The fact that he was a scholar did not shelter him from certain "prestige". Leo XIII seems to have been a particular "target" of certain more or less suspicious characters. In the preface to his translation of the *Siphra-di-Tzéniutha*, Paul Vulliaud himself explained the plot to make French Catholics believe that the Pope was a prisoner, in the "caves of St. Peter", of the French Freemason cardinals, the majority, let us say, of the Roman Curia! A female sideman of the Pontiff officiated and legislated in his stead! It is the translator of *Zohar*, Jean le Pauly, who denounced this bizarre story to Leo XIII, and André Gide took it as the starting point for his romance *Les Caves du Vatican*. Finally, Mélanie Calvat, the "seer" of La Salette, acknowledged in her milieu - which has been without exerting a certain influence on a whole "current" of literature of yesterday and even today - that Leo XIII had ceased to reign the day he refused to recognise the orthodoxy of the famous apparition, which some claimed to have been organised with the help, conscious or unconscious, of Mlle. de la Merlière, who justly persecuted her accusers, with the assistance of Jules Favre: which did not please the epoch....

... At an anti-Masonic congress held at Trent during the last months of 1896, a German Jesuit, formerly a Freemason, had pointed out the implausible grossness of the Taxilian fabulation, and expressed his doubts as to the existence of Diana Vaughan. Taxil then announced that, at a public lecture, he would present the converted news to the audience, and have projected on a screen the original of the pact once concluded between Thomas Vaughan and Lucifer.

On Easter Monday, 19 April 1897, in the hall of the Geographical Society, Léo Taxil, before an increasingly nervous audience, explained how, after eleven years, he had abused the confidence of Catholic opinion by the wildest inventions (pgs 155 to 183). Jokingly Mr Meurin explained, with a strange insistence, why he had his friend the doctor (Dr. Hacks) adopt the name of Dr. Bataille"; but above all, he explained the particular audience that Leo XIII had granted him. To the Pope's question: "My son, what is it that you wish?", Taxil replied: "To die to

your feet, dear Holy Father, to die right here, at this very moment". Leo XIII congratulated the one who, a simple Apprentice in Freemasonry, had nevertheless realised that "the Devil was there". And the sinister personage imitated the Italian accent of the Pontiff who repeated with fright: "The Devil, my son, the Devil!" Several priests, indignant at such a display of villainy, had already left at the beginning of the conference. Others had the courage to hold out to the end and witnessed, terrified, the pouring of the filth of Hell into the Church of Christ. With an indescribable uproar the conference ended; Catholics and anti-clericals were at each other's throats, to the point of coming to blows.

Let Leo Taxil, who has returned to his first vomit, reprint: *The Female Pope, The Son of the Jesuit, The Secret Books of the Confessors, Clerics and Clericals*, etc... But what would become of the other anti-Masons? They had very different destinies. Clarin de la Rive, author of *The Woman and the Child in Universal Freemasonry*, adopts a "reasonable" anti-Masonry; and as for the occultist Têder, throughout his campaign against the Grand Orient of France (*E.S.F.* II, 265, *in fine*), he launched against René Guénon the most venomous attacks (*E.S.F.* II, 125). Clarin de la Rive, after a letter of correction from Guénon, got in touch with him, for he had the merit of sensing the "courage", and even asked him for some studies for his magazine; such is the origin of the articles signed "The Sphinx" in "Anti-Masonic France"³²⁴. Another anti-Mason, Pierre Colmet (*alias* Roger Duguet), after having tried to revive taxilism, with *The Chosen of the Dragon* (*E.S.F.* I, 91 193), a novel in which he exposed the plan of the Grand Lodge of France, indicating the places where diabolical invocations were made, _ then adopted "reasonable anti-Masonry", publishing *The White Tie* (*E.S.F.* I, 97); then, after serious setbacks, he gave, in sometimes emotional terms, a "supreme testimony" on the "deception of the prophecies"³²⁵.

Finally, Charles Nicoullaud (who, moreover, was a Freemason and had signed "Fomalhaut" a novel, *Zoé the Theosophist of Lourdes*, a violent and sometimes licentious pamphlet against the Society of Jesus) became secretary to Mgr Jouin, at the *International Review of the Secret Societies*, where he published, notably, the "Oedipus Maintenances", aimed at delaying "The Sphinx" (René Guénon). Nicoullaud was incontestably an agent of the counter-initiation (*E.S.F.* I, 213 and 214), as was another of the *R.I.S.S.* collaborators: Henri de Guillebert de l'Essart (*E.S.F.* I, 171, bottom of the page).

What remains of the Taxil affair today? The accusations of Satanism levelled against Freemasonry have long since been abandoned by the Church, which has reverted to the attitude of Clement XII, who reproached the Order for its secrecy and its multi-confessional character. The latter reproach is no longer conceivable in the present day. All that remains, then, is secrecy. A considerable "stumbling block", it is true..., and as hard as a "diamond".... Therefore, we do not think that the efforts of the "powers" that aroused Taxil have been in vain. After having seen the devil everywhere, Catholics have come to suspect him of nothing. And what a moment! Dr. Bataille - if you will forgive the insistence - wrote that already in his

³²⁴Most of the articles signed "The Sphinx" have been reprinted in the appendix of volume II of the *Studies on Freemasonry and Compagnonnage*.

³²⁵Cf. René Guénon, *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, chapter XXXVII.

Satan judged "when it was time to put his hand in the dough" (pg. 22). It is enough to read the Gospels to know that sometimes Satan was telling the truth.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

If Taxilism was resolutely anti-Masonic, we could say no less of the *Sodalitium Pianum* society (called "La Sapinière"), even if anti-Masons sought to infiltrate it from the beginning.

Founded in 1903, under the inspiration of Pius X, by Mgr Benigni, this association aimed to fight, within the Church itself, against the progress of modernism.

M. Émile Poulat, in a work⁽³⁾⁽²⁾⁽⁶⁾ of great erudition, has taken a particular interest in this society, whose archives were discovered during the First World War by the German secret services during a search of the house of the lawyer Jonckx de Gand, one of Benigni's collaborators. This search was carried out at the request of German ecclesiastics who had become acquainted with the pleasures of Sapinière's works. These archives, kept for a long time in the great seminary of Rudemonde, were used in 1924 by an anonymous "memoir", circulated by hand in the Parisian ecclesiastical circles. The following year, the affair became known in the secular world: Jean-Jacques Brousseau (who was Anatole France's secretary), devoted an article to it in the newspaper *Excelsior*. Dutch publications took over and caused such a sensation that after the death of Benoît XV, some claimed that the election of his successor, Pius XI, had been influenced by these publications. A new magazine, *The Movement of Facts and Ideas*, jumped into the arena, and accused *Action française*. "On December 29, 1926, *Action française* and certain works of Charles Maurras came to the fore. Considerable commotion and passionate controversy was to follow in French Catholicism. In 1928, *The French and Foreign Political Year* published a long study: "Sainte-Sède, Action française et Catholique intégrale", signed "Nicolas Fontaine", the pseudonym of a friend of the modernist theologian Loisy. We will not go on here with the events that followed and the attempts of the anti-modernists to alter a current that had turned against them. The author gives some details on the processes of beatification and canonisation of Pius X, where the patronage granted by this Pontiff in the *Sodalitium Pianum* was evoked. It also recounts the unlikely odyssey of the original texts of the Sapinière, which reminded us of the tribulations of certain Masonic libraries. It also reproduces the *Roich* code, i.e. the secret vocabulary of 720 words used by the "cousins" (the members of the Sapinière) to understand each other. This vocabulary was not without humour. A seminarian became an "academic". To "buy" meant "to choose". Eastern non-Roman Christianity was called "the stables", Protestantism "the cowshed", Judaism "the delicatessen". The Freemasons had to be content with a less poetic code: "the greens".

³²⁶*Integrism and Integral Catholicism* (Casterman, Paris). This large book, which contains a considerable number of documents, aims only to retrace the history of the fundamentalist movement in its entirety.

La Sapinière, in fact, contrary to a widely held opinion, was not fundamentally an anti-Masonic organisation. At the end of a letter from Benigni to Jonckx, dated 3 February 1913, we can read the advice: "Prudence in relations with an anti-Masonic group in Paris, and, in general, with all similar Parisian groups, whose dissensions play into the hands of the adversary". On these dissensions among the anti-Masons, M. Émile Poulat's work gives a few remarks, while recognising that their history is "horribly complicated". He devotes only a few pages to it and contents himself with sketching a few profiles of enigmatic or picturesque characters, which are mentioned in the *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*: Jean Bidegain, former assistant secretary of the Grand Orient, who blew up the "Affair des Papiers", and who would commit suicide in 1926; _ Copin _ Ablancelli, former 18th degree Freemason and founder of *La Bastille*; _ Flavien Brenier, "mixed up in unimaginable adventures", and who, under the pseudonym of "Eugène Gâtebois", would later command the assault of the *Friend of the People*, against the *International Review of the Secret Societies*; Pierre Colmet (*alias* Roger Duguet), author of key novels populated by composite characters, such as General Bierne, amalgam of Mgr Jouin and his irreconcilable enemy, Flavien Brenier ("Bierne", an anagram of the word "Brenier", deprived of the final "r"); Colonel Driant, General Boulanger's son-in-law and author (under the pseudonym "Captain Danrit") of politico-military novels, who was killed at Verdun in 1916; _ Abbe Joseph (who signed as "Abbe Tourmentin"); Mgr Jouin, with his rich library of 30,000 volumes, but whom Pierre Colmet reproached for "regularly and very indulgently welcoming to his table a small group of proven and militant modernists".

This last exposition would suffice to understand why the leaders of the Sapinière were not very reassured to see the anti-Masons taking such a close interest in their activities. As M. Poulat wrote: "Benigni was already too well warned to confuse his cause with that of men like Copin and Brenier, one a faithless crusader and the other a very restless and non-conformist".

Let us understand that certain currents of anti-Freemasonry were taxillary matters introduced by the agents of counter-initiation, such as the former Rabbi Paul Rosen, a proven technician of the rapid constitution of Masonic libraries. With anti-Freemasonry, it was, then, counter-initiation that was trying to get into Sapinière. It would not have had time to do much harm, for the Sapinière, the work of Pius X, was not going to follow its protector for long. Today, when the tendencies he fought against, by sometimes childish and often reprehensible means, seem to have triumphed, it is not without interest to reread Guénon's warnings concerning the "undeniable signs" which constitute the infiltrations of the "Adversary" into institutions of a traditional character³²⁷.

This same "Trojan horse" tactic, used by the adversaries of the Church, is also used, according to Guénon, by the adversaries of Freemasonry. It is possible, however, that here the most harmful "infiltrations" are not those of individuals, but those of ideas and tendencies. The danger is particularly serious in France, where Masonic rituals are not "fixed". This particularity could be used by Masons of traditional spirit, as Guénon was at the time of the "Thébah" Lodge. But in fact, it is the neo-spiritualists who take advantage of it. A

³²⁷*The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, ch. XXVII.

In favour of the incessant revisions and "modernisations" of rituals, they slip in, with more or less correctness, such an occult formula or such a Teilhardian expression. The Guenonian Freemasons have been wrong not to concern themselves with these things. Indifference could, here, become complicity. It has been said that the Trojans made, with their own hands, a "breach" in their walls, by introducing into their "Holy City" the horse bearing death and destruction. Almost alone, Cassandra tried to dissuade them, and brandished an axe against the fatal device. But we know how the Trojans heeded Cassandra's warnings.

THIRD PART

CHAPTER XVIII

NEW INDICATIONS ON THE WORD AMEN*.

The remarkable article by Jean Tourniac, published in January 1975 in the journal *Renacimiento Tradicional*, under the title "The mysteries of the word *Amen*", in which the author uses both data from the Hebrew Kabbala and the rites of various Christian liturgies of the East and West, contains important indications in the field of symbolism. The very interesting similarities with the curious work of Mgr Devoucoux on the cathedral of Autun, the unique relationships (notably in the Coptic Church of Ethiopia) between the Eucharistic mystery and the "enchanting" pronunciation of the divine names and many other things, can still be the seeds of useful meditations. But above all, it is the references to the *Siphra-di-Tzeniutha* that seem to us worthy of attention and as supplies of material for new developments, for, according to René Guénon's doctrine, what is proper to meditation on symbols is to open up perspectives, not only unlimited, but infinite as Possibility itself.

Jean Tourniac recalls that, according to this important kabbalistic text, the word *Amen* has a numerical value equal to that of the words *Jehovah* and *Adonai*. It is known that the first of these names can never be pronounced by the Jews, and that whenever they find it in a sacred book, they replace it with *Adonai*. It might be conceived that *Jehovah* is connected with the silent, occult, esoteric aspect of Tradition, and *Adonai* with its exoteric aspect; the word *Amen*, which corresponds to both names at once, is somehow connected with the whole of Tradition. In fact, the numerical value of the word *Amen* is 91, which is the sum of the numerical values of the words *Jehovah* (26) and *Adonai* (65).

In view of the above, it may strike us that 65, the number of *Adonai*, is also the number of *Has* (the Silence). But *Adonai*, in short, is equivalent to the expression of Silence, since the Jews must say "*Adonai*" when they come across the word *Jehovah*, on the pronunciation of which they must remain silent. Let us insist also that the figures 6 and 5, with which he writes the number 65, symbolise respectively the macrocosm and the microcosm, and whose meeting, 65, symbolises, according to Guénon, "the union (or the unification) of the macrocosm with the microcosm"³²⁸, which is, in short, the purpose of initiation³²⁹.

* This text has been published in the magazine *Renacimiento Tradicional*, n° 37, January 1979].

³²⁸Naturally, it is the same for the number 11, the sum of 6 and 5, which is the number of the feet of each verse of the *Divine Comedy*; and, possibly, the eschatological word for "the workers of the eleventh hour" has a hidden connection with this important symbolism.

³²⁹We should say more precisely: of initiation into the lesser mysteries. The completion of this initiation is the access to the state of the "True Man" or "Primordial Man". This state is, in the microcosmic order, the equivalent of what is, in the macrocosmic order, the return to the "primordial state", of which all the Traditions speak. One of the peculiarities of this state is the total harmony of man with all other creatures and, in turn, of all creatures with each other. It is the Golden Age of the Greco-Latin, which, after the times, finds the "substitutes" in the "Elysian Fields" or "the island of the Blessed" in the garden of Alcinoüs; and also in the Orpheus behaviour with the rivers, the trees and the animals. For the Judeo-Christians, it is "Paradise".

And since Jean Tourniac, as we mentioned earlier, alluded to a happy innovation of the post-conciliar liturgy, we would like to recall a particularity of the ancient liturgy, which seems to be related to this question of silence. In the "canonical hours" that made up the divine office (*opus Dei*), recited daily in the monasteries, the Sunday prayer, which in Latin has 49 words, was never followed by the word *Amen*. To compensate for this, at mass, the celebrant would say aloud the first 44 words of this prayer; the choir would respond by singing the last 5 words; and the celebrant would then pronounce the word *Amen*, but in a low voice, that is to say, in such a way that it would not be heard by the faithful. It seems to us that the symbolism of this ritual use is particularly evocative³³⁰.

But here is something else. An author whose remarkable works have been praised in the same review³³¹, M. Jaques Bonnet, has reminded us here: "Just as the word *Amen* was pronounced in a low voice at the end of the *Pater* in the Latin masses, so the Arabic word *Amin* - even if it does not appear in the *Koran* - is added by the faithful at the end of the first sura of the Holy Book, the *fatihah*, which is equally essential for each of the five obligatory prayers of Islam". These approximations between the Latin and Arabic liturgies are truly remarkable, and must almost certainly have some connection with the higher meaning of silence³³².

Mr. Jaques Bonnet's research on the word *Amen* led him to enter into other considerations. In particular, he examines the similarities between the Hebrew *Amen* and the Sanskrit *Aum*³³³. We very much hope that this author will offer us some overall appraisals of the conclusions he has reached in his assiduous studies of the sacred texts of India, Islam and Kabbala, the Fathers of the Church and the works of René Guénon³³⁴.

Earthly", which, at the end of the cycle, finds its correspondence in the "Messianic era". In these days, "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid; the ox, the lion's whelp and the sheep shall live together, and a child shall lead them. The calf shall graze with the bear and their young shall sleep together. The lion will eat straw like the cattle. The baby will play in the snake's nest, and the child we have just weaned will play in the Basil's nest. We will not feed, no harm will be done to anyone" (Isaiah, XI, 6 to 9).

³³⁰With the addition of this word *Amen*, the Latin *Pater* has 50 words. Now, the number 50, in the Jewish and Christian Traditions, evokes the idea of a return to the beginnings. In the Jews, from the 50th year (called the "Jubilee year"), debts were abolished and the fields returned to the first owners, which, it is easy to see, symbolises the restoration of the primordial order. It is therefore very likely that the legislation concerning the Jubilee year will always remain more theoretical than effective, which does not mean, of course, that its symbolic value is in any way diminished.

³³¹*The Traditional Symbols of Wisdom*, Ed. Horvath, Roanne, 1971; *Artemis of Ephesus and the Legend of the Seven Sleepers*, lib. orientalist P. Geuthner, Paris, 1977; R.T. no. 32.

³³²In Christianity, lacking a sacred language, it is very important that the word which concludes each of its prayers and which "recapitulates" them in some way should be taken from a sacred language. This word, in effect, communicates, so to speak, its sacred character to the whole of the prayer. It should be noted that the Hebrew word *Amen* ends all Christian prayers (and in particular the essential one, which is the *Pater*) and the essential prayer of Islam, the *Fatihah*. The word *Amen*, then, establishes a mysterious spiritual link between the three religions originating from Abraham.

³³³*Aum* is used to say: "yes"; it signifies, then, the acceptance, and even the fulfilment of a vow. It is also one of the meanings of the word *Amen* at the end of prayers. M. Jaques Bonnet rightly points out that Christ only uses the word *Amen* at the beginning of his very solemn declarations: "*Amen, amen, dico vobis...*", which ordinarily means: "Truly, truly, I say to you..." (334).

³³⁴Let us quote, in particular, the considerations on the two consonants of the word *Amen*, (*mem* and *nûn*), on the traditional relations between man and woman, between left and right, between vertical and horizontal and, consequently, on the symbolism of marriage; all this being closely related to the symbolism of the cross.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

A Seeker, whose ideas on the relationship between the Temple of Solomon and the Temple of Janus we would like to see exposed, has shared with us some very interesting considerations on the word *Amen*. He relates it to the Egyptian word *Amon*, which, in several *Old Charges*, substitutes the expression: Hiram-Abif. Read in reverse, the word "Amon" gives us the word "Noma", which immediately evokes the name of King Numa, who had the Temple of Janus built. Numa, the second king of Rome, inspired by the nymph Égérie, and also a builder and peaceful king, successor to the warrior king Romulus, is, in a way, the Latin equivalent of Solomon, the second king of the Davidic dynasty, directly inspired by God and also a builder and peaceful king, successor to the warrior king David. If we remember that Numa was the founder of the *Collegia fabrorum*, ancestors of the Craft Lodges, and that Janus presided over the initiations, as Master of the gates (*januae*) and, in particular, the solstitial gates consecrated to the two St. Johns, _ we see the interest of all this within the Masonic fields.

CAPÍTULO XIX

THE "POWER OF THE KEYS"

Guénon's attitude towards Catholicism has been the subject of very different judgements, according to the authors; and, above all, according to the fact that these authors have based themselves on the works he has published, or on this or that passage of one of the letters addressed - and under what circumstances - to one of his innumerable correspondents. For our part, we have felt that to know the attitude of Christianity in the eyes of Guénon would be more useful than to know the attitude of Guénon to Christianity. And while the latter may have varied during the ages, that of Christianity has remained constant. But first, it must be remembered that, among the various branches of Christianity, Guénon had in mind a particularly important one, Roman Catholicism. It is not only because the Roman Church is the most numerous of the Christian communities, nor because Guénon's Work has been published in countries of Catholic Tradition. In his attitude towards Rome, there were reasons of a doctrinal order, and we can mention two of them.

The first reason is that only the Pope - but in the Western world as a whole - holds a privilege of great traditional importance: infallibility in doctrinal and disciplinary matters. That this prerogative has been belatedly recognised, that it is sometimes disputed or minimised by certain "avant-garde" theologians, would not change anything in the eyes of Guénon, who considered it perfectly normal for a dogma to be formulated only when necessity makes it manifest.

The second peculiarity of the Papacy is the "power of the keys" conferred by Christ on the Apostles as a whole, but which Peter exercises in a super-eminent manner, thanks to the assistance of the Holy Spirit³³⁵. This power, which touches the deepest mysteries of Christianity, as well as those of "pagan" Rome, and, moreover, those of all Traditions, enables the Sovereign Pontiff to lock or unlock, bind or loose, condemn a doctrine or set it free; and the dogma of infallibility is, in short, nothing more than a belated explanation, limited to the exoteric domain alone, of a power which, in its origin, extended to both the exoteric and the esoteric domains.

The importance of the "power of the keys" was "illustrated" by a curious discussion between Guénon and the *International Review of Secret Societies*. This publication, having one day - in the course of one of its usual lucubrations - mentioned this power, was challenged by Guénon: 'We must charitably warn our contradictor that he has touched upon something forbidden: 'the power of the keys'... Do we not know that it was recently decided, in a high place, that the most absolute silence had to be kept on this essentially 'hermetic' and... more than dangerous question? more than dangerous?'³³⁶.

Such an indication could not fail to arouse the curiosity of certain readers. One of those who corresponded most regularly with Guénon, M. Jean Reyor, asked him if it was to Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, highly regarded at the court of Rome, to whom it was addressed from Cairo; the answer was in the affirmative.

That the mysteries of the "power of the keys" are dangerous is easy to understand, if we see their relation to the equilibrium of the world, which is the result of the action of two opposing (or, rather, complementary) forces: one expansive, the other compressive. In Hermetic language, we call this "solution" and "coagulation"; in Chinese doctrines, it is "concordant actions and reactions".

³³⁵This privileged assistance is alluded to in the well-known words of Christ to Peter: "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for it is not from flesh and blood that these things have been revealed to you, but from my Father who is in heaven" (*Mt*, XVI, 17). We know that this Gospel episode, which follows the "confession of Peter", took place in a city whose name curiously recalls the Roman and Greek traditions: Caesarea Philippi. It is also noteworthy that the words that follow those we have just quoted allude to both "the gates of Hell" and "the keys of the kingdom of Heaven".

³³⁶Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t. I, p. 221.

³³⁷Cf. *Appreciations on the Principles of the Infinitesimal Calculus*, Chapter XVII.

And we may wonder whether the Pope's role as "moderator of peoples and kings" might not be a simple application of the power of the keys³³⁸.

³³⁸We recall what is said of the Pope at the time of his appointment: "Receive the three-crowned tiara, and know that you are the prince of the Apostles, the moderator of peoples and kings, the vicar of Our Lord Jesus Christ". Let us emphasise the hierarchical superimposition of the three attributes conferred on the Sovereign Pontiff by the above words. His role as "moderator" occupies the middle place, that of the "intermediate world"; and it is clearly in this world that the "concordant actions and reactions" are exercised.

CHAPTER XX

PURPOSE OF A RECENT ROMAN DECISION*.

At the end of one of the chapters of our work on René Guénon and the Destinies of Freemasonry, which appeared at the end of 1982, we stated that, in our view, the attitude of the Catholic Church towards the Masonic Order - a review of innumerable discussions that were multiplying throughout the 20th century - was, in short, entirely favourable, and that, possibly, it should not be considered an inconvenience to deal with Rome in order to take the relationship further. We did not think then that events would so quickly prove us right. We know the facts. At the beginning of 1983, the new canon law - which had just been approved by the competent authority - officially announced that it no longer contained any allusion to Freemasonry and that, consequently, all traces of previous condemnation had disappeared. This new canon law was to come into force on 27 November, the first Sunday of Advent, thus beginning the liturgical year. However, a few days before this date, a declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, approved by the Sovereign Pontiff, recalled that the Freemasons, if not excommunicated, were in a state of grave sin, and that, consequently, they were forbidden to participate in the Sacraments. And, a particularly serious decision: persons who have exercised a leading function in the Masonic Order are forbidden to take part in religious ceremonies.

It can be seen that the new situation is far worse than the previous one, since this time the Pope himself has entered the fray, thus breaking with a reserve that his predecessors had observed for a century, and more precisely after the calamitous encyclical *Humanum Genus* of Leo XIII had, so to speak, taken the Taxil affair out of the picture.

We would certainly have preferred that the fears we expressed in 1982 had not been justified. We know many Catholics in Freemasonry whom we hold in high esteem, so that the cruel disappointment they must feel does not sadden us. For they do not all feel entitled to follow the examples of an ultramundane philosopher like Jeseph de Maistre and a martyr of the faith like Jean-Marie Gallot. To all of these we can say, if at the same time they adhere to the teachings of René Guénon, that, at the time of the cycle in which we are, events must be moving so fast that the difficult situation in which they find themselves can be completely reversed, from one moment to the next.

We believe, in fact, that it is only at the end of the present cycle that the relations of the Churches (and in particular the Catholic Church) with Freemasonry can find a normal character and end in a true "communion". In order to understand this, it must be remembered that all the Christian Churches today are exclusively exoteric in character, and that Christian esotericism is practically represented only by Freemasonry.

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Guénon wrote that "the best way to keep silent about a work is to plagiarise it". After the death of this Master, plunderers and plagiarisers, hitherto somewhat reserved, are finally coming out in the open. Never before has so much been said about tradition, symbolism, esotericism and initiation. It is far from our intentions to make of these subjects a kind of monopoly reserved for Guénon and the Guenonians. But there is something that bothers. Among the subjects treated by Guénon with incomparable mastery, there is one never tackled by his pale imitators: that of counter-initiation, that is to say of this "power" which has been at work in the world for many centuries, but whose activity has never been as manifest as it is today. Now, we think that the hostility which drives the one against the other, the Church and Freemasonry, is largely the work of this counter-initiation; and that, in any case, the latter can only rejoice in all that contributes to the increase of this hostility.

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Some Catholics have accused the Freemasons of profaning consecrated hosts, of receiving the devil in their Lodges, and even (Leo XIII *dixit*) of having their enemies murdered "with such skill that, most of the time, the executor of these death sentences escapes the established justice, to watch over the crimes and to establish vengeance".

The reproaches that Rome addresses to them today are much more "serious" and, to put it bluntly, seem to us to be irrefutable. They can be summed up in two: first, that the Freemasons practise rites which are said to operate, in the recipient, a non-material transformation, analogous, then, to that operated by the Sacraments; and, secondly, that the Freemasons admit, among themselves, members belonging to religions other than Christianity.

In the face of these complaints, of which we do not speak of their seriousness, we think that a third one could have been added: Freemasonry dispenses a particular teaching, which it claims to go back to the time of Christ (through St. John) and also to "pagan" religions (through the mysteries of Antiquity and Pythagoreanism). It must be agreed: in the face of such claims, that the representatives of any exotericism can only respect the evangelical expression: "this word is hard; who then will understand it?"

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What are Catholics who thought they would find in the Masonic Order a magnificent ground for the development of their fervour and faith to do? Those who have not been touched by Guénon's teachings are to be pitied. Guenonian Catholic Masons, in very familiar reprisals, in general, with their Scriptures, will find ample reason not to give, to the Roman half-turn, more importance than, in reality, it has. They will be able to read, for example, how Peter, questioning Christ about what is to come and the role of John, obtained this answer: "What does it matter?"

as John, the only Apostle present, with a few women, offering a little human warmth to the dying God, was instituted by Him as a son, and, for that very reason, as the protector of the Virgin; which makes the beloved disciple, by virtue of Mary's affinities with the Shekinah, the prototype of all the "guardians of the Holy Land". And, finally, you know that during this Supper, at which the Sacrament was instituted from which they want to exclude them, Peter had to turn to John to obtain from Jesus the revelation of the "sign" which made it possible to recognise "the son of perdition". If we reflect and see that Peter represents exotericism, John represents esotericism and Judas represents counter-initiation, we can immediately see the applications we can draw from the Gospel episode we have just mentioned.

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Some of our friends will perhaps say to us: "What you write here will certainly not put things right, for you may be accused of having, without any warrant, interpreted the sacred texts differently from duly qualified theologians. And they will hold Freemasonry responsible for your incorrectness, when it would have been so comfortable for it to behave as a simple living association, analogous to the Rotary, the Lions and the Kiwanis, lacking, consequently, any vocation to this intellectuality which Guénon did not distinguish from true spirituality".

We would probably have reasoned in this way ten years ago. But today, at "three decades into the third millennium", when the optimists tell us that all is well and the pessimists tell us that all is bad, we would not be disparaging ourselves if we did not have the courage to say what we think, all that we think. Our aim is not to put things right, for we do not think too highly of the Church and Freemasonry, giving too much importance to what could very well be, at bottom, between these two "powers", a sort of "peaceful coexistence". What would be of interest to us would be if a real "agreement in principle" could be established between them. And such an agreement, as we wrote in the Work to which we referred at the beginning of this chapter, we are truly afraid that it can only be established "in the deepest of valleys, which is the valley of Jehoshaphat".

CHAPTER XXI

AWAITING THE HOUR OF THE POWER OF DARKNESS

During the years following the liberation of France, some of René Guénon's readers, who had been delighted by the regular publication of his articles and chronicles, sometimes complained (among them) that the Master often let himself go into discussions on "details of symbolism", instead of dealing with the only thing that really matters: metaphysical realisation. Such a "reproach" - will we admit it - was surprising, coming from the Guenonians. On several occasions, Guénon had mentioned that he drew his inspiration for his writings from events in the world, which must necessarily "manifest" some of the higher order realities, to which, in themselves, he gave a certain interest. To deny these events was, according to him, to admit that they were products of "chance", a profoundly anti-traditional conception, but one to which certain ultra-modern philosophers, who sometimes boast of "spiritualism", attribute a preponderant role in the evolution of the Cosmos.

If Guénon, it is true, after the Second World War, has particularly accentuated the importance of traditional symbolism, it is, we think, because the circumstances proved opportune for it. Let us remember, in particular, that this period was marked by the founding of a Masonic Lodge, whose work was to be inspired by the teachings of Guénon. Incidentally, the Master was always surprised that the interest he constantly showed in Freemasonry for a long time was only shared by a few of his "disciples". The political and occultist reputation of certain French Obediences could explain this lack of enthusiasm, which, in any case, Guénon has always regretted.

In the "criticisms" to which we have referred, we were immediately struck by the expression "details of symbolism". It is enough to have studied a little about the treatises on Hermetic symbolism to realise the capital importance of the smallest detail. Now, we know the relationship between Hermeticism and Freemasonry, a relationship underlined by the presence of the root HRM, common to the names Hermes and Hiram. But in the course of this chapter, we shall have occasion to insist on the importance of certain details, which we find in the sacred texts of Christianity, and particularly in the most sacred of all: those which deal with the Passion and Resurrection of Christ.

One of the particularities that fundamentally distinguishes symbolic thought from profane, even "philosophical" thought, is the importance of the different modes of "correspondence". We are familiar, for example, with the relationships linking the seven planets of traditional astrology with the seven metals of alchemy (and also, by extension, with the seven colours of the coat of arms). We will now turn our attention to a correspondence of a particular kind: that which can be established between the events of the mortal life of Christ and those which have marked, and will mark, the "earthly" existence of the bride of Christ, the Church.

Let us first remember that the Church, in its universality, comprises both the exoteric institutions officially known under the names of the different Churches, and also that Christian esotericism has been embodied, in the course of the centuries, in various organisations, practically all of which have been absorbed into Freemasonry. In order not to make an exposition too dense, we shall content ourselves with making an approximation between certain facts which marked the end of the earthly life of Jesus, and those (which we know from the revelation of the Scriptures) which marked the behaviour of the Church throughout the tribulations of the end of the cycle.

After His arrest in the Garden of Olives, Christ said to the envoys of the prince of the priests: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (Luke XXII, 53). He was crucified at the sixth hour of the day, and "from the sixth hour to the ninth hour there was darkness over the land" (Matthew, XXVII, 45; Mark, XV, 33; and Luke, XXII, 44). During this long darkness, the only Apostle present was John, who had followed the "Via Dolorosa", with the Virgin Mary, and also with some women, among whom was Mary of Magdala; and who all appear in the Gospel as the "myrrh-bearers", that is, the "myrrh-bearers"; myrrh being, according to Guenon, the "brew of immortality", the third and most excellent of the gifts offered by the Magi to the rising Christ.

It is clear that John here represents esotericism, but where were the representatives of exotericism? They had all fled, except Peter, who had gone to the palace of Caiaphas, where he had had the misfortune to deny his Master three times. Having come to his senses at the crowing of the cock, he had gone to "weep bitterly", not daring to join the faithful women who, with the beloved disciple, had the courage to go up to Golgotha. We will not dwell on the exoteric "value" of these "bitter tears", which we would compare to those of the first human couple expelled from Paradise. But it is worth remembering that, in the secret language used by Dante and the Faithful of Love, the word "weep" had a very particular meaning. The initiatory organisations of the time, after the destruction of the Order of the Temple, had decided to conceal much more, their doctrines and their existence. And this concealment was the cause of the symbolic meaning of the word "weep".

During the three long hours of sub-natural darkness, we know that Peter "wept", while John received from Christ, as a particularly sacred "deposit", the custody of his mother; this exceptional event was witnessed only by the myrrhophores. Let us also remember that, at the ninth hour, Christ, before dying, uttered, in Hebrew, a cry, which those present took as a call to the prophet Elijah; and, in Dante's very complex symbolism, 9 had a very particular importance, to the point that Alighieri could write: "Beatrice is, herself, the number 9".

The tenth and last part of our Manvatara is the Kali-Yuga or dark age. We are at the end of this iron age, and this end knows an obscurantism which is rapidly accelerating and will soon become almost total. It will then be "the hour of the power of darkness", which is also called the "reign of the Anti-Christ". If we are right that, in such an age, the events correspond to those which preceded the death of Christ, there should be something comparable to what were, in his day, the tears of Peter and, at the same time, a kind of promotion of John's function. We are perfectly aware of the gravity of what we are saying here. We know the use to which

The enemies of the Masonic Order, as well as Christians, who are opposed to the whole idea of esotericism, have been the enemies of the Masonic Order. But others before us have experienced events of this order, and have been struck by the double prediction, with which the Gospel of St. John ends, and which seems clearly to have no other purpose than to allude to the events of the last days. It is true that, if the prediction made concerning John is well known ("I will that he tarry till I come"), the one concerning Peter seems to have attracted less attention. Here it is: "Truly I tell you, as long as you are young, you will be self-controlled and go wherever you wish. But when you are old, you will stretch out your arms and another will gird you and take you where you do not want to go". Doesn't this allude to a certain amount of independence for Peter's successors?

Darkness is to "space" what silence is to "time", _ this silence is the first of the duties imposed upon the initiates, and which the Faithful of Love symbolised by the injunction: "to weep". But darkness has two aspects: one evil and the other beneficent. Complete darkness symbolises the "putting under the bushel" of Tradition, or at least of its "visible" part: it is truly "the hour of the power of darkness". But it is also only in the midst of this darkness that the passage from one cycle to the other can be accomplished, a passage which is always the passage from the Iron Age to the Golden Age. To return to the symbolism of the Gospel, on the last page of the Johannine text, the last command given by Christ to Peter was the admonition: "Follow me!" And Peter then turned and saw that John was behind them, that is to say, following them. Whatever may be the last and terrible tribulations that will assail the Church in the last days, we may be sure that Peter and John will meet again to be the obedient servants of the incomparable Master, who said: "He that followeth Me shall never walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of life.

CHAPTER XXII

THE FIVE ENCOUNTERS OF PETER AND JOHN*.

In addition to the incomparable expositions he wrote on metaphysical doctrine and on the principles of initiation, this truly universal spirit, René Guénon, has left us extremely precious insights into the traditional sciences and arts, of which the modern sciences and arts are, he said, nothing more than "residues" deprived of any "meaning", somewhat superior to the most immediate materiality. He considered, for example, that the geography currently studied and taught today is nothing more than the degradation of a sacred geography, of which he had, before his death, the opportunity to see the prodromes of a kind of renaissance³³⁹. The same is true of modern chemistry and astrology, which are the degenerate remnants of a traditional alchemy and astrology, which have nothing to do with those which the occultists and other charlatans of the present day designate under these names. As for history, of which the moderns are so proud, Guénon thought that his "discoveries" are all the more reliable as the epochs are less distant, the "solidification of the world" having made everything disappear which, in such epochs, could go beyond the most material plane.

For him, "universal" history should be interpreted in the light of the doctrine of cycles. As for the history, more limited to space-time, of the Western world, which for the last two millennia has been confused with Christianity, it is important, in order to interpret it correctly, to take into account the role played by the Holy Empire, heir to the Roman Empire and thus to that of Alexander, which also succeeded the Eastern empires mentioned in Daniel's prophecy.

The history of the last two millennia is thus dominated by the vicissitudes of the relations between the Papacy and the Holy Empire, of which Guénon speaks at length in *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*. But alongside these relations, which very quickly took on the character of a struggle, sometimes violent, there were also, within Christianity, certain altercations in the external part - visible to the whole world - of this tradition; and its internal part, always hidden from the eyes of the profane, is what constitutes Christian esotericism.

We will not dwell on the objections made by many Christians who deny the existence of even such esotericism. When Christ gives thanks to His Father for "having withheld certain things from the wise and mighty, and given them to babes", this may be understood as condemning the proud "worldly" wisdom and material power alone, and as, on the contrary, exalting the "safer" wisdom of those who have the vocation to the "state of infancy". Certain commentators have

* This text has been published in the *Hermes notebooks*, René Guénon Notebook, 1985].

³³⁹We refer here to Xavier Guichard's work on Eleusis-Alesia. In our days, research of the same kind, but much more profound and fruitful, has been conducted by Jean Richer, of which a major work, *Sacred Geography of the Greek World*, has just been published in a new edition, considerably enlarged (Editions de la Maisnie, Paris).

The biblical story of the child Daniel, triumphant through divine inspiration, experience and the mischievousness of the two elders. Moreover, there are many episodes in the Gospels which testify, for anyone familiar with the universal science of Symbolism, that certain parts of Jesus' teaching were not dispensed to all. Guénon has sometimes pointed out the hindrance that the mere evocation of these passages caused to certain "official" exegetes. But, let us repeat, the divine inspirer of the Scriptures does not formulate his secret teachings except under the veil of symbol; and Guénon could criticise those whom he saw as incapable of deciphering the slightest "arcane", "including those whom his own Scriptures propose to the totality of exclusive exotericists, who have eyes not to see and ears not to hear".

Among the three monotheistic or "Abrahamic" religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), the first and the third have an esoteric teaching which is absolutely accepted and in no way persecuted: Kabbala for the first and Sufism for the third. Moreover, the initiates of both esotericisms must necessarily belong to their corresponding exotericism: every Kabbalist must practise the Jewish religion, and every Sufi must observe the commandments of Islam.

It is to be noted, however, that the initiatic organisation into which almost all the esoteric teaching of Christianity seems to have been absorbed, namely Freemasonry, is in no way linked to Christian exotericism. Moreover, it claims, as its heritage, not only this Christian esotericism to which we have just referred, but also the "vestiges" of ancient non-Christian Traditions, of which the best known is Pythagoreanism. Consequently, regular Freemasons can belong to any Tradition. It is possible that this particularity has not been alien to the sometimes suspicious and sometimes downright hostile attitude of the Christian exoteric authorities towards Freemasonry. A very explicit "illustration" of such an attitude has just recently been supplied to us.

An objection could be raised here: what is it that authorises you to see in Freemasonry the only one who holds the esoteric Christian "deposit"? Several arguments militate in this direction, but it is, first of all, the cult professed in Masonry towards St. John³⁴⁰, who was constituted on Calvary, as "son of the Virgin", and who, by this fact, also becomes the guardian³⁴¹. This is a fact of the highest importance, because, given the affinities of Mary with the divine Presence (*Shekinah*), John then becomes the prototype of all the "Guardians of the Holy Land; a qualification which, it is known, was given to the Templars³⁴². And let us note that, this cult of predilection

³⁴⁰Guénon knew much about the fact that, in the rituals, the expression "Respected Lodge" was always supplemented by the words "of St. John". We know the importance of the two solstitial feasts in Freemasonry. And, in certain Rites, notably those of the Spanish language, the works are opened and closed, and the degrees conferred, "in the name of God and of St. John". English-speaking Masons like to call themselves *John's Brothers*.

³⁴¹The Scripture insists on this point: "When Jesus saw his mother standing at the foot of the cross, and after her the disciple whom he loved, he said to his mother, Woman, behold your son! And then he said to his disciple, 'Behold your mother. And from that moment the disciple took her to himself'". (John, XIX, 26-27).

³⁴²In the Litany of St. Joseph, this patriarch is called *custos Virginis*. The same appellation can be applied to John the Evangelist. Mary then had three "guardians": Joseph, Jesus and John. It should be noted that Joseph is the patron saint of carpenters (builders in wood) and John is the patron saint of masons (builders in stone). On the other hand, the names of the three guardians begin with the *iod*, the first letter of the tetragram; and we know that the three S's that appear in the Delta of the degree of "Knight of the Sun" are, in reality, three deformed *iods*. We do not know if there is any allusion to these "coincidences" in a degree that was once very popular: the "Scottish of the three JJJs".

declared to Saint John, seems to be very particular to the Freemasons, as it was to the Templars. Neither the Compagnonnage, nor the other Hermetic organisations, whose possible survival Guénon has evoked, nor the *Esychasme*, to which some attribute an "operational" initiatory character, do not have such an insistence on the importance of the figure of St. John.

In the eighteenth degree of the Scottish Rite ("Sovereign Prince Rose-Cross") - a degree which has a very markedly Christian hermetic character - the initials J.N.R.J., which appear on the sign at the top of the cross, are of great importance. In addition to its traditional meaning (*Jesus Nazarene King of the Jews*), this degree also gives it an alchemical interpretation: *Ignis Natura Renovatur Integra*. But there is also in the "questions of order", the following dialogue, which deserves some explanation:

*"Where do you come from? From Jerusalem.
Where are you going? To Nazareth.
Who is your guide" - Rafael.
What tribe are you from? of Judah.*

The last two answers are quite easy to understand. Raphael ("Remedy of God") alludes to the "universal panacea" or "the elixir of long life"; the source of this longevity, which was one of the most ancient signs of the Rose-Crucifixes. Judah was the Royal tribe of the Jews, that of David, Solomon and the Messiah; and Hermeticism, or *Ars regia*, was, par excellence, the Royal Art. But is it not strange that a Christian initiate should claim to go from Jerusalem to Nazareth, when Christ spent his childhood and early youth in Nazareth, and only the last days of his earthly life in Jerusalem? What can such an itinerary, the reverse of that followed by the God-man, mean?

It was in Jerusalem that Christ formulated the essentials of his "public" teaching, about which he could assure us that he had said nothing in secret. But Nazareth was the theatre of what is called His "hidden life", which lasted almost thirty years, and whose only beneficiaries were Mary and Joseph³⁴³. And this is why we think that the Mason who goes from Jerusalem to Nazareth expresses, therefore, that he intends to go beyond the "public" teaching of Christian doctrine, in order to gain access, at least in "desire", to its occult teaching.

Everything expressed in the Christian Scriptures of St. John has an esoteric and initiatory character; but this character is especially evident when the rules of universal symbolism are applied to it. This is not surprising, since the purpose of symbolic language is precisely to go beyond the narrowly limited possibilities of ordinary language. Two consequences immediately follow from what has just been said. First, theologians and exegetes who neglect the importance of this symbolic language pass by the exact and "superior" interpretation of the texts they study. Then, in those texts, the minimum

³⁴³It is quite evident that the teaching which Jesus was able to give before His "public life" is as "divine" as that which the Apostles were to receive afterwards. It is known that the only event of the hidden life which the Gospel gives is the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, which Jesus, at the age of 12, made accompanied by His parents. He was able to give proof of a divine wisdom that clearly shocked the doctors of the Law. The mysteries of the hidden life of the Saviour have been much commented upon by various spiritual authors, and notably by certain Circassian monks, among whom we can cite Saint Amédée, Bishop of Lausanne.

A detail that might seem "insignificant" if we consider it in itself, becomes, on the contrary, loaded with significance, from the moment we consider it in the light of symbolic science.

The texts concerning St. John that we find in the New Testament can be divided into three classes. In the first, St. John figures, if not alone, at least as the only one to be named among the twelve Apostles; the most important of these texts is the one where Christ on the cross makes John the son and guardian of the Virgin. In the second class, we see John accompanied by his brother James (also "son of thunder") and Peter; there are three texts, the Transfiguration, the resurrection of Jairus' daughter and the agony of Jesus in the Garden of Olives. Finally, the third class comprises the texts in which John is directly related to the prince of the Apostles, St. Peter. There are five such texts (four at the end of John's Gospel and one at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles), and we propose to examine them briefly³⁴⁴.

John, XIII, 21-28.- We are at the Last Supper. Christ has just said to the Apostles: "One of you will betray me". The disciples are surprised and, one by one, they question the Master without getting an answer. Finally Peter, seeing John resting on the Lord's chest, makes a sign to him to question Jesus, who then gives his favourite disciple the indication of the "hand sign", which will enable him to recognise the "son of perdition".

John XVIII, 15-25.- After the agony in the garden of Olives and the arrest of Jesus, all the disciples, abandoning him, flee. Peter and John, however, follow from a distance the procession that leads the prisoner to the seat of the high priest Caiaphas. John, who already knew the high priest, enters the court of the palace and makes Peter enter as well. It is in this court that the three consecutive denials of the prince of the Apostles will take place, who, having met Jesus' gaze, after having heard the cock crow, will leave the court to "weep bitterly".

John XX, 1-9.- Good Friday has passed, the feast of the Sabbath, too, and, on the first day of the week, as it begins to dawn, Mary of Magdala, accompanied by other women, buys perfumes and goes to the tomb to embalm the body of the crucified. When they arrived, they found the stone that had closed the tomb removed, the entrance open and the tomb empty. In her confusion, Mary Magdalene runs to the Apostles to inform them. Peter and John rush to the tomb. John arrives first, but waits for Peter to arrive and, entering the sepulchre to follow him, finds on leaving that it is useless to look for the Author of life among the dead.

John XXI, 15-24.- The fourth episode is famous, for with it ends the fourth Gospel. Peter, whose tears and love have washed away his guilt, has just been confirmed by his Master as Shepherd of his flock, which implies, let us remember, the "power of the keys" which gives the power to bind and loose. In the face of such favours, Peter, who then sees John coming towards them, wonders what the Master has been able to reserve for them.

³⁴⁴In entitling this article "The Five Meetings of Peter and John", we wanted to relate five important episodes in which Scripture brings the two Apostles face to face, so to speak, whose personalities indisputably surpass those of the other ten. But it is quite clear that during the three years of Christ's public life, the twelve Apostles, who lived together, saw each other every day.

his beloved disciple. And he questions Christ, who gives him the famous answer: "And if I want him to remain until I come back, what about you?"

Acts of the Apostles, III, 1-10.- We are now in the very first days of the Church. Peter and John go up to the Temple to pray. At the door, a lame man asks them for alms, and Peter says to him: "I have neither gold nor silver, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, get up and walk". And the miracle was suddenly accomplished.

Let us now examine these five episodes with the clarity of symbolism. To interpret the first, let us remember that Peter represents exotericism, John represents esotericism and Judas represents counter-initiation. We see then that exotericism needs esotericism to slow down the "prestige" of counter-initiation. And, no doubt, it will be said, as Guénon has already pointed out, that Christian esotericism, and Freemasonry in particular, has defended itself as badly against the infiltrations of counter-initiation as, for example, the Christian Churches and Catholicism. But, in any case, we can be sure that no one in the West has given as much precision as Guénon on the tactics of the dark forces, and, in a general way, on the "technique of subversion". And it is to his exceptional knowledge of esotericism and initiation that we owe his clarity on the antitheses emanating from the "Shadow Satellite": neo-spiritualism and counter-initiation.

The second episode is difficult to interpret; for it might seem that it is John who, by introducing Peter to the court of Caiaphas, has given him the opportunity to refuse three times. But it would be too audacious to allow oneself to "judge" a failure so soon atoned for by tears. *O felix culpa*," sang the Church, not long ago, on the night of the Resurrection, about Adam's sin, also described as a "necessary sin". And let us point out that if Peter had not been led by his fault to leave the court of Caiaphas and thus separated from John, he would have accompanied John to Calvary and would also have been a witness of the incomparable gift that Jesus gave to the beloved disciple. The only witnesses of this gift were the women who, defying the dangers of a crowd cheering death cries, remained faithful to the end and were thus able to witness the last moments of the God-man and, with Joseph of Arimathea, to take part in placing the body in the tomb³⁴⁶.

The third and fourth episodes are easy to interpret. The third underlines the primacy of the one on whom were conferred the titles of Shepherd of the flock and Prince of the Apostles, and to whom were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The fourth episode reminds us, however, that this authority stops where John's dominion begins.

In the fifth episode, we see Peter acting alone to heal the unfortunate man struck by the "sign of the letter B". John does not figure in this story, except by his presence alone. We think that there is a lesson here worthy of careful consideration by "John's brothers". In modern chemistry, the offspring of traditional alchemy, a body is called a "catalyst" when it is necessary for a reaction, but is not

³⁴⁵We are thinking here especially of psychoanalysis (and particularly that of Jung), of which Guénon has underlined the dangerous character, at the end of the Kingdom of quantity. It should also be noted that, in Freemasonry, it is the Scottish Rite which seems to have been particularly considered, which has allowed some to give its symbolism the interpretations of a truly overflowing fantasy.

³⁴⁶This role of women in the Passion and also in the Resurrection of Christ could help to solve, in part, the difficulty, mentioned by Guénon, in establishing rituals for female initiation.

affected by it, who is content to admit it, or, at most, to activate it. The ideal, for those who claim to esotericism and initiation, would be to practice what Guénon called "non-acting activity". Such an attitude is more common in the East than in the West, and we know the importance of "non-acting" (*Wu-Wei*) in the Far Eastern Tradition. But the temptation to "activism" has, unfortunately, played havoc in many branches of Freemasonry.

From the five encounters we have just examined, we can draw some "practical lessons" for the use of Western initiatory organisations (and especially Masonic obediences), and more especially for the dignitaries who have been given the heavy task of directing them. The agents of the "adversary", who have managed to infiltrate the ranks of authentic initiation, exercise an attentive and insidious but sometimes terribly effective vigilance. Patience in the face of the regular exoteric authorities, because of their misunderstandings, their injustices and sometimes even their slander. And, finally, absolute refusal to yield to the "temptation" to involve Freemasonry in any social or political activity. Those who know Guénon's work well know that such recommendations have never been more urgently needed than in our days. And this leads us to some reflections on what we would call the role attributed to Freemasonry at the end of the present cycle.

In the ancient rituals, when a visitor was asked: "Where is the Lodge of St. John?", he was to reply "On the highest of the mountains, or in the deepest of the valleys, which is the valley of Jehoshaphat". This expression thus recognised to Freemasonry, because of its relationship with St. John, a particular link with the "Last Judgement". Moreover, in the 18th century, in England, certain workshops linked to the most traditional obedience of the time, the "Grand Lodge of the Ancients", worked with the open Bible on the Second Letter of St. Peter, which is one of the few scriptural texts to speak openly of the end times. Finally, let us remember that, according to the interpretation of the most ancient Fathers of the Church, the "obstacle" to the coming of the Antichrist, of which St. Paul speaks in his second Letter to the Thessalonians, was none other than the Roman Empire. This Empire, rebuilt by Charlemagne, soon became the Holy Roman Empire of Germany", the word "Germanic" meaning here, exoterically - as it will also be in the Rosicrucians - "land of germs". This empire disappeared in 1806, a few years after the first Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite was founded in the United States. Since then, the Supreme Councils of each nation bear the title: "Supreme Councils of the Holy Empire", and the shields of the thirty-third degree of Scottish Rite are the same shields of the Holy Empire, with the motto "*Deus meumque jus*", which the Grand Orient of France, always eager for "modernisation", has seen fit to replace by "*Suum cuique jus*". We find, then, that the "idea" (in the Platonic sense of the word) of the Holy Empire is currently "reabsorbed" in Freemasonry and, more precisely, in the last degree of the Scottish Rite. This is not unimportant, as written by ancient Christian authors, who have written about the eschatological role of the Roman Empire.

We do not know if, even among the most attentive readers of René Guénon, many have remarked on the lines with which he ended his review of the article "La Franc-Masonie", by Albert Lantoiné, inserted in a *General History of Freemasonry*.

Religions, published just after the war³⁴⁷. The Master - after praising Lantoine for "having done justice to the widespread legend of the role that eighteenth-century French Freemasonry played in the preparation of the Revolution and throughout it, and deploring the "intrusion of politics into certain Lodges" - disputed the author's conclusion that Freemasonry might be destined to become "the future citadel of religions". And Guénon, while admitting that many will see in such a conception only "a nice dream", did not absolutely dismiss Lantoine's "hope"; but, in any case, he made him experience a traditional "transmutation". He specifies that the role considered by Lantoine, "is not at all that of an incitee organisation which would keep strictly to its own domain"; and adds that, "if Freemasonry can really become the help of religions in a period of almost total spiritual obscurity, it will be in a very different form" from that considered by the author of the *Letter to the Sovereign Pontiff*, "but that, moreover, the fact that it is less outwardly apparent does not make it more effective".

These lines are enigmatic, possibly the most enigmatic that René Guénon has ever written. But it is evident that the period of almost complete spiritual obscurity" of which Guénon speaks can be none other than the reign of the Antichrist. The author of *Appreciations on Initiation*, who must have had the revelation very early on, or, if one prefers, the "consciousness" of the exceptional role that was reserved for him, did not write anything without mature reflection, for "pretty dreams" were not his thing. We are persuaded that the text we have just recalled can provide the explanation for the attention that, from his earliest youth until his last days, he had constantly devoted to Freemasonry; an attention that has caused the surprise of many and the scandal of some others. Guénon saw in this organisation, in which all that is true of Western initiations has been reabsorbed, the signs of a "vitality" that enabled it to triumph over the incessant attacks coming from the "sphere of Antichrist". And this vitality brings to mind the promise of the Apostle John, one of the two patron saints of Freemasonry, when he heard him declare: "I will that he abide till I come again". A grave declaration, when uttered by one who can say: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall never pass away".

ADDITIONAL NOTE ON THE SAINT-EMPIRE

The three frequent allusions made by Guénon to the Holy Empire in several of his works, especially in *The Esotericism of Dante* and also in *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, have surprised many of his readers, who have sometimes seen here a sort of "value judgement" concerning a certain type of government, which, moreover, had the "bad luck" of being almost always hostile to French regimes, whether they were royalist, republican or "Bonapartist". It is true that Charles-Quint is an unsympathetic figure for the French, especially if we oppose him to the "knight-king" François I, forgetting moreover that the latter - who, in Pavi, had "lost everything except his honour" - a few months later,

³⁴⁷Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t. II, pp. 99 and 100.

found the means of forfeiting, in his turn, that honour, by withholding his signature: an act as ungentlemanly as possible. But it matters little: the armies of the "Imperialists" (under the Revolution, they were called *Kaiserlicks*), were formed of hordes as ill-disciplined as those of their French adversaries; but their ravages were but child's play, compared with what they promised, for their future wars: the progress of modern science, placed at the service of the passions of exacerbated nationalists.

According to Guénon, it is at the time of Dante and, consequently, of the destruction of the Templars, that the Christian West had broken with its Tradition, and that, consequently, the struggle between the two "powers" festered to the point that the armies of Charles-Quint, commanded by the Constable de Bourbon, took Rome and subjected it, for a long time, to a terrible pillage. It is not human attempts, very human, which should establish a universal monarchy in Europe, but only the incontestably traditional elements which can reveal the very "idea" of the Holy Empire.

The founder of the Roman Empire, Caesar, was modelled on Alexander the Great, who had conquered the whole of the East, from Macedonia to India. The debut of this extraordinary adventurer had been marked by the episode of the "Gordian knot", and Guénon has pointed out that the sword of the Freemasons is intended to play the same role as that once played by the sword of Alexander³⁴⁸. This role is one of "separation", the first of the Hermetic "operations", which consists of "separating the subtle from the dense", according to the terms of *The Emerald Tablet*. Some alchemical texts state that, once this separation has been accomplished, the rest of the Hermetic operations are nothing more than "woman's work and child's labour". And indeed, once the Greek hero had cut the Gordian knot, his various conquests were accomplished with a rapidity rarely seen in history.

In Roman history, we see nothing that recalls the episode of the Gordian knot, but knots, and above all "ties", played an important, if enigmatic, role in the institutions of the city of the seven hills³⁴⁹. For example, one of the highest religious dignitaries, the flamen of Jupiter, was, so to speak, "bound" by an incredible number of rules, almost all of which were linked to ties and knots, and whose function, despite the advantages and honours involved, was unenviable³⁵⁰. To our knowledge, only Guénon has been able to give a satisfactory, if traditional, explanation of the anomalies to which the pontiff of Jupiter was subjected:

³⁴⁸Cf. *Studies on Freemasonry and the Compagnonnage*, t.I, pgs. 10 and 11. According to the very brief expression that Guénon gives here, the Gordian knot should be, for the "empire of Asia", exactly what it is, for every compound (in the Hermetic style, one would say "for every mixed"), the equivalent of the "vital knot", which constitutes "the point of union which binds together all its constituent elements". Once the Gordian knot had been cut, Darius' reign was doomed; but this death coincided with a birth, that of the Hellenistic empire.

³⁴⁹On the very important symbolism of ties and knots, cf. *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, Chapter LXVIII.

³⁵⁰Among these rules which the Romans enforced without understanding them, let us cite some of the most significant. The flamen of Jupiter could not ride a horse, no doubt because of his kidneys, he could not wear a knot on his back, only free men could be present in his house. What is even more extraordinary: when the flamen moved about in Rome, if he came across an escort of guards carrying a prisoner in chains, the latter was suddenly freed from his bonds and set free. How could we fail to think that, in this same eternal city, an Apostle, on whom his Master had conferred the power of binding and loosing (*potestas ligandi et solvendi*), i.e. the "power of the keys", and whose hermetic character Guénon has emphasised, would soon settle in this same eternal city?

"The life of the *flamen Dialis*, which is described in detail³⁵¹ is a remarkable example of an existence that has remained entirely traditional, in an environment that had already become largely profane; it is this contrast that offers this apparent strangeness, and yet it is a type of existence, where everything has a symbolic value, that should be considered as truly normal".

In the Roman institutions, there was another very special feature: the "bundle of lictors", which was carried before the magistrates when they moved about. This bundle consisted of an axe (symbol of lightning) surrounded by twelve rods joined together. Arturo Reghini has pointed out that the number of lictors preceding the magistrates varied according to their dignity, but could only be 1, 2, 3, 4 or 6, i.e. a submultiple of 12. The two consuls who, after the dismissal of Tarquin le Superbe, had replaced the royalty, were entitled to twelve lictors each. After the death of Caesar, the Empire was led by Augustus; this supreme dignity was honoured by 24 lictors. The Reghini saw in this importance given to the number 12 a sign of the particular relations of Rome with the Pythagorean Tradition, which, as we know, came from the Hyperborean tradition³⁵².

After the collapse caused by the Barbarian invasions, a long period of more than three centuries elapsed, where the Western Empire is no more than a nostalgic memory for some devotees of the past Roman splendour. On Christmas Day 800, Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of Rome, and the Pope reprised for him the ancient traditional acclamation: "To Charles-Augustus, crowned by God, great and peaceful Emperor of the Romans, life and victory!" This event had great repercussions, and the Caliph of Baghdad, Haroun-al-Rachid, sent to the court of Aix-la-Chapelle "the keys of the Holy Sepulchre, a gesture whose hermetic symbolism needs no explanation. At the Treaty of Verdum, the Empire passed to Lothaire, but it was in 962 that a German sovereign, Otto the Great, adopted the first title of Master of the Holy Roman Empire and was consecrated by Pope John XII. This dignity, elective at first, remained practically German, then Austrian until its abolition, although it was officially Roman³⁵³.

When the Holy Empire was destroyed by Napoleon in 1806, its last holder, François II, adopted the title of Emperor of Austria³⁵⁴. The Pope, however, remains

³⁵¹These lines are taken from a chronicle on an Italian work, a chronicle reproduced in the *Comptes Rendus* (pgs. 59 to 64). This chronicle contained some reservations, sometimes important ones, but also praise, to which Guénon was not accustomed, for the products of official scholarship. He wrote, for example: "The author recognises the limitation (possibly, one should say: the complete atrophy) of certain faculties of the Moderns, who, for this very reason, take for a simple matter of "faith" (in the sense of vulgar belief), what, for the Ancients, was a real "experience" (and, let us add, an experience totally unrelated to the psychological). We seem to see Guénon's smile, on discovering in a modern scholar, such a "flattering" judgement for his colleagues in "intellectuality".

³⁵²Cf. *Comptes Rendus* de René Guénon, pg. 16. It goes without saying that the use of the lictor bundle by Mussolini's "Fascism", like that of the swastika by Hitler's "Nazism", constitutes, for the traditional symbols, a "profanation" in the etymological sense of the word.

³⁵³The "title" of the heads of the Holy Empire was as follows: "N., by the grace of God Emperor of the Romans, Caesar ever Augustus, sacred Majesty".

³⁵⁴His title then becomes: "N., by the grace of God Emperor of Austria, Apostolic King of Hungary, King of Bohemia, of Dalmatia", etc....

granting certain liturgical⁽³⁵⁵⁾ and even "elective"⁽³⁵⁶⁾ privileges to monarchs who were no more than "vestiges" of the legacy left by ancient imperial Rome⁽³⁵⁷⁾.

It is strange that in the years preceding the abolition of the Holy Empire, and even since the 18th century, Masonic groups have taken such titles as "Council of the Emperors of the East and West"⁽³⁵⁸⁾. Etienne Morin, armed with a "patent", the authenticity of which, whether true or fictitious, has cast a shadow over many pages⁽³⁵⁹⁾, left for the United States of America, where the first Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite was to be founded, an organisation which would give birth in each country to a body officially called the "Supreme Council of the Holy Empire"⁽³⁶⁰⁾.

The symbolism of the Scottish thirty-third degree is particularly interesting. A non-Mason, Michel Vâlsan, has studied it in a long article, in which he examines all its aspects⁽³⁶¹⁾. Leaving aside the inverted triangle, the colour black and the correspondence between the 33 degrees and the 33 years of Christ, we shall examine the interpretation he gives to the coats of arms of the 33rd degree.

They represent a two-headed eagle (in heraldic language, one would say: an eagle "*éployée*"), carrying on its two heads, the imperial crown and, in its talons, a sword with the motto *Deus meumque jus*. Michel Vâlsan recalls that the eagle, in the ancient traditions of the Roman Empire, was the bird of Jupiter, the master of lightning; and

⁽³⁵⁵⁾In the "missals" before 1914, among the "great prayers" of Good Friday, there was a special prayer "for the Emperor"; and a rubric specified that this prayer was to be used only in countries subject to the Auto-Hungarian crown.

⁽³⁵⁶⁾This privilege led to the election of Pius X at the conclave of 1903. And the first act of the new pontiff was to abolish this provision to which he owed his elevation to the chair of Peter.

⁽³⁵⁷⁾Guénon has recalled that Austria and the Papacy had to suffer particularly from the pretended "prince of nationalities". But there were other "uses", "psychic residues" left in the country which was, for so long, the seat of the material power of the Holy Empire. Before the catastrophe of 1914, in a Vienna stunned by the waltzes of Strauss, two pseudo-doctrines, apparently enemies in appearance and therefore in solidarity in the "depths of the abyss", whose sinister and perverse effects have unfortunately not yet had their full effect: psychoanalysis and National Socialism, were developing with the support, it seems, of imperial financiers. On the use of "psychic residues" for evil purposes, cf. *The Kingdom of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, chapter XXVII, and, above all, at the end of # 5. Well understood, the "post-human" "remains" of such an important "reality" as that of the Holy Empire cannot be retained; and we may add that, in Freemasonry, it is precisely that which relates to the inheritance of the very idea of Empire that was the privileged object of the "infiltrations" of which Guénon speaks in the passage just referred to.

⁽³⁵⁸⁾The "Council of the Emperors of the East and West, Great and Sovereign Lodge of St. John of Jerusalem", was founded about 1760, and is considered to be at the origin of the "Rite of Perfection", in twenty-five degrees, from which the Scottish Rite, in thirty-three degrees, is derived.

⁽³⁵⁹⁾It is absolutely vain to search for documents concerning certain mysterious facts concerning the history of Freemasonry, just as it is vain to search for the reality of its Templar ancestry. All these facts are shrouded in a natural and desired obscurity. It even seems that the behaviour of certain enigmatic characters (and we are thinking here, notably, of Cagliostro), had, above all, the purpose of diverting attention from what was really important in the Masonic Order.

⁽³⁶⁰⁾In the "Scottish" rituals dating from the Napoleonic or Restoration period, one finds, for the opening and closing of the work, as for the conferring of degrees, formulae such as the following: "To the glory of the Great Architect of the Universe, in the name and under the auspices of the Sovereign Grand Inspectors General, thirty-third and last degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, constituting the Supreme Council of the Holy Empire, I hereby declare, etc...." "Each Supreme Council is thus qualified as a "Dogmatic Power of Freemasonry". This does not prevent certain High Masons (especially in Latin countries) from declaring, whenever they have occasion, that Freemasonry differs from religions because it does not teach dogmas, but symbols. Unfortunately for the soundness of this argument, dogmas are also symbols. In Christianity, for example, the dogmas to which all the faithful can adhere are set down in three formularies called the Apostles' Symbol, the Nicene Symbol and the Athanasian Symbol.

⁽³⁶¹⁾"The Last High Degrees of Scottishness and Downward Realisation", in *Traditional Studies*, June, July and September 1953.

which, in Christianity, is the proper symbol of St. John, the "son of thunder". And the two heads of the eagle are equivalent to the two faces of Janus, whose relationship to the two St. Johns Guénon has underlined. As for the other three elements of the coat of arms, which overlap in their representation, they symbolise the three "functions" of imperial power: the crown symbolises the administrative function, the sword the military function, and the motto or motto (because of the word *jus*) the judicial function.

The "vital knot", of which we spoke at the beginning of this chapter, ensures, in short, "the union between the constituent elements" of the "human compound" and, therefore, of every living being. It has, as an analogue, the "sensitive point" which must exist in every building constructed according to the rules of Art. And if we pass from these individual compounds to organisations which, without being properly universal, nevertheless have, so to speak, a "vocation" for universality, we can say that each of them must possess something comparable to what the "Gordian knot" was for the Empire of Asia. Alexander's sword, which cut the Gordian knot, thus foreshadowed the collapse of the Persian kingdom, but at the same time inaugurated the long series of conquests that would form the Greek Empire, later completed by Caesar. This sword had then played the dual role of separation and reunion, in accordance with the Hermetic adage *solve et coagula*, which sums up the process of the Great Work. We know that one of the "marks" of the success of this Work is the production of gold, which has turned so many heads ignorant of this elementary rule that prescribes to the initiates: the "rejection of powers", or, at the very least, the "non-binding" to the "fruits of action". The appearance of gold at the end of the Great Work corresponds to the restoration of the golden age at the end of a *manvantara*. And it is on this last point that we would like to dwell now.

Towards the end of his work *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*, René Guénon quotes and comments on a passage from the treatise *De Monarchia*, where Dante assigns to the emperor the mission of leading humanity to "temporal happiness", formally compared, by Alighieri, to the "terrestrial Paradise"; that is, to the golden age, which must inaugurate the "coming cycle". And Guénon remarked that, "at the very moment when Dante was formulating" the mission providentially attributed to the heads of the Holy Empire, "the events that were to unfold in Europe were precisely those that were to prevent its realisation at all costs". We may add that, at the time (early 19th century) when the "ideal" heritage of the Holy Empire was transmitted (under rather obscure conditions) to Freemasonry, the latter had long since become "speculative" and conferred only a "virtual" initiation. But the words of St. Paul should not be forgotten here: "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance"³⁶². For a virtuality can always, under the action of the Spirit, pass "from potency to act", and darkness, in its higher sense, is the most enormous and luminous possibility. On Good Friday, "after the sixth hour of the day [on which Christ was crucified], until the ninth [when Jesus, having uttered the great cry, yielded up his spirit], there was darkness over the whole earth. It is, therefore, in the bosom of this "dark night" that St. John can understand the words which made him the immortal recipient of Christian esotericism. Any change of state, and *a fortiori* the passage from one cycle to another, "can only be accomplished in darkness".

³⁶²In the article by Michel Vâlsan quoted in the preceding note, this author writes: "It matters little, for the preservation of a function, whether the conservator is a real or a virtual initiate". It is known, moreover, that the virtual nature of an initiation does not alter in any way the "regularity" and, consequently, the validity of the degrees it confers.

The Masonic sword, in accordance with the Hermetic adage, has been able to "separate the subtle from the dense", i.e. it separates the "principal" idea of the Holy Empire from the various attempts made to "set it in motion", of which history has preserved the memory. Attempts which could only rarely be successful, since history only "covers" the darkest periods of the "age of shadow". The ancient Fathers of the Church claimed that the "obstacle" to the coming of the Antichrist was none other than the Roman Empire. Now, at the close of the meetings of the Supreme Councils, the Grand Commander wishes his dignitaries "the blessing of the Holy Patriarch Henoch". This character is one of the two "witnesses" who, in the Apocalypse, are killed by the servants of the Antichrist. The other witness is Elijah, but Henoch represents the antediluvian Tradition, which Adam receives in the earthly Paradise. We find ourselves thus back in the golden age, and have we refused to make us sense of the "ties" which bind the "Gordian knot" to the present rituals of the "dogmatic power" of Freemasonry? For all this is shrouded in darkness, the darkness which Scripture compares to the "divine glory" which the fathers of the Temple hunted during their dedication of this sacred edifice, and which made Solomon say: "The Eternal wants to dwell in darkness"³⁶³. It would be vain to want to pierce all the enigmas, constituting what Guénon, taking up, in order to transpose the sinuses, an expression of Ferdinand Ossendowski, could call "the mystery of mysteries".

A final remark. We will no doubt be told that the present dignitaries of the "Supreme Councils of the Holy Empire" have no idea of the role which, on the authority of Dante and, above all, of René Guénon, we suppose they have in store for them. We already know this, and, moreover, Michel Vâlsan had already pointed it out, and Guénon before him. We only think also that we should not underestimate the extent of the "conversion" (in the etymological sense of "return") brought about by the "reinversion of the poles", which must prelude the advent of the "coming cycle".

³⁶³Cf. II Paralipomènes (II Chronicles), V, 7 _ VI, 1: "When the Ark of the Covenant was installed in the Temple, in the Holy of Holies, under the wings of the Cherubim [...], the cloud descended into the sanctuary. The priests could not stay for the divine service, for the glory of God filled the Temple. Then Solomon cried out: "The Eternal wants to dwell in the Darkness".

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PUBLISHED VOLUME

René Guénon and the Destinies of Freemasonry

1982, Editions d'Oeuvre, Paris.

1995, 2nd edition, Editions Traditionnelles, Paris.

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BOOKS

